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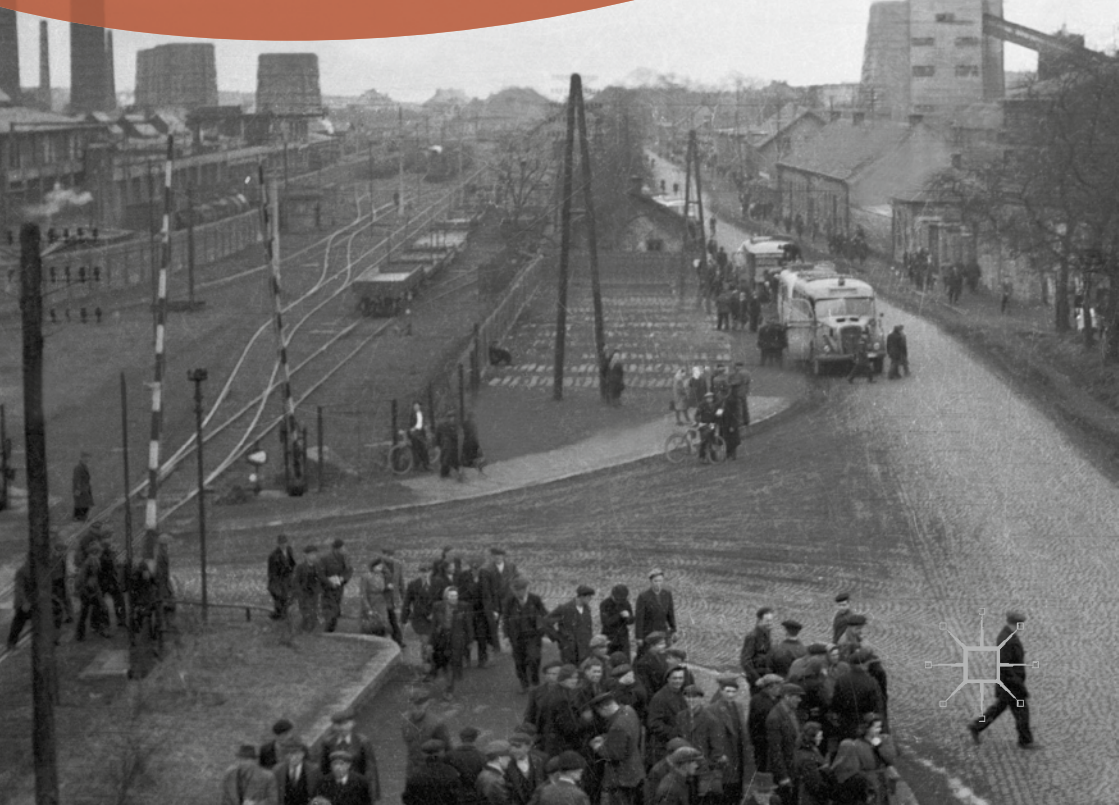
Social Movements and the Change of Economic Elites in Europe after 1945

Edited by Stefan Berger & Marcel Boldorf



Palgrave Studies in the History of Social Movements

INSTITUT FÜR SOZIALE BEWEGUNGEN

Around the world, social movements have become legitimate, yet contested, actors in local, national and global politics and civil society, yet we still know relatively little about their longer histories and the trajectories of their development. This series seeks to promote innovative historical research on the history of social movements in the modern period since around 1750. We bring together conceptually-informed studies that analyse labour movements, new social movements and other forms of protest from early modernity to the present. We conceive of 'social movements' in the broadest possible sense, encompassing social formations that lie between formal organisations and mere protest events. We also offer a home for studies that systematically explore the political, social, economic and cultural conditions in which social movements can emerge. We are especially interested in transnational and global perspectives on the history of social movements, and in studies that engage critically and creatively with political, social and sociological theories in order to make historically grounded arguments about social movements. This new series seeks to offer innovative historical work on social movements, while also helping to historicise the concept of 'social movement'. It hopes to revitalise the conversation between historians and historical sociologists in analysing what Charles Tilly has called the 'dynamics of contention'.

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Stefan Berger • Marcel Boldorf
Editors

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Editors
Stefan Berger
Institute for Social Movements
Ruhr University Bochum
Bochum, Germany

Marcel Boldorf
Faculty of Languages and Cultures
Lumière University Lyon 2
Lyon, France

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Series Editor Preface

Around the world, social movements have become legitimate, yet contested, actors in local, national and global politics and civil society, yet we still know relatively little about their longer histories and the trajectories of their development. Our series reacts to what can be described as a recent boom in the history of social movements. We can observe a development from the crisis of labour history in the 1980s to the boom in research on social movements in the 2000s. The rise of historical interests in the development of civil society and the role of strong civil societies as well as non-governmental organisations in stabilising democratically constituted polities has strengthened the interest in social movements as a constituent element of civil societies.

In different parts of the world, social movements continue to have a strong influence on contemporary politics. In Latin America, trade unions, labour parties and various left-of-centre civil society organisations have succeeded in supporting left-of-centre governments. In Europe, peace movements, ecological movements and alliances intent on campaigning against poverty and racial discrimination and discrimination on the basis of gender and sexual orientation have been able to set important political agendas for decades. In other parts of the world, including Africa, India and South East Asia, social movements have played a significant role in various forms of community building and community politics. The contemporary political relevance of social movements has undoubtedly contributed to a growing historical interest in the topic.

Contemporary historians are not only beginning to historicise these relatively recent political developments; they are also trying to relate them

to a longer history of social movements, including traditional labour organisations, such as working-class parties and trade unions. In the longue durée, we recognise that social movements are by no means a recent phenomenon and are not even an exclusively modern phenomenon, although we realise that the onset of modernity emanating from Europe and North America across the wider world from the eighteenth century onwards marks an important departure point for the development of civil societies and social movements.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the dominance of national history over all other forms of history writing led to a thorough nationalisation of the historical sciences. Hence social movements have been examined traditionally within the framework of the nation state. Only during the last two decades have historians begun to question the validity of such methodological nationalism and to explore the development of social movements in comparative, connective and transnational perspective, taking into account processes of transfer, reception and adaptation. Whilst our book series does not preclude work that is still being carried out within national frameworks (for, clearly, there is a place for such studies, given the historical importance of the nation state in history), it hopes to encourage comparative and transnational histories on social movements.

At the same time as historians have begun to research the history of those movements, a range of social theorists, from Jürgen Habermas to Pierre Bourdieu and from Slavoj Žižek to Alain Badiou, as well as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe to Miguel Abensour, to name but a few, have attempted to provide philosophical-cum-theoretical frameworks in which to place and contextualise the development of social movements. History has arguably been the most empirical of all the social and human sciences, but it will be necessary for historians to explore further to what extent these social theories can be helpful in guiding and framing the empirical work of the historian in making sense of the historical development of social movements. Hence the current series is also hoping to make a contribution to the ongoing dialogue between social theory and the history of social movements.

This series seeks to promote innovative historical research on the history of social movements in the modern period since around 1750. We bring together conceptually informed studies that analyse labour movements, new social movements and other forms of protest from early modernity to the present. With this series, we seek to revive, within the context of historiographical developments since the 1970s, a conversation

between historians on the one hand and sociologists, anthropologists and political scientists on the other.

Unlike most of the concepts and theories developed by social scientists, we do not see social movements as directly linked, a priori, to processes of social and cultural change and therefore do not adhere to a view that distinguishes between old (labour) and new (middle-class) social movements. Instead, we want to establish the concept 'social movement' as a heuristic device that allows historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to investigate social and political protests in novel settings. Our aim is to historicise notions of social and political activism in order to highlight different notions of political and social protest on both left and right.

Hence, we conceive of 'social movements' in the broadest possible sense, encompassing social formations that lie between formal organisations and mere protest events. But we also include processes of social and cultural change more generally in our understanding of social movements: this goes back to nineteenth-century understandings of 'social movement' as processes of social and cultural change more generally. We also offer a home for studies that systematically explore the political, social, economic and cultural conditions in which social movements can emerge. We are especially interested in transnational and global perspectives on the history of social movements, and in studies that engage critically and creatively with political, social and sociological theories in order to make historically grounded arguments about social movements. In short, this series seeks to offer innovative historical work on social movements, while also helping to historicise the concept of 'social movement'. It also hopes to revitalise the conversation between historians and historical sociologists in analysing what Charles Tilly has called the 'dynamics of contention'.

Marcel Boldorf and Stefan Berger's *Social Movements and the Change of Economic Elites in Europe after 1945* contributes to social movement research in two original ways. In doing so, this edited collection also develops an important optic into post-1945 European History as both post-war and post-fascist history. Business historians have, for quite some time, pointed to the complex continuities between fascist or National Socialists and post-1945 configurations. But within the framework of this research, the socio-political background context has, by necessity, taken a secondary role. This is the point of departure for this volume: Berger and Boldorf have brought together an exciting collection of case studies that analyse what happened to critiques of that seamless transition from fascism to post-1945 capitalism or state socialism and ask for the continuities of

anti-capitalist thought and action from the 1930s beyond 1945. The chapters in this volume examine in fascinating detail case studies where this anti-capitalism took the form of grassroots social movements. They thus shine a spotlight onto sections of the labour movements that have been ignored in more traditional approaches so far. And they highlight their organisational and ideological positions, rather than merely zoom in on party-political social democracy and communism.

Conceptually, this volume thus significantly broadens our view and question the neat distinction between 'old' and 'new' social movements. This, in turn, allows them to develop a novel conception of post-1945 European history, which highlights the openness of the post-1945 constellation and its constant contestations rather than its order and structure. They open up not merely new vistas on little known aspects of labour history. But they also help us to see eastern and western Europe in their complex and multiple entanglements.

Bochum, Germany — Stefan Berger
Stirling, Scotland — Holger Nehring

Contents

Notes on Contributors

Peter Ackers was Professor of Industrial Relations and Labour History at Loughborough University, UK, until 2015, where he is now a visiting professor. He is also an adjunct professor at the Centre for Work, Organisation and Wellbeing (WOW) Griffith University, Brisbane, and a visiting scholar at the Oxford Centre for Life-Writing. He was Joint Editor of *Labour History Review*, 2001–2004, and is on the management committee of History & Policy: Trade Union Forum. His two recent edited collections are *Johnstone & Ackers, Finding a Voice at Work?* (2015) and *Ackers and Reid, Alternatives to State-Socialism in Britain: Other Worlds of Labour in the Twentieth Century*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. He is currently working on two themes: the life and times of Professor Hugh Clegg, and English working-class Protestantism.

Jaromír Balcar studied History, Political Science, and Slavonic Studies at the Universities of Munich and Volgograd. Since October 2014 he has been a senior researcher in the research program "History of the Max Planck Society" at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, after having held teaching and research positions at the Institute for Contemporary History Munich (1992–1999), the Ludwig-Maximilians University Munich (1999–2003 and 2005–2007), the University of Bremen (2003–2004 and 2008–2014), and the Collegium Carolinum (2004–2005). His research interests are directed mainly toward the contemporary history of Germany and East Central Europe with a special focus on business and labor history. Recent publications include *Hitlers willige Historiker? Die Debatte um "Ostforschung" und "Ostforscher" im*

Spiegel des "Marburger Historikerstreits" in Jaromír Balcar and Nina Balcar (eds.), *Das Andere und das Selbst. Perspektiven diesseits und jenseits der Kulturgeschichte. Doris Kaufmann zum 65.* Geburtstag, Bremen: Edition Temmen 2018, pp. 276–293, and *Panzer für Hitler—Traktoren für Stalin. Großunternehmen in Böhmen und Mähren 1938–1950*, Munich: Oldenbourg, 2014.

Stefan Berger is Professor of Social History and Director of the Institute for Social Movements at Ruhr University Bochum. He is also executive chair of the Foundation History of the Ruhr and honorary professor at Cardiff University in the UK. He has published widely on the comparative history of social movements, on histories of de-industrialisation and industrial heritage in regions of heavy industry, on the history of historiography and historical theory, on the history of nationalism and national identity, on British-German relations, and on the cultural heritage of war. His most recent publications include *Industrial Heritage and Regional Identity*, edited with Christian Wicke and Jana Golombek, London: Routledge, 2018, and *Transnational Activism and Social Movements*, edited with Sean Scalmer, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

Marcel Boldorf is Professor of German Studies at the University of Lyon in France. He completed his PhD in Economic and Social History in Mannheim in 1996 and his habilitation in 2003. His latest studies were dedicated to the economic history of the two world wars. He has also written on the history of industrialization and of social welfare. Recent publications include *Deutsche Wirtschaft und Politik. Vom Kaiserreich bis ins 21. Jahrhundert*, Darmstadt: WBG, 2018; *Economies Under Occupation. The Hegemony of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan in World War II*, edited with Tetsuji Okazaki, London: Routledge, 2015.

Lars Ekdahl is Professor of History at the University of Södertörn, Stockholm. His research is mainly focused on working life and the Swedish Labour Movement with a specific focus on the trade union movement. He has written a biography on the trade union economist Rudolf Meidner and studied the unions of graphical workers, metal workers and municipal workers. He also wrote a history of the Swedish Labour Movement.

Harald Espeli received a Dr. Agric. in economic history at Norwegian Agricultural University in 1991 and has been Research Professor of History at BI Norwegian Business School since 1997. He has been working on Norwegian economic and political history of the nineteenth and

twentieth centuries, writing numerous commissioned works. His latest monograph is on the history of occupational pensions for state employees since 1814. His articles in English are concentrated on issues related to Norwegian competition policy in a comparative context of economic aspects of the German occupation of Norway (1940–45).

Rik Hemmerijckx is Conservator at the Provinciaal Emile Verhaeren Museum, Sint-Amands (Belgium) and Doctor of Philosophy (History) from the Free University Brussels. His research is oriented on the Belgian labour movement.

Niklas Jensen-Eriksen is the Casimir Ehrnrooth Professor of Business History at the University of Helsinki. He received his PhD from the London School of Economics and Political Science in 2004, and has since written widely on cartels and competition policy, business–government relations, international political economy, and the business history of media. His latest writings include *Creating Clubs and Giants: How Competition Policies Influenced the Strategy and Structure of Nordic Pulp and Paper Industry, 1970–2000* (forthcoming in Business History) and 'Tackling market failure or building a cartel? Creation of investment regulation system in Finnish forest industries', in *Enterprise & Society*, vol. 16, No. 3, September 2015, 521–555 (with Jari Ojala).

Till Kössler is Professor of the History of Education, Childhood and Youth at the University of Halle-Wittenberg. He completed his PhD in Modern History at the Ruhr-University Bochum in 2003 and his habilitation at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich in 2011. He is currently working on Contemporary Spanish history, the history of family and childhood in Western and Southern Europe, and the history of time. His publications include *Vererbung oder Umwelt? Ungleichheit zwischen Natur und Gesellschaft seit 1945*, edited with Constantin Goschler, Göttingen: Wallerstein, 2016; *Obsession der Gegenwart. Zeit im 20. Jahrhundert*, edited with Alexander C.T. Geppert, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015; and *Kinder der Demokratie. Religiöse Erziehung und urbane Moderne in Spanien, 1890–1939*, Munich: Oldenbourg, 2013.

Jaroslav Kučera is Professor of Modern History at the Charles University, Prague, and since 2013 permanent visiting professor at the University of Konstanz. His research area includes Czech and Czechoslovak contemporary history in mid-European and international context with a special

focus on Czech-German relations. Recent publications include *Von der "Rüstkammer des Reiches" zum "Maschinenwerk des Sozialismus". Wirtschaftslenkung in Böhmen und Mähren 1938 bis 1953*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013 (with Jaromír Balcar); *System Transformation as Consequence of the German Occupation? Czechoslovakia's Path from the Nazi War Economy to Postwar Centralized Planned Economy*, in Jonas Scherner and Eugene N. White (eds.); and *Paying for Hitler's War: The Consequences of Nazi Hegemony for Europe*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016, pp. 343–363 (with Jaromír Balcar).

Niels Wium Olesen is Associate Professor of twentieth-century Danish and European History at Aarhus University, Denmark. He has written books and articles on Danish and European twentieth-century history. Among these are *Danmark besat. Krig og hverdag 1940–45* [*Denmark Occupied. War and Daily Life 1940–45*] (2005, rev. 2015) and *Historien om Danmark* [*The History of Denmark*] (2017).

Tanja Penter is Professor of Eastern European History at Heidelberg University, Germany. Her research interests include history of Ukraine and Russia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, comparison of dictatorships, Soviet war crimes trials, questions of transitional justice, and compensation for Nazi crimes. She is a member of the German-Russian and the German-Ukrainian Commission of Historians and of the scientific board of the German Historical Institute in Moscow. Her books include *Kohle für Stalin und Hitler. Arbeiten und Leben im Donbass 1929 bis 1953*, Essen: Klartext, 2010, and *Sovietnam. Die UdSSR in Afghanistan 1979–1989*, edited with Esther Meier, Paderborn: Schöningh, 2017.

Marc Prat is Senior Lecturer in Economic History and History of Economic Thought at the University of Barcelona. He is interested in industrial history, industrial relations, and political economy. He has co-written 'State corporatism and democratic industrial relations in Spain 1926–1935: a reappraisal,' in *Labor History*, 55–2, 2014, pp. 208–227 (with Oscar Molina); 'Wages, prices, and technology in early Catalan industrialization,' in *Economic History Review*, 69, 2016, pp. 548–574 (with Julio Martínez-Galarraga).

Sjaak van der Velden started working in the early 1980s in the construction business as a carpenter. In 2000, he defended his PhD on Strikes in the Netherlands and has since been active as a labour historian at the International Institute of Social History (IISH) in Amsterdam and at the

scientific bureau of the Socialist Party in Rotterdam. He has mainly been engaged in strike research and the history of the union movement, both Dutch and global. He has published many articles in Dutch on labour topics and is often asked by newspapers and national radio and television to comment on ongoing labour conflicts. His most recent publications in English are *Historical Dictionary of Organized Labor*, Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 3rd ed., 2012 (with James Docherty); *Striking Numbers. New approaches to strike research*, Amsterdam: IISH, 2012), and 'Strikes and Social Conflicts', in *International Labor and Working-Class History*, vol. 83—Spring 2013 (with Raquel Varela and Peter Winn).

Xavier Vigna is Professor of Contemporary History at Dijon University. His research focuses on labour history and social movements. After having studied the French strikes of 1968 and working-class literature, he is currently editing a volume on social inquiries. His main publications include *L'insubordination ouvrière dans les années 68. Essai d'histoire politique des usines*, Rennes: PUR, 2007; *Histoire des ouvriers en France au XXe siècle*, Paris: Perrin, 2012; *L'espoir et l'effroi. Luttes d'écritures et luttes de classes en France au XXe siècle*, Paris: La Découverte, 2016.

List of Tables

Social Movements and the Change of Economic Elites in Europe: An Introduction

Stefan Berger

Introduction

The end of 1945 marked a major caesura in Europe's political, social, economic and cultural development. German hypernationalism had left the continent in ruins with tens of millions dead and much of the continent transformed into a wasteland of dead bodies, ruined cities, destroyed infrastructure and environmental disaster. 'Postwar'[1] faced diverse challenges that were interconnected by the overriding question of how the reconstruction of the continent should proceed. The answers to this question were closely related to the post-war search for guilty men, i.e. those responsible for the destruction of Europe. In international politics, the Nuremberg trials answered that question—the National Socialist leadership

[1] Tony Judt, *Postwar. A History of Europe since 1945* (London: Allen Lane, 2006).

S. Berger (✉)
Universität Bochum, Bochum, Germany

S. Berger, M. Boldorf (eds.), *Social Movements and the Change of Economic Elites in Europe after 1945*, Palgrave Studies in the History of Social Movements, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77197-7_1

and those serving its ideology and politics were tried and sentenced in an attempt juridically to lay the past to rest. But it was not just a question that looked for answers in international law and politics. The search for guilty men was going on in many countries of Europe, including all those that had been occupied during the Second World War and in which cases of collaboration had occurred.

One answer to the question who was to blame came in the form of anti-capitalism. Left-of-centre political forces, from communists to anarcho-syndicalists, social democrats and left Catholics prominently argued for a connection between capitalism and fascism. Max Horkheimer's famous statement: 'Whoever does not want to talk about capitalism, should be silent about fascism',[2] has its roots in those inter- and post-war debates about the close interconnections between fascism and capitalism. Communism had long claimed that fascism was a political system that served the interests of capitalism in economic crisis by suppressing the working-class revolution.[3] Yet at the end of the Second World War, anti-capitalism went far beyond Communism and became, for a short period, a mainstream trope of politics. Many 'capitalists' had collaborated with the fascist occupiers during the war and had made healthy profits under and with war. The memories of the economic depression of the interwar period was still fresh in many people's minds and further contributed to a negative perception of capitalism as an economic system that benefitted the wealthy few and disadvantaged the vast majority of those toiling under capitalism.[4]

The Red Army, advancing on Berlin, brought the message of anti-capitalism with it into Eastern and East-Central Europe. Where the Red Army stood, communist regimes were established with force in the post-war period, suppressing all those opposed to Communism. The Soviet Union ended capitalism in one half of Europe and its antifascism stressed that this change of economic system was the prime condition for uprooting fascism and paving the way to a social system that would hand power

[2] Max Horkheimer, 'Die Juden und Europa', in idem, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 4 (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1988), p. 380f. [first published 1939].

[3] On Communist interpretations of fascism see Stanley G. Paine, 'Interpretations of Fascism', in Roger Griffin and Matthew Feldman (eds), *Fascism. Theories and Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 56f.

[4] On the strength of anti-capitalist sentiment in post-war Europe see also Keith Lowe, *Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II* (London: Picador, 2013).

to the workers and farmers.[5] This was a challenge to the capitalist economic systems of the Western allies. Hence, the USA, as foremost capitalist power in the world in 1945, took measures to stem the advances of Communism. The birth of the Cold War, so soon after the end of the Second World War, had as much to do with the battles of economic systems as the battles of political systems. Those in the west critical of capitalism were divided between the followers of Soviet communism and those who wanted to find a 'third way' between Soviet Communism and American capitalism. Various forms of 'third force' arguments were prominent between 1944 and 1948 contributing to a vigorous debate about the future of capitalism in the post-war Western world.[6] Ultimately the force of the capitalist defence was such that the 'third force' movements lost out everywhere in Western Europe, and from the late 1940s to the late 1980s, a rather static global binary divide between a liberal capitalist West and a Communist anti-capitalist East became the accustomed scenario.

The challenge to capitalism came to the fore after the end of the Second World War but it was rooted in the Second World War and its prehistory in the interwar period. Hence, 1945 does not represent a sharp break but rather a political caesura allowing particular forms of discourses about economic systems and their elites to move to the fore that had been presented and prepared over almost three decades from the end of the First World War and the Bolshevik revolution onwards.[7] The subsequent chapters will deal with those discourses, and the actions that arose from them, over a range of different European countries. It will discuss who demanded the replacement of economic elites that were deeply embroiled in the history of capitalism and fascism and who launched plans for some form of alternative economic system. It will ask what resistance those actors, and the social movements they formed, met and how they ultimately failed in the

[5] On the Communist transformation in Eastern Europe see Ann Applebaum, *Iron Curtain: The Crushing of Eastern Europe 1944–1956* (New York: Anchor, 2013).

[6] On 'third force' arguments in Britain, compare Darren G. Lilleker, *Against the Cold War: The History and Political Traditions of Pro-Sovietism in the British Labour Party, 1945–1989* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013); Jonathan Schneer, *Labour's Conscience: the Labour Left 1945–1951* (London: Routledge, 1983).

[7] An interesting attempt, in the German context, to relativise the significance of 1945 as a decisive break is provided by Martin Broszat and Klaus-Dietmar Henke (eds), *Von Stalingrad zur Währungsreform: zur Sozialgeschichte des Umbruchs in Deutschland* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1990).

West to bring about change, whilst in Eastern Europe Stalinism forcibly imposed change.

This introduction will, first of all, discuss the concept of social movements and how it applies to the situation in and around 1945. Subsequently it will develop some of the themes and questions that the editors put to all the authors of the subsequent chapters to lay down the common framework that unites the contributions to this volume. It falls to the concluding chapter by Marcel Boldorf to sum up and reflect comparatively upon the conclusions drawn in the different chapters.

Social Movements and the Immediate Post-War Context

Sid Tarrow famously described 'social movements' as 'moving targets'—indicating that definitions of what exactly constitutes a social movement are notoriously vague and fuzzy.[8] The word field is indeed broad—we can think of social movement, political party, trade union, private interest group, association, religious congregation and others more, concepts which can and arguably should be delineated. But how can we do it? And is there not still a considerable overlap between them, however much we attempt to create firm borders between them? All of them surely are relevant in the history of, to use another of Sid Tarrow's key terms, 'contentious politics'.[9]

The fuzziness of conceptual borders extends into the fuzziness of political borders. It is a widespread misconception, not least due to the conflation of the political sympathies of many social movement researchers with the object of their study, that social movements are necessarily progressive, emancipatory or on the left. Just because social movement research has long been blind on its right eye, it does not mean that fascism and other right-wing nationalist and authoritarian movements should not also be studied as social movements.[10] However, for the purpose of this book, the fascist and right-wing authoritarian social movements had been discredited

[8] Sid Tarrow, '"Aiming at a Moving Target": Social Science and the Recent Rebellions in Eastern Europe', in *Political Science and Politics* 24:1 (1991), pp. 12–20.

[9] Sid Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 3rd edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[10] Kevin Passmore, 'Fascism as a Social Movement in a Transnational Context', in Stefan Berger and Holger Nehring (eds), *The History of Social Movements in Global Perspective. A Survey* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 579–618; Theodor Schieder (ed.), *Faschismus als soziale Bewegung: Deutschland und Italien im Vergleich* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983).

by the end of the Second World War. Although some right-wing dictatorships, such as Francoism in Spain, survived the end of the war, the challenges regarding the capitalist reconstruction in Western Europe came from the left broadly conceived.

Here we arrive at a third misconception common in social movement studies, namely the widespread attempt to demarcate the new social movements from old social movements. This distinction goes back to Alain Touraine who, in the 1960s, was deeply disillusioned by the old social movements, i.e. the labour movements, as carriers of social revolution. Instead, he pinned his hopes on what he called new social movements—only to be disappointed again, but that is a different story.[11] Subsequently researchers working on new social movements have often stressed, with Ronald Inglehardt, that they are based on postmaterialist values, which allegedly distinguished them from the more materialist values associated with the socio-economic advancement of the working classes that allegedly was the central concern of the old social movements.[12] Hence, new social movements were supposed to be more middle-class. They focussed on the sphere of reproduction rather than production. They were decentralised, radically reformist and in favour of participatory democracy. Old social movements, by contrast, were working-class and focused on the sphere of production. They were centralised, revolutionary and more inclined to be led from the top down. This, however, is a highly ideal-typical differentiation, which, I would argue, breaks down before serious historical investigations. Studies on the labour movement have confirmed that they were supported by an important segment of middle-class voters almost from the beginning, even in the case of the German Social Democrats, which, for a long time, were thought of as particularly working-class in its support.[13] The Italian labour movement even was predominantly middle-class well before 1914.[14] It is not the case that the 'old' labour movement was not interested in the sphere of reproduction, whilst many 'new' social movements took a strong interest in the sphere

[11] Alain Tourraine, *The Voice and the Eye: an Analysis of Social Movements* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

[12] Ronald Inglehart, *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic and Political Change in 43 societies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

[13] Jonathan Sperber, *The Kaiser's Voters: Electors and Elections in Imperial Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[14] Robert Michels, 'Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie: Parteimitgliedschaft und soziale Zusammensetzung', in *Archiv für Sozial- und Wirtschaftspolitik* 23 (1906), pp. 471–556 and 25 (1907), pp. 148–231.

of production. Furthermore, there are no clear-cult dichotomies between degrees of centralisation or revolutionary potentials between 'old' labour and 'new' social movements. So overall, I would very much urge caution about such delineations between 'old' and 'new'. For obvious reasons, in this volume, we almost exclusively deal with 'old' social movements, mainly the labour movement, as the 'new' social movements only came into existence in the context of the aftermath of the long 1960s.

Nevertheless, if we follow my line of reasoning above, then old social movements should just as much be classed as social movements as new social movements, so that it is more than justified in this volume to talk about social movements challenging economic elites and the capitalist economic system after 1945, in particular as these movements went far beyond the labour movement and included many left Catholic and left Liberal political forces that were loosely connected in an anti-capitalist network. Dieter Rucht defines social movements precisely as 'a network of individuals, groups and organizations that, based on a sense of collective identity, seek to bring about social change (or resist social change) primarily by means of collective public protest',[15] and Friedhelm Neidhardt talks about them as 'mobilised network of networks'.[16] Indeed, many definitions of social movements emphasise the network character of social movements, their loose form of association and organisation, something that fits the anti-capitalist movement in the aftermath of the Second World War perfectly.

Another famous definition of social movements that is relevant for this volume comes from Charles Tilly. In his survey on social movements from the mid-eighteenth century to the beginning of the twenty-first century, he defines social movements as 'a sustained series of interaction between power-holders and persons successfully claiming to speak on behalf of a constituency lacking formal representation, in the course of which these persons make publicly visible claims for changes in the distribution of the exercise of power, and back those demands with public demonstrations of support.'[17] An important element here is protest—'publicly visible claims

[15] Dieter Rucht, 'Studying Social Movements: Some Conceptual Challenges', in Stefan Berger and Holger Nehring (eds), *The History of Social Movements in Global Perspective. A Survey* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), p. 45.

[16] Friedhelm Neidhardt, 'Einige Ideen zu einer allgemeinen Theorie sozialer Bewegungen', in Stefan Hradil (ed.), *Sozialstruktur im Umbruch. Karl Martin Bolte zum 60. Geburtstag* (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 1985), p. 195.

[17] Charles Tilly, 'Social Movements and National Politics', in Charles Bright and Susan Harding (eds), *State-Making and Social Movements* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984), p. 306.

for changes'. Protest, as we shall see in subsequent pages, was indeed a marked characteristic of the anti-capitalist movement after 1945. These anti-capitalist protests were very much about the interaction of the movement with power-holders—both in the political and economic spheres. The nature of the change pursued by these anti-capitalist movements differed substantially. It ranged from a revolutionary overthrow of capitalism and the liberal-democratic regimes associated with it to the reform of capitalism through measures of socialisation, nationalisation and workers' participation, in other words a hedging-in or taming of capitalism that would, in the eyes of the reformers, produce a capitalism with a human face.

The widely differing aims of the post-war anti-capitalist movements often meant that they shared little else beyond rather diffuse anti-capitalist sentiments. If social movement studies stress the importance of collective identity as a basis for collective action,[18] such collective identity was fragmented, even fractured, in the anti-capitalist movements at the end of the war. Identitarian concepts were therefore difficult to employ and the performative character of the anti-capitalist movements lacked a strong 'us' versus 'them' orientation, as both the 'us' and the 'them' was too heterogeneous. This is also the reason why the semantics of the movements could not police its borders very effectively. Whereas other social movements developed complex symbols and myths, and produced a range of objects such as T-shirts, buttons, stickers and posters to frame its collective identity, the anti-capitalist movements after the Second World War were struggling with that. All the semantics were produced within sub-milieus that did not share any wider programmatic vision about how to arrive at which post-capitalist society. The milieus, lifestyles and subcultures of anti-capitalist movements was simply too heterogeneous.

The most important difficulty by far of the post-war anti-capitalist movements was the effective mobilisation of resources. In social movement studies the resource mobilisation approach asks how social movements compete for influence and resources within wider political and social fields.[19] The restabilisiation of capitalism in the West shortly after 1945 meant that anti-capitalism could mobilise few resources, especially as

[18] Aidan McGarry and James Jasper (eds), *The Identity Dilemma: Social Movements and Collective Identity* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2015).

[19] For an introduction to resource mobilisation approaches in social movement studies see Bob Edwards and John D. McCarthy, 'Resources and Social Movement Mobilization', in David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule and Hanspeter Kriesi (eds), *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 116–152.

it could easily be identified with the hated Communism behind the emerging Iron Curtain. The strength of anti-Communism in the West soon fractured the anti-capitalist networks, with non-Communist forces seeking various realignments with the defenders of capitalism.

When social movement studies scholars talk about 'Political Opportunity Structure' (POS), they have in mind that social movements have been more or less successful in establishing themselves and realising their aims depending on how open existing political institutions have been towards them.[20] In other words, how much have existing elites disagreed/agreed on key issues of nascent social movements and to what extent has this opened up opportunities for them? To what extent have social movements been able to rely on important societal allies? How willing has the state been to consider the active repression or encouragement of social movements? In relation to the nascent anti-capitalist movements after 1945 it can be argued that, in the Cold War, they increasingly faced a lack of openness and a climate of harassment on behalf of the state. Hence, the snowballing of different political groups into a powerful movement was, by and large, prevented. Targeted acts of provocation attempting to communicate the aims and ambitions of anti-capitalism drew a heavy-handed response from the state after 1946/1947. Under these circumstances local protests often remained local and did not transform into national, let alone transnational, forms of protest.[21]

The importance of communication for the success of social movements is underlined by social movement studies that have argued convincingly that the impact of social movements cannot easily be measured in terms of policy outcomes but manifests itself primarily in reorienting discussions within societies about political-cultural norms.[22] Such reorientation was made difficult after 1945 by the strength of conservative forces in favour of keeping traditional capitalist economic systems and leaving political systems in place that were not keen on notions of a renewal.

[20] Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald (eds), *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures and Cultural Framings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[21] An interesting approach to social movement studies that could perhaps be employed usefully here and that focusses on questions of the life cycle of social movements is Suzanne Staggenborg, *Social Movements*, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[22] Dieter Rucht, 'Öffentlichkeit als Mobilisierungsfaktor für soziale Bewegungen', in Friedhelm Neidhardt (ed.), *Öffentlichkeit, öffentliche Meinung, soziale Bewegungen* (Opladen: Leske & Buderich, 1994), pp. 337–358.

'Experts' have often been of vital importance to reorient discussions, boost the credibility of social movements and enhance their abilities to mobilise greater numbers of people for their causes. If one thinks of Bertrand Russell, Albert Schweitzer and the Göttingen appeal of 18 German atomic physicists, their 'expert knowledge' had an important impact on the fortunes of the peace movement.[23] In a similar vein, biologists and environmental 'experts' have been vital to lend credence to the claims and demands of the ecological movement.[24] And medical expertise was at the heart of the battle surrounding abortion reform between the feminist movement and the anti-abortion movement, itself, of course, also an important social movement.[25] With the debates surrounding capitalism at the end of the Second World War, we also observe in various countries a struggle over which economic paths to renewal and reconstruction was the more promising. Yet, ultimately, as we shall see, the expert cultures aligned with the defence of a reformed capitalism were far stronger than those arguing for the abolition of capitalism.

The importance of communicative strategies for social movements was augmented with the occupation of public and private space through a rich repertoire of social protest, including strikes, petitions, the vote, mass demonstrations, conferences and various forms of street politics, including blockades and occupations of squares and/or factories.[26] Another increasingly popular form of protest associated with the occupation of space included bodily protests, such as performances, singing, the formation of human chains, the display of mutilations and disabilities in anti-war protests and self-immolation as a last-resort form of protest.[27] In the

[23] Benjamin Ziemann, 'Peace Movements in Western Europe, Japan and USA since 1945: an Introduction', in *Moving the Social: Journal of Social History and the History of Social Movements* 32 (2004), p. 14.

[24] See, for example, the emphasis on expert cultures in Liz Sonneborn, *The Environmental Movement: Protecting our Natural Resources* (New York: Infobase, 2008).

[25] The importance of medical expertise is stressed in Alesha E. Doan, *Opposition and Intimidation. The Abortion Wars and Strategies of Political Harassment* and, for an earlier period and different place, Atina Grossmann, *Reforming Sex: The German Movement for Birth Control and Abortion Reform 1920–1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

[26] Marc Traugott, *Repertoires and Cycles of Collective Action* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995).

[27] Dieter Rucht, *Modernisierung und neue soziale Bewegungen: Deutschland, Frankreich und die USA im Vergleich* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 1994); J. Craig Jenkins, 'Social Movements, Political Representation and the State: an Agenda and Comparative Framework', in idem and Bert Klandermans (eds), *The Politics of Social Protest: Comparative Perspectives*

subsequent chapters we shall also encounter such occupation of space as one vital strategy of anti-capitalist movements after the war.

Occupying space was often accompanied by violence.[28] Historically speaking, the methods of social movements frequently included violence, even if they rarely advocated the use of violence, not least as this would have provoked strong reactions of states, which, in the modern period, insisted on and thoroughly policed its own monopoly over the use of violence. In 1945 the state was incredibly weak in many parts of Europe, so that violence on behalf of social movements could not always be met by state violence. Yet, as the state recovered in the post-war period, the violent overthrow of economic and political systems appeared less likely, signaling a preference for reformist agendas.

Finally, an important function of social movements is the canalisation of social protest—emerging in everyday culture and known in all human societies.[29] In post-war Europe, social movements also performed this function. And it is the nature of this canalisation of contentious politics in the post-Second World War wave of mobilisation that we shall be concerned with in this volume.

Social Movements and the Anti-Capitalist Moment at the End of the Second World War

So far we have shown that the anti-capitalist movements after 1945 showed all the hallmarks of a social movement mobilising for a substantial and radical policy change under conditions not conducive to this overall aim. But what were the specific conditions under which these challenges took place in different parts of Europe? What type of military occupation during and after the Second World War created which conditions for a critique of capitalism and capitalist economic elites? To what extent did the issue of collaboration feature prominently in demands to change

on States and Social Movements (Mineapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), pp. 14–35.

[28] Donatella della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence and the State: a Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[29] For Germany, Dieter Rucht has attempted to differentiate different waves of social movement mobilisation; See Dieter Rucht, 'Zum Wandel politischen Protests in der Bundesrepublik: Verbreiterung, Professionalisierung, Trivialisierung', in *Vorgänge* 4:3 (2003), pp. 4–11; whether or not his framework can be generalised for Western Europe as a whole is something that needs to be tested further by comparative research.

fundamentally the economic system and its elites? How did the division into perpetrators, victims and bystanders structure the discourse about economic reorganisation? What about countries that had been defeated in the war, countries that had emerged victorious and countries that had officially stayed neutral?

At the end of the Second World War, traditional power structures had been broken in many countries. For a brief moment a power vacuum reigned into which social movements could step to develop their programs for economic and political renewal. How successful were their attempts to do this? What counterforces did they have to contend with? What role did the victorious Allies play in this process? How did armed resistance movements, active during the Second World War, influence the demands for restructuring the economy? Neutral countries, such as Sweden, experienced the end of the war differently from those countries participating in the war. No major power vacuum occurred here and the continuity of institutions, personnel and ideology was overwhelming.

It is also intriguing to take a look at those countries which became communist after 1945: to what extent did the Soviet influence override national traditions? Wherever the Red Army stood, social movements could not act independently of Soviet tutelage. Yet, did it matter whether anti-capitalist movements had genuinely popular support or if they were simply puppets of the Soviet occupation regime without any roots in national politics? What about integral parts of the Soviet Union, like the Ukraine, that had been occupied by the German army? What impact did the restructuring of the economic sphere have after the Germans had left?

The subsequent chapters will also ask to what extent different, even conflicting, developments occurred in the same country, either at the same time or during particular phases of development in the post-war period. To what extent were different social movements responsible for creating different scenarios with widely diverging ideas about what should happen in terms of economic restructuring? What kind of reconstruction of the nation can we observe at the end of the Second World War? Who were the key actors? What long-term trajectories were having what impact on developments? After all, the widespread perception of the need for a thorough reconstruction were not just related to the immediate crisis of the post-Second World War world, but often they went back to the end of the First World War and the interwar period. Yet anti-fascism and the anti-fascist resistance had heightened the perceived need for change. At the same time

as we witness massive demands for change, we also see a strong desire to stabilise the post-war situation in the midst of unprecedented upheaval.

Many of the following chapters focus on continuities and discontinuities between the old pre-war labour movements and the anti-capitalist movements emerging in and after 1945. In post-war Europe the split in the labour movement that occurred in the aftermath of the successful Bolshevik revolution of 1917 had prevented a united front of Social Democracy and Communism even in the face of the fascist threat. The anti-capitalist movements of the post-war years focused to different degrees on democratising the economic sphere and abolishing capitalism. How did these two demands sit with each other in different post-war nation states? How did the pre-war strength of Social Democracy and Communism respectively impact on those post-war debates ideologically and in terms of practical policy outcomes? What alliances were built in the post-war years between the different political groups seeking reconstruction? To what extent did the rift between Social Democracy and Communism reignite again over the question of the removal of economic elites?

This volume does not only take into account social movements. It also examines the industrial and economic elites. Did it matter how important specific industrial centres were in any given society? To what extent did the pre-war positioning of economic elites vis-à-vis the labour movement influence their ability to fend off challenges from the anti-capitalist social movements in the post-war era? Did perhaps a more consensually oriented rather than a conflictual strategy of employers pay off at the end of the war through relatively weak challenges of social movements to the existing economic order?

Furthermore, the fascist regimes did not simply disappear without any trace following their military defeat. The chapters that follow will ask about continuities between fascist ideas and structures of economic organisation after 1945. In Germany, for example, the Weimar Republic in the interwar period already tinkered with practices of tripartite corporatism. In both Imperial Germany and National Socialism, more bipartite forms of corporatism (very different in themselves), largely excluding labour, were in place. How did these traditions of corporatism become actualised in the social partnership model developed after the war? If we take the example of Spain, here the right-wing authoritarian regime of Franco that was closely allied to the fascist countries successfully managed the transition to post-war and was allowed to join the Western democracies in their

new anti-Communist orientation after 1945. The continuities here were overwhelming.

What follows will also contrast the reorientation of employers in terms of strategy and policy after the end of the First World War with the time after the end of the Second World War. Were employers more or less successful in reorienting themselves? What factors determined their staying power in different parts of Europe? In those countries occupied by the German army during the Second World War, how successful were the economic elites in presenting themselves as victims of German National Socialism who had no choice but to collaborate? How did economic elites make use of predetermined elite networks that made it easier to fend off any post-war challenges? What impact did the growth of the welfare state have after 1945?

Not all of these questions will be dealt with by all of the chapters in this volume, but they mark the boundaries of this attempt to measure to what extent anti-capitalist social movements could and did mount a challenge to capitalism after the end of the Second World War. Starting off with the German case, which arguably underwent some of the most profound restructuring at the end of the Second World War, two chapters, by Till Kössler and Marcel Boldorf respectively, examine the cases of West and East Germany separately. Kössler focuses on social movements of industrial workers in the West German coal and steel industries between 1945 and 1951, questioning to what extent their protests were expressions of a desire to prevent the restoration of the pre-war economic order and to punish the economic elites that had made healthy profits under the National Socialist regime. Industrial democracy was, according to Kössler, not uppermost on the minds of shop-floor social movements active in West Germany. The chapter on East Germany by Marcel Boldorf investigates the impact of social movements on the change of managers in large industrial companies. In particular, he analyses the social make-up of the grassroots social movements that emerged even before the end of the war but changed significantly due to the Soviet-led reorganisation of public life in the Soviet zone of occupation. The newly formed political parties especially affected the grassroots social movements that had sprung up before.

Moving from Germany to France, we encounter a country that was among the victors. Yet it had been occupied by the Germans for four long years during the war. During this time, as Xavier Vigna argues in his chapter, many Frenchmen resisted actively the occupation whereas many others

collaborated with the occupiers. Immediately after the liberation, the memory of that division in French society was deep and led to a widespread 'epuration' (cleansing) of French society of known collaborators. However, the so-called liberation committees that had sprung up across France following the withdrawal of German forces consisted of broad cross-party alliances. Many of them accepted the old political and economic order and saw themselves as interim caretakers before the re-establishment of the Republic. Even the socialist party was heavily opposed to any direct workers' action seeking to take control of the factories, despite the fact that many industrialists had happily colluded with the German occupiers.

In neighbouring Belgium, Rik Hemmerijckx presents the Resistance to German occupation as a diverse conglomeration of very different groups. He argues that only the trade union movement had the potential to transform fundamentally Belgian economic life after the war. Although the economic reforms between 1944 and 1947 stopped short of nationalisation and the introduction of socialism, they introduced a Keynesian approach which transformed Belgian capitalism, making it far more concerned with social balance and welfare.

A similar concern with social peace in the neighbouring Netherlands, where memories of insurrection following the First World War were still vibrant in the minds of many members of the elite, led to the development of a strong tripartite corporatist system of labour relations that is analysed in the chapter by Sjaak van der Velden. Most of the unions complied with this design, as they perceived it as fulfilment of their own pre-war demands. Yet the system was also designed with a view to overcoming the strong social and political divisions in Dutch society at the end of the war. Hence, van der Velden sees the corporatist designs as a successful attempt to prevent the transformation of capitalism and to pacify Dutch society.

The Eastern European experience was very different from Western Europe, as the presence of the Red Army ensured an exchange of economic elites from above. The transition from capitalism to communism was a programmatic given for the Soviet Union and it did everything to empower Communist Parties across East Central and Eastern Europe who took the lead in initiating such transitions. In post-war Czechoslovakia, as detailed in the article by Jaromír Balcar and Jaroslav Kučera, the works councils and trade unions played a prominent role in aiding the left-wing parties in their struggle within the National Front government. In the

Communist coup in Prague in February 1948, they were again highly visible. This, however, did not prevent them from falling victim to the Communists' concern with eradicating all independent bodies from political life. Hence, the works' councils were transformed into local branches of the trade unions that were acting very much as transmission belts for policies designed by the politburo of the Communist Party.

Within East Central and Eastern Europe after 1945, the case of the Soviet Union is a special case. First, by the end of the war, it was already a Communist state with more than 20 years' experience of a planned economy. The Bolshevik revolution and the transition to a Communist state had, by and large, eliminated the capitalist class and replaced it with a new class of economic managers loyal to the Soviet Union. As Tanja Penter argues in her chapter, many of them left the Donbass region when the German army advanced. Amongst the new elites that were recruited under German occupation, economic life continued but when the Soviets returned, the collaborators either fled or were subsequently tried and (mostly) executed by the Soviets. But the Soviet Union was also special in the sense that under the Communist dictatorship no independent social movement could form at the end of the war. The policies, be it the cleansing of society from collaborators or the transition to a post-war system of economic, political and social life, were determined by the Communist Party and its representatives. Trade unions were mere instruments in the hands of the Communist Party.

From Eastern Europe the volume moves to four case studies on different Scandinavian countries. The experience of the Scandinavian countries of the Second World War has been startlingly different. In Denmark sections of the Resistance movement promoted various ideas of radical change in the post-war period involving the economic sphere. As Niels Wium Olesen shows in his chapter, the traditional political parties were offering diverse ideas of how to rebuild the country following the end of German occupation. Stronger state intervention in the economic sphere was popular, especially but by no means exclusively among Social Democrats. Comprehensive ideas for an extension of the welfare state went hand in hand with ideas to limit the power of employers. The post-war years were, according to Olesen, an intriguing period in which plans, developed not the least by social movements, came to the fore that linked the desire for a stable economy with the need to rebuild Danish democracy.

Norway had also experienced occupation by the Germans during the Second World War. However, unlike in Denmark, the issue of collaboration

was much more divisive and led to a large-scale cleansing of Norwegian elites that had actively cooperated with the National Socialists. Politically the situation was very different. In autumn 1945, the Norwegian Labour Party won a parliamentary majority in a general election for the first time. As Harald Espeli analyses in his chapter, this victory ironically narrowed the space in which social movements, which had been emerging out of the Resistance movement, could operate. The Labour government rather than social movements set the pace and agenda of social reforms in post-war Norway. It had widespread popular backing that was based on a new sense of community and consensus concerning basic values and goals created and shaped during the occupation. A major exchange of economic elites was not part of Labour's post-war agenda. The social movements, Espeli contends, lacked the leadership to challenge the dominance of the Labour Party on this and other fields.

Within Scandinavia, Finland was an altogether different story in comparison to Denmark and Norway. In Finland, the post-war era began in September 1944, when the country switched sides in the Second World War. Finland, which had fought with Germany against the Soviet Union from the summer of 1941 onwards, was now on the side of the Allies, yet with a keen interest to keep the Soviet Union before the gates of the nation. As Niklas Jensen-Eriksen outlines in his chapter, in this changed and extremely complex political situation, communist and other left-wing social movements challenged the existing social, economic and political order. The memory of a bloody and prolonged civil war at the end of the First World War was still vivid in many people's minds. The desire not to repeat this historical experience together with the ongoing continued political strength of those elites who had first steered Finland towards Nazi Germany and then managed successfully to change sides, explains why these social movement remained minoritarian and were ultimately unsuccessful in challenging the traditional economic elites who continued almost unchanged and unharmed into the post-war era. When the 'years of danger', as the years 1944–1948 have been called, ended, Finland was still a country with traditional Western-style parliamentary democracy and capitalist economic system.

Sweden followed yet another trajectory within Scandinavia. Officially neutral in the Second World War, the political elites treaded carefully not to offend National Socialist sensitivities in the phase of the war when Germany went from victory to victory. Later on, Swedish policies moved closer and closer to the Western allies. The economic elites in Sweden did

business with all sides, many of them profiting handsomely from the war. The post-war settlement in Sweden thus was characterised by strong continuities that were not disturbed by political, war-related changes. As described in Lars Ekdahl's chapter, the ultimate outcome of the post-war settlement was the result of two different kinds of political confrontation. The first confrontation was between the Social Democratic labour movement and representatives of organised capital. It ended in the latter being successful in marginalising demands for a more decisive change of the economic system and giving in to trade union-led demands for a strong corporatist system in which unions would have a decisive say over economic and social policies. The second confrontation took place within the labour movement itself. Here the right-wing Social Democrats managed to isolate Communist and left socialist positions—both within the party and within the trade unions. Furthermore they prevented the emergence of a new social movement to the left of Social Democracy, thereby monopolising the position of the left in Sweden and cementing the Social Democratic hegemony over Swedish politics that was to last for more than three decades in the post-war world and decisively shaped Swedish society until the present day.

Moving from Scandinavia to Southern Europe, Spain was another country officially neutral in the Second World War. If Franco had had his way in 1940, Spain would have entered the war on the side of the axis power, but National Socialist Germany did not want this to happen, partly out of hubris, partly because it feared another rather weak military ally, such as it already had in Italy.[30] With hindsight, this was a blessing in disguise for Franco. He sent Spanish fascist volunteers, the so-called Blue Legion, to back up the Wehrmacht in Eastern Europe,[31] but this could be successfully hidden from sight in the volte face that Franco performed at the end of the war. Stressing the staunch anti-Communism of Spain and building on the anti-Communist reputation of the Falange from the times of the Spanish civil war, the Francoist regime managed to become an integral part of the Western Cold War world. The latter in turn was willing to forget about the very close ties of the regime to National Socialist Germany throughout much of the 1930s and 1940s. Hence, as Marc Prat argues in

[30] Stanley G. Payne, *Franco and Hitler: Spain, Germany and World War II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

[31] Gerald D. Kleinfeld and Lewis Tambs, *Hitler's Spanish Legion: The Blue Division in Russia in World War II* (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole, 1979).

his chapter, the deepest change in Spanish political, social and economic life did not happen at the end of the Second World War but a few years earlier, in 1939, when the Francoist regime was established in Spain. It spelt the utter destruction of the labour movement that played such an influential role during the Republican era in the first third of the twentieth century. Instead, the Francoist regime established a trade union that was close to the Falange and a smokestack to placate workers. Business interests and elites had nothing to fear from the regime unless they were politically opposed to it or they stood in the way of the interventionist economic policies adopted by Francoism. Like in National Socialist Germany, the political regime was ultimately more powerful than business interests wherever the two collided. Yet in many cases they co-existed harmoniously. Independent social movements, by contrast, played no significant role in the post-1945 period. They could rebuild only slowly in the period of the 1960s when the regime became less autocratic and repressive and began to open up in the preparation of the transition period that characterised the period of the 1970s in Spain.

The final case study in this volume deals with yet another special case in post-war Europe: Britain. In fact, in 1945 Britain held a unique position among European nations. Victorious in the war against Fascism and with no experience of foreign occupation (except for the tiny Channel Islands), the country's long-established political institutions suffered no sudden rupture or challenge. There were similarities with Norway in that the first post-war elections also brought the first majority Labour government into power.[32] Its leading figures had served in Churchill's wartime coalition governments. Like in Sweden, the trade unions played a central role in producing a 'corporate bias' in public policy,[33] but that could already be traced to beginnings in the interwar period. Extremely self-confident trade unions could present their new might as the result of a long, steady, constitutional journey. Hence, the crucial social movements in post-war Britain had all been formed, tried and tested before the beginning of the Second World War. What was new was their close alliance with a new public policy elite that emerged to manage the post-1945 social democratic settlement. The chapter by Peter Ackers observes this post-war renegotiation of rela-

[32] David Redvaldsen, *The Labour Party in Britain and Norway: Elections and the Pursuit of Power between the World Wars* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

[33] Mark Neocleous, *Administering Civil Society: Towards a Theory of State Power* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), p. 152.

tions between trade unions, employers and the state through the eyes of Hugh Clegg (1920–1995), a key figure in the new Industrial Relations system as it emerged in the post-war world.

The concluding chapter by Marcel Boldorf attempts to bring out similarities and differences between the experience of the post-war transition in the different countries represented in this volume paying special attention to the role of social movements and the fate of economic elites. Of course, the volume could have included many other case studies. It would have been particularly useful to include the example of the other major fascist country in interwar Europe, namely Italy. It would equally have been helpful to have Southern Europe represented more fully. In particular, chapters on Greece and Yugoslavia would have made for further fascinating comparisons. Similarly, more Eastern European countries would have been crucial in order to investigate to what extent the experience of Sovietisation differed across East Central and Eastern Europe. However, the editors hope that this volume will engender greater interest in the transition period at the end of the Second World War and encourage more in depth studies on how this period of transition in many ways set the tone for the post-war reconstruction of Europe.

Confrontation or Cooperation? The Labour Movement and Economic Elites in West Germany After 1945

Till Kössler

At the end of the Second World War, Germany's economic elites and labour organisations were seemingly locked in a bitter confrontation. While most industrialists had actively collaborated with or at least not opposed the Third Reich, the Nazi dictatorship had smashed the labour movement and incarcerated or expelled its leaders. Rivalling visions of the new post-war political and economic order also drove the two sides apart. While business leaders wanted to preserve a capitalist economic order and their own economic power, almost all trade unionists demanded a radical reform of the capitalism, large-scale socialisation of at least the most important industries and to get rid of the old economic elites whom they held responsible for the destruction of Weimar democracy. However, by the middle of the 1950s, a new order of industrial relations had emerged in West Germany that was based on close cooperation and a mutual respect between capital and labour. Compared to other Western European

T. Kössler (✉)
Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Halle, Germany

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post-war societies, the level of industrial conflict was low. How did this change come about?

Historians have given two different answers to this question in the last decades. In the 1960s and 1970s, Marxist and other left-wing scholars have argued that the old labour elites in cooperation with conservative forces and the Western allies prevented a true democratisation of German industries by suppressing the emancipatory initiatives of a grass-roots labour movement that sprung up after the war. In their view, the antifascist workers' committees of the post-war period could have been the starting point of a fundamental democratic transformation had the leadership of the Social Democratic party (SPD) and the trade unions not been too hesitant to mobilise grass-roots support. They also argued that the labour movement did not push hard enough for a denazification of economic elites and allowed the old directors and managers to hold onto power or to return to their posts. All in all, in this view the labour movement lost a golden opportunity to force a clear break with both the old capitalist order and with National Socialism.[1]

In the 1980s this line of argumentation, however, was fundamentally challenged by scholars who denied that revolutionary changes were possible in 1945. These researchers pointed to the mostly pragmatic orientation of the works council movement in the early post-war period and the limited room for manoeuvre for far-reaching reforms after the war given the hardships of the post-war years and allied occupation. The urgent task of rebuilding the production sites and providing the workforce and their families with food, clothing and shelter left little time for labour activists to pursue revolutionary plans. Viewed against this background, a thorough denazification of the economic elites was out of reach too, as their removal would have further disrupted production and would have put the material wellbeing of the war-torn society at risk. In the opinion of these scholars, the trade union movement had no choice but to pursue a politics of compromise and to accept the reinstatement of directors and managers who had collaborated with the National Socialist regime. Moreover, compromise was not only a necessity but also a result of sincere attempts by

[1] See for example Frank Deppe, 'Gewerkschaftspolitik und Arbeiterbewußtsein in der Periode der Neugründung der westdeutschen Gewerkschaften nach 1945', in idem, *Das Bewußtsein der Arbeiter. Studien zur politischen Soziologie des Arbeiterbewußtseins* (Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1971), pp. 255–300; Frank Deppe, Georg Fülberth and Jürgen Harrer (eds), *Geschichte der deutschen Gewerkschaftsbewegung* (Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1977).

West Germans to learn from the bitter Weimar experiences and start anew. In this respect, the cooperation between Capital and Labour, between economic elites and the trade union movement, marks a victory of pragmatism over ideology and a successful example of democracy building. All in all, this line of research has stressed the success of the new labour movement. Although the allied occupation forces and the business leaders were able to fend off more ambitious plans to socialise and nationalise the heavy industries, the trade unions were able to institutionalise co-determination both at the company level and in the wider economic field and to establish themselves as highly influential actors in West German politics and society.[2]

There is a case to be made for this narrative of democratisation. However, against a background of new research on German society under National Socialism and mental transformations from the Nazi dictatorship to a democratic political order, it seems time to re-evaluate important strands of the narrative. In the past two decades, historians have become increasingly interested in the complicated process of regime change after 1945. As they have become aware of the overwhelming support of Germans for the Third Reich at least until the final phase of the war, the question of how Germans detached themselves from National Socialism and started to embrace democratic values and practices has moved to the centre of attention. In the last decade, a number of studies have dedicated themselves to answering this question, but the industrial sphere and the industrial workplace have not figured prominently in the research. This has a lot to do with the widely held assumption that industrial workers were hardly tainted by National Socialism and that workers' movements after 1945 represent an unequivocally democratising force that helped to destroy the remnants of National Socialism.

[2] Ulrich Borsdorf and Hans-Otto Hemmer, 'Anfang vor dem Ende. Die Neugründung von Gewerkschaften und das Wiederentstehen von Betriebsräten im März/April 1945', in *Gewerkschaftliche Monatshefte* 36 (1985), pp. 233–256; Michael Fichter, *Besatzungsmacht und Gewerkschaften: zur Entwicklung und Anwendung der US-Gewerkschaftspolitik in Deutschland 1944–1948* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1982); Christoph Kleßmann, 'Betriebsräte und Gewerkschaften in Deutschland 1945–1953', in Heinrich August Winkler (ed.), *Politische Weichenstellungen im Nachkriegsdeutschland 1945–1953* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), pp. 44–73; Siegfried Mielke, 'Die Neugründung der Gewerkschaften', in Hans-Otto Hemmer and Kurt Thomas Schmitz, *Geschichte der Gewerkschaften in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Cologne: Bund-Verlag, 1990), pp. 19–83; Lutz Niethammer, *Rekonstruktion und Desintegration*, pp. 26–43.

In contrast to the thesis of a rather smooth and uncomplicated transition to democracy, I want to draw attention to the plurality and contradictions that characterised the political outlook and actions of the post-fascist workforce and to the ambivalent nature of regime change in the industrial sphere and at the shop-floor level. The establishment of a new model of industrial relations based on cooperation and trust was not as smooth as is often implied. The development of a new conciliatory attitude between the labour movement and the economic elites deeply discredited by their prolonged involvement in National Socialism was not a natural outcome of the war or solely the result of learning from Weimar history. Rather, it was the consequence of specific circumstances and conflicts of the post-war years and the re-establishment of labour relations and the trade union movement during the early Cold War period.

This essay then traces the interactions between a post-fascist workforce, the trade union leaders and industrial economic elites during the immediate post-war years. While it would be worthwhile to examine the changing perception of the labour movement within the business community, I will limit myself to an analysis of the outlook and politics of industrial workers and the trade union movement for pragmatic reasons. I argue that the stance the labour movement took vis-à-vis the economic elites decisively changed during the post-war years under the influence of not only allied occupation and the beginning of the Cold War, but also of a severe struggle with a politically ambivalent grass-roots radicalism at the shop-floor level. This struggle has often been overlooked but it decisively shaped the history of the West German labour movement during the post-war decade.

In the following, I will first look more closely at the differences in experience and outlook that separated trade union leaders and ordinary industrial workers after the fall of the Third Reich and the problems these differences posed for trade union politics. This analysis is necessary because the quarrels within the unions determined labour politics toward the employers, managers and employers' associations to a great extent. Against this background, the essay then turns to the denazification as an important early field of confrontation between workers and industrial elites. It sketches different overlapping and conflicting approaches within the labour movement of dealing with directors and managers accused of collaborating with the Nazi regime and shows that the purging of National Socialists was intimately linked to broader questions of restructuring power relations in industrial companies. While demands of rigorous purging of Nazi collaborators were omnipresent in the post-war years, the

actual policy towards the economic elites was far more ambiguous and did not close the door to future cooperation. This cooperation was, as will be argued in the final part of this essay, fostered at the end of the 1940s by the fight of both moderate labour leaders and industrial elites against the Communist movement that had initially been surprisingly successful in giving a voice to sentiments and interests of workers in the transitional phase from totalitarian dictatorship to a new post-war order.

My body of data mostly stems from the heavy industries of the Ruhr valley, the most important industrial region of the Western zones and a crucial area for West German reconstruction and democratisation. Before 1933 the mining and steel industries that dominated the area were characterised by both a particularly authoritarian work culture and a strong tradition of radicalism and conflict.[3] Therefore, a new look at the social movements and protests in this region and their actions regarding the economic elites can help us to better understand the establishment of democracy in West Germany and the transformation of industrial relations after 1945.

Labour Elites and Ordinary Workers. The Reconstruction of the Labour Movement in West Germany

The resurgence of the labour movement in the Western zones of occupied Germany developed both from the bottom up and from the top down. In the weeks and months following the allied occupation, networks of activists set up antifascist committees and re-established works councils as major instruments of workers' control at the company level.[4] Works

[3] Christoph Kleßmann, *Die doppelte Staatsgründung. Deutsche Geschichte 1945–1955*, 4th edn. (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1986), p. 10; See also Wolfgang Köllmann, Hermann Korte, Dietmar Petzina and Wolfhard Weber (eds), *Das Ruhrgebiet im Industriezeitalter. Geschichte und Entwicklung* (Düsseldorf: Schwann im Patmos-Verlag, 1990); Jan-Pieter Barbian and Ludger Heid (eds), *Zwischen gestern und morgen. Kriegsende und Wiederaufbau im Ruhrgebiet* (Essen: Klartext-Verlag, 1995).

[4] The classical study is Lutz Niethammer, *Arbeiterinitiative 1945. Antifaschistische Ausschüsse und Reorganisation der Arbeiterbewegung in Deutschland* (Wuppertal: Peter Hammer Verlag, 1976); Since the late 1970s, there has been a strong interest in the works council movement: Karl Lauschke, '"In die Hände spucken und ran!" Arbeiterschaft und Betriebsräte während der Nachkriegsjahre. Zugleich ein Literaturbericht', in *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte* 19 (1990), pp. 313–338; Michael Fichter, 'Aufbau und

councils first had made their appearance in the First World War and subsequently became important actors in German industry during the Weimar Republic. After the end of the Third Reich, they quickly re-emerged as veterans of the Weimar labour movement and stepped forward to fill the power vacuum created by the fall of National Socialist rule at the shop-floor level. The councils supervised the reconstruction of the factories, the distribution of food and clothes and the hiring of new personnel. In addition, they demanded a voice in all important business affairs. Overall, the works councils established themselves as guardians of industrial peace that worked for the good of the companies in exchange for a significant expansion of workers' rights. Without them, co-determination would have hardly been introduced at the company level. In the heavy industries, they were even able to obtain a seat on the board of directors of the companies.[5]

Parallel to the establishment of the works councils, the surviving veterans of the Weimar period re-established the trade union movement at both the local and regional level. Most activists agreed to overcome the traditional fragmentation of the trade union movement in socialist, communist and Catholic organisations which they saw as a major reason for the failure of the labour movement to prevent Hitler's rise to power. As a result,

Neuordnung. Betriebsräte zwischen Klassensolidarität und Betriebsloyalität', in Martin Broszat, Klaus-Dietmar Henke and Hans Woller (eds), *Von Stalingrad zur Währungsreform. Zur Sozialgeschichte des Umbruchs in Deutschland* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1988), pp. 469–549; Christoph Kleßmann, 'Betriebsräte' and Alexander von Plato, 'Nachkriegssieger. Sozialdemokratische Betriebsräte im Ruhrgebiet. Eine lebensgeschichtliche Untersuchung', in Lutz Niethammer (ed.), "*Hinterher merkt man, daß es richtig war, daß es schiefgegangen ist.*" *Nachkriegs-erfahrungen im Ruhrgebiet. Lebensgeschichte und Sozialkultur im Ruhrgebiet 1930–1960* (Berlin/Bonn: Dietz-Verlag, 1983), pp. 311–359; Martin Rüther, *Zwischen Zusammenbruch und Wirtschaftswunder. Betriebsratstätigkeit und Arbeiterverhalten in Köln 1945 bis 1952* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1991).

[5] Hans Becker (ed.), *Montanmitbestimmung. Geschichte, Idee, Wirklichkeit* (Köln: Bund-Verlag, 1979); Karl Lauschke, *Die halbe Macht. Mitbestimmung in der Eisen- und Stahlindustrie 1945 bis 1989* (Essen: Klartext, 2007); Gloria Müller, *Mitbestimmung in der Nachkriegszeit* (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1987); Gabriele Müller-List, *Neubeginn bei Eisen und Stahl im Ruhrgebiet. Die Beziehungen zwischen Arbeitgebern und Arbeitnehmern in der nordrhein-westfälischen Eisen- und Stahlindustrie 1945–1948*, rev.edn. (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1990); an exellent study of co-determination in the Weimar era is Werner Plumpe, *Betriebliche Mitbestimmung in der Weimarer Republik: Fallstudien zum Ruhrbergbau und zur chemischen Industrie* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1999); for a comphrehensive overview see Werner Milert and Rudolf Tschirbs, *Die andere Demokratie. Betriebliche Interessenvertretung in Deutschland 1848 bis 2008* (Essen: Klartext, 2012).

unified trade unions emerged under the umbrella of the German Federation of Trade Unions (*Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund*) founded in October 1949. In the aftermath of the war, the room for manoeuvre for the unions was limited at first by restrictions on free negotiations over wages that the occupation enforced. The unions, moreover, had to deal with problems of food and shelter first, especially during the severe food crisis of 1946/1947. Increasingly however, the expansion of co-determination and the socialisation of the heavy industries became the main focus of trade union politics.[6] Trade union power reached a highpoint in 1951 when labour leaders were able to push through a Federal law guaranteeing co-determination in the coal and steel industries and the equal representation of Capital and Labour on the supervisory boards of the companies. Despite this success and while they remained powerful players in the field of industrial relations, they were unable to implement their more far-reaching reform plans.[7]

An important task of the new unions was to clarify their relationship with the works council movement. Many high-ranking officials were suspicious of the councils, whom they suspected to be overly concerned with their own companies at the expense of larger workers' interests. They tried to integrate the grass-roots institutions into the larger trade union movement and to increase their influence in the pits and factories. The labour leaders also tried to curb party political rivalries between Social Democrats and communists—and to a lesser extent Catholics—within the works

[6] See for example Christoph Kleßmann and Peter Friedemann, *Streiks und Hungermärsche im Ruhrgebiet 1946–1948* (Frankfurt/Main and New York: Campus-Verlag, 1977); As an important case study: Karl Lauschke, *Die Hoesch-Arbeiter und ihr Werk. Sozialgeschichte der Dortmunder Westfalenhütte während der Jahre des Wiederaufbaus 1945–1966* (Essen: Klartext, 2000).

[7] Ulrich Borsdorf, 'Der Weg zur Einheitsgewerkschaft', in Jürgen Reulecke (ed.), *Arbeiterbewegung an Rhein und Ruhr* (Wuppertal: Hammer, 1974), pp. 385–413; Michael Fichter, *Besatzungsmacht und Gewerkschaften*; Siegfried Mielke, *Die Neugründung der Gewerkschaften*, pp. 19–83; Werner Müller, 'Die Gründung des DGB, der Kampf um die Mitbestimmung, programmatisches Scheitern und der Übergang zum gewerkschaftlichen Pragmatismus' in Hans-Otto Hemmer and Kurt Thomas Schmitz (eds), *Geschichte der Gewerkschaften in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Cologne: Bund-Verlag, 1990), pp. 85–147; see also the important source books that include excellent introductions: Josef Kaiser (ed.), *Der Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund 1945 bis 1956. Quellen zur Geschichte der deutschen Gewerkschaftsbewegung im 20. Jahrhundert*, vol. 11 (Cologne: Dietz-Verlag 1996); Walter Dörrich and Klaus Schönhoven (eds), *Die Industriegewerkschaft Metall in der frühen Bundesrepublik. Quellen zur Geschichte der Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbewegung im 20. Jahrhundert*, vol. 10 (Cologne: Dietz-Verlag, 1991).

councils and local trade union chapters and were eager to strengthen the position of the trade unions as a politically independent power.

To understand the dynamics of the protest movements of workers in the heavy industries after 1945 and their attitude towards the economic elites, two developments have to be kept in mind. Firstly, it is important to understand the differences in outlook and interests between ordinary workers and the trade union elites and their different understandings of how to resolve conflicts in the factories. The allegiance of the industrial workforce to the new trade unions after 1945 was far from self-evident. For one, the post-war Industrial workforce had become much more socially and culturally diverse than it had been before the war. An industrial occupation offered financial security in times of crisis and many Germans who did not have a working-class background took up a manual occupation in the coal and steel industries because they did not immediately find work in other economic sectors and were attracted by the access to food and shelter a job in the heavy industries offered.[8] The majority of the newcomers, among them many refugees and expellees, did not plan to permanently work as industrial workers but planned to return to their former occupation as soon as the economy stabilised. These workers had not grown up in working-class families and did not naturally see their natural political representation in the trade unions.

Even more importantly, in 1945 the old trade union elites and the mass of industrial workers were separated by their very different experiences of the Nazi dictatorship. Both groups had led very different lives between 1933 and 1945. While the National Socialist regime had severely persecuted trade union and left-wing political activists, most industrial workers had not experienced political repression. Historians have frequently interpreted working class resistance between 1933 and 1945 as a true expression of workers' sentiments. However, recent research has pointed to the overwhelming support of German society to National Socialism, a support that included a large majority of industrial workers until at least the final years of the Second World War. While dissatisfaction with many aspects of National Socialist rule and especially the harsh working conditions and authoritarian structure of industrial relations clearly did exist, especially

[8] Mark Roseman, *Recasting the Ruhr. Manpower, Economic Recovery and Labour Relations 1945–1958* (New York/Oxford: Berg, 1991); Paul Erker, 'Die Arbeiter bei MAN 1945–1950', in Klaus Tenfelde (ed.) *Arbeiter im 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1991), pp. 546–572.

during the war years, many workers had a positive opinion of Hitler and experienced the late 1930s as a time of comparative stability and a modest rise in living standards.[9] What is more, the National Socialist rhetoric of 'national community', 'honour of labour' and 'German quality work' resonated with many workers who envisioned the new state as a political order in which workers' rights and the honour of the working man would be protected and social equality would be achieved.[10] After 1945, the trade union leaders were very aware of the attraction the Third Reich had held for many workers, as they denounced that National Socialism had 'corrupted almost the entire working class with their ideas and their money. Now we have to remove not only material debris but also debris in the heads.'[11] In the post-war period, the returning labour leaders had to keep in mind the specific world views, interests and expectations of the post-fascist workforce if they wanted to integrate them into the trade union movement. Although the unions were quickly able to increase their memberships, the interactions with rank-and-file members were often wrought with tensions and had important repercussions on trade union politics.

There was another reason for the mutual estrangement between activists and ordinary workers. The mostly negative experiences with the compulsory National Socialist *Deutsche Arbeitsfront* (German Labour Front, *DAF*) had led many workers to distrust self-proclaimed labour leaders beyond the individual plant level. In the face of severe repression of any attempt of organised protest during fascism, workers had also learned that the only way to successfully push through demands was by limited direct action at a shop-floor level. Spontaneous protests on the shop-floor level appeared to be the only viable way to achieve improvements in wages and working conditions. Limited wildcat strikes and practices like deliberately working slowly had become the main weapons in industrial disputes

[9] Michael Schneider, *Unterm Hakenkreuz. Arbeiter und Arbeiterbewegung 1933–1939* (Bonn: Dietz-Verlag, 1999); Ulrich Herbert, 'Arbeiterschaft im "Dritten Reich". Zwischenbilanz und offene Fragen', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 15 (1989), pp. 320–360.

[10] Alf Lüdtke, 'Wo blieb die "rote Glut"? Arbeitererfahrungen und deutscher Faschismus', in idem (ed.), *Alltagsgeschichte: Zur Rekonstruktion historischer Erfahrungen und Lebensweisen* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus-Verlag, 1989), pp. 224–282; Alf Lüdtke, '"Ehre der Arbeit": Industriearbeiter und Macht der Symbole. Zur Reichweite symbolischer Orientierungen im Nationalsozialismus', in Klaus Tenfelde (ed.), *Arbeiter im 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta 1991), pp. 343–392.

[11] *Referat Eberhard Brünen*, 27.10.1945, RW 164/512, Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf.

during the 1930s, and continued to influence workers protests after 1945.[12] Both the distrust of union officials and a conflict strategy centred around direct and localised action did not end when the war did. Distrust was now directed against the old and new trade union officials, and many workers were sceptical about high-level negotiations between Capital and Labour.

A second point has to be kept in mind to fully understand the workers' protest movements and their politics vis-à-vis the business elites after 1945. This point concerns the influence of communist activists on the shop-floor level and in the local trade union branches. Up until 1950, in the iron and steel industries as well as in mining, a third of all works council members and also a quarter to a third of all local trade union officials were communists. The influence of the Communist party in industrial affairs was significantly higher than during the Weimar years. This was reflected in a membership surge. In the greater Ruhr region, for example, 120,000 people joined the ranks of the Communist party in the immediate post-war years. In 1947, there were four times more communists in the region than there had been in 1933. This development was quite astonishing as the National Socialists had murdered many leading communists and had saturated the German public sphere with violent anti-communist rhetoric.[13]

This surprising strength of the communist movement, however, had only little to do with the appeal of the larger communist world view. Rather, it was intimately linked to the experiences, interests and hopes of industrial workers on the shop-floor level. The number of devoted communists was small. But local cadres in the workplace were successful in giving a voice to sentiments of a wider segment of the post-fascist workforce, sentiments that were for their part politically highly ambivalent. A militant rhetoric and a politics of immediate conflict resolution proved attractive to many workers who were not used to democratic procedures and old-type labour politics and expected a radical change of power relations in the factories after the fall of National Socialism. In the final years of the war, many workers had become frustrated with working conditions and the authoritarian workplace culture that stood

[12] Wolfgang Franz Werner, *"Bleib übrig!" Deutsche Arbeiter in der nationalsozialistischen Kriegswirtschaft* (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1983), pp. 360–363.

[13] For a detailed discussion, see Chap. 3 in Till Kössler, *Abschied von der Revolution. Kommunisten und Gesellschaft in Westdeutschland 1945–1968* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2006).

in marked contrast to the promises of the Nazi regime to make manual work respectable and raise the social prestige of the individual worker. This rhetoric had raised expectations, and after the fall of National Socialism, many workers strongly felt that the new era should be one of workers' rights and respectability. Local activists demanded the dismantling of the traditional authoritarian workplace culture and propagated the beginning of a new era of workers control and workers' pride at the workplace and in the factories. A British Officer had already reported in February of 1946 that 'Communist propaganda is not difficult because dissatisfaction can easily be aroused'.[14] Young workers especially no longer wanted to accept an authoritarian workplace culture, a culture 'still well-known from the Third Reich'.[15] They developed a new self-assertiveness in dealing with foremen, managers and directors and associated the terms democracy and socialism first and foremost with the end of deference towards the bosses and foremen and the acknowledgement of workers' respectability and workers' rights.[16] Already in 1946, an informant had reported to the British occupation authorities: 'The workers hoped to be treated with more respect from the part of the leading officials and they are very disappointed. Especially the higher officials are more "Prussian" than ever.'[17]

The communist cadres at the workplace were able to channel the expectations and hopes of post-fascist workers into a mobilisation movement for a reordering of the industrial workplace and companies for some years. Many workers found that communist rhetoric, metaphors and arguments convincingly made sense of their experiences during and after the war and

[14] A striking example of the language of Communist factory newspapers is *Der Hüttenmann* 4 (1953) and 4 (1952), SAPMO/BA, BY 1/313, Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen im Bundesarchiv Berlin; for another example, see *Nicht so eilig Steiger...* (Sommer 1947), AfSB, IGBE-Arch., Div. 12, Archiv der IG Bergbau und Energie im Archiv für soziale Bewegungen Bochum.

[15] Leaflet: *Ungeheuerlicher Willkürakt der Direktion der Eisenwerke!*, o. D. (Dezember 1952), SAPMO/BA, BY 1/313, Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen im Bundesarchiv Berlin; For similar utterances in 1945 see *Telegramm NGCC*, 9.3.1946, PRO, FO 1013/775, Archiv der IG Bergbau und Energie im Archiv für soziale Bewegungen Bochum.

[16] *G. Dahm to PSO Recklinghausen*, 13.2.1946, PRO, FO 1013/665; *Protokoll der Jugendkonferenz aller Betriebsjugendleiter des Bezirks V*, 10.1.1947, (IGBE-Arch.) J 2, Archiv der IG Bergbau und Energie im Archiv für soziale Bewegungen Bochum.

[17] *G. Dahm to PSO Recklinghausen*, 13.2.1946, PRO, FO 1013/665, Archiv der IG Bergbau und Energie im Archiv für soziale Bewegungen Bochum.

proved useful in legitimising their claims for more humane treatment by foremen, more pay and fewer work hours. This workplace radicalism encompassed a highly confrontational stance towards foremen and bosses. Communist factory newspapers often threatened unpopular bosses in quite violent language, telling them to be careful not be crushed by the scorn of their subordinates and warned them not to return to 'fascist' behaviour. One anonymous article, for example, warned a boss who had allegedly called worker 'oxen' that 'mean farmers were often crushed by their own oxen'.[18] To fashion themselves as part of a global revolutionary movement gave groups of post-fascist workers political and cultural leverage with respect to managers and bosses discredited by their involvement with the Nazi regime. Moreover, the grass-roots communist preference for immediate conflict resolution through spontaneous protests, wildcat strikes and the threat of force resonated well within a workforce that had lived through National Socialism and for the most part did not value the forms of representative, long-term politics most trade union leaders preferred.[19] The communist rhetoric seemed to legitimise wildcat strikes and communists often unconditionally supported direct actions against unpopular management decisions. A good example for this is a protest meeting of tram-drivers in the city of Wuppertal in the winter of 1946/1947, in the midst of the food crisis. After the local trade union president had pleaded for a moderate approach, a communist speaker took the stage and proclaimed: 'If the high officials will not release this food we shall take it!'[20]

The Question of Denazification

In the transformation from National Socialism to a democratic order, denazification of the economic elites played an important, albeit ambiguous, role. The purging of National Socialist activists from the factories was an important demand of the various antifascist committees that established themselves in the spring of 1945, and the early announcements of the

[18] *Der Hüttenmann* 4 (1953) and 4 (1952), SAPMO/BA, BY 1/313, Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen im Bundesarchiv.

[19] For an in-depth analysis of Communism at the workplace, see: Till Kössler, *Abschied von der Revolution*, Chap. 3.

[20] *RWIS, Political Intelligence Bulletin No.3*, 20.11.1946, PRO, FO 1013/317, Archiv der IG Bergbau und Energie im Archiv für soziale Bewegungen Bochum.

committees were often characterised by far-reaching demands.[21] However, the matter of purging National Socialism from the plants and factories was multifaceted and antifascist initiatives were complex and contradictory.

Firstly, the antifascist activists, works councillors and trade unionists did not have a clear-cut definition of what it meant to be a National Socialist. The general rhetoric of antifascism masked the fact that both labour leaders and local activists were unsure of how to best deal with foremen, bosses and directors. The calls for a political cleansing of National Socialism in the companies and among German business elites were mostly unspecific and seldom linked to a broader agenda of denazification.[22] It quickly became clear that the workers' understanding of Nazi crimes differed significantly from that of the occupation forces. Often the works councils and trade unions criticised the decisions of the occupation authorities regarding members of the economic elites because they felt their judgement to be too soft. Workers' representatives frequently protested the return of former directors and employees to the companies after they had been cleared by the allied forces. The workers pointed to evidence that had in their view been overlooked, referred to their intimate knowledge of a person's past, threatened to go on strike and pressured the authorities to rethink their decision. The spontaneous protests frequently led to a reconsideration by the occupation forces.[23] In these cases, it is often hard to determine whether the workers really did possess better knowledge about the Nazi past of an accused person or if they defined involvement in the Nazi regime differently. However, the leading motive for the protests was not so much the individual involvement of members of the economic elites in wartime crimes but the fear that the return of leading figures of the pre-1945 elites would be a first step to reintroduce the despised authoritarian capitalism of the 1920s and 1930s. The protests against the

[21] *Political Summary*, 11.8.1945, PRO FO 1049/75, Archiv der IG Bergbau und Energie im Archiv für soziale Bewegungen Bochum; see also the general remarks in Lutz Niethammer, 'Aktivität und Grenzen der Antifa-Ausschüsse 1945. Das Beispiel Stuttgart', in *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 23 (1975), pp. 297–331.

[22] See for example the very general remarks in a call for a local public Trade Union meeting on May 1, 1946: *Aufruf zur Maikundgebung 1946*, *Freie Deutsche Gewerkschaft*, *Polizeidirektion Mühlheim/Ruhr 12*, Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf.

[23] See for example *Diary of a tour through Westphalia and the North Rhine Province*, 15–17.10.1945, PRO FO 10149/193 and *HQ RB Düsseldorf, Monthly Report for June 1947*, PRO FO 1013/323, Archiv der IG Bergbau und Energie im Archiv für soziale Bewegungen Bochum.

reinstatement of Paul Reusch, the prominent long-time leader of the *Gutehoffnungshütte* company, to an advisory position are a prominent example of these fears. The works council of the Oberhausen steel plant held that with Reusch 'the reactionary gang of the Ruhr economy once again moves to the forefront' of economic and political power.[24]

However, sometimes pragmatic considerations softened the stance of the labour movement. While they generally promoted a thorough cleansing of active National Socialists from the companies and often pressured the occupation authorities to release certain persons, the works councillors were at times reluctant to support the firing of former collaborators if these persons were important for the functioning of a plant.[25] The examples demonstrate that the early workers' movement concern with denazification was intimately linked to wider issues of reconstruction and democratisation. Their actions vis-à-vis the economic elites were more multifaceted than has been often thought.

The question of denazification becomes even more complex when the sentiments and actions of ordinary workers are taken into account. First of all, in the immediate months after the end of the war, workers at times physically attacked foremen or bosses they resented without the approval of works councils. Miners at a Recklinghausen pit, for example, tried to violently force an overseer whom they accused of having mistreated workers during the war off the company premises.[26] The scorn of industrial workers was generally not directed against members of the higher administrative staff but against specific foremen or bosses in their immediate social and professional environment who were known for harassing workers and disrespecting their sense of honour. In most cases, it is hard to tell if it was more the National Socialist affiliation of a foreman or his unpopular actions towards workers that lay at the heart of the attempts to remove

[24] *BR der Hüttenwerk Oberhausen AG Vorstand der IG Metall*, 13.4.1948, RW 164/631, Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf.

[25] *HQ MilGov NRW, Manpower Dept, Monthly Report March 1947*, PRO FO 1013/323, Archiv der IG Bergbau und Energie im Archiv für soziale Bewegungen Bochum.

[26] *AIG, Reference MG 122 Message*, 19.3.1946, PRO, FO 1013/775, Archiv der IG Bergbau und Energie im Archiv für soziale Bewegungen Bochum; for another example, see Thomas Bertram, '"Revolution wird nicht geduldet". Der Gelsenkirchener Bergbau im Spannungsfeld gewerkschaftlicher Neuordnungsvorstellungen und alliierter Wiederaufbaupolitik', in Hartmut Hering et al. (eds), *Für uns begann harte Arbeit. Gelsenkirchener Nachkriegslesebuch* (Oberhausen: Asso-Verlag 1986), pp. 207–232, here p. 212f.

him from his post. At least in some cases, the workers demanded the removal of foremen who had not been members of the Nazi movement. The actions of a director, manager or employee within the company in relation to the workers seem to have been the most important criteria for the workers to accuse or defend them.[27] Antifascist sentiments and feelings of received personal injustice went hand in hand.

In a more general way, denazification at the shop-floor level was intertwined with expectations that the post-war era had to bring about a fundamental change in symbolic interactions and power relations at the workplace. The radical rhetoric of communist factory newspapers that stressed the honour and strength of labour and threatened superiors not to overplay their hand when dealing with the workforce expressed these sentiments quite well.[28] These examples point to the widespread sentiment among industrial workers after the war years that a post-fascist order had to be one of workers' rights and a new, less-authoritarian workplace culture. At the same time, by locating support for National Socialism in certain unpopular individuals, the workers implicitly distanced themselves and their peers from the fascist past and from any questions concerning their involvement in it. A British observer, for example, noted a fairly generally held view among the Ruhr miners 'that a "Richtiger Kumpel" [a true miner] was never a Nazi although he might have been a party member'.[29]

All in all, the dominant rhetoric of the working class organisations that identified fascism with capitalism strengthened the notion of the working classes as innocent victims of the fascist dictatorship. Furthermore, it drew more attention to the overarching questions of modifying or revolutionising the capitalist organisation of the economy and less to the individual responsibility for National Socialist crimes of members of the economic elites. Therefore, after an initial period in which the purging of the companies of National Socialists played an important role in the politics of the works councils and trade unions, the subject was relegated to the background as questions of nationalisation, co-determination and trade union rights took centre stage. This opened the way for a more cooperative relationship between labour representatives and economic elites.

[27] W. Strang, *Office of the Political Adviser to the Commander in Chief*, CCG (BE), 23.4.1946, PRO FO 1049/564, Archiv der IG Bergbau und Energie im Archiv für soziale Bewegungen Bochum.

[28] See for example *Der Hackenstiel*, o. D. (1950), AES, 1950–1958.

[29] *Social Survey No.1: Attitudes of Germans to Coal Mining/Green Labour*, 1946, Summary of Conclusions, PRO FO 1030/197, Archiv der IG Bergbau und Energie im Archiv für soziale Bewegungen Bochum.

Communism and Anti-Communism

The fight against communism in West Germany had a major impact on the relationship between Capital and Labour. The shared interest in keeping communism at bay at the work-place and in the factories of West Germany as well as in the trade unions facilitated a tacit rapprochement between the moderate trade unions, the state and business elites.

The struggle between communist and non-communist factions over power and influence is a major element of post-war labour history in the Western occupation zones. Researchers have often stressed the willingness of labour activists in 1945 to start anew and to put aside mistrust and resentments that had piled up at the end of the Weimar republic.[30] However, while this willingness was very real, it was more limited than has often been thought. Among a core group of activists, the Weimar conflicts still mattered quite a lot. And while all major political forces agreed on the creation of a unified, cross-party trade union movement, they differed significantly in their visions about what the ideological orientation of this movement should be and what politics it should pursue. On the one hand, there were certainly many members who sincerely believed the antifascist committees of 1945 to be the beginning of a new form of political association uniting the German labour movement behind a programme of reform and change. On the other hand, however, most communist and social democratic activists at the local level saw the committees primarily as a reincarnation of the different antifascist action groups that the political parties had organised in the early 1930s. The unification often met with outright resistance from local activists who wanted to reconstruct the political and religious unions of the late Weimar era. The communists involved, for example, could only imagine the unity of the working class as a union under communist hegemony. For them the antifascist committees continued the work of the antifascist action groups of the early 1930s and were embryonic forms of communist party cells.[31] One local activist expressed this specific communist understanding of unity in 1945 when proclaiming: 'We have to defend unity against the social and Christian

[30] Lutz Niethammer, *Arbeiterinitiative 1945. Antifaschistische Ausschüsse und Reorganisation der Arbeiterbewegung in Deutschland* (Wuppertal: Peter Hammer Verlag, 1976), p. 20, p. 699; Lutz Niethammer, 'Aktivität und Grenzen der Antifa-Ausschüsse 1945', p. 330f.

[31] See for example Karl Schabrod, *Bericht aus dem Bezirk Ruhrgebiet*, 15.8.1945, SAPMO/BA, BY 1/210, Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen im Bundesarchiv.

democrats'.[32] From the outset then, the establishment of the new trade unions was accompanied by a bitter power struggle between competing political factions. Many activists considered the political balance of power within the unions as only temporary. Networks structured along party political lines existed behind the outward façade of unity. Both communists and social democrats tried to win control over the union organisations and push through their political agenda.[33]

On the company level as well, different political factions battled each other over influence on the works councils.[34] The post-war plants were highly politicised arenas where labour activists, workers and management fought over the contours of a new work order. Up until the middle of the 1950s, work council elections showed many similarities to political elections including long election campaigns, party political propaganda and clashes over election tickets. Communist factory cells were initially able to gather surprising support among the post-fascist workers in the steel and mining industries.[35] In works council elections as well as in local TU elections, they conquered roughly a third of all seats and made their voice heard through leaflets, company newspapers and strong engagements in company meetings (*Betriebsversammlungen*).

The communist influenced radicalism was at odds with the strategy of most social democratic and Catholic trade unionists who criticised the communist actions and rhetoric as self-defeating and instead argued for a more orderly strategy of negotiations.[36] In response to the communist challenge, the moderate trade union leaders tried to expand their reach in the factories and gain control over the local factory committees. They spent much time and energy suppressing wildcat strikes and communist

[32] *Bericht Fritz Müllerstein*, o. D. (Anfang 1946), SAPMO/BA, BY 1/221, Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen im Bundesarchiv.

[33] For an in-depth account see Till Kössler, *Abschied von der Revolution*, Chap. 3.

[34] Christoph Kleßmann, 'Betriebsparteigruppen und Einheitsgewerkschaft. Zur betrieblichen Arbeit der politischen Parteien in der Frühphase der westdeutschen Arbeiterbewegung 1945–1952', in *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 31 (1983), pp. 272–307; Klaus Schönhoven, 'Kalter Krieg in den Gewerkschaften. Zur Gewerkschaftspolitik von KPD und SPD nach 1945', in Klaus Schönhoven, *Sozialismus und Kommunismus im Wandel* (Cologne: Bund-Verlag 1993), pp. 261–280.

[35] See also Patrick Major, *Death of the KPD. Communism and Anti-Communism in West-Germany* (London: Clarendon press 1997).

[36] See as an example for the politics of restraining local protest movements *Land Commissioner to High Commissioner Robertson*, Monthly Report, January 1950, PRO FO 1013/745, Archiv der IG Bergbau und Energie im Archiv für soziale Bewegungen Bochum.

networks both within companies and in the unions, and increasingly took harsher measures against grass-roots protests. By defeating the Communist movement and containing the radical movements at the shop-floor level, these leaders hoped to integrate the wider post-fascist workforce into the new formalised union structure and convince them of the advantages of long-term oriented politics. Overall, many trade union leaders were quite sceptical about the political trustworthiness of the rank-and-file members. They feared that West German workers could again succumb to the siren call of totalitarianism in another crisis situation, this time in the guise of Soviet communism. They were therefore very careful to reign in local unrest and developed a preference for high-level, compromise-oriented negotiations as the best way of union politics.

The fight against the Communist movement intensified at the end of the 1940s as the East German government started an all-out campaign to win over the West German working classes. The East German communist ruling party, the Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (SED), increased the funding of West German communist factory cells, shipped hundreds of thousands of leaflets and brochures to the West and called for large-scale political strikes against the new federal government. The communist leadership also reverted to its late Weimar strategy and attempted to set up its own 'red' trade union movement. Confronted with this massive challenge to their authority and integrity, the moderate trade unionists made the fight against the communist movement a cornerstone of their politics. Social democrats and Catholic trade unionists worked together to vote communists out of trade union offices, and in 1951 the trade unions announced strict rules prohibiting communist agitation by trade union office-holders and demanded a neutral stance in matters of party politics. They even introduced a pledge of allegiance to union principles that all office-holders and representatives had to sign. This pledge included a thinly veiled condemnation of communist politics. The anti-communist campaign proved highly successful. In the following months, communist trade unions either left the communist party and completely committed themselves to bipartisan trade union work or were systematically expelled from the unions. By the mid-1950s, there was virtually no professed communist left among trade union officials, although the communists preserved some influence in the works councils.[37]

[37] See Till Kössler, *Abschied von der Revolution*, Chap. 6; Rainer Kalbitz, 'Gewerkschaftsausschlüsse in den 50er Jahren', in Otto Jacobi et al. (eds), *Gewerkschafts-*

From an early moment on, trade union leaders received support in their battle with communist factions from both the British and American occupation forces. British labour officers and high-ranking German officials briefed them on communist plans and tactics, shared intelligence gathered by secret sources with them and conferred with them regarding the best strategies to curb communist influence. In 1950, for example, the British commissioner for North-Rhine Westphalia reported to London: 'In this anti-Communist campaign we are working in close conjunction with the regional branches of the West German trade union federation, the Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund (DGB), who have taken us completely into their confidence and have in various ways asked for help, for example, in supplying information regarding the entry or exit of trade unionists to the Eastern Zone.'[38] Moreover, from early on, the Western Allies encouraged talks between labour representatives and employers and tried to organise regular consultations between the two sides. Beginning in late 1947, the British authorities periodically sponsored meetings between high-ranking trade unionists and economic elites in North Rhine Westphalia. While these reunions did not yield any practical results and scepticism about cooperation loomed large, they did establish a working relationship between the two sides and in the long run helped to foster an atmosphere of mutual respect.[39]

The cooperation intensified in the early 1950s as the mutual interest to curb communist influence provided a common ground for dialogue and coordination. For example, after rumours of communist plans for a strike in an industrial town near Cologne reached British Labour officials in the spring of 1950, they immediately convened a meeting at the Land Ministry of Labour between employers and the trade union representatives to discuss the matter.[40] All sides would benefit from the curbing of local protests.

politik in der Krise. Kritisches Gewerkschaftsjahrbuch 1977/78 (Berlin: Rotbuch-Verlag 1978), pp. 159–165.

[38] *NRW Report March 1950*, PRO, FO 1013/745, Archiv der IG Bergbau und Energie im Archiv für soziale Bewegungen Bochum.

[39] See the detailed Extract from Industrial Relations Periodic News Letter, No. 48/2 (1948), PRO FO 1013/1882, Archiv der IG Bergbau und Energie im Archiv für soziale Bewegungen Bochum.

[40] *Land North-Rhine Westphalie, Manpower Department*, Monthly Report for March 1950, PRO FO 1013/769 and see also the earlier comprehensive account: *Countering of Communist activities in British zone*, March 1948, PRO FO 371/70478, Archiv der IG Bergbau und Energie im Archiv für soziale Bewegungen Bochum.

A good example of the practice of cooperation is the aftermath of the works council election in the gigantic *Westfalenhütte* steel plant in Dortmund in 1955 that was surprisingly won by the communist factory cell. The newly elected communist works council chairman almost immediately caused a national scandal as he wasted no time traveling to East Berlin where he received an award out of the hands of President Wilhelm Pieck. In reaction to this event, the management of the *Westfalenhütte* conferred with the steel workers union IG Metall and with its consent fired the activist and dissolved the works council.[41]

Given the long tradition of conflict, mutual resentments and mistrust between labour leaders and economic elites did not evaporate immediately and confrontations about fundamental questions of economic order continued to loom large. Moreover, a radical tradition continued to exist and influence the agenda and policy of left-leaning social democrats. But the communist challenge and an uneasiness about the political trustworthiness of the post-fascist workforce increasingly dissuaded both employers and most trade union leaders from pursuing a hardline policy of confrontation and in the long run helped to find compromises in industrial disputes. In the face of communist attempts at grass-roots mobilisation, the trade unions turned to negotiations with employers as the main instrument for pushing through their demands. Strikes or the threat of strikes continued to be an important instrument of trade union politics, but the leadership mostly shied away from an all-out mobilisation of their members. The trade union leader Heinrich Gutermuth, head of the mining union *IG Bergbau*, already in 1954 remarked that in contrast to the Weimar era, trade union politics 'has moved to meeting rooms (*an den grünen Tisch*) and therefore out of sight of the ordinary members'.[42] Moreover, while socialisation and an expansion of co-determination beyond the steel and mining industries continued to be core demands of the post-war labour movement, the trade unions increasingly accepted the new West German capitalist economic order and began to work within its

[41] Karl Lauschke, *Die Hoesch-Arbeiter und ihr Werk. Sozialgeschichte der Dortmunder Westfalenhütte während der Jahre des Wiederaufbaus 1945–1966* (Essen: Klartext 2000), pp. 119–143.

[42] *Protokoll der Angestelltenkonferenz am 13.5.1954 in Bochum*, AfSB, IGBE-Arch., V 6, Archiv der IG Bergbau und Energie im Archiv für soziale Bewegungen Bochum; this frequently led to protests from more radical rank-and-file members: *Organisationsbericht der Verwaltungsstelle Gelsenkirchen*, August 1954, IGM-Arch., 1–3/11; see also: Werner Müller, *Die Gründung des DGB*, pp. 127–130.

institutions. Correspondingly, the mutual exchange of opinions led business leaders to value trade unions as guardians of order and to accept the legitimacy of trade unions and works council involvement in economic affairs.

In the long run, the Cold War disputes fostered a de-radicalisation of workers' protests and cooperation between workers and management in the factories as well. As any protest movement at the shop floor could easily and routinely be denounced as communist machinations, protests could only hope to be successful if they held their distance to broader political questions and went through formally recognised channels of representative politics. In the politically charged atmosphere of the late 1940s and early 1950s, a politics of compromise proved to be the only long-term viable option for workers' representatives. In this respect, the decline of labour radicalism and an uncompromising stance towards the economic elites was intimately linked to Cold War politics. In a broader perspective, in the struggles with shop-floor radicalism and an alternative communist vision of economic order, a specific West German model of industrial relations centred on negotiations and compromise took shape.

Social Movements and the Change of Industrial Elites in East Germany

Marcel Boldorf

The objective of this article is to examine the effect that social movements had on the change of personnel at managerial level in larger industrial companies during the post-war years. It will pay particular attention to the formation process of these movements in the Soviet Occupation Zone (SOZ) by examining their social basis and their longevity. Literature describes a spontaneous formation of movements during the phase after German capitulation which in the SOZ was, however, soon affected by the regained sovereignty of the first approved political parties and the reorganisation of public administrations at local and district level. The Communist Party, which became the Socialist Unity Party (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands, SED) in April 1946 after merging with the Social Democrats, endeavoured to influence the development of social movements by focusing on dialogue and debate with the Soviet occupying power.

Previous research has paid too little attention to the interaction of different social movements. Although the function of the early antifascist

M. Boldorf (✉)
Université Lyon 2, Lyon, France

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movement has been analysed in detail,[1] its interaction with developments within the companies themselves, in particular with the works council movement, has not been explained. The first of these two early movements was made up of disenfranchised groups of people who were starting to regain political influence, that is, former trade unionists, socialists and communists. They brought the antifascist forces in many towns and communities together and focused their attention in the public domain on areas of administration and welfare. The first denazification measures are also attributed to them. However, by order of the Soviet occupying power, the antifascist commissions which had emerged in an ad hoc fashion were dissolved in the summer of 1945 and their members integrated into the newly formed local administrations.[2] The second movement was a result from an internal development process in the companies that began in May 1945. The historian Siegfried Suckut argues that the personnel vacuum in the so-called 'herrenlose Betriebe' (ownerless companies) left the employees with no other choice but to take action themselves in the interest of reconstruction.[3] Helke Stadtland adds that the workers had to organise production either without the entrepreneurs, who had fled or been arrested, or as their rivals.[4] Both interpretations attribute a high level of responsibility to the works councils. By and large, this master narrative conforms to the tenor of German Democratic Republic (GDR) industrial historiography and dominates the historiography in different variations. Because their fundamental assumptions have hardly been examined using archival documents, the validity of their theses needs to be re-examined. The examples chosen for this purpose originate from a sample of East German steel works whose industrial history has been studied in detail.[5]

The denazification and sequestration commissions established themselves as a third form of institutionalised social control. Being based on

[1] Jeanette Michelmann, *Aktivisten der ersten Stunde. Die Antifa in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2002).

[2] Thomas Widera, *Dresden 1945–1948. Politik und Gesellschaft unter sowjetischer Besatzungsherrschaft* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), pp. 68–86; See Stefan Creuzberger, 'Die Liquidierung antifaschistischer Organisationen in Berlin. Ein sowjetisches Dokument', in *Deutschland Archiv* XXVI (1993), pp. 1266–1279.

[3] Siegfired Suckut, *Die Betriebsrätebewegung in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands, 1945–1948* (Frankfurt/Main: Haag & Herchen, 1982), p. 124.

[4] Helke Stadtland, *Herrschaft nach Plan und Macht der Gewohnheit. Sozialgeschichte der Gewerkschaften in der SBZ/DDR 1945–1953* (Essen: Klartext, 2001), p. 62.

[5] Marcel Boldorf, *Governance in der Planwirtschaft. Industrielle Führungskräfte in der Stahl- und Textilbranche der SBZ/DDR, 1945–1958* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015).

different regulations introduced by administrations of the Länder and provinces, official denazification from the summer of 1945 had a heterogeneous appearance.[6] The Denazification Directive No. 24 adopted by the Allied Control Council's Directive in January 1946 defined the function of the denazification commissions more clearly, restricting it to the prosecution of active Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP) members from a particular rank. Their work built on that of the antifascist commissions to a certain degree, but their connections to the local authorities were closer because their members came from within them as well as from the first approved political parties. The sequester commissions were another form of organisation that played a role in exerting influence on industrial companies. They came about as a result of the Soviet Military Administration's (SMAD) Order No. 124 from 30 October 1945 that sequestered the 'ownerless companies', that is, especially the joint-stock companies.[7] Operational control was placed in the hands of German administrations, which in turn created special commissions as supervising bodies. In practice, the work of the denazification and sequester commissions often overlapped because the members did not fully understand the difference between the two bodies. Neither type of commission came about spontaneously as a social movement; both were administrative committees with specific functions, in this case the surveillance of individuals and companies. Therefore, they cannot be seen as social movements in the strict sense of the word, although their activities possibly extended to the executive changes in industry that are being examined here.

Cooperation Between Antifascist Commissions and Local Administrations

In eastern and western Germany, commissions which concentrated on reconstruction and the restoration of public administrations were formed spontaneously at municipal or district level. They rarely had ambitions for

[6] Manfred Wille, *Entnazifizierung in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands 1945–48* (Magdeburg: Block, 1993), p. 112; Clemens Vollnhals, *Entnazifizierung. Politische Säuberung und Rehabilitierung in den vier Besatzungszonen 1945–1949* (Munich: dtv, 1991), pp. 178–86; Laws and Decrees in Thuringia on 23 July, Saxony on 17 August Mecklenburg-Vorpommern on 29 August and the province of Saxony(-Anhalt) on 13 September 1945.

[7] André Steiner, *Von Plan zu Plan. Eine Wirtschaftsgeschichte der DDR* (Munich: DVA, 2004), p. 40.

establishing as an economic and political dual power. Until the end of June 1945, the extent of their involvement in public administration was more developed only in areas such as the unoccupied no-man's-land of Stollberg and Schwarzenberg in the south of Saxony.[8] Otherwise, the commissions took a pragmatic approach, focusing on getting reconstruction up and running. Although they included many Communist Party (KPD) members, they were not particularly ideologised and had no ambitions to transform the economy. In that respect, they were not exactly the embodiment of the revolutionary workers' movement that GDR research would later make them out to be.

During the German Revolution of 1918–1919, it could be seen that the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils had a reserved attitude to potential nationalisation. And even after the Second World War, workers' committees were reluctant to take away the right of corporate ownership. Studies in business history show no evidence of attacks by revolutionary workers.[9] The programmes and policy pronouncements of the antifascist front did not contain any demands to nationalise or take control of companies.[10] Instead, entrepreneurs and business people were assured that they did not have to worry about losing their private property and that they could continue to run their companies. The prevailing pragmatism was understandable: people were war-weary and longed for a return to normality. Pushing for a modification of property rights in the companies did not seem to be the right approach at a time when securing the supply of goods took priority. In addition, the people showed their opposition to the formation of a 'Soviet state', during actions like the demonstration in Chemnitz. As a consequence, the local antifascist commissions set the reconstruction of a functioning urban economy as their main task.[11]

The events that took place when the executive positions in the Döhlen-Freital steelworks near Dresden were filled can be used as an example to

[8] Michelmann, *Aktivisten der ersten Stunde*, pp. 245–265.

[9] Sebastian Fink, *Das Stahl- und Walzwerk Riesa in beiden deutschen Diktaturen 1933 bis 1963. Ein Vergleich* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2012); Armin Müller, *Institutionelle Brüche und personelle Lücken. Werkleiter in Volkseigenen Betrieben der DDR in der Ära Ulbricht* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2006); Martin Kukowski, *Die Chemnitzer Auto Union AG und die "Demokratisierung" der Wirtschaft in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone von 1945 bis 1948* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2003.).

[10] Michelmann, *Aktivisten der ersten Stunde*, p. 216.

[11] Michelmann, *Aktivisten der ersten Stunde*, pp. 230–232.

illustrate the way in which power interacted at a local level. Two weeks after the Soviet occupation, on 22 May 1945, Bruns and Faust, two board members who had been managing the company during the war, returned to Freital. Because they were compromised by their activities in the NSDAP, the local antifascist commission would not allow them into the factory.[12] After spending one week negotiating with the municipal administration, the decision was not only overturned, but the two managers were also reinstated in their previous positions of authority. The municipal administration, led by the SPD and Communist Party, did not question their ultimate authority. As economic history research in the GDR asserted, there was neither any act of revolution nor a purge of the 'exponentials of monopoly capitalism'.[13]

It was only in August 1945 when the administration of the Land Saxony introduced the 'Offices for company reorganisation' (Ämter für betriebliche Neuordnung) that local practice changed to some extent. This type of authority was set up in all of the larger municipalities in Saxony, particularly early in Dresden.[14] Its official remit was the investigation of entrepreneurs and companies with a National Socialist past. It became increasingly involved in the economic situation by transferring company rights of disposal to provisional managers or trustees, and by revoking the trade licence of some business owners. The authorities supposedly sequestered 2000 companies all over Saxony before the end of 1945, although they did not have the opportunity to access the larger businesses occupied by the Soviet military.[15] In these cases, the previous owners' rights of disposal were immediately revoked so that the factories could be dismantled at once. These actions that were carried out by the administrations gave a first indication of the allocation of responsibilities among the groups involved.

[12] *Work council of the Sächsische Gussstahlwerk Döhlen to the Central Committee of the KPD*, 15 November 1945, R 8122/1046, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

[13] Wolfgang Mühlfriedel and Klaus Wießner (1989) *Die Geschichte der Industrie der DDR* (Berlin: Akademie), pp. 37–38.

[14] Widera, *Dresden 1945–1948*, p. 318.

[15] Georg Wagner-Kyora, 'Sozialer Auf- und Abstieg in der Chemieindustrie. Arbeiter, Angestellte und Akademiker in Leuna 1930–1960', in Peter Hübner and Klaus Tenfelde (eds), *Arbeiter in der SBZ-DDR* (Essen: Klartext, 1999), p. 624; Müller, *Institutionelle Brüche und personelle Lücken*, p. 177; Widera, *Dresden 1945–1948*, p. 306.

The Distribution of Power Within the Companies: The Position of the Works Council Movement

The work of the second social movement which started with the establishment of the works councils can be examined in the larger industrial companies. There is evidence that works committees, soon renamed works councils, were established in many locations in the eastern zone, as was the case in the western zones.[16] They recruited from the group of people that was also responsible for forming the antifascist commissions. For this reason, the early works councils, which frequently referred to themselves as antifascist works committees, are often mentioned in the same breath as the antifascist commissions that operated in the public domain. A random sample shows that the first activists were mostly long-serving members of staff who had often remained in their jobs during the war because their age or status as a skilled employee exempted them from military service.[17] A typical post-war works council member was older, male and a skilled worker. This group of people used their intimate knowledge of the circumstances in the factory and on occasion their pre-war experience as elected worker representatives to revive the works council as a traditional German way of institutionalising worker interests.[18]

The standard assumption about the establishment of the works councils is that the newly formed workers' movement filled the power vacuum that resulted from the capitulation of National Socialist Germany. And because the workers had forced the owners and senior management of the industrial companies to leave, they were 'ownerless' (herrenlos) and the worker representatives took on the necessary task of running the company. The expression 'ownerless companies' entered the official language of the SOZ by way of the SMAD Order No. 124 on sequestration from 30 October 1945 where it was used to describe all joint-stock companies, thus allowing action to be taken against so-called state-capitalist and private monopolistic companies.[19] This implies that there was an interest afterwards to make as many companies as possible appear 'ownerless' in order to

[16] Suckut, *Die Betriebsrätebewegung in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands*, p. 221.

[17] Boldorf, *Governance*.

[18] Suckut, *Die Betriebsrätebewegung in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands*, pp. 117–121.

[19] Mühlfriedel and Wießner, *Die Geschichte der Industrie der DDR*, p. 42.

legitimise the sequestration and subsequent nationalisation of the factories.[20] This reduces the value of documents from 1946 and 1947 that belatedly described the situation at the end of the war, like the subsequent justification reports of individual works councils and trade unionists. For example, Dietrich Staritz claims that such a retrospective report by the federal executive board of the Free German Trade Union Federation (FDGB) summarising the experiences of over 100 companies brings out the antifascist emphasis of the new beginning.[21] However, it can also be argued that this collection of reports was only a reinterpretation of events which happened after the war had ended and resorted to an antifascist vocabulary that was by then widely in use.

The question that must be asked about the immediate post-war situation is whether the majority of factories, most of which were joint-stock companies, had in fact been abandoned by their owners and executive managers. The theory of a power vacuum in the companies after the war prevails in the literature. Suckut summarises it as follows[22]: work stopped in most companies and the workers were faced with the material necessity of having to earn a living. The example of the activists convinced even those who were undecided at first. The personnel situation in the 'ownerless' companies gave the employees no choice but to take the initiative themselves if reconstruction was ever to begin. This interpretation is consistent with GDR historiography that exaggerated the transition process as a revolutionary act supported by the grass roots.

A succession of examples from the larger industrial companies in the eastern zone prove that the top management did in fact abscond to the West, moving the lines of continuity of top management almost completely to the Federal Republic.[23] This can be demonstrated for most Flick plants in the SOZ, despite Odilo Burkart remaining one of the top managers of the group in Riesa (Saxony), or the Maxhütte in Unterwellenborn (Thuringia) remaining from May 1945 onwards under the control of the engineer Friedrich Franz, who had been a company director during the

[20] Stadtland, *Herrschaft nach Plan und Macht der Gewohnheit. Sozialgeschichte der Gewerkschaften in der SBZ/DDR 1945–1953*, p. 342.

[21] Dietrich Staritz, *Die Gründung der DDR. Von der sowjetischen Besatzungsherrschaft zum sozialistischen Staat*, 3rd edn. (Munich: dtv, 1995), pp. 112–123.

[22] Suckut, *Die Betriebsrätebewegung in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands*, pp. 121–124.

[23] Peter Hübner, 'Durch Planung zur Improvisation. Zur Geschichte des Leitungspersonals in der staatlichen Industrie der DDR', in *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* XXXIX (1999), p. 200.

war. Other large industrial companies fit the picture. The US military convinced the top management of Carl Zeiss Jena to relocate to the West. Ernst Hochschwender and Heinrich Bütefisch, company directors at Braunkohle-Benzin AG, migrated from Schwarzheide along with 'plant manager' Wagner. As the Soviets marched into Chemnitz on 7 May 1945, the board of Auto Union fled to neighbouring Zwickau, which was still occupied by the Americans; they moved further into the western zones as the Soviets advanced.[24] There are many other examples. The spontaneous flight of an owner was almost always based on a decision taken by an individual. These were not expulsions driven by organised labour. The managers' main motives usually included the wish to continue practising their profession and to secure their livelihood as well as a diffuse fear of prosecution.

From the safety of the West, the former executive managers attempted to influence the fate of the branches and subsidiary factories over a long period. This means the idea of companies in the eastern zone being cut off from company management in the West is not tenable, at least not in 1945.[25] Nevertheless, there does appear to have been a power vacuum of sorts that needs to be examined to see if the worker representatives actually moved into the vacant positions and took over the running of the industrial companies.[26] The situation on the ground, insofar as it can be reconstructed using the fragmented surviving sources, was often much more complicated. Besides the reorganised workers, there were other groups of players that asserted a claim on the management of the industrial companies. There were, for example, many engineers left in the companies looking for ways to continue their career paths. Because their superiors had left, they were able to move up the ladder into top positions.[27] This pattern especially applies to technical managers who were needed during dismantling. However, business managers were often no

[24] Müller, *Institutionelle Brüche und personelle Lücken*, p. 87; Hans-Joachim Jeschke, *Aus der Geschichte des Chemiewerkes Schwarzheide, vol. 2: 1945 bis 1953* (Schwarzheide: BASF-Eigenverlag, 2005), p. 28 and pp. 52–53; Kukowski, *Die Chemnitzer Auto Union AG*, p. 42.

[25] Staritz, *Die Gründung der DDR*, p. 111.

[26] Staritz, *Die Gründung der DDR*; Suckut, *Die Betriebsrätebewegung in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands*; Mühlfriedel and Wießner, *Die Geschichte der Industrie der DDR*, pp. 37–38.

[27] Kim Christian Priemel, 'Finis Imperii. Wie sich ein Konzern auflöst. Informationsströme und Verfügungsrechte im Flick-Konzern 1945/46', in *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* XCV (2008), p. 7.

longer needed and were dismissed. Although the dismantling regime was responsible for a large number of dismissals, the companies that were not being dismantled had to be managed in a cost-effective way because savings accounts were blocked. These plant-specific reasons also led to many managers being dismissed by the company executive. There were also a considerable number of companies with managers who were able to hold on to their managerial positions, like the two worsted yarn spinning mills in Leipzig, Stöhr AG and Tittel & Krüger.[28] Insofar as it can be ascertained from sources, the newly organised worker representatives did not object to the dismissals.

As early as August 1945, the SMAD and at least part of the KPD leadership tried to subordinate the works councils to the trade unions in order to restrict their economic and political rights of co-determination and to exercise central control over spontaneous grass-roots activities in the companies. However, the SMAD abandoned this aim on account of the expected resistance and subsequently not only tolerated the works councils, but sometimes even supported them.[29] The occupying forces were eager to appoint members of works councils who had been elected or put in place after the war as provisional company managers. This was one of the reasons why the prevailing regime of dismantlement and reparation was the main source of worry for the works councils which were trying to look after the common good of their factories. In several cases, they supported immediate cessation of dismantlement and, in the case of the Riesa steel works, they even wrote a declaration of solidarity with the Flick group management and sent it to the Soviet Reparation Commission.[30] In the declaration, the worker representatives supported the aim of Flick managers, who were still acting independently, to start a new steel company in central Germany.

The approach taken by the organised works councils was illustrated by a works assembly meeting that took place at the steel works in Hennigsdorf, Brandenburg in November 1945: more than a month after the Flick factories had been expropriated in Saxony, two members of the local works council, Korioth and Wolgast, attempted to justify their continued

[28] Boldorf, *Governance*, pp. 135–141.

[29] Christoph Klessmann, *Die doppelte Staatsgründung. Deutsche Geschichte 1945–1955*, 5th edn. (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1991), p. 131.

[30] *Letter of the workers' council of the Riesa steelwork to the Soviet Reparation Commission*, 10 July 1945, NL 4182-957, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

cooperation with the Flick group headquarters. Korioth openly expressed his support for the former managers and even emphasised that he himself had sought contact with Berlin. He claimed that only the ongoing negotiations between the Flick manager Kaletsch, government agencies and the provisional works managers could lead to any sort of success. Korioth called for the appointment of the business manager Wobbe, who was also supported by Kaletsch as a trustee; the works assembly agreed.[31] The candidate was subsequently rejected at a higher level and the worker representative Wolgast remained in the trustee position. It was obvious that he had accepted the previous decision made in the interests of the company and made no attempt to obtain a top position.

Because of the incipient dismantlement and the removal of produced goods, the employee representatives moved closer to the position of the surviving Flick management, even though the managers had been publicly branded by the KPD as fascist warmongers. Collaboration with the old power base appeared to the works councils to be the best way of stopping the ongoing dismantlement, which was seen as a threat to the existence of the factory and its workers. At the factory level, a broad alliance formed that included the workers, the remaining engineers and directors; it also represented a kind of company egoism.

German managers were responsible for actually running the larger industrial companies, even if their actions were overseen by the Soviet factory commandants. However, the workers' self-organisation bodies, especially the works councils, took a subordinate role in relation to important decisions affecting company governance. The typical management board in the large-scale industrial sector was a tripartite body, made up of two directors with a technical background and a union representative or a member of the works council. Examples of this sort of top management could be found in Chemnitz Auto Union, Carl Zeiss Jena and some factories in the chemical and steel industries.[32] The old boards of management sometimes remained in place, but more often than not men moved up from the lower echelons of management into executive managerial positions. Cases in which the works council alone ran the company were

[31] *Minutes of the 2nd assembly in the Mitteldeutsche Stahl- und Walzwerke Friedrich Flick* KG Hennigsdorf, 20 November 1945, DC 1/1894, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

[32] Kukowski, *Die Chemnitzer Auto Union AG*, pp. 39–42; Müller, *Institutionelle Brüche und personelle Lücken*, pp. 175–176; Georg Wagner-Kyora, *Vom "nationalen" zum "sozialistischen" Selbst. Zur Erfahrungsgeschichte deutscher Chemiker und Ingenieure im 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2009), p. 342.

absolute exceptions. The opposite was more often the case, as can be seen from the Tittel & Krüger large spinning mill in Leipzig. The works council never gained a foothold in this company, which had a workforce in excess of 1000 employees and remained a privately owned stock company until 1948. As a result, the badly organised labour force failed to influence the factory executive.

Many authors argue that the works council movement represented a fundamentally democratic vision of society; others point out that they were a legalised melting pot for non-communists.[33] When the Allied Control Council enacted the Works Council Law (Betriebsrätegesetz) in April 1946, it legitimised the works councils' previously spontaneous formation. In its most important passages, the Control Council Law did not go beyond the corresponding bill from 1920, concentrating mostly on formulating functions, such as participation in collective bargaining negotiations, on improving production and on extending social amenities within the company; but it did not mention works council rights. In the final analysis, the Control Council Law extended the existence of the works councils in the SOZ so that they came out of the works council elections in the summer of 1946 in a stronger position. Almost 55 per cent of the works council members were also members of the SED; 43 per cent were without party affiliation. This ratio shifted slightly in favour of those without party affiliation in 1947, ending up with 47 per cent compared with 51 per cent SED membership.[34] Despite the high percentage of non-party members, the large SED presence means that the works councils cannot be described as anti-communist melting pots. The FDGB continued to broaden its influence on the works councils as a 'transmission belt' of the SED, asserting a claim to represent solely the workers in the company. This led to unwanted works councils being removed and finally, in 1948, to the dissolution of the bodies and their amalgamation into the SED-dominated 'Betriebsgewerkschaftsleitungen' (Company Union Leadership).[35]

[33] For the first view see Stefan Paul Werum, *Gewerkschaftlicher Niedergang im sozialistischen Aufbau. Der Freie Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund 1945 bis 1953* (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 2005), p. 17; Suckut, *Die Betriebsrätebewegung in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands*; Staritz, *Die Gründung der DDR*, p. 113; for the second view: Oskar Schwarzer, *Sozialistische Zentralplanwirtschaft in der SBZ/DDR. Ergebnisse eines ordnungspolitischen Experiments, 1945–1989* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1999), p. 53.

[34] Werum, *Gewerkschaftlicher Niedergang im sozialistischen Aufbau*, p. 83.

[35] Werum, *Gewerkschaftlicher Niedergang im sozialistischen Aufbau*, p. 95; Stadtland, *Herrschaft nach Plan und Macht der Gewohnheit. Sozialgeschichte der Gewerkschaften in der SBZ/DDR*, pp. 126–128.

The question of how long the works councils continued to function as a social movement remains. Despite its spontaneous emergence, the movement was only granted a relatively short independent existence because it was quickly co-opted by the organisational structures of the SED and the FDGB. The large number of members without party affiliation indicates, in contrast to other social committees such as the social commissions, the youth committees and women's committees, that they retained a degree of self-determination; however, their actual influence in the companies was disappearing more and more. Not only the high degree of organisation among non-party members, but also examples of the works council work, clearly demonstrate the alliance between the provisional and trustee factory management.

We have seen that neither the antifascist commissions nor the works councils developed strong ambitions to replace the company management. While the former were a short-term phenomenon, the latter developed a temporary persistence, despite the pressure exercised by the FDGB and the KPD/SED. Typical for the work of the works councils was their lack of influence on the key business functions of the executive management. Instead, they concentrated on rebuilding the companies, and particularly on increasing production. In this way, they took on quasi-managerial functions without actually running the factory.

The conflict between the works council and the board of management in the worsted yarn spinning mill Stöhr in 1945–1946 can be used as an example to illustrate the distribution of power.[36] In autumn 1945, 13 works council members organised a meeting to challenge the recent appointment of the executive manager Herbert Riedel despite his National Socialist past. KPD politicians from Leipzig as well as two representatives of the Soviet military Command were present during the meeting. After a heated debate, the Soviet Lieutenant Colonel Apelinski ended the discussion by describing the dismissal of a director as a serious malaise for any factory. This was an early example of an occupying force officer arguing against a rushed replacement of personnel. The SMAD suggested the principle of a single executive manager, a model that had proved successful in the Soviet Union.[37] They reached a compromise at Stöhr AG, deciding

[36] *Kammgarnspinnerei Stöhr. Assembly in Leipzig-Plagwitz*, 10 October 1945, No 20943-1634, Staatsarchiv Leipzig.

[37] Stadtland, *Herrschaft nach Plan und Macht der Gewohnheit. Sozialgeschichte der Gewerkschaften in der SBZ/DDR*, p. 342.

to give a general manager closely connected to the works council a connecting role. The managerial structures remained unchanged, and the works council failed to push through their demands for the right of co-determination in personnel matters.

Six months later, the Office for company reorganisation (Amt für Betriebsneuordnung) in Leipzig appointed the head of the works council to the position of controller to work with the trustee Koch, the last remaining board member from the war years.[38] However, the appointment was by and large a symbolic act that did not have any major impact on the board of management. Koch also held an influential position of the head of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Leipzig. It was not until 1948 that he was dismissed and brought to court during the campaign against the textile industry in Saxony that is described below.

Further examples from the steel industry show that the influence of the works councils on company management remained marginal.[39] Rather, they became one of several poles of power in company self-management and were consulted on production or social planning during production meetings or committee meetings. Their importance compared to their competitors in the company, that is, the trade union and SED party leadership, increasingly disappeared. In individual cases, a career within the company was not impossible. The Riesa works council member Zschukelt, for example, was appointed as staff manager, and in this position he was able to exercise influence on personnel matters in the company. The career of his works council colleague Lacour was only indirectly influenced by his membership of the works council. From 1946 onwards, he worked in a tripartite managerial setup in close cooperation with the leading business director Hings because of his good knowledge of the Russian language. His inclusion in the administration helped Lacour, who had trained as a lathe operator, to become the head of department. He was then appointed the head of production and ran the entire factory from 1956 to 1967. However, there were also a large number of other cases where the members of the pioneering works councils were dismissed in an ignoble manner.

According to authors such as Staritz, in 1945 a works councils initiative founded by social democrats and communists carried out the denazification

[38] *Inquiry of the Leipzig* "*Office for company reorganisation*", 13 July 1946, No 20943-872, Staatsarchiv Leipzig.

[39] Boldorf, *Governance*, pp. 95, 127, 290.

of management and introduced comprehensive rights of participation before German ordinances or Soviet orders had been put in place.[40] Even if there is evidence to prove that this took place at a local level, it was at best a very brief episode. It did not lead to a broad mass movement and works council influence on denazification and the replacement of executives, in particular, remained slight. Other entities within the companies were more important when it came to the dismissal of individuals with a National Socialist past. The next section contains a more differentiated picture of denazification which, according to the official GDR version, lasted for three years.

The Work of the Denazification Commissions

The setting up of denazification commissions was from the very start under the control of public administrations and was based on a number of ordinances passed by the administrations of the Länder between July and September 1945. In this way, the task of denazification was placed in German hands at an early stage and at the lowest level, the municipal administrations were responsible for enforcement. The practical implementation was carried out mainly by their personnel departments, which were dominated by the SED at an early stage. As a result, the administrations themselves and professional groups such as the police, teachers and judicial professions were closely scrutinised.[41]

The concept of denazification also included the political purging of the economy, so that the dismissal of all factory directors and employees at managerial level regarded as having a National Socialist past was a theoretical possibility. In practice, the denazification commissions did not manage to make their influence felt at company level. In most companies, dismissals only took place if individuals came to the attention of the administrative commissions. This means that systematic purging did not occur and the more intense denazification process was restricted to

[40] Staritz, *Die Gründung der DDR*, pp. 111–113.

[41] Helga Welsh, *Revolutionärer Wandel auf Befehl? Entnazifizierungs- und Personalpolitik in Thüringen und Sachsen 1945–1949* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1989); Hermann Wentker, *Justiz in der SBZ/DDR. Transformation und Rolle ihrer zentralen Institutionen* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2001), pp. 103–118; Mike Schmeitzner, 'Formierung eines neuen Polizeistaates. Aufbau und Entwicklung der politischen Polizei in Sachsen 1945–1952', in Rainer Behring and Mike Schmeitzner (eds), *Diktaturdurchsetzung in Sachsen. Studien zur Genese der kommunistischen Herrschaft 1945–1952*, (Cologne: Böhlau, 2003), pp. 201–267.

state-owned companies, such as the railways and the post.[42] The reorganisation of the commissions that took place in the SOZ after a major delay following the Control Council directive from 12 January 1946 did not make any difference to this implementation practice. It was not until October 1946 that the administrations of the Länder established district commissions, which were initially called cleansing commissions in Thuringia. As a rule, these commissions included the head of the district authority (Landrat) or the Lord Mayor (Oberbürgermeister), representatives of the parties and mass organisations and personnel departments of the administrations and of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce. The other Länder followed suit in the period up to December 1946, so that finally each of the 262 towns and districts of the SOZ had one official commission each, the denazification commission, which was responsible for the reactivation of the political purges. Due to their small number, the commissions were overburdened by their tasks. However, the declared objective at this stage was that denazification should not delay the internal restructuring of the administrations, with the result that implementation was restricted to a small group of leading officials.[43]

During the third stage of the formation of commissions that followed the SMAD Order No. 201 from 16 August 1947 the group of persons that were to be checked for their National Socialist past did not really change. In order to improve the prosecution process, the disparate criminal investigation bodies had already been merged into the new Unit 5 of the criminal investigation department (K5) in April 1947.[44] The personnel of this unit were largely the same as those of the special commission that had previously supported the work of the Soviet security apparatus. The establishment of the K5 changed the role of the executive in the SOZ decisively because the K5 had been given special powers of investigation.

[42] Damian van Melis, *Entnazifizierung in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Herrschaft und Verwaltung 1945–1948* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1999), p. 70; Wolfgang Zank, *Wirtschaft und Arbeit in Ostdeutschland. Probleme des Wiederaufbaus in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1987), p. 49.

[43] Marcel Boldorf 'Von der Entnazifizierung zur Stalinisierung. Kontinuitätslinien der politischen Säuberung in der SBZ/DDR, 1945–1952', in *Historische Zeitschrift*, 288 (2009), p. 299.

[44] Monika Tantzscher (1998) 'Die Vorläufer des Staatssicherheitsdienstes in der Polizei der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone—Ursprung und Entwicklung der K 5', in *Jahrbuch für Historische Kommunismusforschung*, pp. 125–156.

The task of the denazification commissions was the provision of additional incriminating evidence. However, this did not lead to a more systematic investigation at management level in the industrial companies.

At the same time, an attempt was made to rectify a number of errors that were the responsibility of denazification and sequestration commissions who had overstepped their competencies. The administrations complained that the commissions had often applied their own standards to purging activities and that no differentiation was made between nominal and active members of the NSDAP. As many small companies had been shut down, the administration of the former Prussian province of Saxony (renamed Saxony-Anhalt) even considered returning 3000 confiscated companies, mainly medium-sized companies, shops and workshops, to their previous owners.[45] Of course, this did not affect the large industrial companies that were under sequestration. Restitutions of companies that had been expropriated without proper reason also took place in the Land Brandenburg.[46]

In January 1948, Walter Ulbricht announced that denazification would soon be complete. He emphasised that rebuilding the country was the priority and demanded that the investigations should be restricted to executive managers who had not been National Socialists but were sabotaging the new order at every opportunity. Former membership of the NSDAP became a criterion of secondary importance and the focus moved to opponents and enemies of the political system being established. With the official end of denazification in March 1948, prosecution and purging was no longer the responsibility of the administrations and their commissions. The secret police and the state control institutions finally took over.[47]

In the context of this article, it must be pointed out the denazification commission cannot be regarded as a social movement. In terms of content, it continued the tasks of the antifascist commissions which had been founded at an early stage but they lacked important features that are usually used to define social movements. They were not founded spontaneously but by administrations and they had no grass roots. Instead, the commissions were founded and restructured by means of central decrees,

[45] Wille, *Entnazifizierung in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschland*, pp. 112–118.

[46] Timothy R. Vogt, *Denazification in Soviet-Occupied Germany. Brandenburg 1945–1948* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 68.

[47] Boldorf (2009), *Von der Entnazifizierung zur Stalinisierung*, pp. 304–305.

either by the early ordinances of the administrations of the Länder, Allied decrees or Soviet orders. The commissions were closely linked to the authorities because this is where most of the commission members came from. The end of the commissions was also connected to their high public profile: in 1947, some of the trials in Saxony attracted 300 to 500 spectators.[48] They certainly developed a certain 'show function' intended to intimidate former National Socialist activists but of course the SED found them unsuitable for quietly dealing with unwanted functionaries. In total, the influence of the denazification commissions on the change of industrial elites was relatively small.

How Did the Change of Industrial Elites Take Place?

The onset of a comprehensive replacement of personnel at executive level coincided with the change in the economic system. Two groundbreaking developments in spring 1948 were decisive. First, the final transfer of private property in the industrial sector to the state sector as a result of an SMAD Order in April 1948 that ended sequestration, allowing the development of 'companies owned by the people' (Volkseigene Betriebe, VEB). Second, the adoption of a production plan for the second half of 1948 as well as a two-year plan for 1949/1950 based on a decision by the German Economic Commission (Deutsche Wirtschaftskommission, DWK).[49] Both decisions resulted in a major increase in the degree of state control and changed the relationship between it and corporate autonomy.

The German Economic Commission, which was regarded as the provisional government of the SOZ, saw strict economic control as an absolute necessity in order to subordinate the companies to the discipline of a planned economy. The Central Control Commission, which was set up for this purpose, was the first centrally organised special commission based on the Soviet model. Its task was the uncovering of 'activities against the state'. In the area of economics, it focused on controlling the planning process, monitoring administrative bodies, removing bureaucracy and uncovering activities causing economic damage. The first action was taken against an 'illegal entrepreneurial conspiracy' in the textile towns of

[48] Rut-Kristin Rößler, *Die Entnazifizierungspolitik der KPD/SED 1945–1948. Dokumente und Materialien* (Goldbach: Keip. 1994), p. 230.

[49] Steiner, *Von Plan zu Plan*, pp. 42–53.

Meerane and Glauchau in Saxony.[50] A group of 40 textile producers was accused of carrying out illegal business transactions and unlawfully enriching themselves. Before judgement was passed, the allegedly massive deliveries of textiles to the western zones were used as a pretext for nationalising the affected companies in June 1948. The entrepreneurs were removed from their positions and replaced by new managers. The show trial that followed served as a means of legitimising state intervention and established practices for transforming property ownership in the industrial sector, which had occasionally been used in the past.

In the steel works of the SOZ, a significant replacement of managers was carried out in a similar way. However, there were no further spectacular trials and a more subtle approach using official or party procedures was preferred. The steel works had already been nationalised and the SED endeavoured to influence the replacement of managers by strengthening its own presence in the company. The company party organisations and the personnel directors that were appointed by the SED executive of the respective Land strongly influenced the filling of positions. The SED party officials in the companies were in close contact with the higher levels of the party apparatus, followed a strict party line and were obliged to adhere to party orders and decisions.[51] In some cases, they cooperated with the state and party-internal control commissions. They focused on disseminating party ideology and on developing 'socialist competition' within the company. The SED groups within the company sometimes also acted as mediators when conflicts between leading party officials and trade union representatives arose. Their activities were an important basis for the implementation of SED party politics in the companies. Traditional structures prevailed much longer in companies where they were not represented.

Most of the important industrial leaders had already fled in 1945 and as a consequence, staff from the lower echelon took over the management of the companies. These temporary managers generally only kept their positions after the 1948 watershed if they were engineers in the technical

[50] Jutta Braun, 'Die Zentrale Kommission für Staatliche Kontrolle. Wirtschaftsstrafrecht und Enteignungspolitik in der Gründungs- und Frühphase der DDR', in Dirk Hoffmann and Hermann Wentker (eds), *Das letzte Jahr der SBZ. Politische Weichenstellungen und Kontinuitäten im Prozeß der Gründung der DDR* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2000), pp. 169–171; Thomas Horstmann, *Logik der Willkür. Die Zentrale Kommission für Staatliche Kontrolle in der SBZ/DDR 1948–1958* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2002), pp. 161–163.

[51] Hübner, Durch Planung zur Improvisation (1999), p. 212.

department. Otherwise, the SED and administration bodies replaced them with loyal party members who could prove they were following the party line: long-standing party activists were given managerial positions, even if they did not have the required expertise. A particularly striking example was the journeyman tailor Helmut Hensel who became director of the Maxhütte in 1947 and in 1950 took on the same position in the Hennigsdorf steel works.[52] However, at that time, the factory director required the ability to negotiate when conflicts arose within the factory rather than technical expertise. At the same time, staff with a National Socialist past could hold onto their positions if they could stand the pressure within the company and especially if they distinguished themselves as SED supporters loyal to the party.

Conclusions

This article criticises the prevailing assumption in the literature about the political power vacuum in the companies and its consequences. In particular, it questions the relevance of a revolution from below by focusing on personnel issues. There were indeed social movements in the SOZ but they were generally short-lived and quickly taken over by public or party authorities.

Within the movements themselves, greater emphasis must be placed on the individual interests of the players and the motivational basis of their initiatives. Their main objective was economic reconstruction. For the antifascist commissions, this meant influencing the urban environment, while the works councils concentrated on reinforcing their companies. This approach was often interpreted as 'company egoism' by the dirigiste Länder administrations and the German communists who were striving for dominance. The works councils focused mainly on preventing dismantlement and securing production for reparations, aiming in both cases to ensure the survival of the company. However, there were many traditional connotations: the National Socialist notion of commitment to the company community was so successful that the term 'Gefolgschaft' (allegiance) was still used in post-war documents. Furthermore, anti-Soviet sentiments were much more common than the will to achieve an antifascist restructuring.

[52] Boldorf, *Governance*, pp. 114–118.

The most important finding of this article is that the personnel changes in company management were not really caused by a grass-roots movement but by a revolution from above that did not take effect directly after the end of the war but only after some time had passed. The article shows that a comprehensive renewal of personnel could only take place after the SED had established itself at the pivotal points of the political post-war regime. Other preconditions were that the party had established its own control instances, dominated the public administrations and, above all, had strengthened its presence in the companies by establishing the company party organisations and by placing their membership in key positions, for example in the personnel departments.

After 1948, almost all of the key positions in the larger industrial companies, e.g. the factory or personnel directorship, were held by members of the SED. At the same time, the high fluctuation of personnel was taken advantage of to gradually replace management, including department heads and foremen, by party members. This approach resulted in managerial positions being given to underqualified persons. When managerial positions were filled, there was always a conflict between giving the position to an incompetent party official or to an expert without party affiliation.[53]

By introducing a comprehensive control system, the SED safeguarded their ability to control the economy and the society. In the VEB, party representatives reported to the superior instances on a regular basis and applied party discipline, party orders and party control in their area of responsibility. The surveillance apparatus was not established until 1950, when the new Ministry for State Security concentrated all control functions in its economics department. Because SED membership was often enough to prove loyalty to the party, many former NSDAP members were able to return to managerial positions in the 1950s on the strength of their new party membership cards.[54]

[53] Jeschke, *Aus der Geschichte des Chemiewerkes Schwarzheide*, p. 208.

[54] Frank Schulz, 'Elitenwechsel in Industrieunternehmen im Wirtschaftsraum Leipzig von 1945 bis Anfang der fünfziger Jahre', in Werner Bramke and Ulrich Heß (eds) *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft in Sachsen im 20. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 1998), p. 217.

France After the Liberation: The Labour Movement, the Employers and the Political Leaders in Their Struggle with the Social Movement

Xavier Vigna

The French defeat in the spring of 1940 and the ensuing German occupation, as well as the establishment of the authoritarian Vichy regime, made it theoretically impossible for social movements to emerge; that is to say, to allow the development of mobilisation(s) and challenge(s) to authority within companies and/or against any aspect of government policy. However, in the summer of 1940 and *a fortiori* from 1941 onwards, resistance movements were born precisely because of their ability to convey the discontent of the French society and to use its momentum.[1] In this sense, the French Resistance undoubtedly was a social movement, whose members were leading a 'normal' life as civilians under occupation whilst also

[1] François Marcot, 'Les Résistants dans leur temps', in idem (ed), *Dictionnaire historique de la Résistance* (Paris: Robert Laffont, coll. Bouquins, 2006), p. 46.

X. Vigna (✉)
Université de Bourgogne, Dijon, France

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leading a clandestine life as members of the Resistance. It intended to both reform the country and preserve its republican character.[2] It had a strong working-class component: Working-class resistance fighters organised a number of strikes, although they were prohibited. Two corporations, railway workers (especially those in repair workshops) and miners, were distinguished by going on strike repeatedly. Amongst the miners, particularly in the North, patriotism and a class consciousness merged and led to a large strike between 27 May and 9 June 1941, which gathered up to 100,000 strikers.[3] After this initial outburst, two other waves of strikes hit the coalfields in 1942 and 1943.

The failure of the June 1942 Relief (la 'Relève'), which was initially meant to encourage French workers to volunteer for work in Germany, forced Vichy to requisition labour from September onwards. In fact, in the following three months, 200,000 Frenchmen were forcibly recruited and sent across the Rhine. Finally, the 16 February 1943 Act established the compulsory labour service ('Service du travail obligatoire', STO). In total, 650,000 men were affected from September 1942 to the summer of 1944; young people under 25 constituted more than two thirds of the workforce. What is more, workers were overrepresented as they made up 54 per cent of this workforce, while they only constituted 31 per cent of the male population over 14. These deportations caused great hostility and led to a strengthening of the conflict mood.

Therefore, the resistance in factories combined two intimately interrelated aspects: a patriotic one directed against the German occupiers (present in the whole country since November 1942) and the traitors of the Vichy government, but also a social aspect directed against employers accused of a range of different things: taking advantage of the war to fire workers or to send trade unionists to Germany to get rid of them, increasing working rates and being largely responsible for the significant deterioration of working conditions. As a matter of fact, this double critique was taken up by the illegally restructured trade union movement (the General Confederation of Labour—CGT—though forbidden, was reunited in April 1943) and was adapted by the resistance movements. Indeed, the

[2] Claire Andrieu, 'La Résistance comme mouvement social', in Michel Pigenet and Danielle Tartakowsky (eds), *Histoire des mouvements sociaux en France de 1814 à nos jours* (Paris: La Découverte, 2012), pp. 415–417.

[3] For all these events, see Xavier Vigna, *Histoire des ouvriers en France* (Paris: Perrin, 2012), pp. 143–161.

program of the governing body of the French Resistance, the National Council of Resistance, adopted in March 1944, called for the establishment of a 'true economic and social democracy' once the country was liberated. Even better, it advocated for a 'right of access, in the context of companies, to leadership and management functions for workers with the necessary qualifications' and at the national level called for 'the participation of workers in the management of the economy'.

When Allied troops liberated the country on 18 August 1944, the CGT (the oldest—1895—and dominant union) and the French Confederation of Christian Workers (CFTC, established in 1919) called for insurgency strikes. On the one hand, this participation of workers in the Liberation strengthened the overall assumption that workers symbolised the Resistance, and on the other hand it triggered a diffuse aspiration to try the traitors, to purge the country of its corrupt elites and to build a new democratic regime that would finally acknowledge and protect the working class. In this sense, the summer of 1944 saw a social movement that was altogether extremely powerful, mobilised and armed and that intended to fundamentally transform French society and its political organisation.

This social movement was supposed to find an echo in a political left, which dominated political life at the end of the war when it benefitted from an extreme weakening of employers whose organisations were being completely remodelled. The interesting thing about the French situation between 1944 and 1948 is how these aspirations and mobilisations, including the ones that had emerged amongst the workers during the Liberation, were contained by employers, smothered in 1945–1946 and then repressed by the centre-left coalition in power in 1947–1948.

The Liberation and the Workers' Aspirations: 1944–1945

The Cleansing

The Liberation, which took place during the summer and the autumn of 1944 depending on the region, made employers fearful of working-class explosion. This form of 'Great Fear' sometimes led them to go into hiding or at least to choose discretion, while the interim government struggled to assert its authority. Some company managers were simply driven away during a worker-led purge. Usually the top echelons of the company

management were targeted, especially managers and foremen who were blamed for the deterioration of working conditions.

Two parallel processes were taking place. On the one hand, company staff exposed all of their grievances and demanded sanctions up to and including dismissal. This kind of spontaneous purging happened most often during the Liberation and sometimes brought employees and armed Resistance fighters together who did not hesitate to arrest engineers or business managers, especially in the Languedoc-Roussillon[4] and in the North, where some executives were taken from their homes and paraded under the jeers of the locals.[5] In the Rhône-Alpes region around Lyon, 113 leaders of industrial or commercial enterprises were arrested. Nine of them were managers of institutions with more than 500 employees, including Marius Berliet, the head of an important trucking firm.[6] In the Cher department, hostility was so strong that it led to the execution of six managers.[7] In fact, veritable class hatred erupted caused by the accumulation of successive working-class defeats since 1938 and fuelling a form of social movement laced with fierce hostility. In the North, the Commissioner of the Republic Francis-Louis Closon noted a 'base desire for justice commingling past fears, contained hatred and the age-old class opposition that the contradictions of the [German] Occupation could not but strengthen'.[8] On the other hand, the authorities carried out a purge through the establishment of regional inter-professional purging committees (or commissions) in industrial and commercial enterprises. These committees reviewed

[4] Rolande Trempé, 'Comités mixtes à la production, comités patriotiques d'entreprise: leur rôle dans la naissance des comités d'entreprises', in Centre des archives du monde du travail (ed.), *L'enfance des comités d'entreprise. De leur genèse dans les conditions de la défaite de 1940 à leur enracinement dans les années 1950* (Roubaix: Centre des Archives du Monde du Travail, 1997), p. 138f.

[5] Etienne Dejonghe and Daniel Laurent, *Libération du Nord et du Pas-de-Calais* (Paris: Hachette, 1974), pp. 157–158.

[6] Hervé Joly, 'L'épuration économique a bien (provisoirement) existé: l'exemple de la région Rhône-Alpes', in Marc-Olivier Baruch (ed.), *Une poignée de misérables. L'épuration de la société française après la Seconde Guerre mondiale* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), pp. 310–312.

[7] Jean-Louis Laubry, 'Les comités d'épurations dans les entreprises des régions de Limoges et d'Orléans (1944–1945)', in Marc Bergère (ed.), *L'épuration économique en France à la Libération* (Rennes: PUR, 2008), p. 194.

[8] Francis-Louis Closon, *Commissaire de la République du général de Gaulle. Lille, septembre 1944—mars 1946* (Paris: Julliard: 1980), pp. 124–125; see also the testimony of Edmond Le Garrec, '37 années aux usines Renault', in *De Renault Frères constructeurs d'automobiles à Renault Régie Nationale, bulletin de la section d'histoire des usines Renault* 2:9 (December 1974), pp. 74–89; thanks to Nicolas Hatzfeld for that reference.

cases brought in front of them by companies, their staff or the liberation committees, and suggested courses of actions to be ultimately decided on at the regional level by the Commissioner of the Republic. The latter could also sequester company assets. Even a company like Peugeot, in which the boss Jean-Pierre Peugeot had established an internal team responsible for sabotage after which he had to flee to Switzerland to escape the Gestapo, was concerned with the cleansing procedures. At the Sochaux factories, no fewer than 14 engineers, foremen and team leaders were implicated, including the deputy directors of the foundry and of mechanical engineering, as well as the director of mechanical engineering. Six of them were finally dismissed, including the head of technical services.[9] Similarly, 52 workers were investigated in January 1946 for having voluntarily gone to work in Germany.

A great number of local and sectorial studies converge to highlight both the extent of the cases submitted for review and a bitter-sweet conclusion. The Commissioners of the Republic, including Yves Farge in Lyon, Raymond Aubrac in Marseille or Jacques Bounin in Montpellier did sequester many assets. But the local inter-professional purging committees (CRIE) showed a relative leniency. In the Gironde department around Bordeaux, for example, 31 proceedings were brought against senior staff members resulting in only 11 sanctions with no dismissals, versus 41 against workers and employees which led to 36 dismissals.[10] At the national level, the inter-professional commission convicted 191 business owners out of 1342 reviewed cases.[11]

However, many workers were convinced that the purge had failed. In the northern mines, all the managers were rehired except for three who had retired; 40 engineers were subject to a temporary suspension and were relocated, particularly to the German Saarland. In total, out of over 800 cases examined in the North, the purge resulted in two dismissals, 18 suspensions, 11 relocations and 11 demotions. 'Had they wanted bloodshed in the basin that they would not have acted otherwise,' concludes Etienne

[9] *Comité interprofessionnel d'épuration dans les entreprises industrielles et commerciales de la région Bourgogne Franche-Comté*, Côte-d'Or, 1187 W 95, Archives départementales (AD).

[10] Sébastien Durand and Philippe Souleau, 'L'épuration professionnelle et financière des entreprises girondines', in Marc Bergère (ed.), *L'épuration économique en France à la Libération*, op. cit. (Rennes: PUR, 2008), p. 139.

[11] Philippe Mioche, 'Les entreprises', in Philippe Buton and Jean-Marie Guillon (eds) *Les pouvoirs en France à la Libération* (Paris: Belin, 1994), pp. 77–95.

Dejonghe.[12] In fact, disappointment and even bitterness prevailed amongst the working class, who exhibited latent discontent manifested in many strikes until the summer of 1945. This was the case for the mines, but also for several companies in the Loire department (around Saint-Etienne), where it often led to the departure of undesirable executives.[13]

The Birth of Labour Councils

Workers' mobilisation during the liberation also took the shape of various workers' councils, which sprang from the evanescence of business leaders or from their ousting following sequestration. These councils, which were mainly concentrated in the southern half of the country, emerged in three main forms. First of all, joint production committees appeared, especially in the Toulouse region from August 1944 on, first in the aerospace industry and in other branches, eventually involving several neighbouring departments. These committees were intended to perform purging tasks, as well as to foster increased industrial output.[14] In this sense, they were the equivalent of the British *Joint Production Committees* created in 1942.[15] They were encouraged by the interim government. On 6 October 1944, Charles Tillon, the Communist Air Transportation Minister, extended them to all aircraft factories, and on 25 January to boatyards and to French Navy establishments in particular, so that a total of about 90 plants eventually hosted joint production committees, which were the only legal kind.[16]

The second strategy involved patriotic business committees, which were made up of the management (executives and engineers) but also of the companies' union officials. In the Loire department, for example, the departmental CGT Union pushed for the creation of such committees to develop the manufacture of war supplies as early as late November 1944. Finally, a departmental patriotic committee was established on 11 January 1945, bringing together five business leaders, two engineers, two

[12] Etienne Dejonghe and Daniel Laurent, *Libération du Nord et du Pas-de-Calais*, p. 239.

[13] *Report of Prefect Monjauvis*, 22 February and 16 March 1945, F$^{1\ CIII}$/1220, Archives nationales (AN).

[14] Herrick Chapman, *L'Aéronautique. Salariés et patrons d'une industrie française, 1928–1950* (Rennes: PUR, 2011 or. ed. 1991), pp. 315–319.

[15] Geoffrey G. Field, *Blood, Sweat and Toil. Remaking the British Working Class, 1939–1945*, (Oxford: UP, 2011), pp. 93–94.

[16] Rolande Trempé, *Comités mixtes à la production, comités patriotiques d'entreprise.*

technicians and six workers to 'help workers to create and foster a patriotic production attitude'.[17] Similarly, a patriotic business committee created within the Etablissements Rochet Schneider in the Rhône department (around Lyon), which integrated workers, technicians and executives, was said to be 'actively involved in the management of the company'.[18] In fact, such organisations were proliferating in the Loire, the Isère and especially in the Rhône department, the latter having about 200 by March 1945.[19]

Finally and most importantly, management committees appeared that did away with existing directions and imposed a form of workers' control over businesses. This situation notably involved 15 metallurgical companies of the Marseille region,[20] as well as about 40 concerns in the Allier department.[21] Thus, without reaching the extent to which the movement had developed in Northern Italy,[22] it nonetheless contributed to a demonstration of the workers' capacity for management and, moreover, it appeared to reinforce the age-old idea of workers' control, particularly with the introduction of new forms of social relations or even with the willingness to involve workers in the day-to-day running of the company. The symbol of this aspiration was the Berliet Company in Lyon, which the workers' management intended to rechristen 'Liberté' (Freedom), an anagram.[23]

Though its leadership never made it a national policy, such worker mobilisation was supported by the involvement of communist trade unionists within the CGT. Similarly, the Communist Party repeatedly reported on these initiatives—as a cautious sort of approval—though in their view, they had two main limitations: first, as far as medium-sized businesses were concerned, they did not hit the bourgeoisie over its head, figuratively speaking; secondly, they corresponded to grass-roots initiatives

[17] *Rapports préfectoraux dated 4/12/1944*, p. 22 and *15/1/1945*, p. 23, AN F$^{1\,CIII}$/1220.

[18] *Letter to Yves Farge, commissioner of the Republic*, 283 W 174, 8/2/1945, AD Rhône.

[19] Rolande Trempé, *Comités mixtes à la production, comités patriotiques d'entreprise*, pp. 142–145.

[20] Robert Mencherini, *La Libération et les entreprises sous gestion ouvrière, Marseille, 1944–1948* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1994).

[21] Antoine Prost, *Autour du Front populaire* (Paris: Seuil, 2006), chapter 7, especially pp. 183–211.

[22] Ferruccio Ricciardi, 'L'échec de la démocratie industrielle dans l'Italie d'après-guerre: l'expérience du "conseil de gestion" chez Alfa Romeo, 1945–1951', in *Histoire, Economie & Société* 1 (2007), p. 127.

[23] Marcel Peyrenet, *Nous prendrons les usines. Berliet, la gestion ouvrière (1944–1949)* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1980).

without any State involvement whatsoever.[24] Nonetheless, they significantly worried employers, who bore the brunt of these initiatives with no way of opposing them. In a letter to General De Gaulle on 15 October 1944, Henri de Peyerimhoff, a former president of the Central Committee of French Collieries, thus stigmatised the 'almost always verbal denunciations, [the] arbitrary imprisonment, [and] attacks—these fortunately rare—' experienced by entrepreneurs. Moreover, he denounced 'the silent and fearful ostracism we feel subjected to'.[25] In fact, during a 3 October interview with the employers' representation committee, an attempt at reconstituting a business organisation, De Gaulle allegedly said: 'I did not see any of you gentlemen in London … Well, after all, you're not in jail.'[26] Though probably apocryphal, these words still indicate the disrepute into which employers had fallen, being suspected or more or less accused of having all collaborated with the German occupiers. But if these workers' initiatives hurt companies, they also upset those socialist politicians most attached to the industrial order of things, including the Minister of Production Robert Lacoste. Indeed, politicians, though eager to fundamentally transform social life and especially to improve the conditions of workers, had taken into account the political balance of power, so these changes hardly managed to meet the expectations of employees.

A Labour Movement Governing the Republic and Imposing the Welfare State: 1945–1946

A Hegemonic Unionised and Political Left

Politically, the balance of power had shifted considerably because the right-wing forces had been completely discredited, whereas the left-wing political parties were being reconstituted and strengthened by the appearance of a new organisation: the *Mouvement républicain populaire* (MRP), which represented a left-wing Christian democrat current. The end of the war allowed for the organisation of several elections, which confirmed the

[24] Philippe Buton, *Les lendemains qui déchantent. Le Parti communiste français à la Libération* (Paris: Presses de la FNSP, 1993), pp. 151–153.

[25] Claire Andrieu et al, *Les nationalisations de la Libération. De l'utopie au compromis* (Paris: PFNSP, 1987), pp. 227–228.

[26] Jean-Noël Jeanneney, 'Un patronat au piquet, septembre 1944-janvier 1946', in *L'argent caché* (Paris/Seuil: coll. Points-Histoire, 1984), p. 248.

political omnipotence of the left. In October 1945, a referendum and general elections placed the three remaining left-wing parties far ahead, with the Communist Party taking 26 per cent, closely followed by the MRP with 25.6 per cent and the *Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière* (the Socialist Party) with 24.6 per cent: the left, though certainly diverse and divided, won three-quarters of the vote! Without going into detail about the general political climate, and without commenting on the exact succession of governments, a coalition of those three parties dominated and took over from General De Gaulle in January 1946. Within this governing coalition there were always several communist ministers, an unprecedented phenomenon in French history.

These three parties became structured and (re)gained certain power. The SFIO was the most weakened one, all the more so as it had done away with all of its militants who had fallen into collaboration. Within the MRP, despite a rather conservative electorate, the different currents of social Catholicism aggregated and sometimes managed to garner some real popular support, like in the North amongst employees, textile workers and miners.[27] But it was the Communist Party whose rise was meteoric: with about 60,000 militants during the liberation of Paris, and already six times as much in December, it grew to between 520,000 and 814,000 members in late 1946.[28] In addition, it had spread significantly throughout the territory, but its centre of gravity had shifted geographically and especially socially to rural and agricultural France, thus creating a relative underrepresentation of workers. The trade union movement experienced a similar growth. The influence and the outreach of the CGT thus grew and the union boasted 3.8 million members in 1945. Half of them worked in industrial federations.[29] As for the CFTC, it claimed 700,000 members, 200,000 more than the Popular Front, but the figure was probably exaggerated. In any event, the union movement had unprecedented power, which in part resulted from the many ties it had with the state apparatus. Thus, 11 of the 30 leaders of the MRP were CFTC card-carriers and 44

[27] Etienne Dejonghe and Yves Le Maner, 'Le Nord—Pas-de-Calais', in Philippe Buton and Jean-Marie Guillon (eds), *Les pouvoirs en France à la Libération* (Paris, Belin: 1994), p. 160.

[28] Roger Martelli re-evaluates the figure of 814,000 members in December 1946 proposed by Philippe Buton; he estimates between 520,000 and 600,000. *Prendre sa carte, 1920–2009*; see *Données nouvelles sur les effectifs du PCF* (Fondation Gabriel Péri—Seine Saint Denis Council, 2010), p. 45.

[29] Antoine Prost, 'Les effectifs de la CGT en 1945', in Antoine Prost, *Autour du Front populaire* (Paris: Seuil, 2006), pp. 215–231.

CFTC members were elected as MPs in the 1945 general elections, mostly on MRP lists.[30] Similarly, four CGT unionists, the communists Ambroise Croizat and Marcel Paul and the socialists Albert Gazier and Robert Lacoste, became ministers. What is more, the new system increased the number of consultative bodies in which unions were strongly represented (Economic and Social Council, National Wages Commission, National Labour Council and so on) and pushed the Bureau of Labour to support negotiations within companies.[31] These links were also found at the local level. In Lyon, for example, the CGT member Dedieu was appointed to be the 'union workers relations delegate' at the Office of the Commissioner of the Republic and conveyed the aspirations of the union to the administration.[32] Across the divide, employers' organisations fared rather poorly: in October 1944 government-seeking interlocutors founded the Employers' Representation Committee. However, it was not always able to mobilise its members and it had to deal with the new General Confederation of Small and Medium Enterprises (CGPME) created at the same time at the behest of Léon Gingembre, which was very wary of major-league employers.[33]

Reforms in Exchange for Mobilisation

In general, the welfare state was experiencing strong growth, just as in other European countries. The social security system was improved by the October and November 1945 executive orders that finally granted employees wide social protection. Both unions and managerial organisations managed the system. Similarly, by the Act of 11 October 1946, occupational medicine was extended to all private companies. The Liberation also brought about a reorganisation of the labour market with its rampant

[30] Gérard Adam, *La CFTC, 1940–1958. Histoire politiques et idéologique* (Paris: Cahiers de la FNSP–Armand Colin, 1964), pp. 131–133 and Michel Pigenet, 'La Libération. Les mobilisations sociales à l'heure de la Reconstruction', in Michel Pigenet and Danielle Tartakowsky (eds), *Histoire des mouvements sociaux en France de 1814 à nos jours* (Paris: La Découverte, 2012), p. 431.

[31] Adam Steinhouse, *Workers' participation in Post-Liberation France* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2004), pp. 59–68.

[32] 283W174, AD Rhône.

[33] Sylvie Guillaume, *Confédération générale petites et moyennes entreprises. Son histoire, son combat, un autre syndicalisme patronal, 1944–1978* (Bordeaux: PU de Bordeaux, 1987), pp. 15–20.

shortage of labour. The wave of nationalisations (Renault, Electricité de France, Gaz de France, Snecma, Charbonnages de France and so on), once again a Europe-wide trend,[34] naturally increased the power of the state but led to only marginal changes to the workers' condition. As a matter of fact, the companies involved never had management committees. However, in the years 1944–1948, the trend concerned 658,000 employees, more than 358,000 of whom were in the collieries only.[35] In addition, the nationalisations allowed the ousting of those executives most compromised by collaboration and permitted to replace them with high-ranking members of the civil services.[36] Similarly, the Parodi-Croizat 1945–1946 ordinances (named after two successive Ministers of Labour), establishing classifications of workers according to wages, are of the utmost importance: they indeed introduced a grid that defined the qualification of labour in various industrial branches. However, these ordinances allowed for payroll deductions based on age or geographic criteria. The Parodi-Croizat ordinances thus violated the 'equal work, equal pay' principle. These wide-ranging policies were complemented for some workers, such as dockworkers and miners, which were regulated by statute and for whom there were important additional benefits.

However, these large-scale reforms were accompanied by an intense mobilisation of the workforce. Indeed, the workers who participated in the Liberation answered the call of the government and of the unions and participated in the reconstruction of the country. Thousands of workers in the Paris region mobilised and went to work in the North or in the South-East of the country. At the call of CGT journal *La vie ouvrière*, groups of reconstruction workers were formed and worked for free on Sundays and holidays. In Lyon, construction workers worked day and night to complete the reconstruction of the bridges in the spring of 1945 even though the administration had announced that reconstruction would take 10 years to complete.[37] The workers therefore fully engaged in the 'battle of production' orchestrated by the government, leftist political parties and trade

[34] Antoine Prost (ed.), 'Les nationalisations d'après-guerre en Europe occidentale', in *Le Mouvement social* 134 (January–March 1986).

[35] Andrieu, *Les nationalisations de la Libération*, p. 358.

[36] Hervé Joly, 'Les élites économiques françaises et allemandes face à la reconstruction: continuités et ruptures', in Dominique Barjot et al (eds), *Les reconstructions en Europe* (Brussels: Complexe, 1997), pp. 249–264.

[37] Grégoire Madjarian, *Conflits, pouvoirs et société à la Libération* (Paris: UGE, 1980), pp. 228–229.

unions. Everything was done to encourage production. For example, in the northern mines, piecework was introduced as early as January 1945, despite the fact that the miners' union in the Pas-de-Calais had banned it as early as September 1944! There was a similar tension under workers' management in Berliet in Lyon. The communist administrator was inspired by the soviet model to promote elite workers and tried to emulate the miner Stakhanov. In addition, the reorganisation of work was accompanied by an increase in the number of timekeepers, whose number rose from 23 in 1945 to 31 in the following year and up to 38 in 1947. This meant there was one for every 188 workers in 1946 against one for 134 in 1947.[38] At the government level, the communist ministers Ambroise Croizat (Labour), Charles Tillon (Armaments) and Marcel Paul (Industrial Production) called for increased yields to circumvent the wage freeze, except that performance-based pay 'benefits workers in the more powerful CGT strongholds, whereas it penalizes women workers whose overexploitation they sanction'.[39] In addition, the battle for production strengthened the incitative role of foremen, although they had sometimes disqualified themselves during the war. Finally, it relied on an unflinching mobilisation of workers, although they were physically exhausted.

Above all, the battle for production and the approximate adoption of Stakhanovism were accompanied by a condemnation of all forms of conflict by the labour movement. To avoid periods of strikes, Thorez gave a major speech in Waziers on 21 July 1945. Having denounced purging disputes with foremen as a sign of 'insufficient efforts by the miners' and 'a morality crisis generally prevailing in our country', he got to the core of his argument: 'produce, produce and produce still more; making charcoal today is the highest form of your class' commitment, your duty to France. Yesterday, sabotage was the [miners'] weapon; now the weapon of the miner is to produce so as to thwart the plans of the conservatives'.[40] The General Secretary of the Communist Party also reiterated those entreaties when the CGT and the communist press repeatedly expressed their opposition to work stoppages: the CGT metalworkers federation, for example, dubbed the strike 'acts of sabotage inspired by Vichy secret agents', while

[38] Peyrennet, *Nous prendrons les usines*, p. 163.

[39] Annie Lacroix-Riz, *La CGT de la Libération à la scission de 1944–1947* (Paris: Editions sociales, 1983), p. 57.

[40] Annette Wieviorka, *Maurice et Jeannette. Biographie du couple Thorez* (Paris: Fayard, 2010), pp. 364–365 and Rolande Trempé, *Les trois batailles du charbon 1936–1947* (Paris: La Découverte, 1989), pp. 216–217.

Les Cahiers du Communisme claimed that 'all workers who are going on strike are anti-communists'.[41] It was therefore not surprising that the administration emphasised its support from the unions. Thus, 'in Ardèche, to fight against the eternally disgruntled, the police prefect of the Ardèche [had] no better allies than the secretaries of the CGT',[42] while the Labour Inspector of the Côtes-du-Nord noted in an official report: 'The CGT makes every effort to assist us in our mission as wardens of the traditional social order.'[43]

Similarly, the bold innovation in the form of various workers' committees was ruined by the provisional government which proceeded with some skill: the committees were extended to the whole country and they were established in companies with more than 100 employees, first to reduce their influence and eventually to dissolve it completely. The rationale for the 22 February 1945 ordinance specified the restrictions on those future committees: 'These committees are not economic decision-making bodies. It seemed essential for the entrepreneur, who is responsible to the whole nation, to retain the corresponding authority within the company. Workers' committees will therefore be solely advisory, except in regard to the management of social benefits'.[44] The CGT protested and called for an expansion of the powers of the committees. What it did get was the Act of 16 May 1946 that lowered the threshold for creating workers' committees from 100 to 50 employees and gave union candidates a monopoly in the first election round. However, in a circular dated 31 July 1946, Ambroise Croizat, the Communist Minister of Labour, reaffirmed that the committee must act according the company's interests and analyse wages in their economic aspect. The committees therefore remained weak, unable to interfere in the organisation of work and left with meagre powers. In addition, immigrant workers were deprived of any right to vote.[45] The committees certainly deprived the management of control over social benefits, but the higher echelons were dead set against any way the employees could scrutinise the day-to-day running of the company.

[41] Madjarian, *Conflits, pouvoirs et société à la Libération*, p. 435 note 73.

[42] *Undated note to the minister compiling reports by the prefects of Ardèche, Drôme, Haute-Savoie, Savoie and Loire*, AN F 1^{cIII} 1219.

[43] Mioche, *Les entreprises*, p. 86.

[44] Quoted by Jacques Le Goff, *Du silence à la parole. Une histoire du droit du travail des années 1830 à nos jours* (Rennes: PUR, 2004), p. 365.

[45] Adam Steinhouse, *Workers' participation in Post-Liberation France* (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2001) pp. 90–100.

However, the metallurgical industry was determined to fight 'for the strictest application of the legislation'.[46] In contrast, some companies, such as Citroën, simply refused to create committees. The creation of workers' committees therefore meant a regression of the prerogatives that had been obtained by management committees or even by simple advisory committees. Hence, their fate in the various companies involved was sealed. Starting from 1947, most companies were returned to their owners.

Disillusionment and Bitterness

Faced with these developments the workers very quickly made their disillusionment and bitterness known. As early as 15 March 1945, the Prefect of the Isère department indicated the magnitude of the issue on the first page of his bimonthly report:

> The working and middle classes in the cities […] feel that after September 1944 instead of the Revolution that everyone had hoped for or feared but which all had expected we were given a Restoration under the guise of reestablishment of the Republican Rule of Law. […] Insufficient food supplies cause ever more violent recriminations. Warning signs of a deep agitation about that subject are visible every day: more numerous strikes, massive demonstrations innumerable petitions sent by the trade unions. The mere fact that the department which was amongst the most resistant [to the Germans] in France is treated worse than many others helps to maintain and develop this agitation. A rather disturbing symptom is that the CGT cadres, who do their utmost to prevent that the rising exasperation of workers that manifested itself in protests, are ever more clearly overwhelmed. In a word, the working masses are not only becoming detached from the Government, but seem ready overtly to fight it.[47]

As we have already pointed out, this detachment of the working classes, mobilised in the Resistance and later in the battle for production, stemmed from the weakness of purging in companies, as well as from the nagging problem of low food supply. Workers also felt alienated by big geographical differences in wage levels. For example, in Doubs, the workers in Besançon

[46] Danièle Fraboulet, *Quand les patrons s'organisent. Stratégies et pratiques de l'Union des industries métallurgiques et minières, 1901–1950* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2007), p. 332.

[47] AN F 1^{cIII} 1219.

demanded wage parity with those in Dijon. The Prefect also called for 'a revision of these decisions […] if we want to avoid very serious agitation among the working class'.[48] The feeling was further fuelled by the persistent difficulties in food supply, which *worsened* before the spring of 1948, that is to say almost three and a half years after the liberation of the territory. Indeed, on the one hand, rationing disappeared only very gradually; potatoes were freely available as early as July 1946, but butter and milk were not until April 1949. On the other hand, the bread rations decreased steadily from 350g per person per day in 1944–1945 to 200g from September 1947 to May 1948![49] Naturally, the persistence of rationing fostered a black market to which workers had little access, because salary increases, especially in the autumn of 1944 and in July 1946, did not follow the skyrocketing prices. Thus food supply remained a nagging problem as food costs made up 80 per cent of workers' budgets in 1946! In this context, it is apparent how the workers' conditions and standard of living continued to deteriorate.

To demonstrate their disillusionment and bitterness, the workers oscillated between *exit* and *voice*, to borrow Albert Hirschman's telling distinction.[50] Absenteeism was indeed admittedly explicable by a certain exhaustion of the workers, but its generalisation and especially its increase also reflected a distance that workers maintained from the supposedly new economic elites. In the mines, for example, it reached a very high level in 1946–1947 and in the North it rose to 35.24 per cent in August 1948![51] Similarly, despite a supposed workers' management at the Berliet company, the number of simulated work-related accidents or absenteeism of rural workers during the summer months remained high.[52] Moreover, despite the unions' instructions, protest movements erupted periodically, mainly over wage and food supply demands, as in May 1945 in the North or around St-Etienne and Lyon.[53] In July 1946, workers' unrest reached a

[48] *25/5 and 26/6/1945*, AN F 1^{cIII} 1217 reports; see also Steinhouse, *Workers' participation in Post-Liberation France*, pp. 126–127 about demonstrations in Lorraine.

[49] Dominique Veillon and Jean-Marie Flonneau (eds), *Le temps des restrictions en France (1939–1949)* (Cahiers de l'IHTP, 1996), pp. 32–33.

[50] Albert Hirschman, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1970).

[51] Adam Steinhouse, *Workers' participation in Post-Liberation France*, p. 198; and Trempé, *Les trois batailles du charbon 1936–1947*, p. 190.

[52] Peyrenet, *Nous prendrons les usines*, pp. 90–91.

[53] *Rhône and Loire Police Prefects reports*, 16/5 and 18/5/1945, AN F$^{1\ CIII}$/1225 and 1220.

national scale. On 1 July, the police reported that 8000 workers were on strike at the Peugeot factory in Sochaux 'without union orders'. The movement quickly spread to Paris, Lyon, the North and other parts of the country throughout the month of August.[54] This upheaval coincided with the first appearance of the National Confederation of Labour (CNT), which resulted from a split within the CGT led by anarcho-syndicalists. They were particularly strong in the North, Toulouse and Lyon (including at Berliet), where their presence gave rise to violent clashes. Faced with this labour uprising, the communist militants of the CGT denounced what they saw as most obnoxious Trotskyist unrest.[55]

Conclusion

Tensions reached a high point in the spring of 1947, when the CGT tried in vain to break a strike at the Renault plant, led by Trotskyist militants.[56] It forced the CGT and the PCF into a painful turn against government policy, which sped up the ousting of the communist ministers from the government in early May 1947. This departure precipitated an explosion of a social conflict in 1947–1948, with very sharp local variations (Lorraine and Clermont-Ferrand in 1948). This conflict was mainly reflected in the so-called insurrectional strikes of November–December 1947[57] and later in the miners' strike that lasted from September to November 1948. For the Communist Party, these strikes were certainly due to the fear of seeing the workers distancing themselves and later due to Soviet instructions. However, they had at least as much to do with a deep anger of the working class against economic and political elites (including the socialists), and in particular against management practices in firms which remained harsh, especially in the mines. It looked as if, after the restoration of the economic

[54] See *RG reports*, 1, 9, 13, 20, 30/7 and 2 and 5/8/8 1946, AN F^{1a}/3371.

[55] See the clinically unbiased testimony of Roger Linet, *CGT: Lendemains de guerre 1944–1947* (Paris: Hachette, 1995), pp. 134–143.

[56] Philippe Fallachon, 'Les grèves de la Régie Renault en 1947', in *Le Mouvement social* 81 (October–December 1972), pp. 111–142 and Cyrille Sardais, 'Autopsie d'une négociation. Le règlement de la grève d'avril-mai 1947 à la Régie Renault', in *Le Mouvement social* 232 (July–September 2010), pp. 47–73; Conversely Tuong-Vi Tran's analysis: 'The Failure of the French Tripartite Experiment in May 1947', in *European History Quaterly*, 42:2 (2012), pp. 278–279 is incorrect as to the position of the Communist Party.

[57] Robert Mencherini, *Guerre froide, grèves rouges. Parti communiste, stalinisme et luttes sociales en France. Les grèves "insurrectionnelles" de 1947–1948* (Paris: Syllepse, 1998).

order, which was hardly transformed by nationalisation, after the reconstitution of the employers' guild (its central command, the *Conseil national du patronat français*, was born in January 1946) and while living conditions remained catastrophic, a disgruntled working class clearly intended to show its resentment but also its might. This ambivalence is particularly evident in the great violence that emanated from these strikes, marked by recurrent clashes between the workers and the police but also between strikers and non-strikers, which contributed to an atmosphere of civil war. Examples of this violence include the shooting that left three people dead at the Valence Train Station in December 1947, or the shots fired against miners in Firminy, Merlebach and Alès in 1948, as well as the 2900 men mobilised in Clermont in June 1948 and the 60,000 policemen and soldiers riding battle-tanks, reoccupying the miners' settlements and then the mineshafts in the North in the autumn of 1948.[58] These multiple clashes partly re-enacted the fighting between workers and governmental forces during the German occupation: in Firminy, it was the former FTP resistants who sided with the miners against the police on 22 October 1948, while in the coalfield of Alès, a woman, probably Italian, spat in the face of a police lieutenant, slapped him and shouted: 'You're a dirty Kraut.'[59] In the end, 1375 people were arrested in the autumn of 1947 as a result of strikes, 40 per cent of them in the Paris region. On 12 November of the following year, when the strike was not over yet, 1041 miners were already under arrest, half of them in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais department,[60] and hundreds of foreign workers, notably Polish and Italian ones, had been deported.

Those two years are therefore a time of workers' mobilisation repressed by the government, in which the socialists played a central role. In this sense, the years 1947–1948 show a social movement broken by one of the main components of the labour movement: the Socialist Party. The mobilisation also caused very harsh judicial repression, marked by long prison sentences, often increased on appeal.[61] Above all, just as they fostered a new split within the CGT with the creation of Force Ouvrière, they gave rise to an anti-communist purge in the State apparatus as well as in

[58] See the DCRG leaflet: *Genèse et déroulement des grèves de novembre et décembre 1947*, February 1948, AD Rhône 668W91, pp. 11–16 as well as the private papers of Jules Moch, socialist interior minister, AN 484 AP/14 to 19.

[59] *Declaration of lieutenant Emile Lefranc*, s. d., AN 484AP/18.

[60] AN 484AP/19.

[61] 3U2144 and 2146, AD Rhône.

businesses, be they nationalised (especially in the collieries) or not: a series of communist cadres was evicted. Finally, for the traditional economic elites, these workers' strikes were by and large a perfect opportunity: although they caused very violent clashes in and around businesses, these workers' defeats allowed the restoration of the authority of management and an increasing tightening of the reins over the following two years.[62] Hence, they concluded a cycle of *anni horribiles* for employers, who had seen their authority falter and their property threatened after the Liberation. In the name of anti-communism, a fraction of the labour movement and the left in power had restored the traditional economic elites in exchange for a few reforms. So while everything had seemed bound to change, it ended up being back to business as usual, almost as if nothing had happened.

[62] Notably at the Peugeot plant in Sochaux. Cf. Nicolas Hatzfeld, *Les gens d'usine. 50 ans d'histoire à Peugeot—Sochaux* (Paris: Les Editions de l'Atelier, 2002), pp. 213–217.

Social Movements and the Change of Economic Elites in Europe After 1945. The Belgian Case

Rik Hemmerijckx

The world wars of the twentieth century have always been considered as rifts in history, as moments of change. The example of the First World War, with the disappearance of the European Old Regimes, the breakthrough of communism in Russia and the broadening of the democracies in Western Europe are all significant for this proposition. The outcome of the Second World War is another moment of change, but here views are much more divergent and certainly in Western Europe tendencies of change alternate with apparent tendencies of continuity. The example of the Belgian case and the way in which social movements, born out of the resistance to German occupation, succeeded or failed to impose themselves as motors of change in the post-war years are significant in this way.

The resistance in Belgium was never a unified force and was, in fact, more like a conglomeration of different groups and organisations. One group particularly interests us because of its potential as an agent of

R. Hemmerijckx (✉)
Emile Verhaerenmuseum, Sint-Amands, Belgium

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fundamental transformation of the post-war order: namely the trade union movement and the different ways it expressed itself.

The trade union movement in Belgium has always been organised along political-ideological axes: apart from the socialist trade union movement, there is a Catholic organisation of trade unions and even a small organisation of liberal trade unions. The socialist and Catholic trade unions became mass-movements in the aftermath of the First World War, and by the end of the 1930s, they had established themselves as recognised social powers.[1] In 1938 the socialist and Catholic unions had some 581,000 and 325,000 members respectively. This corresponded with a degree of trade unionism of circa 36 per cent.[2] A series of communist trade union committees operated simultaneously with the dominant socialist and Catholic unions, mainly in the Walloon mining industry, but these were dismantled by 1936. Another important element necessary for understanding the growing power of the trade unions is the very specific function of Belgian trade unions. The unions were the official channels of provision for unemployment insurance for their members, and they were even put in charge of the organisation of this system by the Belgian state.[3] Typical for socialist trade unionism was its close link to the Socialist party. All members of the socialist trade unions were automatically enlisted in the party, and many trade union leaders were elected to parliament on the Socialist ticket. With the growing power of the unions, the employers were forced to recognise them as representatives of the workers. Not without difficulties, a practice of collective bargaining was set up on branch level with the creation of the first committees for collective bargaining from 1920 onwards. Although different strike movements frequently broke out in those years, trade union action became more and more determined by the regulations of collective bargaining. The general strike of 1936 was important because it enforced some important social demands (paid holidays, etc.), but at the same time it extended collective bargaining

[1] Jozef Mampuys, 'De christelijke vakbeweging', in Emmanuel Gerard (ed.), *De Christelijke Arbeidersbeweging in België, 1891–1991* (Leuven: Universitaire Pers, 1991), pp. 164–208; Leo Michielsen, *Geschiedenis van de Europese Socialistische Arbeidersbeweging* (Ghent: Masereelfonds, 1980), pp. 256–258.

[2] Kurt van Daele, 'De ontwikkeling van het sociaal-economisch overleg in het interbellum. De syndicale macht in de export gerichte sectoren als een verklarende factor', in *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis* XXXIII: 1–2 (s. d.), p. 133.

[3] Guy Vanthemsche, *De beginjaren van de sociale zekerheid in België 1944–1963* (Brussels: VUBPress, 1994), pp. 29–30.

to the national intersectoral level with the creation of a national labour conference. In this way, the trade unions directly participated in the making of social policy. The growing influence of the trade union movement provoked a reaction from the employers: in order to counter its influence, the employers tried to create different social initiatives on the factory level, such as separate organisations to pay unemployment benefits and company-based health insurance provisions.[4]

The Belgian system of social organisation and protection was thrown into turmoil in the aftermath of the German occupation of 1940. The German military authorities not only abolished parliamentary democracy and civil liberties; they also wanted to have total control over the different trade union organisations. The right to strike and the system of collective bargaining were abolished, a wage freeze was declared and the payment of unemployment benefits was withdrawn from the prerogative of the unions. The remaining unions lost their financial autonomy and were forced to integrate themselves into a German-controlled unified trade union movement, known as the 'Unie van Hand en Geestesarbeiders/Union des Travailleurs Manuels et Intellectuels' (Union of Manual and Intellectual Workers, UHGA/UTMI). This UTMI, organised along corporatist lines, was the only trade union organisation tolerated by the occupying forces.[5] At the moment of its creation, by the end of November 1940, some of the former pre-war union leaders agreed to participate, but most of them quit the organisation in the course of 1941. As a result of these resignations, membership numbers for the UTMI declined: in the beginning it amounted to some 250,000 members, but by May 1942 its membership was reduced to 109,000. By that time, it can be considered as a totally nazified organisation: Edgar Delvo, a former socialist who joined the Flemish collaborationist party, the VNV (Flemish National Union), became the leader of the UTMI. The Walloon collaborationist Rex-movement of Léon Degrelle was not really interested in obtaining positions of power in the trade union movement. As most members of the main pre-1940 trade unions quit or never joined the organisation, the nazified UTMI was only representative of a small part of the workforce.

[4] Dirk Luyten, *Sociaal-economisch overleg in België sedert 1918* (Brussels: VUBPress, 1995), pp. 17–89.

[5] Jean Neuville, *La CSC en l'An 40. Le déchirement et la difficile reconstruction de l'unité* (Brussels, 1988), p. 351; Wouter Steenhaut, *De Unie van Hand- en Geestesarbeiders. Een onderzoek naar het optreden van de vakbonden in de bezettingsjaren (1940–1944)* (PhD diss., University of Ghent, 1982–1983).

Even the employers were hesitant to recognise it and as the normal ways of industrial bargaining were abolished, the employers preferred to negotiate with the direct representatives of the workers on factory level.[6]

In contrast to the situation during the First World War, industrial production in Belgium was not halted between 1940 and1944, and the economy got largely integrated into the German war economy. Belgian industrialists, however, imposed some restrictions on themselves: production for weapons and ammunition was prohibited, and overall production levels had to be maintained at the pre-war levels. In theory, the value of the exported goods had to be balanced with the value of the imported raw materials or foodstuffs. The main aim was the preservation of the industrial machinery and the maintenance of the Belgian workforce. The last provision fell away with the promulgation of the decrees on forced labour into Germany from the end of 1942 onwards. As food supplies diminished and wages became completely insufficient, social unrest grew steadily during the war. On different occasions, work stoppages and strikes broke out. In order to reduce social tensions, the employers developed different social initiatives in the factories to help workers cope with their daily needs: additional food and clothing were distributed among the workforce. Despite the imposed wage freeze, employers allowed unofficial wage increases from 1942 onwards. In some cases, Belgian industrialists even gave financial support to resistance groups or trade union leaders who were opposed to the UTMI.[7]

The prohibited pre-war trade unions continued to maintain contact through their leaders and reorganised themselves clandestinely. The Catholic trade unions did not openly identify themselves as an organised resistance group, but they were actively preparing for liberation and post-war politics. On the other hand, the socialist trade unions were organised as an active group in the underground movement. They started to publish underground papers in which the German occupation, the creation of the UTMI and the trade union leaders who collaborated with it were heavily criticised. Along similar lines, they prepared for the post-war period and

[6] Dirk Luyten and Rik Hemmerijckx, 'Belgian Labour in World War II: Strategies of Survival, Organisations and Labour Relations', in *European Review of History* 7:2 (2000), pp. 214–215.

[7] Dirk Luyten, 'The Belgian Economic Elite and the Punishment of Economic Collaboration after the Second World War; Power and Legitimacy (1944–1952)', in *Economic History Yearbook* 2 (2010), pp. 97–98; John Gillingham, *Belgian Business in the Nazi New order* (Ghent: Jan Dhondt Stichting, 1977), pp. 57–72.

animated some discussions on the reform of the internal trade union structures and post-war social legislation. Inspired by the British Beveridge Plan, the socialists started to advocate a national social security system.[8] Parallel to these discussions, an informal negotiation group was created with representatives of the socialist and Catholic trade unions and the employers' organisations to discuss post-war social and economic policy. This discussion, which had begun by the end of 1941, led to the conclusion of the so-called Social Pact in April 1944, an agreement that outlined the new conditions for a post-war social policy in order to facilitate reconstructing and starting up industrial activities at the moment of liberation. Among others, this agreement foresaw the introduction of a national social security system for Belgian workers.[9]

The socialist trade union leaders opposed the German occupier, although they were rather reluctant to mobilise the Belgian workers for a direct confrontation with the occupier or the collaborationist groups. They refused to call for worker strikes or direct action against the UTMI or the occupying forces. The main aim was to maintain the organisation with a core of militants on a low level and to deploy them at the moment of liberation in order to take up its pre-war positions. As the workers were confronted with shortages and miserable material conditions, the refusal to stimulate direct action created a certain power vacuum on the factory level during the occupation. In these circumstances, a whole range of committees were organised on the shop floor, all presenting themselves as the nucleus of a newly amalgamated trade union movement. Three movements were of particular importance: the Comités de Lutte Syndicale (Committees for Union Activism, CLS), the Mouvement Syndical Unifié (Amalgamated Trade Union Movement, MSU) and the Syndicat Général des Services Publics (General Union of Civil Servants, SGSP).

On account of its highly visible participation in the resistance, the Belgian communist party had gained much influence and was able to implement intense activity on different levels. As the party had a certain tradition of social agitation and oppositional trade union militancy, and as

[8] Rik Hemmerijckx, *Van Verzet tot Koude Oorlog. 1940–1949: machtsstrijd om het ABVV* (Brussels: VUBPress, 2003), pp. 44–81.

[9] Dirk Luyten and Guy Vanthemsche, *Het Sociaal Pact van 1944. Oorsprong, betekenis en gevolgen* (Brussels: VUBPress, 1995), p. 368; Patrick T. Pasture, 'The April 1944 'Social Pact' in Belgium and its Significance for the Post-War Welfare State', in *Journal of Contemporary History* 28 (1993), pp. 695–714.

their main pre-war competitor, the socialists, were not able to sustain a pronounced level of activities, the occupation provided a unique opportunity for the communists to develop their own trade union activities. In this way, the party created the Comités de Lutte Syndicale (CLS), which became their main instrument to gain influence in the social field. Although the CLS presented themselves as independent, in reality they were led and organised by communist activists. Some of these militants had participated in the communist-led trade union opposition groups of the 1930s. There were active groups in various regions of Belgium, but the main CLS strongholds were located in the capital, Brussels, and the industrial regions of the Walloon part of the country. Their locations were a perfect reflection of the communist presence during the years before the war. The CLS were mainly focused on advocating for worker demands on the factory floor, and they stimulated direct action, such as strikes, slow down actions and even sabotage. During the war, the revolutionary, anti-capitalist discourse was abandoned and transformed in a patriotic narrative. In its propaganda, every strike action was presented as an act of patriotism.[10]

The MSU was in essence a movement of the shop stewards of the pre-war socialist metalworkers' union in the Walloon part of the country, namely the regions of Liège and Charleroi. From the beginning of 1943, the group started to present worker demands and was involved in different actions. The MSU also presented itself as a "syndicat unique", a kind of amalgamated union, independent from all political parties. In order to break away from the pre-war reformist traditions, and vaguely inspired by anarcho-syndicalist theories, it advocated a ban on the combination of political and trade union offices and declared itself a partisan of "direct action". Inspired by the ideas of "planned socialism" of the 1930s, the group published a programmatic statement ("*Pour la Révolution constructive*", 1944) in which it presented itself as the defender of a new economic democracy: a vast programme of nationalisations and the reinstatement of workers' control on various levels of the economy. Worker demands were not to be limited to social matters but had to be extended to economic

[10] José Gotovitch, *Du rouge au tricolore: les communistes belges de 1939 à 1944* (Brussels: Labor, 1992), pp. 246–286; José Gotovitch, 'De "magnats capitalistes" aux "patrons patriotes": Communistes et patronat sous l'occupation', in Serge Jaumin and Kenneth Bertrams (eds), *Patrons, gens d'affaires et banquiers* (Brussels: Le Livre Timperman, 2004), pp. 381–394.

matters. Special attention went to the involvement of workers in social and economic matters at a factory level.[11]

The SGSP, the General Union of Civil Servants, was born out of the pre-war socialist unions of civil servants and public service workers. It had its main basis in the Walloon part of the country (Namur and Liège). Like the MSU and the CLS, it was in favour of trade union independency. It also advocated the nationalisation of the energy sector.

By the end of the occupation, it became clear that these new radical organisations had a real impact on the working populations, especially in Brussels and the Walloon part of the country. Although some sections of the CLS became amalgamated with the MSU and the SGSP, there never emerged a real unity between all the groups.

In various countries, the resistance groups and the social movements to which they were linked played a significant role in the liberation of the country. In Belgium too, liberation had to be the moment for those groups to demonstrate their power and their mobilisation capacity. Inspired by the example of the French and Italian resistance, the Belgian communists and the radical trade union groups called for a general strike. But in spite of these calls, in early September 1944, when the allied troops entered the country, the momentum of liberation was missed because the allied troops conquered the country in just a few days. In these circumstances, the resistance groups only played a secondary role in the liberation of the country.[12] In spite of the presence of the armed partisans and some armed worker groups linked to the MSU, the factories were not occupied by worker committees or resistance groups. The legal Belgian government and the pre-war authorities were able to take over the reins again without major problems. The disarmament of the Belgian resistance, decided on by the government in November 1944, of course caused much protest and even some clashes with the Belgian army in Brussels, but in reality it marked the end of the Belgian resistance as an autonomous military and political force.[13] As King Leopold III had been taken to Germany in May 1944, the constitutional restoration could not be completed immediately. The King's position during the war—he stayed in Belgium

[11] Rik Hemmerijckx, 'Le Mouvement Syndical Unifié (MSU) et la naissance du renardisme', in *Courrier hebdomadaire du CRISP*, 1119–1120 (1986), p. 73.

[12] Martin Conway, *The Sorrows of Belgium. Liberation and Political Reconstruction, 1944–1947* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 58–62.

[13] José Gotovitch, 'Sous la Régence: Résistance et pouvoir', in *Courrier hebdomadaire du CRISP* 999 (1986), p. 32.

and dissociated himself from the Belgian government in London—would become one of the major political issues in the post-war period. In the meantime his brother, Prince Charles, guaranteed the continuity of the royal function.[14]

At the moment of liberation the pre-war authorities, the traditional political parties and trade unions began their activity, but soon they had to face a new reality. The appearance of a fortified communist party and the emergence of the new trade union committees, created during the resistance period, altered the conjuncture. In the months after liberation, the communist party gained much popular support and its membership rose to some 100,000 members in 1945. In order to neutralise this emerging force, the Belgian government (a coalition of Catholics, socialists and liberals) tried to include the Communist Party in its ranks. As the communist party had always been an oppositional party and as the government had to deal with the important challenges of the reconstruction, this experience was not always successful. In November 1944, the party distanced itself from the government because of a conflict over the disarmament of resistance units, but it rejoined a newly created coalition government in February 1945 and continued to assume governmental responsibilities until March 1947.[15]

The political landscape had changed but radicalisation and pressure for renewal were also apparent in the trade union movement. The metal industry of the Liège region had become a bulwark of the MSU and the Walloon mining industry was largely in the hands of the CLS. The 500,000 pre-war socialist trade union members had diminished to some 248,000. It appeared that the socialist trade unions had lost half of their membership, mainly in Brussels and the Walloon part of the country. With some 294,000 members, the Catholic unions, which were dominant in the Flemish part of the country, were able to maintain their positions.

The new trade union committees transformed themselves into a more structured organisation and a formal national leadership was chosen. In this way, the CLS were transformed into the "Syndicats Uniques", which were brought together in a Confédération Belge des Syndicats Uniques

[14] José Gotovitch and Jules Gérard-Libois, *Leopold III: de l'an 40 à l'effacement* (Brussels. L. Pol-His, 1991), p. 328.

[15] José Gotovitch, 'Histoire du Parti Communiste de «Belgique»', in *Courrier hebdomadaire du CRISP* 1582 (1997), p. 28.

(CBSU) by January 1945. Membership of the CBSU reached some 165,000 members in April 1945. Théo Dejace, a communist militant and teacher from Liège, became the leading figure of this movement. The MSU (50,000 members) and the SGSP (52,000 members) formalised their organisations in a similar fashion. André Renard, a former militant of the socialist metalworkers union, became the leading figure of the MSU. André Genot, a militant of the civil servants union in Namur, became the main figure of the SGSP.

The purge of groups and persons who had collaborated with the German occupying forces became one of the problems to deal with in the newly installed Belgian democracy. It was an urgent but difficult problem with implications on different levels of society. The judicial system and police authorities had to deal with popular feelings of revenge and the actions of resistance groups who arrested thousands of people suspected of collaboration. It is evident that this spontaneous persecution was not always in accordance with the official legal system of justice.[16] On the other hand, different organisations had to organise a purge within their own ranks. In the socialist and Catholic unions, a number of leading persons who had joined the UTMI had to be removed from their positions; however, this process was more difficult than it seemed. In some cases, a certain pragmatism was preferred instead of a consistent and principled position. This is the reason why August Cool, the Flemish national leader of the Catholic union, and the leaders of the socialist textile union of Flanders were allowed to stay in function.[17]

Another problem was the persecution of economic collaborators. As already mentioned, in general the Belgian industrialists had tried to avoid direct support of the German war effort.[18] But it was not always clear where pragmatism ended and where collaboration started. In the agitated period after the liberation, the punishment of the economic collaborators became a popular demand and a cause for worker mobilisation. In different factories, purge committees were formed and in some cases strikes broke out to demand the arrest of leading managers. The communist press followed the agitation in the factories on a daily basis and called for direct

[16] Luc Huyse and Steven Dhondt, *Onverwerkt verleden. Collaboratie en repressie in België 1942–1952* (Leuven: Kritak, 1991), p. 312.

[17] Neuville, *La CSC en l'An 40*, p. 351; Rik Hemmerijckx, *Machtsstrijd om het ABVV* (Brussel: VUBPress, 2003), pp. 143–145.

[18] Dirk Luyten, *Burgers boven elke verdenking? Vervolging van de economische collaboratie in België tijdens de Tweede wereldoorlog* (Brussels: VUBPress, 1996), p. 270.

punishment of industrial collaborators. The most striking event was the arrest of a director of the ACEC factory in Herstal by a group of armed partisans in October 1944. In the communist press, this arrest was presented as a kind of 'workers' justice'. The national direction of the CLS immediately called for the confiscation of the factories whose directors had been sentenced for collaboration and demanded direct participation of the personnel in the management of the confiscated factories.[19] But in spite of some sensational cases, the Belgian legal system succeeded in retaining control over the punishment of economic collaborators. A number of cases came to trial and some industrialists were severely condemned.[20] The communist press approved the condemnations but complained that in particular the big industries were able to escape serious retributions.[21] As only a minority of industrialists were put on trial for economic collaboration and because these condemnations never entailed an actual wave of nationalisations, no major changes affecting the Belgian economic elites occurred after 1945.

The same cannot be said for the trade union movement. The new trade union organisations born out of the resistance presented themselves as the driving forces behind a renewal of the Belgian trade union movement. In this way, they advocated a general amalgamation process of Belgian trade unionism. But notwithstanding the attraction of these newborn trade unions, the pre-war unions—mainly the socialists and the Catholics—were able to maintain important positions. The Belgian government still considered the pre-1940 organisations to be the legitimate representatives of the workers. In this way, they also maintained a kind of monopoly position on the different levels of collective bargaining. In the days following liberation, they convened a national labour conference that took some important decisions, such as the increase of salaries by 60 per cent. This was an important psychological victory that the pre-war unions were able to claim for their own. In the same way, they also maintained the right to administer the unemployment benefits of their members. This meant that the new unions born out of the resistance had to force their way into the commissions of collective bargaining. Among the Walloon mineworkers, a number of strikes broke out to obtain the recognition of the "syndicats

[19] *Le Drapeau Rouge*, 12 and 28–29 October 1944.

[20] Dirk Luyten, 'The Belgian Economic Elite', in *Economic History Yearbook* 51:2 (2010), pp. 95–105.

[21] *Le Drapeau Rouge*, 14 March 1945.

uniques".[22] As the pre-war unions had been able to maintain some important positions, in the end, the newly formed organisations in effect had to search for a compromise with these unions.

The traditional unions were not overly keen to enter into any kind of amalgamation process with the CLS. The Catholic unions almost immediately discontinued such negotiations and concentrated on the development and reinforcement of their own organisations. There was also much reluctance among the socialist unions but finally they had to accept a union with their former communist opponents. Relations with the more independent unions (MSU, SGSP) involved much less conflict. In this way, the negotiations about trade union unity ended in a kind of reconstruction of the former socialist trade union movement. Nevertheless, in the newly constructed Algemeen Belgisch Vakverbond/Fédération Générale du Travail de Belgique (General Federation of Belgian Workers, ABVV/FGTB) the new tendencies, grown out of the Resistance, had an important position in the national leadership. The FGTB now declared itself independent from the political parties and, with two out of five representatives, the CBSU-tendency was well represented in the FGTB secretariat.[23] In contrast to the maintenance of economic elites, the Belgian trade union leadership changed to an important degree.

Nonetheless, from the moment of its creation in May 1945, it was obvious that this construction of 'trade union unity' amongst pre-war socialists, communists and the more independent tendencies would not proceed without conflicts. The political-ideological contradictions between socialists and communists had maintained their sharpness. In some important sectors, for example in the mining industry, it was impossible to merge the two rival unions. The strategy of the socialists was to maintain unity with the communist tendency but to diminish the latter's influence gradually within the national FGTB. The December 1945 congress was an important moment because the socialist group succeeded in reducing the communist presence, leaving one seat in the FGTB secretariat to the "unity"-tendency. Théo Dejace became the remaining communist in the national direction of the FGTB. During the period of communist participation in the first post-liberation governments, from February 1945 until March 1947, the conflicts within the national leadership of the FGTB

[22] Luyten and Hemmerijckx, 'Belgian Labour in World War II', p. 224; Hemmerijckx, *Van Verzet tot Koude Oorlog*, pp. 147–148.

[23] Hemmerijckx, *Van Verzet tot Koude Oorlog*, pp. 158–164 and pp. 169–170.

were more or less neutralised. During this period, the communists defended a rather moderate course and were even opposed to strike actions because they could destabilise the government. This attitude stood in contrast with the MSU-tendency of André Renard, which was able to give its support to some strikes in the Liège steel plants, challenging in this way the 'policy of production' and the accompanying wage freeze.[24]

The situation changed when the communist party left the government in March 1947. As the party wanted to organise the opposition to the new government from within the unions, the tensions between communists and socialists in the FGTB became apparent to all. In the climate of the Cold War, the opposition between the two tendencies grew steadily to a climax. The approval of the Marshall Plan by the FGTB leadership in December 1947 led to the complete isolation of Théo Dejace and the communist tendency. The so-called 'strike of the 200,000' in early February 1948 was the final attempt of the communists to instigate a general strike in order to defeat the Belgian government. With the failure of this strike and with the communist coup in Prague only a few days later, anti-communist feelings now became widespread within the FGTB and, as Dejace had resigned from the national secretariat, it was not too difficult for the socialist majority in the FGTB-congress to eliminate the communist faction from the leading echelons of the FGTB. A decisive step was taken towards the 'normalisation' of the Belgian socialist trade union movement.[25]

Still, although the communist "unity"-tendency was thus unable to maintain itself within the FGTB, the same cannot be said of the MSU faction. With his dominant position in the Liège region and his visions on independent trade unionism and the reform of economic structures, André Renard was able to gain support for his positions. During the 1950s, he became one of the major figures in the national leadership of the FGTB and embodied the left wing in the FGTB. With his militant Liège metalworkers union, he can be considered as the continuity of

[24] Conway, *The Sorrows of Belgium*, pp. 330–342; Hemmerijckx, *Van Verzet tot Koude Oorlog*, pp. 215–253; Rick Hemmerijckx, 'The Belgian Communist Party and the Socialist Trade Unions, 1940–1960', in Michael Waller, Marc Lazar, Stéphane Courtois (eds.), *Comrades and Brothers. Communism and Trade Unions in Europe* (London: Frank Cass, 1991), pp. 135–138.

[25] Hemmerijckx, *Van Verzet tot Koude Oorlog*, pp. 257–329; Jules Gérard-Libois and Rosine Lewin, *La Belgique entre dans la Guerre Froide et l'Europe (1947–1953)* (Brussels, Pol-His, 1992), pp. 115–125.

wartime trade union resistance. He played a major role during the general strike against the return of King Leopold in 1950 and during the strike in the winter of 1960–1961. When the 1960–1961 strike turned out to miss its objectives, Renard started to defend more regionalist positions.[26]

Considering the situation in the Belgian trade unions after the war, the radical trade union committees born out of the resistance (CSL, MSU and SGSP) presented themselves as a force at the moment of liberation, but they were never really able to establish themselves as a truly transformative force of post-war society. In effect, they very quickly had to admit that the pre-war organisations and authorities still kept the keys to power in their hands. The whole effort of the Belgian economic policy aimed at the reconstruction of its pre-war production capacity; and in spite of the demands for a planned economy and for some nationalisations (especially the sector of energy production), economic policy in Belgium was largely rebuilt on the capitalist premises of the pre-war period. Pragmatism overpowered every attempt to institute fundamental changes. Even with the communist party present in various initial post-liberation governments, a political majority never emerged to enforce a radical transformation of the Belgian economic system. In 1945 the communists tried to support the creation of trade union-managed production committees in the factories—the so-called 'production committees'—but this idea was only realised in a limited range of places and did not obtain any legal support.[27] Of course there were some important social innovations, such as the introduction of a new national social security system for working people (illness, old-age pensions, benefits for children and unemployment benefits) introduced in December 1944 and the broadening of industrial bargaining towards the level of the factories in 1947.[28] But the basis for this policy had been laid during the war and was the result of a compromise, the so-called "Social Pact", between the traditional industrial and social powers. Respect for the authority of employers and private ownership of the factories were some of the constituent principles of this pact. Thus, the main industries were not nationalised, let alone socialised, and in spite of a certain participation of the trade union movement in economic matters, the capitalist

[26] Pierre Tilly, *André Renard biographie* (Brussels, Le Cri, 2005), p. 810.
[27] Wouter Dambre, *De Ondernemingsraden in België* (Andwerp: Kluwer, 1985), pp. 32–33.
[28] Vanthemsche, *De beginjaren van de sociale zekerheid*, pp. 56–77.

mode of production re-established itself in Belgium as a matter of course. Although in the end, "1944" was not just the continuation of "1940": the social innovations of 1944–1947 introduced a Keynesian approach of economic policy, changing Belgian capitalism into a kind of neo-capitalism with a social touch.

The Dutch Post-war Social Movement and the Elite's Reaction

Sjaak van der Velden

List of Abbreviations

BBA	Extraordinary Decree on Labour Relations
CAO	Collectieve Arbeids Overeenkomst (Collective Labour Agreement)
CBS	Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (Statistics Netherlands)
CNV	Christelijk Nationaal Vakverbond (National Federation of Christian Trade Unions)
CvR	College van Rijksbemiddelaars (Board of Government Mediators)
EVC	Eenheids Vak Centrale (Unity Union)
KAB	Katholieke Arbeiders Beweging (Catholic Labour Movement)
NVV	Nederlands Verbond van Vakverenigingen (Dutch Federation of Trade Unions)
OVB	Onafhankelijk Verbond van Bedrijfsorganisaties (Independent Union of Industrial Organisations)

S. van der Velden (✉)
International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, Netherlands

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Introduction

The post-war period in the Netherlands was a time of reconstruction. Following the prevailing opinion of the time, the Dutch had only one goal. That goal was to restore the economy. In a joint effort, they restored the economy that had suffered so much from the war. The Nazi occupiers had struck a severe blow to economic life by killing or deporting many hundreds of thousands of inhabitants, looting the country and even destroying the arteries of the economy: the ports of Rotterdam and Amsterdam. After the allied victory over Germany, there was a feeling of national unity. The population was supposed to look forward and to put their shoulders to the wheel. There was no time for consideration. Even the victims, the returned Jews and former slave labourers, were supposed to forget and move on.[1,2] After a few days of celebrating the liberation, the impoverished population started working hard to restore what was damaged. They broadly supported the politics of restoration, for the common good. Only a small minority refused to support the new government and was not willing to relinquish the right to fight for a better life.[3] At least, that is what the official ideology sounded like.[4]

In this chapter, I will investigate if this is what really happened. Were there only small signs of unrest that resembled the post-1918 insurrectionary wave of strikes and demonstrations and was the elite really able to contain these? Or did a social movement emerge that wanted to fundamentally change society as it existed? How did the economic and political elite react to unrest in society and were they successful?

The Emergence of Corporatism After the War

In circles within and around the Dutch government in exile in London, there had been discussions about post-war society. Everyone agreed that it would not be wise to restore the pre-war pillarisation and the open class divisions. Members of the political and cultural elite who were detained in

[1] Isaac Lipschits, *De Kleine Sjoa. Joden in Naoorlogs Nederland* (Amsterdam: Mets & Schilt, 2001).

[2] B.A. Sijes, *De Razzia van Rotterdam 10–11 November 1944* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1951).

[3] Jan Juliaan Woltjer, *Recent Verleden. De Geschiedenis van Nederland in de Twintigste Eeuw* (Amsterdam: Balans, 1992), p. 152.

[4] Piet de Rooy, *Republiek van Rivaliteiten. Nederland Sinds 1813* (Amsterdam: Mets & Schilt, 2002), pp. 214–220.

a concentration camp in Sint-Michielsgestel agreed that pre-war divisions should vanish. Union leaders, liberals, Christian democrats, social democrats, artists and scientists participated in these discussions. They were advocates of the Breakthrough (*Doorbraak*), a movement of people who wanted to do away with the ideological boundaries that had divided the Dutch before the war. This cooperation was also considered a continuation of the pretence of unity of the Dutch during the German occupation. That this unity was more of a pretence than a real attitude can be illustrated by the outcome of a survey that was published almost immediately after the war. People in the Western provinces were asked what they thought of the wartime behaviour of a number of groups.[5] According to this survey, the behaviour of medical doctors, priests, vicars and students towards the Nazis was considered 'good' (meaning that they resisted the Nazis) by an overwhelming majority of around 90 per cent of the population. One third of those surveyed thought that public servants and workers behaved in a 'good' way. The causes for this positive outcome must be the three big strikes against the German occupiers that took place in 1941, 1943 and 1944. Factory owners and contractors received the 'good' epithet from only 12 and 3 per cent respectively. So, class boundaries remained intact in the resistance during the war, at least in the opinion of the Dutch people themselves.

Thus, the risk of a divided population had to be eliminated. From the political left to the political right, most members of the ruling parties were convinced that it was a time for a change. The old social relations were to be changed and a more egalitarian society had to be built. They hoped that Dutch society would become less divided once it emerged from the war. Of course, this new egalitarianism would have to be consistent with the existent class-structures. The abolition of class society as such was not debated and in fact the existence of class society was even denied. In the words of a leader of the social democrat union: 'in theory and practice the class struggle has had its day. It has turned from a revolutionary into a reactionary force. Away with it!'[6] The solution of problems in society was to be found in cooperation between all groups and parties.

[5] Jan Romein and Annie Romein, *De Lage Landen bij de Zee. Geïllustreerde Geschiedenis van het Nederlandse Volk* (Utrecht: Uitgeversmaatschappij W. De Haan, 1949), p. 701.

[6] 'De klassenstrijd heeft als theorie en praktijk afgedaan … Zij is van een revolutionaire tot een reactionaire kracht geworden. Dus weg ermee!!', in Paul Coomans, et al., *De Eenheidsvakcentrale (EVC) 1943–1948* (Groningen: H.D. Tjeenk Willink, 1976), p. 167.

This discussion within the elite was not typically Dutch but rather a widespread phenomenon in the West. Different national elites had different opinions but the overall feeling was the same all over Europe and in North America. After all, the memories of the post-1918 revolutions were still very much alive and many feared a repetition and the emergence of communism.[7] It therefore seemed wise to allow labour unions and social democratic parties to participate in the system. This way the antagonism between labour and capital would be denied and softened, not abolished.

The attitude of the majority of the elite was in a sense a continuation of inter-war developments. The interbellum in the Netherlands saw a growing influence of the social democratic and other non-radical parts of the labour movement on public life. Let us sum up a few examples of this growing influence that became more prominent in the aftermath of World War I when the ruling class feared a revolution. In 1919 the government installed a *Hoge Raad van de Arbeid* (High Council of Labour). The Council was a tripartite advisory board of labour unions, employers' organisations and state advisors. The board advised the governments in power on matters of social and economic policy. Although this advice was without imperative, it formed a public acknowledgement of the inspirations of the labour movement. This acknowledgement is also demonstrated in the growing number of employees working under collective agreements. These agreements could even be imposed by the state on entire trades after 1937 to prevent wage competition. From 1923 state mediators intervened and prevented many labour conflicts from developing into strikes.[8]

The plans developed during World War II aimed at expanding the pre-existing legal institutions. Together with a strict wage and price policy this was expected to successfully prevent the expected and feared radicalisation of the working class. How were these plans implemented? Almost immediately after the liberation in 1945, the new Dutch government passed a law on labour relations: the Extraordinary Decree on Labour Relations (BBA, *Buitengewoon Besluit Arbeidsverhoudingen*). This law was strongly influenced by the discussions in London and Sint-Michelsgestel. The BBA delegated all decisions on wages and working hours to the Board of

[7] John Kenneth Galbraith, *A Journey Through Economic Time. A Firsthand View* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1994), pp. 142–150.

[8] John P. Windmuller, C. De Galan and A.F. van Zweeden, *Arbeidsverhoudingen in Nederland* (Utrecht: Het Spectrum Utrecht, 1987), pp. 48–84.

Government Mediators (CvR, *College van Rijksbemiddelaars*). Unions and employers' organisations were granted a statutory right to advise the government through the Foundation of Labour (*Stichting van de Arbeid*), in which both workers and employers were represented. The labour unions and the employers' organisations that were to become important players in the new system gave their backing to the new law. Both from their own backgrounds and interests. The employers welcomed a policy that prevented wages from rising. The labour unions had their own argument. Fearing a recurrence of massive pre-war unemployment, they were convinced that wages should not rise too fast. Following mainstream economic theory, employers and unions jointly considered high wages to have a negative impact on economic development, and thus on employment.

There was also a strong urge towards cooperation between employers' organisations and labour unions. This urge was also a continuation of pre-war developments. As mentioned, before 1940 parliament passed several laws that already created a system of state mediators and compulsory collective agreements for entire industrial sectors. The BBA was the fulfilment of pre-war desires of the union movement to further develop these pre-war regulations. Union leadership considered this to be a clear sign of the recognition of labour's role in society, as a clear victory of the union movement. Many rank-and-file shared this feeling. The confessional unions, for their part, regarded the BBA as a fulfilment of the corporatist desires they had pursued since the 1890s.

In 1950 a new law was introduced amending the BBA and creating a tripartite body to advise the government on general economic policy. This Social Economic Council (SER, *Sociaal Economische Raad*), a continuation of the 1919 High Council of Labour, consisted of 45 members; 15 appointed by officially recognised trade unions, 15 by employers' associations, and the remainder independent experts appointed by the state.

The rigid system of industrial relations that came into being immediately after the war underwent some minor alterations, but in general it remained intact for 25 years.[9] The labour unions that participated in this corporatist system were the same unions that had existed in the pre-war years. The Germans had abolished these, but they were reinstated immediately upon liberation. The Dutch government in exile issued an

[9] Sjaak van der Velden, *Werknemers Georganiseerd. Een Geschiedenis van de Vakbeweging bij het Honderdjarig Jubileum van de Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging (FNV)* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2005), p. 135.

Ordinary Decree as early as September 1944 to restore the organisations of employers and workers that had existed and were officially recognised before the occupation.[10] Contrary to what many had hoped for during the war-time discussions in London and Sint-Michelsgestel, the three officially recognised unions again represented the ideological pillars that had separated Dutch society before the war. Most Roman Catholic workers who wanted to participate in the union movement joined the Catholic Labour Movement (KAB, *Katholieke Arbeiders Beweging*, established in 1909). Protestants joined the National Federation of Christian Trade Unions (CNV, *Christelijk Nationaal Vakverbond*, established in 1909), while socialist workers joined the Dutch Federation of Trade Unions (NVV, *Nederlands Verbond van Vakverenigingen*, established in 1906). During the period 1946 to 1970, the NVV accounted for some 46 per cent of the total membership of these three unions, the NKV for roughly one third, and the CNV for one fifth. These proportions remained remarkably constant throughout those years, with the NVV and CNV each gaining just one per cent at the expense of the NKV. Although the pre-war ideological division returned with hardly any discussion, the three worked closely together. They even formed a so-called *Unie* (union) to express their common goals when negotiating with employers.

Not everyone supported the return of the old divided labour unions. In protest at the restoration of the pre-war social-democratic and confessional unionism, left-wing workers established a fourth union, the *Eenheidsvakcentrale* (EVC, Unity Union), which is said to have been the biggest for a short time. The EVC originated in the southern province of Limburg immediately after the liberation of this part of the Netherlands in 1944. Many workers joined the new union because it promised to put an end to the division of the union movement. Many former members of the social democratic NVV also joined because they were unsatisfied with the questionable attitude many officials of the NVV had shown towards the Germans. In order to keep the organisation intact, these officials had refused to resign during the German occupation and so they forced themselves into cooperation with the Nazis.[11]

[10] 'Besluit van 8 September 1944, Houdende Vaststelling van het Buitengewoon Besluit Vereenigingen van Werkgevers en Werknemers', in Militair Gezag, *Herstelwetgeving. Tekstuitgave van de Wettelijke Regelingen, Uitgevaardigd met het Oog op de Bevrijding van Nederland, vol. 1* (F. Boosten & Stols: Maastricht, 1945), pp. 150–159.

[11] Ger Harmsen and Bob Reinalda, *Voor de Bevrijding van de Arbeid. Beknopte Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Vakbeweging* (Nijmegen: SUN, 1975), p. 205.

In September 1945 some claimed that the EVC already had 170,000 members while the pre-war labour unions were still rebuilding their organisations.[12] The other unions were coming back but the EVC managed to establish a place of its own. The new union initially accounted for one fifth of all union members. The returned pre-war unions, employers and the state unanimously turned their backs on the EVC and openly excluded it from any negotiations. So, the only union that actually put the outcome of the wartime discussions into action and wanted to end pillarisation and division of the union movement was ostracised. The Cold War between the West and the Soviet Union caused a lot of suspicion against people and organisations that resisted existing conditions and relations. This added to the hostile attitude of the existing institutions against the EVC. As a result, the EVC had virtually become a spent force in Dutch labour relations within the seven years after its establishment. The demise of the EVC cannot be attributed only to the resistance offered by competitors and adversaries. There was also a problem with the influence of the Dutch Communist Party (CPN, *Communistische Partij van Nederland*) because this party tried to crush the existing propensity to strike among a lot of workers. The reason for the communist party to act in this way was that it hoped for a place in the new administration.[13] This hope was not as absurd as it may seem. After all, during the parliamentary elections of 1946 well over 10 per cent of the population voted for the party. An unprecedented part of the electorate thus supported the communists. This support can be explained by the role the communists had played in the anti-German resistance and the heroic role of the Soviet Union in the defeat of Nazi Germany. The popularity of the Communist Party tempted some members of the party board to believe that the CPN might soon enter the government. All ideas about a change of the existing capitalist society were replaced by a plea for the economic reconstruction and increased production. In the words of the chair of the party: 'The problem of the reconstruction of the country and the raise of production is the CENTRAL PROBLEM of today's political internal situation'.[14]

[12] Paul Coomans, et al., *De Eenheidsvakcentrale (EVC) 1943–1948* (Groningen: H.D. Tjeenk Willink, 1976), p. 312.

[13] Arnold Koper, *Onder de Banier van het Stalinisme. Onderzoek naar de Gedeblokkeerde Destalinisatie van de CPN* (Amsterdam: Van Gennep, 1984), p. 48.

[14] 'Het vraagstuk van de wederopbouw van het land en de verhoging der productie is het CENTRALE VRAAGSTUK in de huidige politieke binnenlandse toestand', in Paul Coomans, et al., *De Eenheidsvakcentrale (EVC) 1943–1948* (Groningen: H.D. Tjeenk Willink, 1976), p. 176.

The efforts of the CPN to earn acceptance as a reliable political party by resisting strikes within the EVC caused a group of non-communist, left-wing workers to split and form a new union in 1948.[15] This small, left-wing organisation, the Independent Union of Industrial Organisations (OVB, *Onafhankelijk Verbond van Bedrijfsorganisaties*), mainly attracted Rotterdam dockers and fishermen from the North Sea villages of Scheveningen and Katwijk. This cessation thus caused a further weakening of the unity of the union movement instead of strengthening it. The OVB stood in the tradition of a small, pre-war revolutionary union, the National Secretary of Labour (NAS, *Nationaal Arbeids-Secretariaat*, est. 1894). Just like the NAS, the OVB remained only a tiny part of the union movement. It attracted new members by demanding more than the mainstream unions but hardly through an open call for a change of society. Recently, Evert Smit has shown that the Rotterdam dockers, who have as a group boosted many Dutch strike movements for over a century, were mainly interested in better wages and working conditions and not a revolutionary turnover. These dockers were also the workers most attracted by the OVB.[16] The call for a radical change in society never received much sympathy among the ordinary workers, despite the evident hopes among the cadres of the OVB. The same is true for the small groups who criticised the CPN for its moderate attitude such as the Trotskyists of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP, *Revolutionair Communistische Partij*).[17]

In 1950 the momentum for an alternative labour union had disappeared. The communist influence in the EVC had scared off both radicals and social democrats. The first group formed the OVB and the second group returned to the NVV. With the advent of the Cold War, the popularity of radical ideas soon vanished and even became suspicious. The Communist Party, which had denied and even obstructed the short-time, post-war radicalism of some groups of workers, was not rewarded with a seat in the administration. On the contrary, the party was punished for its alliance with the Soviet Union. The CPN had around 50,000 members in 1946 and numbers even increased slightly during the next two years, but soon

[15] OVB, *O.V.B. 30 Jaar, 1948–1978* (Rotterdam: OVB, 1978).

[16] Evert Smit, *De Syndicale Onderstroom. Stakingen in de Rotterdamse Haven, 1889–2010* (Amsterdan: Vossiuspers University of Amsterdam, 2013).

[17] Paul Coomans, et al., *De Eenheidsvakcentrale (EVC) 1943–1948* (Groningen: H.D. Tjeenk Willink, 1976), pp. 183–187.

lost half of its membership. In 1950 only 27,000 members remained while in 1953 the CPN only had a membership of 17,000 left. During the same period the social democratic party membership grew from 69,000 to 89,000.[18]

How Did the Rank-and-File React?

Despite the widespread belief that the Dutch were united in their efforts to restore the economy, many first tried to gain a better life for themselves. There were many good reasons for this attitude. After all, around 140,000 men had experienced slave labour in Germany. Those who had been left behind in the big cities in the western part of the country fell victim to a famine the likes of which the Netherlands had not witnessed for centuries. In the winter of 1944–1945, 20,000 people fell victim to it. On top of that, many houses were destroyed as a result of the numerous bombings by the Nazis and allied forces.[19] It was therefore understandable that many people demanded immediate improvements.

This impatience caused what many within the elite had feared would happen. Almost immediately after the German surrender, the first strikes broke out. Striking workers did not fit in the official—and false—ideology of a united country that had resisted the Nazis and was ready to rebuild the economy. They were therefore confronted with much opposition from state officials, the reinstated labour unions, most politicians and even the mainstream press. A few examples may illustrate the attitudes of striking workers and their opponents.[20]

On May 18, within two weeks of celebrating the liberation, 650 workers in Amsterdam went on strike. They demanded a four-day working week and better food regulations. These demands indicate the poor living conditions of many workers in the west of the country at the time. Immediately after the war, many people were still exhausted and this led to demands for improved living circumstances. The Amsterdam strikers were not the only ones. In June striking dockers in the port of Rotterdam demanded better shoes, higher wages and working clothes. This strike

[18] Sjaak van der Velden, *Links. PvdA, SP en GroenLinks* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2010), p. 223.

[19] Loe de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog. Deel 10b.* Het Laatste Jaar (The Hague: Staatsuitgeverij, 1981), p. 149.

[20] All examples can be found at http://socialhistory.org/nl/stakingen and in Sjaak van der Velden, *Stakingen in Nederland. Arbeidersstrijd 1830–1995* (Amsterdam: Stichting Beheer IISG, 2000).

began when the police fired at workers who were accused of stealing cargo. The local department of the new EVC supported the strike but the national executives who were under the growing influence of the Communist Party opposed it because the strike endangered the food supply. Newspapers campaigned against the strikers on the same grounds. Dutch strikebreakers and Canadian military offloaded the ships once they received permission from the mayor of Rotterdam, ending the strike. The local EVC department enlisted thousands of port workers who were angry and felt abandoned. During a strike of milkmen in Deventer, the military authorities threatened the strikers with fines and jail time, to give another example of the opposition that strikers witnessed. Obviously these years were special if we look at the demands of the strikers. During most years, 80 per cent of the strikes were about wages but during the first post-war years, this was not the case.[21] Although the majority of the strikes were about wages, other demands became more prominent. Among them was the demand for recognition of the EVC by the employer as a party to negotiate with. Workers also demanded that certain colleagues or officials be fired because of their role during the war. Two examples may suffice. In the coalmines of Heerlen, workers went on strike against the return of certain officials and in Amsterdam, the workers of a metal company refused to work together with detained traitors who were forced by the authorities to work there.

The general attitude of the authorities from the mainstream left and right was that strikes should be countered fiercely. And that is what happened. When Rotterdam dockers went on strike again in August 1945, the Prime Minister declared that the right to strike would be more or less suspended during the reconstruction of the economy. This was the general policy. Of course, individual employers were sometimes willing to give in to the demands of their own workers. They did support the general policy as long as this policy did not conflict with their company interests. An example of such self-interest that contradicted the employers' general behaviour is also provided by the port of Rotterdam. The local employers' organisation was receptive to a debate with the EVC. After all, good relations with this union might prevent the dockers going on strike more often than they already did.

[21] Sjaak van der Velden, *Stakingen in Nederland. Arbeiderstrijd 1830–1995* (Amsterdam: Stichting Beheer IISG, 2000), p. 112.

As one might expect, the strongest opponent of the EVC was the social democratic NVV. This hostile attitude tempted an agent of the Dutch internal security service to the utterance that the militants of the EVC should be grateful to the other unions. If these moderate unions had not neglected the demands of unsatisfied construction workers, these workers would not have gone on strike in 1951 during the construction of a new steel plant. When informed about the complaints of the workers, the NVV representatives went straight to the employer instead of contacting the workers.[22] The secret agent who attended as many strikers' meetings as possible started feeling sympathetic towards the workers who were ignored by their own organisations. He also realised that this attitude was not effective in opposing the influence of radicals. In a case like this, and there were many such occasions, it was easy for the EVC to profit because the workers were driven into the arms of the more radical union. While fighting the EVC, the NVV forgot its original goal: to look after the interests of the workers.

After considering these few examples let us now have a look at the general picture.

Table 1 offers strike statistics for the Netherlands in the period 1945–1955. Of course, these data are meaningless on their own. But if we compare the average number of strikes to the averages of the preceding and following periods, it makes more sense. During 1930–1940, the average number of strikes was 176 and during 1956–1965, 41 strikes occurred per year. The period under study shows an annual average of 158 strikes, much closer to the pre-war average than to 1956–1965. With 368 conflicts, 1946 was the year with the highest number of strikes during the entire period 1930–1965 and the second highest was 1947 when 346 strikes were counted. If we consider the given numbers, it is obvious that there is no reason to believe that everyone supported the ideology of a united country trying to rebuild the economy. This is especially so because the highest average number of strikes also occurred during the post-war years and not, as one might perhaps expect, during the 1930s. The only record high from the 1930s was the number of strike days. This was not unusual in an era that witnessed many long-lasting strikes of desperate

[22] Sjaak van der Velden, 'Een Geheim Agent als Verdediger van Arbeidersbelangen. De Bouwstaking van Augustus/September 1951', at *Onvoltooid Verleden. Website voor de geschiedenis van sociale bewegingen*, http://www.onvoltooidverleden.nl/index.php?id=35 (access date: 3 March 2015).

Table 1 Strikes and factory occupations in the Netherlands, 1945–1955 (1930–1965)

Year	*N*	*C*	*S*	*D*
1945	155	345	76,222	198,797
1946	368	784	78,190	1,182,252
1947	346	132	73,266	202,966
1948	185	281	20,243	139,749
1949	157	391	15,955	244,286
1950	125	267	23,569	151,598
1951	117	167	17,049	78,097
1952	47	57	4,093	31,223
1953	76	103	13,068	25,133
1954	97	165	22,288	62,296
1955	69	323	26,498	154,076
Yearly Average 1945–1955	*158*	*382*	*33,676*	*224,589*
Yearly Average 1930–1940	*176*	*579*	*15,054*	*490,176*
Yearly Average 1956–1965	*41*	*210*	*22,697*	*122,793*

Source: http://www.iisg.nl/databases/stakingen.php

N = Number of strikes + occupations; *C* = Number of companies affected; *S* = Number of strikers; *D* = Number of working days lost

workers fighting wage cuts. In conclusion, we can say that the first post-war years were a period of intense struggle for workers. Their aims were in most cases to improve their living and working conditions. Apart from the demands to recognise the EVC and a few strikes against the presence of certain individuals who had supported the Germans during the war there were hardly any strikes in favour of a change of existing society. There were a few political strikes aimed at a change in government policy. The most prominent were the *Sinaasappelstaking* (orange strike) of Rotterdam dockers in 1946 against the offloading of oranges from fascist Spain and a few strikes in support of soldiers who refused deployment to Indonesia.[23] There were however no strikes to change society and end the power of managers and entrepreneurs. In this sense, the period 1945–1950 was not very different from most other years since 1920.

What was the attitude of the employers? Did they really believe in a new society wherein labour and capital would cooperate on an equal footing as the official ideology sounded? Or were many employers, like many

[23] Sjaak van der Velden, *Werknemers in Actie. Twee Eeuwen Stakingen, Bedrijfsbezettingen en Andere Acties in Nederland* (Amsterdan: Aksant, 2004), pp. 119–120.

Table 2 Lockouts in the Netherlands, 1945–1955

Year	*N*	*C*	*S*	*D*
1945	3	3	9,920	46,560
1946	10	10	5,145	44,631
1947	10	16	1,388	5,431
1948	5	5	476	16,950
1949	2	2	55	95
1950	1	1	1,044	944
1951	0	0	0	0
1952	1	1	n.a.	n.a.
1953	0	0	0	0
1954	0	0	0	0
1955	1	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Yearly Average 1945–1955	*3*	*4*	*2,003*	*12,735*
Average 1930–1940	*7*	*21*	*545*	*3.222*
Average 1956–1965	*0.4*	*0.4*	*177*	*790*

Source: http://www.iisg.nl/databases/stakingen.php

N = Number of lockouts; *C* = Number of companies affected; *W* = Number of workers locked out; *D* = Number of working days lost

workers, also willing to struggle if they felt it necessary? Let us take the lockout as the ultimate sign of an offensive attitude by employers and by the way the only sign that is easily analyzed because good statistics exist. How many lockouts occurred in the aftermath of the war (Table 2)?

During the 10 years immediately after the war, the number of lockouts that took place was lower than during the 10 pre-war years. But both the number of locked-out workers and the number of days were much higher than during the periods before and after. This is an indication of two simultaneous attitudes by employers. They were willing to allow the participation of labour unions in the designed tripartite system but at the same time took a fierce stance against any unwanted workers' behaviour. Most lockouts were a reaction to wildcat strikes or strikes not supported by one of the officially recognised labour unions, NVV, KAB or CNV. By locking out these workers, the employers actually assisted the three recognised unions in their efforts to gain ground after the war.

The period 1945–1950 was, in more ways than one, a time of resistance against the old-fashioned, pre-war attitudes and convictions. Squatting of houses, for example, was a reaction to the apparent housing shortage

many people faced.[24] The shortage resulted from the wartime devastations and the fact that the Dutch administration under the leadership of social-democrats did not regard the building of new houses as the highest priority. They wanted to rebuild the destroyed infrastructure first.[25] Most people complied with this and many lived in overcrowded houses. But some protested by silently occupying empty houses. They were often evicted by the police. Another good example of the rebellious post-war mood is the objection against military service. This objection was aimed at a very specific service, the war against the new Republic of Indonesia, a former Dutch colony that fought for its independence. In 1947 and 1948, hundreds of young recruits refused to be shipped to Indonesia as colonial soldiers.[26] They were supported by thousands of strikers and demonstrators but punished as deserters.

It is clear that the elite's main attitude after the war was a carrot and stick approach. The unions were allowed to participate in the newly vested structures but everyone who showed signs of resistance was met with the force of the state. This policy was successful. When post-war radicalism had faded away, there was a changed state of mind within the working class. Strike activity plummeted, although wages were among the lowest in Western Europe. Most workers seemed to go along with the official ideology that every sign of unrest was probably inspired or caused by the Communist Party or even the Russians. Many people started fearing that the country would be occupied again, but now by troops from Moscow.

To the officially recognised labour unions, the new situation might seem favourable. There was, however, a catch. The statutory tripartite system was not only regarded as a victory for the union movement but it also caused many workers to believe that there was no point in joining the recognised unions. After all, the unions would negotiate with employers and the state regardless of their members. Other workers also felt that the unions were too conciliatory towards a government set on retrenchment. The highest union density ever achieved in the Netherlands occurred in 1952 when 43 per cent of employees were union members (see Appendix).

[24] Eric Duivenvoorden, *Een Voet Tussen de Deur. Geschiedenis van de Kraakbeweging 1964–1999* (Amsterdam: Arbeiderspers, 2000), p. 14.

[25] Pim Fortuyn, *Sociaal-economische Politiek in Nederland 1945–1949* (Alphen aan den Rijn: Samsom, 1981), p. 165.

[26] Henny Zwart, *Er Waren er die Niet Gingen. Vijftien Eeuwen Straf voor Indonesiëweigeraars* (Amsterdam: Solidariteit, 2005).

From that date onwards, the percentage fell smoothly. This drop in numbers lasted until 1975 in the middle of the aftermath of '1968'. Then density returned again to 45 per cent. This drop in union density was one of the two main problems the official unions encountered. The other problem was the distance between ordinary union members and the union leadership. This gap continued to widen as a result of greater centralisation within those unions.[27] This two-fold gap between union officials and the rank-and-file has been one of the main problems the union movement has had to deal with since the early 1950s.

Concluding Remarks

At the beginning of this chapter, I posed the question whether there were signs of social unrest after the end of World War II that resembled the post-1918 insurrectionary wave of strikes and demonstrations. As we have seen, there were such signs. For the most part, these signs never left the cadres of existing society. There were hardly any efforts to fundamentally change society and end the power of capital. The unrest that did occur was easily contained by the economic and political elite.

In order to prevent a repetition of the post-war insurrectionary and even revolutionary tide that swept the country after World War I, the bigger part of the union movement was absorbed into a tripartite system of labour relations. Because Dutch society came out of the war more divided than was regarded desirable by the elite, they were in favour of a change but without abolishing class society. A corporatist organisation of the economy seemed to fit best. The majority of the existing unions consented to this development because they regarded tripartism as the fulfilment of their pre-war demands and hopes. This is what they had been fighting for since the end of the nineteenth century when the three biggest pillars of the labour movement ideologically moved to some kind of corporatist attitude. When in 1956 the NVV celebrated its fiftieth anniversary, it published a memorial volume titled *Om de Plaats van de Arbeid* (On Labour's Place).[28] The writer made it perfectly clear that the recent restructuring of

[27] John P. Windmuller, *Labor Relations in the Netherlands* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1969).

[28] Frits de Jong Edz, *Om de Plaats van de Arbeid. Een Geschiedkundig Overzicht van Ontstaan en Ontwikkeling van het Nederlands Verbond van Vakverenigingen* (Amsterdam: Arbeiderspers, 1956).

the way the Dutch economy was organised confirmed the important place the unions had attained after almost a century of fighting. Of course, society was still not perfect but in his opinion, militant struggles were no longer needed. This way of thinking was part of the internationally popular view of the waning of the strike.[29]

The rank-and-file for the most part also supported the new role their union movement was imputed. There were signs of a mood of resistance immediately after the war but these were almost only aimed at the improvement of bread and butter. A change of society or a regime change was not really an option for the workers on strike. They wanted their daily lives improved first and were for the biggest part proud of the place labour was given. Union density has never been higher than during the early 1950s when the unions received their strongholds in de *Stichting van de Arbeid* and the SER.

Union officials and their brothers in arms from the social democratic party were really regarded as a part of the ruling elite during this time. Before 1940, they were in a process of slow acceptance by the political elite. But now they entered this elite. Even the plan the NVV and the social democrats wrote during the economic crisis of the 1930s now became part of the official policy supported by labour unions, employers' organisations, Christian democrats and even the liberals. The economy would be organised in a planned way including the establishment of a Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (CPB, *Centraal Planbureau*) in 1945. Almost nobody realised that this apparent victory of social democracy was mistakenly confused with a bigger role of the ordinary worker in society. It took more than 10 years before the union leaders discovered that the distance between themselves and the rank-and-file had become almost unbridgeable. The system that was designed during the war met its boundaries at the end of the 1960s and early 1970s when massive strike waves swept the Netherlands. During a three-week strike of Rotterdam dockers in 1970, they symbolically buried the union.[30] It was again time for a change. The union needed a rebirth.

[29] Arthur Max Ross and Paul Theodore Hartman, *Changing Patterns of Industrial Conflict* (New York: John Wiley, 1960).

[30] Sjaak van der Velden (ed.), *Kranen over de Wal. De Grote Rotterdamse Metaal- en Havenstaking van 1970* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2005), p. 29.

Appendix: Members of Trade Union Federations, 1960–2003

Year	*EVC*	*NVV*	*CNV*	*KAB*	*Total*	*Density*
1946	162,323	242,645	93,994	182,821	805,510	n.a.
1947	169,428	300,341	119,051	224,885	960,641	n.a.
1948	176,873	330,889	131,560	251,510	1,052,897	n.a.
1949	163,365	365,391	147,477	268,896	1,106,099	n.a.
1950	163,278	381,554	155,627	296,410	1,160,304	39,8
1951	163,830	405,570	166,487	311,427	1,214,078	41,3
1952	164,359	420,776	174,750	321,478	1,258,274	42,8
1953	n.a.	435,683	182,293	334,714	1,137,775	37,6
1954	n.a.	453,949	191,138	347,268	1,184,652	37,5
1955	n.a.	463,121	199,693	360,986	1,221,355	37,5

Source: Van der Velden 2005

The Works Councils in Czechoslovakia 1945–1949. Remarks on the Fate of a Social Movement in the Process of Transformation

Jaromír Balcar and Jaroslav Kučera

After six years of German occupation and terror, the intention to build a totally new political entity in Czechoslovakia was not just limited to the creation of a homogenous national state of the Czechs and Slovaks by the forced evacuation of Germans and Hungarians. The vision was to build an 'economic and social democracy', (—as it was called by then Czechoslovak president Edvard Beneš—) a completely new political system that the bourgeois-liberal democracy should be transformed into.[1] For this purpose, employee participation would have to be much higher than ever before. The programme of the first Czechoslovak government, dated 5 April 1945, stipulated that all employees 'in factories, workshops and offices'

[1] Edvard Beneš, *Demokracie dnes a zítra* (Prague: Čin, 1946), p. 213.

Charles University uses orcid codes. The one of Jaroslav Kucera is: orcid.org/0000-0003-2460-7117.

J. Balcar (✉)
Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin, Germany

J. Kučera (✉)
Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic

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could freely choose their representatives in trade union organisations and works councils. These two organisations were to be the 'legal representatives of the employees towards private entrepreneurs and public authorities in all questions of wages, labour and social policy'.[2] This corresponded with the widespread demand for citizens to participate as widely as possible in the administration of public affairs.

Thus, to a certain degree the government programme respected the realities of the summer of 1945. Towards the end of the war and immediately after liberation, works councils mushroomed in Czechoslovakia, partly under the influence of the new trade union organisation, the Revolutionary Trade Union (*Revoluční odborové hnutí*, ROH), partly quite spontaneously and without any guidance. People at the time had great expectations of the works councils: they were proclaimed to be 'the very first element of our People's Democracy'[3] and the 'symbol of the new order in our companies'.[4] It is true that initially hopes were high that works councils would play a decisive role within the new order of society and the economy. These hopes appear exaggerated in retrospect. Nevertheless, works councils embodied the most important institution enabling workers to exert influence on both the activity of industrial enterprises and public authorities during the first post-war years. Via the works councils, the workers participated in the running of enterprises and the steering of the economy, as well as in public administration.

However, the existence of works councils as independent representatives of employees' interests was rather short-lived, ending as early as 1949. Their actual importance is a controversial issue in historiography. According to an older study by Karel Kovanda, the decree of the President of the Republic of October 1945, which gave works councils a legal base and restricted their responsibilities, already signalled 'the end of the works councils both as independent political force and as an element of self-management in the economy'. From then onwards, the works councils appeared to him 'as a rather weak organism with certain powers in

[2] *Program československé vlády Národní fronty Čechů a Slováků, přijatý na prvé schůzi vlády dne 5.4.1945 v Košicích* (Prague: Ministerstvo informací, 1945), pp. 25–26.

[3] Paper, undated (before 24.10.1945), in Všeodborový archív Českomoravské konfederace odborových svazů (Archive of the Bohemian-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions, here below VOA), Ústřední rada odborů (Central Council of the Trade Unions, here below ÚRO) – Organizační oddělení 1945–1950 (Coordination Department, here below ORG), carton (here below cart.), p. 8, inventory unit (inventární jednotka, here below inv.), p. 58.

[4] Otto Schmidt, 'Volání po autoritě v podnicích', *Hospodář* 17:12 (1946), 22.8.1946, p. 3.

personnel affairs but with no real authority to influence decisively any issues of substance concerning the running of the firm'. At the latest, he considered the works councils' elections in the spring of 1947 their 'demise', effectively bringing them under the thumb of the communist-dominated trade unions.[5] For Karel Kaplan, however, the various forms of participation of workers in steering the economy, among them the works councils, were one of the four 'basic principles' of the new economic order, and even showed the beginnings of a new form of ownership.[6] In order to illuminate this question, our paper intends to find out whether the political parties representing the Czechoslovak People's Democracy from May 1945 to February 1948 as an all-party coalition of the 'National Front' really intended to build up an economic system based on extensive participation of workers in economic and social affairs. Which role did they grant the works councils in the representation of employees at their place of work? And what were the reasons for their rapid loss of importance ending in their complete amalgamation with the trade union organisation at factory level?

What makes the study of the works council movement in Czechoslovakia (and elsewhere) so difficult in terms of methodology is their extreme heterogeneity. Though the institution of works councils, as well as their duties, rights and scope, had been regulated by a separate presidential decree in October 1945, followed by several orders of implementation, in reality there were considerable differences between individual enterprises. It was of crucial importance whether the enterprise was state-owned or under national administration respectively,[7] or whether it was in private hands. Much depended also on the political and personal composition of the works council. However, the most important factor crucial to the makeup of the works council was the professional competence and the

[5] Karel Kovanda, 'Works Councils in Czechoslovakia 1945–1947', in *Soviet Studies* 29:2 (1977), pp. 255–269, here pp. 266–267.

[6] Karel Kaplan, *Proměny české společnosti 1948–1960* (Prague: Ústav pro soudobé dějiny, 2007), p. 27.

[7] State authorities appointed national administration in enterprises in the hands of 'nationally unreliable' persons (either physical or juristic), i.e. of Germans, Hungarians as well as 'collaborators' and 'traitors' of Czech or Slovak nationality. Juristic persons were considered 'nationally unreliable', if they had served 'purposely and systematically the German or Hungarian conduct of war or fascist or Nazi purposes'; *Decree No. 5 Collection of Laws and Regulations of the Czechoslovak Republic* (here below Coll.), 19.5.1945, on national administration of enemy property.

personality of the individual works councillors, as well as the professional, political and moral credit of the management, and not least the strength of other actors within the enterprise, e.g. trade unions and political parties. Some works councils developed into control centres, taking over the company's management. Without them, Bohumil Laušman, the Minister of Industry said in the summer of 1945, 'not a mouse is moving' within the factories.[8] Some became the long arm of the left parties or the trade unions, and others were more or less nothing but props. In other words, the position and the role of the works councils cannot be generalised and the question of how representative individual cases are is, at least, arguable. To make matters worse, works councils in the Bohemian lands have up to now been researched only marginally, if at all. Thus, currently we encounter only fragmentary results concerning works councils' activities in certain enterprises.[9]

All Power to the Councils! Works Councils in the Spring and Summer of 1945

Employee participation in Czechoslovakia dates back to the early 1920s. After the post-war foundation of the State in 1918, so-called factory committees were constituted, initially in mining companies and then extended to the rest of the industry.[10] After invading the Bohemian-Moravian heartland in March 1939, the Germans allowed this institution as well as the Czech trade unions to continue; however, they curtailed their rights of participation and turned them into an instrument of Nazi economic steering.[11] Because of their lack of power and

[8] Quoted according to Peter Heumos, 'Betriebsräte, Einheitsgewerkschaft und staatliche Unternehmensverwaltung. Anmerkungen zu einer Petition mährischer Arbeiter an die tschechoslowakische Regierung vom 8. Juni 1947', in *Jahrbücher für die Geschichte Osteuropas* 29 (1981), pp. 215–245, here p. 220.

[9] Peter Heumos, who has intensively studied the Czechoslovak workforce after 1945 and in this context also dealt with the works councils, focuses mainly on the period after the Communist take-over in February 1948; cf. Peter Heumos, 'Industriearbeiter in der Tschechoslowakei 1945–1968. Ergebnisse eines Forschungsprojekts', in *Bohemia* 44 (2003), pp. 146–171.

[10] Law No. 330 Coll., 12.8.1921, on factory committees.

[11] On the role and development of factory committees and trade unions during the time of German occupation, see Jaromír Balcar and Jaroslav Kučera, *Von der Rüstkammer des Reiches zum Maschinenwerk des Sozialismus. Wirtschaftslenkung in Böhmen und Mähren 1938 bis 1953* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), pp. 89–101; see also the latest compre-

their role as propagandistic transmission belt of the occupants, the factory committees enjoyed only very little popularity among the Czech workers. Not least for this reason, this organisation was not maintained after liberation. It was replaced by the works councils, founded illegally towards the end of the war mainly in the large armaments factories of the Protectorate. Some of these had played an important role in the Prague uprising of May 1945. It was this participation in active resistance against the Germans that brought the new representative bodies of labour such high standing within politics and society of re-emerging Czechoslovakia. Immediately after liberation, the works councils began to struggle for power in factories and enterprises.

Their success depended on the particular situation of the management of each enterprise at the end of the war. Where German managers had been installed, then had fled or been imprisoned, and where the remaining Czech managers did not succeed—due to the lack of workers' trust—to take over the national administration of the company, the works councils stood a good chance to seize the leadership. This happened, for instance, with ČKD (*Českomoravská Kolben-Daněk*), the country's second largest engineering concern after Škoda, at the time still under its wartime name of 'Bohemian-Moravian Machine Factory' (*Böhmisch-Mährische Maschinenfabrik*). Here, a group of Czech managers led by former General Manager Karel Juliš tried to regain leadership during and after the Prague uprising. They were met with decisive resistance by factory workers in the Prague quarter of Karlín (which also housed the general management of the company), who declared themselves Revolutionary Works Council of the General Management and demanded leadership of the whole concern.[12] Employees considered their former bosses 'collaborators' and blamed them for the massive economic difficulties the company had suffered in the 1930s; moreover, they accused them of aligning with the Agrarian Party and the National Democrats until 1938/1939, both right-leaning parties officially banned after liberation.[13]

hensive study by František Čapka, *Odbory v českých zemích v letech 1918–1948* (Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2008).

[12] Böhmisch-Mährische Maschinenfabrik (here bellow BMM) to the Ministry of Industry, 4.6.1945, in Státní oblastní archív Praha (State District Archive Prague, here bellow SOA Praha), Česko-moravská Kolben-Daněk - Ú (here bellow called ČKD-Ú), cart. 2, signature 31.

[13] BMM to the Czechoslovak Metal and Engineering Works, 11.5.1946, in SOA Praha, ČKD-Ú, cart. 2, signature 36.

However, in other factories and companies, where the Czech managers enjoyed authority among the employees, the works councils achieved only limited success and had to share the power. In the case of the Association for Chemical and Metallurgical Production (*Spolek pro chemickou a hutní výrobu*), Czechoslovakia's largest chemical producer, the Ministry of Industry practically reinstalled the general management of 1938 by appointing them national administrators—with the exception of the former German and Jewish members.[14] Here the works council were limited to their proper job, representing the interests of the employees, whereas in important economic decisions, they played second fiddle, if that.

Nevertheless, the works councils initially took over at least part of the operative leadership functions in various factories, even in those enterprises governed by their long-established management, then reappointed national administrators by the Ministry of Industry. In the chaos of the immediate post-war period, with compromised infrastructure and communication, the management of large concerns had difficulties sending orders to factories located all over the country. Therefore, the works councils had to secure and sometimes repair local production centres, machines and buildings. Thus, they created important prerequisites for resuming post-war production and consolidating economic administration.[15]

The works councils gained special importance in the settlement with the occupation regime. The government program adopted at Košice had already announced harsh punishment for the German occupants, as well as Czech and Slovak accomplices, explicitly for economic collaboration.[16] Since legal regulations were first issued in the autumn of 1945, local elements in the meantime took action with their own interpretation of government intentions. Within the industrial enterprises, the works councils considered the punishment of Nazis and above all their Czech collaborators one of their main tasks and they played an important role in so-called

[14] Ministry of Industry to Association for Chemical and Metallurgical Production (Spolek pro chemickou a hutní výrobu, here bellow ChS), 19.9.1945, in Národní archív, Praha (National Archives, Prague, here bellow NA), Chemický spolek (Chemical Association, here bellow ChS), cart. 3062; Circular of ChS, 25.10.1945, in NA, ChS, cart. 2791; index of members of the board of administration as well as of directors of the Spolek pro chemickou a hutní výrobu, 31.10.1945, in idem.

[15] Paper, undated (before 24.10.1945), in VOA, ÚRO-ORG 1945–1950, cart. 8, inv. 58; Heumos, *Betriebsräte, Einheitsgewerkschaft und staatliche Unternehmensverwaltung*, p. 220.

[16] *Program československé vlády Národní fronty Čechů a Slováků, přijatý na prvé schůzi vlády dne 5.4.1945 v Košicích* (Prague: Ministerstvo informací, 1945), p. 17.

'national cleansing'.[17] Special 'cleansing committees' screened the management, as well as the ordinary workers, for their behaviour during the period of occupation. Unfortunately, only fragments of these documents survived in archives, and hence these 'cleansing committees' have been widely ignored by historiography until today. In order to close this gap in research at least partially, we shall consider below one certain enterprise, ČKD, which had been extremely engaged in armaments production during the occupation.

The activities of ČKD works councils and their cleansing committees were mainly directed against suspected Czech collaborators because the Germans had fled or already been arrested.[18] They focused on five different groups of ethnic Czechs.[19] First, they aimed at the members of the factory security service ('*Werkschutz*'), who enforced order and discipline in the workplace while preventing acts of sabotage. Moreover, they had permanently bossed the workers around, reporting even the slightest violation of regulations such as tardiness, exactly the kind of behaviour that made them the most hated people within the factories. The second group consisted of the former factory committee members, who had represented the workers during the occupation. Here the justifiable desire for revenge largely hit the wrong persons: though the Germans had transformed the committees into an instrument for their purposes, the council members had, however, already been elected by the employees before the German invasion and were subsequently confirmed in their position by governmental orders. The third group comprised heads of departments and foremen, i.e. middle management, who had passed on the orders of the directors and who were now accused of having been willing instruments in the hands of the occupants. In this case, old accounts with unpopular bosses may have been settled under the guise of revenge against the Nazi occupation. This suspicion is supported by the fact that although a number of engineers of ČKD were cleared of collaboration and

[17] Appeal of the Revolutionary Works Council, 16.5.1945, in SOA Praha, ČKD-Ú, cart. 135, signature 877; Cf. Benjamin Frommer, *National Cleansing: Retribution against Nazi Collaborators in Postwar Czechoslovakia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[18] Cf. Tomáš Staněk, *Internierung und Zwangsarbeit. Das Lagersystem in den böhmischen Ländern 1945–1948* (München: Oldenbourg, 2007).

[19] For the following analysis, cf. Jaromír Balcar and Jaroslav Kučera, 'Von der Fremdbesatzung zur kommunistischen Diktatur. Die personellen Umbrüche in der tschechoslowakischen Wirtschaft nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg', in *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 2010:2, pp. 71–94, here pp. 78–82.

denunciation, the prosecutors still pleaded for their dismissal as the accused had shown 'unsocial' behaviour.[20] Among the fourth group were all ex-members of fascist organisations like 'Vlajka' (Flag) or the 'League against Bolshevism'. The fifth group, also not determined by their position within the factories, consisted of employees accused of denunciation, which was the most frequent charge in the process of retribution, also at the factory level. The investigation committee of ČKD started an especially intensive search for those persons who had denounced six of the company's executives to the Gestapo during the many arrests following the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich in May 1942.[21]

To all appearances, the investigation committee of ČKD does not constitute a special case. On the contrary, the cleansing committees in nearly all larger factories in Bohemia and Moravia showed a remarkable zeal.[22] They transferred and dismissed employees and even arrested persons that were especially incriminated in order to hand them over to the state security organs.[23] Indeed, works councils and their cleansing committees had nearly unlimited possibilities to settle accounts with detested bosses and to eliminate nearly everybody they wanted from leading positions, even those who had not willingly cooperated with the Germans. They were, as the example of ČKD indicates, charged with 'unsocial conduct' and said to have lost the 'confidence of the people'.[24] Due to a lack of sources, it is impossible to assess the quantitative dimension of their actions, even approximately. It is, however, certain that the expulsion of the Germans and the retribution against 'traitors' and 'collaborators' of Czech or Slovak nationality significantly weakened the camp of the entrepreneurs, shifted weights within the enterprises and contributed in no small measure to the climate of legal insecurity that was characteristic for the post-war period in Czechoslovakia.[25]

[20] Draft of the cleansing committee, undated, in SOA Praha, ČKD-Ú, cart. 135, signature 870.

[21] BMM to the Head of National Security, 11.10.1945, in SOA Praha, ČKD-Ú, cart. 135, signature 873. BMM to the Head of National Security, 12.6.1946, in idem.

[22] The works council of Spolek proceeded similarly in cleansing the factories. Announcement No. 8 [of the works council of Spolek], 1.6.1945, in NA, ChS cart. 2851.

[23] Cf. Rezoluce zástupců pražských průmyslových závodů Ústřední radě odborů k otázkám národní očisty, 5.6.1945, in *Budování jednotných odborů. Sborník dokumentů 1944–1946* (Prague: Práce, 1965), Document 17, pp. 56–57.

[24] 'Asocial' conduct as a reason for the appointment of national administration was voiced explicitly, in Decree No. 5 Coll., 19.5.1945, on national administration of enemy property.

[25] Cf. Frommer, *National Cleansing*, pp. 180–184.

The cleansing process soon was also met with criticism sharply condemning the arbitrary acts of the works councils. Parts of the press accused them of establishing an 'inquisition', thus violating even the most basic civil rights.[26] For some observers, the massive and immediate dismissals threatened the primary economic goal, namely the relaunching of industrial production. In July 1945, even Antonín Zápotocký, number two in the hierarchy of the communist party and head of the nearly all-mighty Central Council of the Revolutionary Trade Unions (*Ústřední rada odborů*, ÚRO) spoke out against 'personal, egoistic motivations' of the purges and cryptically demanded: 'The process of national cleansing must not hamper the restart of the production, but has to promote it.'[27] Therefore, the demand emerged to install a place of appeal with ÚRO or a Ministry in order to guarantee objectivity and a fair trial.[28]

The revolutionary spontaneity and lack of tractability of the works councils was also economically problematic. A central problem of the immediate post-war period was the strong industrial wage hike. The responsibility for this lay partly with the national administrators, and partly with the works councils. Both ignored the existing rules dating from the time of occupation and stipulating that all increase in wages had to be approved by the organs of economic steering.[29] But all appeals by, for example, ÚRO—which so to speak changed sides acting in the interest of the state and even the entrepreneurs, not the employees, as trade unions normally do—that the works councils should persuade the workers that now was not the right time for large wage claims obviously did not fall on fertile ground.[30] The works council of ČKD carried the conflict with ÚRO to extremes by bluntly refusing to renounce its wage demands.[31] This was probably not an isolated case. Thus, average wages, which had risen by a total of 65 per cent during the six years of German occupation, rose by a further 20 per cent between June and September 1945 alone, while

[26] Richard Gregor, 'Jak snášeti bezpráví? ÚRO a závodní rady. Odborníci a závodní rady', *Dnešek* 1:7 (1946/1947), pp. 97–99, here p. 97.

[27] Quoted from: Karel Růžička, *ROH v boji za rozšíření moci dělnické třídy (1945–1948)* (Prague: Práce, 1963), p. 30.

[28] Paper of ÚRO, undated (1945), in VOA, ÚRO-ORG 1945–1950, cart. 2, inv. 11.

[29] Plenary session of ÚRO, 7.6.1945, in VOA, ÚRO - Plenární zasedání 1945–1960 (Plenary Sessions, here bellow PLEN), cart. 1, inv. 2.

[30] Paper, undated (before 24.10.1945), in VOA, ÚRO-ORG 1945–1950, cart. 8, inv. 58.

[31] Session of the Presidium of ÚRO, 13.6.1945, in VOA, Schůze sekretariátu ÚRO 1945–1949 (Sessions of the Secretariat of ÚRO, here bellow SEKR), cart. 1, inv. 7.

production continued to decline until the autumn.[32] For this and other reasons, the Office of the President of the Republic considered the works councils not the driving but the breaking force of positive economic development.[33]

Revolutionary fever was widespread among the employees of the state administration and public servants, too. Moreover, the works councils of authorities and public offices did not suffer from a lack of self-confidence. A report issued by the works council of the state financial directorate in Brno in May 1945 states, for example, that there were no quarrels in personnel matters between themselves and the heads of the authority but should differences arise, the point of view of the council should be the decisive factor.[34] The situation was especially precarious in central authorities where the works councils gained influence on state policy. The ÚRO, and in particular Zápotocký, found this unacceptable, reasoning that 'this would not only create a second trade union organization but almost a government'.[35] Even in some ministries, confusion and conflicts arose between the agile works councils and some of the ministers. Faced with the unsettled competences of the works councils, top politicians found it impossible to efficiently consolidate their offices. According to the Minister of Health, Adolf Procházka (Czechoslovak People's Party), this was because it was unclear 'whether the minister decides or the works council'. Therefore, as stated by the Minister of Justice, Jaroslav Stránský (Czechoslovak Socialist Party), any delay in issuing a legal norm definitively fixing the competences of the works councils would create the 'immediate danger of dissolution' of the state administration.[36] Thus, the troublesome situation in the central state authorities became a catalyst for creating a clear legal foundation for the works councils' activities.

[32] For the development of wages, see: *Statistický zpravodaj* 11/1 (1948), 2.1.1948, p. 264.

[33] Annotation of the Office of the President of the Republic, 18.7.1945, in Karel Jech and Karel Kaplan (eds), *Dekrety prezidenta republiky 1940–1945. Dokumenty* (Brno: Doplněk 1995), Document 36.4, pp. 824–826.

[34] Works council of the Financial Direction for Moravia to the Ministry of Finance, 29.5.1945, in NA, Ministerstvo práce a sociální péče (Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare), cart. 561, signature 5001.

[35] Session of the Presidium of ÚRO, 25.7.1945, in VOA, ÚRO-SEKR 1945–1949, cart. 1, inv. 20.

[36] Minutes of the 35. session of the government, 29.6.1945, in *Dekrety prezidenta republiky*, Document 36.2, pp. 819–820; Minutes of the 38. Session of the government, 10.7.1945, in idem, Document 36.3, pp. 820–824.

How Much Power to the Councils? The Debate on the Decree on Works Councils in the Summer of 1945

The ÚRO were the first to recognise the enormous potential of the works council movement. The leading organ of the powerful trade union ROH issued a directive on 12 May 1945, which claimed to have been approved by 'government authorities' and thus to have general legal force. This directive stipulated the establishment of a works council in all companies and public authorities with more than 20 employees and also fixed its scope of activity, if vaguely: the works council was to control the production and management of the company, represent the economic, social and cultural interests of the employees and insure compliance with health and safety regulations.[37] Today it is hardly possible to judge how far these regulations were followed in the immediate post-war confusion. Be that as it may, towards the end of May 1945, politicians already began to deal with the works councils. Klement Gottwald, party leader of KSČ and deputy head of government, asked ÚRO to prepare a draft decree on works councils,[38] but nothing happened. Thus, in early July the communist-guided Ministry of Work and Social Welfare submitted a hastily formulated draft bill, which was met with reservations by ÚRO.[39] The trade union bosses criticised the draft for merely copying the old regulations on works councils and demanded 'a completely new law'.[40] By the end of July, ÚRO finally presented its own draft.[41] This time the far-reaching competences of the works councils and their subordination under the trade unions—already stipulated in the draft of the Social Ministry—provided grounds for political conflict.[42] Some critical points were eliminated after tough political negotiations while others were adjourned and left to

[37] Directive of ÚRO, 12.5.1945, in *Budování*, Document 12, p. 44; in companies with 5 to 19 employees, a shop steward was to be elected.

[38] Session of the Presidium of ÚRO, 29.5.1945, in VOA, ÚRO-SEKR 1945–1949, cart. 1, inv. 4.

[39] Session of the Presidium of ÚRO, 12.7.1945, in VOA, ÚRO-SEKR 1945–1949, cart. 1, inv. 19.

[40] Session of the Presidium of ÚRO, 28.6.1945, in VOA, ÚRO-SEKR 1945–1949, cart. 1, inv. 13

[41] Session of the Presidium of ÚRO, 25.7.1945, in VOA, ÚRO-SEKR 1945–1949, cart. 1, inv. 20.

[42] Minutes of the 41. Session of the government, 27.7.1945, in *Dekrety prezidenta republiky*, Document 36.5, pp. 826–827.

an order of implementation to be determined later. The process of law-making was extremely time-pressured, since the Decree on Works Councils was to be issued by the end of October 1945, together with the Decrees on Nationalisation.

Regarding the competences of the works councils, the politicians concurred with ÚRO in one important principle: in no way were the works councils to be executive organs of a factory or an enterprise. Therefore, the provision that works councils were not allowed to intervene in the latter's decisions with orders and instructions of their own was entered in an early version of the decree and remained until the final wording. Trade union bosses had no intention of assuming responsibility for the economic results of factories or enterprises—be it from a realistic assessment of their own professional competence or from fear of being held responsible for their own failure in the case of economic difficulties by the employees. Moreover, the possible dual leadership in companies served as a deterrent. There must not be two masters in an enterprise, was the communist Minister of the Interior's assessment, one which raised no protest from any government politician.[43]

Thus, the competences of the works councils had roughly been outlined but it was impossible to eliminate all problems. Terms describing their tasks—for instance, 'supervise', 'control', 'take part' or 'collaborate'—could be interpreted in very different ways. This problem was especially explosive in private enterprises, which—to the irritation of the non-Marxist parties as well as the state administration—were treated no differently from enterprises under national administration or the future national enterprises in the draft laws submitted thus far. Fearing negative influences on entrepreneurial initiative, Minister Stránský among others suggested to increase limitations on competences of works councils in private enterprises, in order to allow entrepreneurial activity.[44] Contrary to this, communists and trade unionists did not consider it the job of works councils to help entrepreneurs in attaining their private economic goals. They held the councils should rather use their effort for the 'greatest common economic benefit'.[45] Behind this quarrel, the opposing ideas about

[43] Minutes of the 41. Session of the government, 27.7.1945, in *Dekrety prezidenta republiky*, Document 36.5, pp. 826–827.

[44] Minutes of the 41. session of the government, 27.7.1945, in *Dekrety prezidenta republiky*, Document 36.5, pp. 826–827.

[45] Session of the Presidium of ÚRO, 18.7.1945, in: VOA, ÚRO-SEKR 1945–1949, cart. 1, inv. 19.

the goal and purpose of entrepreneurship in a system of planned economy were hidden, a crucial debate in the emerging economic order of the Czechoslovak People's Democracy. The decree on works councils ultimately made no difference between the forms of ownership in industry and showed no consideration for their specific conditions and interests. Public administration was the only exception. Here the rules of the decree were to be applied 'analogously and appropriately' to employees' councils. This expressed the common interest of all political parties to establish their own control over the revolution within the public administration.[46]

The final version of the Decree unmistakeably stipulated that the leadership of a company lay with its management; only management was responsible for economic activity and economic success.[47] Yet a back door remained open, since works councils were to participate in leadership with 'suggestions and advice'. So they, for instance, took part in elaborating and executing business and production plans and suggested measures for increased performance and efficiency. Therefore, management was obliged to put all relevant written documents and information at the works councils' disposal, such as reports on the economic, business and technical situation of the company, as well as any plans for the future. Moreover, the works councils were to ensure that activities in the company were for the 'common economic benefit', representing these highest interests not only against management but also against employees. The works councils were to persuade managers and workforce to renounce demands or measures contrary to the 'common economic benefit'—whatever that was. Thus, works councils were forced into a strange half-way position between representing workers' interests and, informally, the state steering of the economy.

According to their tradition, the works councils had far-reaching competences in the field of labour law. They were to be involved in the collective regulation of working conditions, as well as that of individual working contracts, i.e. they had rights of participation in the hiring and firing of individual employees. Social policy matters were a central aspect of the works councils, though even here the 'common economic benefit' and the existing rules set vaguely drawn limitations to the practice. Last but not least, the provision obliging management to grant the works council a share of the company's net profit of at least 10 per cent per year permitted

[46] Decree No. 104 Coll., 24.10.1945, on Works Councils.

[47] Cf. Heumos, 'Betriebsräte, Einheitsgewerkschaft und staatliche Unternehmensverwaltung', pp. 230–213.

the works councils to adopt potentially far-reaching social, health and cultural measures. Thus, the works councils had quite considerable means granting them a new independent financial base and consequently a real scope of action in social policy at factory level.[48]

The other main point of contention was the works councils' relationship with the new unified trade union. In practice, a very confused situation had developed. Some of the works councils considered themselves—according to the directive of ÚRO of 12 May 1945—as organs of ROH[49]; others, however, kept their distance from the trade unions, who themselves were not represented in all public authorities and companies with their own grass-roots organisation.[50] In companies and authorities containing both organisations side by side, relations developed varying from close cooperation bordering on actual fusion via cooperation at eye level to the other extreme, a kind of fratricidal war.[51]

Within ÚRO itself, there was no consensus about the concrete nature of the relationship with the works councils, though the internal debate was plainly dominated by the tendency to subordinate the works councils to the trade unions and their central executive committee.[52] In issuing the 12 May 1945 directive, ÚRO had already usurped the role of official coordinator of the works councils, if not even that of a control and supervision organ.[53] Only very few trade union officials were ready to renounce this possibility of influence on the works councils. If not a basic organisation of the trade unions at the place of work, the councils should at least constitute a special type of organ of the trade unions. The commission for social

[48] In 1948 the amount was estimated at 500 million Crowns. Cf. 'Sociální politika v Československé republice', *Věstník ROH* 2:20 (1948), 14.5.1948, p. 178; for comparison: the national income of Czechoslovakia in the year 1946 is estimated at 163 billion Crowns; cf. Jaroslav Toms, 'Development of the National Income and of Its Structure', in *Czechoslovak Economy 1945–1948. Collected Papers* (Prague: State Pedagogical Publishing House, 1968), pp. 244–245.

[49] According to the directive, the works councils were 'representatives of the trade unions of the workers', Directive of ÚRO, 12.5.1945, in *Budování*, Document 12, p. 44.

[50] In January 1946, there were more than 20,000 works councils or shop stewards, as opposed to 10,086 factory trade union branches or delegates of ROH; cf. Miroslav Kárný, 'Odbory budují. Na okraj lednové všeodborové konference', *Tvorba* 15:5 (1946), pp. 65–66.

[51] Heumos, 'Betriebsräte, Einheitsgewerkschaft und staatliche Unternehmensverwaltung', p. 224, who stresses the conflicts between the two bodies at factory level.

[52] Cf. Session of the Presidium of ÚRO, 26.5.1945, in VOA, ÚRO-SEKR 1945–1949, cart. 1, inv. 3; see also Martin R. Myant, *Socialism and Democracy in Czechoslovakia, 1945–1948* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 68–69.

[53] Direction of ÚRO, 12.5.1945, in: *Budování*, Document 12, p. 44.

policy of ÚRO held that the works councils were an 'executive organ' of the trade union movement, the factory trade union branches, however, 'bearers of ideology, a guide and conductor of the works council and its activity'.[54] Some trade unionists wanted to keep the works councils as independent organs alongside the factory trade union branches of ROH. They intended to give non–trade union workforce members the chance of engaging in company matters and intra-company politics.[55] However, the trade unions had to benefit too. Thus, trade union boss Zápotocký accorded the works councils the additional task of doing the trade unions' ground work by, for instance, recruiting workers as members of ROH. Furthermore, he believed trade unionists should always dominate in works council leadership.[56]

The July 1945 ÚRO draft decree on works councils finally contained the provision that the works council was 'an organ of the company, its employees, the trade union organization and the economic and social administration'.[57] One can only speculate what this provision would have meant in practice and what the resulting concrete dependencies and competences would have been—it was probably not even clear to the draft's authors. Notably, the idea of a tight interconnection of the trade unions and the works councils met with resistance. The harshest criticism came in mid-July from the office of the President of the Republic, whose speaker opined that ÚRO, were the works councils subordinated to them, would rise 'politically to one of the most powerful organs of the state, vested with competences that were larger than those of any ministry'. Moreover, this 'side government' would have been accountable to nobody.[58] In spite of this criticism, the Ministry for Social Welfare continued to stick up for ÚRO: the Ministry's draft paragraph, submitted in September 1945, still called the works councils 'organs of ROH in the factories'.[59]

[54] Draft of ÚRO, undated (July/August, 1945), in VOA, ÚRO-ORG 1945–1950, cart. 2, inv. 11.

[55] Session of the Presidium of ÚRO, 26.5.1945, in VOA, ÚRO-SEKR 1945–1949, cart. 1, inv. 3.

[56] Session of the Presidium of ÚRO, 25.7.1945, in VOA, ÚRO-SEKR 1945–1949, cart. 1, inv. 20.

[57] Draft of ÚRO, undated (1945), in VOA, ÚRO-ORG 1945–1950, cart. 2, inv. 9.

[58] Annotation of the Office of the President of the Republic, 18.7.1945, in *Dekrety prezidenta republiky*, Document 36.4, pp. 824–826.

[59] Draft of the Ministry for Labour Protection and Welfare, 5.9.1945, in VOA, ÚRO-ORG 1945–1950, cart. 2, inv. 11.

The final version of the decree removed this provision. In view of the closed phalanx of opponents, ÚRO abandoned its untenable position, since it was not even supported by the communists any more. Elsewhere in the decree, the soft formulation empowering ROH to control the councils remained: 'The competent body of the united trade union organization guides and gears the activities of the works councils within the limits of the rules concerning their scope of action'.[60] Moreover, the decree itself and the order of implementation in December 1946 provided the trade unions and ÚRO with concrete instruments enabling them to exert a decisive influence over the works councils' makeup and activity: ROH factory organisations compiled single lists of candidates for works council elections, approved their budgets or decided how the 10 per cent net profit was to be used.[61] In small companies with up to three employees, the trade union organisations ruled anyway, assuming the functions of the works councils.

Presumably it was not least the irritating vision of unguided and uncontrolled works councils that silenced criticism of the strong influence of the trade unions on the councils. This is what Zápotocký referred to when he assured ministers on 18 September 1945 that the trade unions would intervene in works council matters only in case of 'infringements, battle of words and differences' and where 'it was necessary to achieve the interests of the state'. His assertion that it would be 'much more pleasant' for the trade unions not to have to intervene in works council activity at all was, however, far from the truth.[62]

No Power to the Councils! The Decline of Works Councils in the People's Democracy 1945–1949

With the issuing of the Decree on Works Councils in October 1945, a process of successive deconstruction of the works council movement as independent and powerful representation of the workforce was launched. ÚRO recognised the next chance to subordinate the works councils on

[60] Decree No. 104 Coll., 24.10.1945, on Works Councils. Cf. Jon Bloomfield: *Passive Revolution. Politics and the Czechoslovak Working Class, 1945–1948.* (London: Allison and Busby, 1979), pp. 100–102; Myant, *Socialism and Democracy in Czechoslovakia*, pp. 74–75.

[61] Proposal of ÚRO, 3.12.1946, in VOA, ÚRO-ORG 1945–1950, cart. 8, inv. 60.

[62] Minutes of the 55. Session of the government, 18.9.1945, in *Dekrety prezidenta republiky*, Document 36.8, pp. 831–838.

the occasion of the imminent works council elections, originally planned for 1946. In election appeals in December 1946, ÚRO declared the works councils had accomplished their historic purpose: saving valuable production plants, cleansing companies of 'collaborators' and 'asocial elements' and contributing to the resumption of production. The new councils' task would be fulfilling the Two-Year-Plan, starting in January 1947. This was a clear declaration of the changing function of the works councils towards an instrument of both plan fulfilment and the planned economy as such. Concurrently, the trade unions leadership announced their opinion on the nature of the 'new' works councils: membership was to be reserved for the 'best of the best' and mainly 'proven champions of the unity of the trade unions'. For ÚRO, a recommendation for the candidates was their 'correct trade union activity'.[63]

The works council elections did not take place until the spring of 1947 but they actually did lead to a kind of political '*Gleichschaltung*' of the works councils. The single lists of candidates compiled by ROH factory trade union branches were dominated by 'non-political' trade union members, many of whom, however, carried the KSČ party book in their pocket. Voters were not allowed to make any changes in the lists, otherwise their voice was void. Thus, the election was rather an acclamation. Most employees reacted by boycotting elections. Since the election needed 80 per cent participation to be valid, many factories failed to elect a works council.[64] This played into the hands of ROH, as it was—in this case—authorised to nominate a substitute body organ to take over the activities of the works council until the next elections again organised by ROH.[65] The extent of the communist infiltration of works councils became clear in the February crisis of 1948, when KSČ exploited the national congress of works councils for their own purposes. Approximately 8000 delegates supported the KSČ and ÚRO's demands for further nationalisations, a new people's

[63] Resolution of ÚRO, 14.12.1946, in VOA, ÚRO-PLEN 1945–1960, cart. 2, inv. 10.

[64] In factories with 500 to 1000 employees, only 45 per cent of the lists of candidates were approved; in factories with over 3000 employees, only 13 per cent, according to other sources even only 7 per cent. It is telling that the official results were not published, thus strengthening the impression of manipulation; cf. Bohuslav Tvrdoň, 'Odbory a demokracie', in *Dnešek* 2:37 (1947/1948), 11.12.1947, pp. 573–575, here p. 575; Kovanda, *Works Councils in Czechoslovakia*, pp. 263–265; Bloomfield, *Passive Revolution*, pp. 168–173; Myant, *Socialism and Democracy in Czechoslovakia*, pp. 145–146; Heumos, *Betriebsräte, Einheitsgewerkschaft und staatliche Unternehmensverwaltung*, pp. 235–241.

[65] Decree No. 104 Coll., 24.10.1945, on Works Councils.

democratic constitution and another land reform, demands underlined by a one-hour national strike.[66] Unbeknown to delegates, this was the death sentence for the works councils.

At the end of March 1948, an amendment of the Decree on works councils already declared them—quite in accordance with the constant efforts of ROH—the 'primary and executive organ' of the united trade union organisation while letting them continue to exist side by side with factory trade union branches.[67] A further amendment of July 1948 deprived the works councils of the power to dispose of the 10 per cent participation in the net profits of the respective enterprise. The funds were now transferred into the 'United Fund of Workers' (*Jednotný fond pracujících*), established as a supposedly independent legal entity within the scope of ROH, whose job it was to better the employees 'social, health and cultural situation'.[68] At the same time, a discussion started about the abolishment of the dual representation of workers interests at the company level. Becoming compulsory organisations, trade unions experienced a strong increase of members in the spring and summer of 1948. By the end of 1948, ROH counted 2.1 million members, so that nearly all employees in industry were organised in trade unions. Therefore, upholding independent representatives of factories, whose job it was, among others, to include employees outside of the trade unions, became illogical. Trade union functionaries alone were admitted to the works council elections in the spring of 1949. Thus, both organisations were merged and the competences of the works councils transferred to the trade unions.[69] The new Statute of National Enterprises of July 1950 explicitly confirmed the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement as sole representative of all employees in enterprises. The works councils were not mentioned anywhere, although the Presidential decree of 1945 formally still remained in force. Strangely, the name 'works council' persisted in some places until

[66] Cf. Bloomfield, *Passive Revolution*, pp. 218–230; Myant, *Socialism and Democracy in Czechoslovakia*, pp. 200–208.

[67] Law No. 42 Coll., 20.3.1948, changing and supplementing several stipulations of the Decree of the President of the Republic on Works Councils from 24.10.1945.

[68] Law No. 188 Coll., 21.7.1948, changing and supplementing several further stipulations of the Decree of the President of the Republic on Works Councils from 24.10.1945.

[69] Václav Šona, 'Jednotný odborový orgán v závodě', *Odborář* 2:44 (1949), 1380; Josef Šmídmajer, 'Přizpůsobujeme se novým úkolům', *Odborář* 2:45 (1949), pp. 1407–1415, here p. 1408; Václav Nýdrle, 'Funkce podnikových rad byla překonána vývojem', in *Odborář* 3:4 (1950), pp. 109–111.

1959 as the denomination of the factory trade union branches was not officially codified.[70] These organs, however, were only a shadow of the works councils of 1945. The communists were not interested in real participation of the employees. Thus, the description of employee participation in management was left purposely vague in the 1950 Statute of National Enterprises. As a foreshadowing to the next 40 years, it spoke vaguely of participation in the elaboration and controlling of plans, as well as the 'disclosure and criticism of inadequacies'.[71]

The main responsibility for the roll back and ultimate decline of the works councils in Czechoslovakia between 1945 and 1949 lay with the political parties' marginal interest in an independent representation of the workforce. Nothing points to the parties of the Czechoslovak People's Democracy intending to create an economic system that would be based—as claimed by Karel Kaplan—on a relatively far-reaching participation of the employees in economic and social matters. It is true that at the end of the war, politicians of all parties promised to represent interests of employees in their work place, though in vague terms but with far-reaching competences. However, the political establishment was evidently surprised by the enormous speed with which the works councils emerged and by the zest with which they took up their in part self-imposed tasks. Doubtless the works councils constituted the utmost revolutionary element of Czechoslovak society in the first months after the war, articulating far-reaching revolutionary demands and putting them into action, without special consideration for the plans of the new government. Thus, a conflict between the works councils and the political parties of the National Front was unavoidable.

The parties considered the works councils through the prism of their often rather confused ideological notions, which ranged from changing

[70] Law No. 37 Coll., 8.7.1959, on the position of the works councils of the basic organisation of ROH, introduced the name 'Company committee of the basic organisation of ROH'; at the same time the Decree No. 104/1945 Coll. formally expired.

[71] Governmental Decree No. 105 Coll., 26.7.1950, on the Statute of national industrial enterprises; even if works councils and factory trade union branches later managed to secure larger actual competences for themselves than provided by the law, this was not at all in the interest of the government; to a certain degree, the KSČ relinquished their claim to absolute power in the factories, because the political cost of permanent use of brute force simply seemed to high; cf. Peter Heumos, 'Arbeitermacht im Staatssozialismus. Das Beispiel der Tschechoslowakei 1968', in Angelika Ebbinghaus (ed.), *Die letzte Chance? 1968 in Osteuropa. Analysen und Berichte über ein Schlüsseljahr* (Hamburg: VSA, 2008), pp. 51–60, here pp. 54–55.

society by reform or revolution. The right-wing parties on this spectrum saw the works councils as representatives of revolutionary chaos, as allies of the Marxist left and as an alarming sign they themselves were likely to lose the battle for the voters' favour. However, the sympathies of the left wing for the works councils also were rather limited. On the one hand, the works council movement confirmed the high revolutionary expectations of Czech society, giving a clear signal to the communists to give up their hesitant attitude from previous negotiations about the government programme of the National Front in Moscow and Košice in Spring 1945 and campaign openly for a political, economic and social transformation—the voice of the people seemed to demand just this. On the other hand, the works councils' revolutionary ethos collided with the evolutionary, legal, 'Czechoslovak' road to socialism envisaged by the communists (and even more so by the social democrats) at the time. Moreover, the self-concept of KSČ was to be the avant-garde of social change. Following the works councils blindly was in no way in the party's interest. Thus, although a vigorous vocal supporter of the works council movement, KSČ found a common language with the other parties in defining their competences and thus restricting their scope of activity. At the same time, KSČ secured considerable influence on this activity, mainly through the trade unions it had thoroughly infiltrated.

Although not functioning exactly as planned by the communists, ROH's dominance over the works councils proved to be decisive for the further development. Thus, the works councils could be integrated more tightly into the trade union policy, largely one of unreserved support of the path taken by the government of the National Front and especially KSČ in May 1945. The basically positive attitude of the trade unions towards the new people's democratic state found expression in, for instance, the debate on the right to strike, which rumbled on until February 1948. Though ÚRO did not intend to renounce the freedom to strike, they believed, however, that the trade unions' influence and 'good will' on the side of the government would continue to protect the country against conflicts of strike. Therefore, they warned 'all their organs and members' against calling strikes 'carelessly' and without the agreement of the higher authorities.[72] Henceforth, strikes were only permitted in the political fight against 'reaction'; they ceased being a legitimate weapon to

[72] Session of the Presidium of ÚRO, 14.3.1946, in VOA, ÚRO-PLEN 1945–1960, cart. 2, inv. 5.

defend social interests of the workforce against the people's democratic state—either as entrepreneur and director of the economy or as a political authority.[73] Consequently, the new communist constitution omitted mentioning the right to strike. The close ideological approach of the works councils towards ROH and KSČ, as well as their members' infiltration into the works councils, increasingly eroded their non-party character. Therefore, workers outside of KSČ did not engage in the works councils or ended their engagement, thus enabling the communists to use them as auxiliary troops in political conflicts. After the final victory in the political power struggle in February 1948, the works councils soon lost their right of existence in the eyes of the new masters.

Increasingly, works councils constituted an alien element in the emerging system of planned economy. Together with the Decree on works councils, President Beneš signed a number of decrees ordering the nationalisation of banks, insurance companies and a large part of industry.[74] With one stroke of the pen, the state had become the country's largest entrepreneur: by early 1946, national enterprises already employed approximately two thirds of all workers in industry.[75] And with the Statute on national enterprises of January 1946 and the Statute on their financing the ministerial bureaucracy had been formulating since 1946, the character of nationalised enterprises changed: in principle, they no longer worked for their own profit, but instead were to receive state bonuses for the fulfilment of planning goals.[76] Thus, the national enterprises were not only

[73] Cf. Evžen Erban, 'Právo na stávku v lidové demokracii', *Věstník ROH* 1:2 (1947), 24.1.1947, pp. 17–18. 'Představenstvo ÚRO jednalo o stávkách', *Věstník ROH* 1:11–12 (1947), 21.3.1947, pp. 73–74. 'Členové ROH ukončují diskusi o t. zv. "právu nestávkovat"', *Věstník ROH* 1:43 (1947), 17.10.1947, pp. 310–311; even after 1945, strikes mainly remained instruments in industrial conflicts; cf. Peter Heumos, 'Zum industriellen Konflikt in der Tschechoslowakei 1945–1968', in Peter Hübner, Christoph Kleßmann and Klaus Tenfelde (eds), *Arbeiter im Staatssozialismus. Ideologischer Anspruch und soziale Wirklichkeit* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2005), pp. 473–497.

[74] On the policy of nationalisation, especially the attitude of the individual parties, trade unions and works councils towards this question, see Bloomfield, *Passive Revolution*, pp. 68–90; Myant, *Socialism and Democracy in Czechoslovakia*, pp. 70–74.

[75] The nationalised sector was even larger if one adds the enterprises still under national administration, which comprised a further 15 per cent of the industrial labour; cf. Jiří Kosta, *Abriß der sozialökonomischen Entwicklung der Tschechoslowakei 1945–1977* (Stuttgart: Suhrkamp, 1978), pp. 18–19.

[76] Cf. Jaromír Balcar and Jaroslav Kučera, 'Von der Gestaltung der Zukunft zur Verwaltung des Mangels. Wirtschaftsplanung in der Tschechoslowakei von der Befreiung bis in die frühen 1950er Jahre', in Martin Schulze Wessel and Christiane Brenner (eds),

property of the state but they were also totally focused on its policy in their entrepreneurial actions. The 'adversary' of the works councils was no longer an entrepreneur or his manager, but the state. The antagonism of capital and labour increasingly turned into one between the state or its policy and organised workers' interests. In the growing rigidity of the planning system, there was ever diminishing space for a representative of group interests legitimated by grass-root democracy, at one time engaging in heavy trench fights with their factory's management, another time toeing the same management's line against the directives of higher state organs. Moreover, it became apparent, whether from egoistic interests or a lack of business competence, that the works councils were unable to ensure their entrepreneurial actions were in accordance with the 'common economic benefit' postulated in the decree. A publication of ROH lamented in summer 1947 that the works councils would not acknowledge 'subordination to the higher interest', which in practice meant, for example, 'not to earn more than is necessary and required by a healthy economic development and the growth of the enterprise'.[77] Already in June 1945, trade union leaders expressed fears that the 'private economic interest' of the works councils might supplant the 'private economic interest' of the enterprises, fears that appeared proven.[78]

For the employees too, the works councils soon lost their right of existence. The reason was not only their diminishing competences or their self-disciplining as a result of infiltration by the communist-dominated trade unions. In many respects, the works councils had always been a paper tiger owing to certain structural weaknesses. They proved unable to develop and implement a political programme in detail, rallying around rather vague catch-words like 'nationalisation' or 'socialism' instead. However, these lost their appeal, as they had either already been realised or were taken over by government policy. Moreover, works councils were characterised by extreme heterogeneity and weak supra-company structure of communication and representation. They remained tied to the workforce's thoughts and expectations and were thus structurally unable to enter into coalitions with other members of society, their influence

Zukunftsvorstellungen und staatliche Planung im Sozialismus: Die Tschechoslowakei im ostmitteleuropäischen Kontext 1945–1989 (München: Oldenbourg, 2010), pp. 187–203, here pp. 192–196.

[77] Otto Roček, 'Závodní rady a cenová politika', *Věstník ROH* 1:26 (1947), 26, 20.6.1947, 176.

[78] Plenary session of ÚRO, 7.6.1945, in VOA, ÚRO-PLEN 1945–1960, cart. 1, inv. 2.

ending at the factory gate, most not even willing to look beyond. Therefore, later in the system of state socialism, the bodies representing employees at their place of work never developed into the nucleus of a political movement of resistance, although KSČ was never able to silence the unruly workers.[79]

The idea of works councils as representatives of employees at their place of work was common in post-war Europe. Nearly everywhere, works councils constituted a central part of the social movement that, after experiencing economic crisis, war and genocide, fought for a fundamental change of economy and society. In Czechoslovakia, works councils, not at least owing to the specific socio-economic, ethnic and historical conditions of this country, were extremely widespread. Moreover, they had a considerable though short-lived influence on a rather wide range of important issues, including organising the social conditions of the employees, controlling the management of enterprises and directing the economy as a whole. Works councils constituted the only new actor—formed spontaneously at the grass roots and remaining independent at least in the beginning from state and political parties—to promote the process of social transformation that started in Czechoslovakia already in the summer of 1945. Their development and their short existence confirm the character of this social transformation as a 'revolution from above'. In such a revolution, a social movement could play an independent role only in the beginning and only for a short period of time. When the new masters finally amalgamated the works councils with ROH, this meant hardly more than the abolition of a form of organisation that had already had its day.

[79] Cf. Heumos, *Betriebsräte, Einheitsgewerkschaft und staatliche Unternehmensverwaltung*, p. 229 and p. 242; Heumos, *Zum industriellen Konflikt in der Tschechoslowakei*, passim.

Rebuilding the Donbass. The Impact of Nazi-Occupation on Workers, Engineers and the Economic Development of the Post-War Soviet Union in Late Stalinism

Tanja Penter

Introduction

The case of the Soviet Union looks at first sight to be a kind of dual 'deficit story' in terms of the role social movements played in the post-war cleansings of economic elites who collaborated with the Nazis during the period of German occupation in World War II. Firstly, due to the specific structure of the Soviet command economy and the lack of private enterprises, it seems rather difficult to identify the 'economic elites' who personally profited from the German occupying regime in local societies. Secondly, the late Stalinist post-war order allowed neither the formation of independent social movements nor the participation of social movements in cleansing policies. The role of trade unions under late Stalinist rule continued to be rather marginal.

T. Penter (✉)
Unversität Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany

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However, to some extent the post-war Soviet Union faced problems in its formerly occupied territories that were similar to the problems of the formerly occupied countries of Western Europe: the Soviet Union had to accomplish enormous reconstruction works, especially with regard to major industrial plants devastated by the Germans, and it had to deal with war criminals and local collaborators. Under Stalin's post-war regime, certain cleansings against managers and specialists who had collaborated with the Nazis in the occupied territories took place and affected the economic sphere. Systematic research about convictions of German war criminals and local collaborators in the Soviet Union has just started.[1] So far it seems that local societies in the post-war Soviet Union often took part in identifying and persecuting local collaborators. This paper studies post-war cleansing policies against managers and engineers of the Donbass mining industry and pays particular attention to the question of how far ordinary workers were able to participate in it. The Donbass, located in Eastern Ukraine, was the Soviet Union's main coal region up until the 1960s. Under Stalin's forced industrialisation of the 1930s, the region experienced acute economic development and population growth, and became a leading industrial centre and 'showcase region of socialism'. During World War II, parts of the Donbass were occupied for over 22 months by the German Wehrmacht. The German occupation authorities went to great lengths to rebuild and exploit the mines, which had been destroyed by the Red Army during their retreat. Along with 1800 German mining specialists, about 90,000 local miners—a quarter of them women—were employed in the mines, as were around 20,000 Soviet prisoners of war. As well as these workers who had to work for the Germans in the occupied territories, more than 350,000 Soviet citizens were deported from the

[1] See Andreas Hilger, Nikita Petrov and Günther Wagenlehner (eds.), *Sowjetische Militärtribunale, Vol. 1: Die Verurteilung deutscher Kriegsgefangener 1941–1953* and *Vol. 2: Die Verurteilung deutscher Zivilisten 1945–1955* (Köln: Böhlau, 2001–2003); A.V. Prusin: '"Fascist Criminals to the Gallows!": The Holocaust and Soviet War Crimes Trials, December 1945–February 1946', in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 17:1 (Spring 2003), pp. 1–3; Tanja Penter, '"Das Urteil des Volkes". Der Kriegsverbrecherprozesse von Krasnodar 1943', in *Osteuropa* 60:12 (2010), pp. 117–131; Tanja Penter, 'Local Collaborators on Trial. Soviet war crimes trials under Stalin (1943–1953)', in *Cahiers du Monde russe*, 49:2–3 (2008), pp. 341–364 and the thematic volume Tanja Penter and Juliette Cadiot (eds.), 'Law and Justice in Wartime and Postwar Stalinism', in *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 61:2 (2013).

Donbass to Germany as so called *Ostarbeiter*.[2] Numerous local Soviet engineers played an important role in the reconstruction of the mines and their successful exploitation by collaborating with the Germans in an attempt to improve their living conditions. It should be noted, however, that contrary to the dominant Soviet propaganda narrative, Communist party records reveal that most of the engineers and technicians of the mining industry remained in the occupied Donbass and were not evacuated early enough into the rear area.[3] After the liberation by Soviet troops, the Stalinist government had to recognise that the experience of German occupation had changed the Donbass population's attitudes towards Soviet power. Apart from having experienced terror and violence, the war had given the population the opportunity to look behind the "iron curtain" and get into contact with Western culture and everyday life. In this respect, the experience of working under German rule played an important role. During the post-war years, Soviet citizens who had worked for the Germans in the occupied territories or in Germany became (to various extents) discriminated against and stigmatised as traitors. This was part of a new, all-embracing categorisation and hierarchical organisation of the population by the State.

The regime drew certain conclusions about the potential loyalty of Soviet citizens and their attitude towards the State on the basis of their specific wartime experience. It punished disloyalty and rewarded loyal behaviour. Furthermore, a broad, uncompromising purge was launched against members of the Communist party who had stayed in occupied territory. In a much more pragmatic way, leaving out specialists who were needed in reconstruction, cleansings took place against specialists like Donbass mining engineers and managers, who had collaborated with the Germans. Still, hundreds of thousands of accused collaborators were sentenced by military tribunals.

The cleansings remain a blank spot in Soviet post-war history until today, due to the fact that most of the trial documentation is still held in the former KGB archives. In Ukraine these materials became accessible to

[2] See Tanja Penter, *Kohle für Stalin und Hitler. Leben und Arbeiten im Donbass 1929 bis 1953* (Essen: Klartext, 2010).

[3] According to Soviet post-war party statistics, from 3958 industrial cadres in Stalino region, 2594 (65 per cent) remained in occupied territory, F. P-326, Op. 2, D. 85, Bl. 28, DADO (State archive of Doneck region).

researchers only quite recently; in Russia they still remain closed to researchers.[4] This paper is based on the documentation of several trials against mining specialists in the former KGB archive in Donec'k, as well as on relevant materials from the former state and party archives in Kiev and Moscow. The main thesis of this paper is that the state's cleansing policies were in practice not only influenced by various practical requirements, as the fact that rare specialists were needed in reconstruction, but to a certain extent also by impulses from 'below'. The logic of the cleansing policies was affected by various local negotiation processes in the formerly occupied territories, in which workers also participated.

The fact that many of the mining industry's leading engineers to a greater or lesser extent cooperated with the Germans was a decisive factor in the success of the German policy of economic exploitation. The Soviet security service (NKVD) noted this fact in a secret report in November 1943 after the liberation of the Donbass:

> Since the establishment of this society (BHO) several specialists, who had a treacherous and hostile attitude towards the Soviet motherland and did not want to be evacuated, voluntarily offered their services to the fascist intruders for the active reconstruction of the coal mines and other branches of industry in the basin. As a result the Germans succeeded in reconstructing the mines and factories, carried away about 2.5 million tonnes of coal, which were in the depots, and collected maps and other documentary materials characterising the resources of the Donbass.[5]

The report mentions 22 specialists who had actively supported the Germans in the reconstruction of the mining industry. All of them were later sentenced in military tribunals. It is impossible to determine the exact number of specialists sentenced in such trials after the liberation of the Donbass for cooperation with the Germans. For the Donec'k region, we

[4] For a microfilm collection of trials, see: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) collection of Soviet war crimes records (1943–1980s) related to the Holocaust in Ukraine (RG 31.018M); this invaluable collection, which encompasses over 600 trials, mainly of former policemen, was assembled from the records deposited in 21 different regional archives in Ukraine; the collection mainly focusses on trials against perpetrators, connected to crimes against Jews, so unfortunately the whole sphere of 'economic collaboration' is represented only rather marginally.

[5] F. 1, Op. 23, D. 3839, Bl. 27ob, CDAHOU (Central State Archive of public associations of Ukraine; former party archive); this document has been mentioned first by Hiroaki Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror in the Donbas. A Ukrainian-Russian Borderland, 1870s–1990s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

have some initial data about Soviet citizens who had been arrested by the NKVD as collaborators during the years 1943–1945 and who were rehabilitated in or up to the 1990s. This number reached 3364 people.[6] The Ukrainian historian Nikol's'kij estimates that the number of people not rehabilitated was as large as the number of those rehabilitated.[7] Already in the first three months after liberation, the NKVD in the Donec'k region arrested more than 2500 Soviet citizens, most of them members of the local police and the local administration.[8]

Soviet Post-war Trials Against Collaborators

According to a publication by the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB), over 320,000 Soviet citizens were arrested between 1943 and 1953 for collaborating with the Germans. This constituted one third of all arrests made by the NKVD in these years.[9] If we compare this number with the roughly 100,000 Germans and Austrians convicted as war and NS-criminals all over Europe since 1944, including 21,555 Germans—mostly prisoners of war (POWs)—convicted in the Soviet Union, it becomes obvious that far more Soviet citizens than Germans were convicted for war crimes under German occupation.[10] This is not unique to the Soviet Union: in other European countries, the post-war settlement with collaborators was

[6] Moreover, 20 per cent were agents of German espionage, 10 per cent members of the local police and 5 per cent fellow workers of the Gestapo; the rest were servicemen of the German army, fellow workers of the SS, Members of Kosak units and others; see V. M. Nikol's'kij, 'Donbasivci, represovani u 1941–1945 rr. Z polityčnych motyviv: rezul'taty zahal'nyh pidrachunkiv', in *Pravda čerez gody. Stat'i vospominanija, dokumenty. Vyp Tretij* (Donec'k, 1999), pp. 42–50.

[7] V. M. Nikol's'kij, 'Orhany deržavnoï bezpeky na Doneččyni v roky velykoï vitčyznjanoï vijny: statystyka dij', in *Istoryčni i politolohični doslidžennja (vydannja Donec'koho deržavnoho universytetu)* 1:2 (2000), pp. 156–158.

[8] Among them, 1019 members of local police and Gestapo, 346 Starosta, 12 mayors, 99 leading Members of German institutions, 256 employees of German institutions, 265 agents of German espionage, 103 'traitors, who switched over to the enemy', 10 Ukrainian nationalists, 432 'anti-Soviet elements', F. 1, Op. 23, D. 3839, Bl. 42, CDAHOU (Central State Archive of public associations of Ukraine; former party archive)

[9] See O. B. Mozohkin, *Statistika repressivnoi deiatel'nosti organov bezopasnosti SSSR na period s 1921 po 1953 gg.*, www.fsb.ru/history/autors/mozohin.html [accessed in June 2009]; See also Nikolsky, *Represyvna dijal'nist' orhaniv deržavnoï bezpeky*, pp. 206–224.

[10] For the conviction of German war criminals in the Soviet Union, see the excellent overview by Andreas Hilger, '"Die Gerechtigkeit nehme ihren Lauf"? Die Bestrafung deutscher Kriegs- und Gewaltverbrecher in der Sowjetunion und der SBZ/ DDR', in Norbert Frei

also much more intense and bloodier than the prosecution of German war criminals, as Norbert Frei has noted.[11] And, as in other European countries, the convictions of collaborators in the Soviet Union during wartime and the immediate post-war years did not always take place in the court room. It was not uncommon for collaborators to be shot by NKVD special units without any trial.[12] For example, German *Einsatzkommandos* in several places in the Donbass region in Eastern Ukraine reported that Red Army units executed numerous Soviet citizens who had cooperated with the Germans after the liberation of the occupied territories. In some villages, the whole population was murdered because of their positive attitude towards the Germans.[13] If we look at the post-war trials in the broader context of Soviet trials from the late 1920s until the 1960s, it becomes clear that arrests and convictions after 1940 still constituted a minor portion. The cleansing of potential enemies was much more extensive during the 1930s than during the post-war period.[14]

Soviet war crime investigations proceeded as follows. The bill of indictment usually contained the words: 'the regional NKVD office has received information regarding …'. Apparently, the defendants were often denounced by their neighbours. There was considerable public participation in the denouncement of collaborators. Sometimes the local population even took the initiative in arresting collaborators and handed them over to the NKVD.[15] There were two different judicial bodies that investigated

(ed.), *Transnationale Vergangenheitspolitik. Der Umgang mit deutschen Kriegsverbrechern in Europa nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2006), pp. 180–246.

[11] Frei, *Transnationale Vergangenheitspolitik*, pp. 32–35.

[12] Epifanov, *Otvetsvennost' gitlerovskich voennvch prestupnikov i ikh posobnikov v SSSR: istoriko-pravovoi aspekt*, Volgograd, 1997, p. 76.

[13] 'Meldungen aus den besetzten Ostgebieten Nr. 54, 14 May 1943', R58/224, Federal State Archive Berlin; p. 172; Ereignismeldung UdSSR Nr. 186, 27, March 1942, R58/221, Federal State Archive Berlin, p. 167; letter of the propaganda ministry (Generalreferat Ostraum) to the Reichsminister, 12 February 1942, R55/1289, Federal State Archive Berlin, pp. 52–55.

[14] More than three quarters of the 970,000 arrests that took place in Ukraine during the years 1927 to 1961 occurred before the war. This indicates that the cleansing of potential enemies of the Soviet government was much more extensive during the 1930s than during the post-war period; See Nikol's'kij, *Represyvna dijal'nist' orhaniv deržavnoï bezpeky*, pp. 119–120.

[15] However, the NKVD could not always rely on the local population. In some localities, especially in areas where power had changed hands more than once within a short period of time, the population was scared and did not report collaborators to the Soviet authorities. Sometimes people even hid the collaborators from persecution.

crimes perpetrated by the Germans and the offences committed by local collaboration. Military Commissions—which entered the liberated territories first—were subsequently supplemented by the so-called Extraordinary State Commission for the Investigation of the Crimes of the German-Fascist Invaders and their Accomplices, created in November 1942.

In the Ukrainian Donbass, local collaborators had been convicted in accordance with the Ukrainian criminal law of 1934, which was not replaced by the new criminal code until 1960. Among the crimes qualifying as 'counterrevolutionary crimes', §54-1a referred specifically to 'betrayal of the homeland', including 'actions which were carried out by Soviet citizens to the detriment of the Soviet Union's military strength, its national independence or the security of its territory, as for example espionage, the forwarding of military or state secrets, switching over to the enemy and escape over the border'.[16] Punishment ranged from death by shooting to 10 years' imprisonment. In the case of members of the Red Army, the sentence was invariably capital punishment, in accordance with §54-1b.[17]

In April 1943, the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union enacted decree No. 43, which prescribed 'sanctions against German fascist criminals responsible for the killing and maltreatment of the Soviet civilian population and captured POWs, as well as secret agents and homeland traitors from the Soviet population and their auxiliaries'.[18] This decree placed German war criminals' crimes alongside those committed by Soviet collaborators for the first time. Among other things, it stated that spies and traitors were to be punished by death, while their accomplices (*posobniki*) were to be sentenced to 15 or 20 years of forced labour.

At the same time, the Soviet Chief Prosecutor and the Supreme Court felt it necessary to introduce a number of directives in order to avoid arbitrary convictions.[19] In November 1943, the Soviet Supreme Court passed

[16] §54 of the Ukrainian criminal law was similar to §58 in the Russian criminal law, which had played a central role in prosecuting 'counterrevolutionary crimes'; see V. Maliarenka (ed), *Reabilitatsia represovanykh. Verkhovnyi sud Ukraïny: Zakonodavstvo ta sudova praktyka*, (Kiev: 1997), p. 20.

[17] See Maliarenka, *Reabilitatsia represovanykh*, p. 20.

[18] See Manfred Zeidler, *Stalinjustiz contra NS-Verbrechen. Die Kriegsverbrecherprozesse gegen deutsche Kriegsgefangene in der UdSSR in den Jahren 1943–1952. Kenntnisstand und Forschungsprobleme* (Dresden: Hannah-Arendt-Institut für Totalitarismusforschung, 1996), pp. 16–20.

[19] See, for example, the instruction of the national Soviet prosecutor No 46ss from May 1942 about the classification of people's actions serving the German occupiers, in Maliarenka (ed.), *Reabilitacija represovanych*, pp. 44–45.

a directive that dealt specifically with the deeds of the Soviet citizens who had helped the enemy.[20] The Supreme Court was critical of the military tribunals, which tended to classify each and every act of the Soviet citizens in service of the German occupiers as high treason. The directive differentiated between different forms of collaboration, specifically between 'traitors' and 'accomplices'. The following deeds were described as acts of treason, punishable by death: occupying leading positions in the local administration or police; providing the Germans with classified documents; hunting down partisans, members of the Red Army and Soviet activists; taking part in murder and/or violent acts against the civilian population; robbing private and state property; and serving in the German army. Individuals who had assisted the Germans in rebuilding industry, agriculture and infrastructure, or in collecting goods for the German army, were to be sentenced to 15 or 20 years of forced labour as accomplices. The authorities left just two groups of collaborating Soviet citizens in peace: individuals who cooperated with the Germans while simultaneously supporting partisans and the Soviet underground or committing sabotage; and petty bureaucrats, workers and specialists who carried out their jobs but did not commit any of the crimes mentioned above.[21] The Soviet Chief Prosecutor instructed the regional prosecutors to review all death sentences and to immediately appeal against any unlawful decisions.[22] In May 1947, the Supreme Soviet abolished the death penalty altogether. However, in January 1950, the death sentence was reinstalled in the case of 'traitors, spies, saboteurs, and subversive elements'.[23] A report by the Ukrainian military tribunal in Kiev from October 1943 provides apt evidence of the arbitrary nature of sentences passed by different regional military tribunals. According to this report, there were cases of unwarranted death penalties, as well as of unjustified acquittals. The Kiev tribunal listed a whole range of legal abuses, including the deliberate misreading of trial records, refusal to consider milder penalties or any mitigating circumstances.[24]

[20] See Maliarenka (ed.), *Reabilitatsia represovanykh*, pp. 47–49.

[21] See Maliarenka (ed.), *Reabilitatsia represovanykh*, pp. 47–49.

[22] See Epifanov, *Otvetstvennost' gitlerovskikh voennykh prestupnikov*, pp. 70–80.

[23] See Peter H. Solomon, *Soviet Criminal Justice under Stalin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1996), p. 412.

[24] 1/23/684, CDAHOU (Central State Archive of public associations of Ukraine; former party archive), pp. 6–15.

The main charge against collaborators was their 'homeland betrayal'. High treason was considered a graver offence than a crime against humanity, thus occupying the top position of the Soviet hierarchy of charges. The most severe punishment was meted out against individuals who had displayed a 'hostile attitude toward the Soviet power'.[25] Defendants with connections to the organisation of Ukrainian nationalists, for example, received relatively severe punishments, up to the death penalty.[26]

Even relatively minor transgressions could send a Soviet citizen to a forced labour camp as a traitor. For example, in Voroshilovgrad, 10 former *Ostarbeiter* were tried in 1942 because they 'voluntarily went to Germany for work and performed with anti-Soviet speeches in Berlin'.[27] When they returned to Ukraine in November 1942, allegedly under German orders, they spread rumours about good living conditions in Germany. These individuals received between 7 and 20 years of labour camps.[28] This example demonstrates that the Soviet authorities interpreted the phenomenon of collaboration rather broadly. Suspicion of disloyalty hung not only over individuals who had actively supported the Germans, falling under suspicion of disloyalty, but also over those who had been exposed to German propaganda or maintained contact with Germans, among others even Soviet POWs and *Ostarbeiter*.

The only mitigating circumstances considered by the tribunals were 'clean' social backgrounds and pre-war biographies, relatives serving in the Red Army, participation in anti-German resistance and the expression of loyalty toward the Soviet state.[29] This is why defendants sometimes mentioned in their defence speech that they had come from poor peasant families, were wounded while performing military service or worked diligently in a kolkhoz after the war.[30]

[25] See Tanja Penter, 'Local Collaborators on Trial. Soviet war crimes trials under Stalin (1943–1953)', in *Cahiers du Monde russe*, 49:2–3 (2008), pp. 341–364.

[26] RG 31.018M/reel 1 (D. 43555); RG 31.018M/reel 2 (D. 43111), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM).

[27] 1/23/684, CDAHOU (Central State Archive of public associations of Ukraine; former party archive), pp. 6–15.

[28] 1/23/684, CDAHOU (Central State Archive of public associations of Ukraine; former party archive), pp. 6–15.

[29] Penter, *Local Collaborators on Trial*, pp. 341–364.

[30] RG 31.018M/reel 2/frame 3701 (D. 2784), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

One peculiar feature of Soviet justice was that it was not only the specific reprehensive acts that were tried, but also the defendants' moral qualities, judged by their loyalty toward the Soviet state. This effectively devalued the burden of proof. Even the family status of the defendant was significant, which was unique to Soviet war crime trials.[31] Thus, having a father who had previously been labelled as 'kulak' could serve as an aggravating circumstance. Having a brother who had fought in the army, on the other hand, could help the defendant.[32]

The following example of a convicted industry manager demonstrates the wide range of interpretations in the trials. In April 1943, the director of an enamel factory in Voroshilovgrad was sentenced to death for helping the Germans to rebuild and exploit the factory that had previously been destroyed by the retreating Red Army. Following the review of the case by higher Soviet authorities, the death sentence was reversed. According to witnesses, the accused's main objective was to save the factory from destruction rather than to help the Germans.[33] This shows again that moral attitudes behind actions were quite hard to prove in post-war years and could be interpreted in a variety of ways.

Defence attorneys played a different role in Soviet trials than they did in the West. Nominally, the defendants had the right to be defended by an attorney, who was assigned by the military tribunal. In reality, however, only few trials during the Stalinist period took place in the presence of an attorney. It was also not uncommon for a defendant to distrust the officially appointed attorney and decline his services.[34]

As far as numbers are concerned, a relatively high percentage (about five per cent) of defendants sentenced on charges of collaboration between 1943 and 1945 were punished by death, whereas significantly fewer people (about one per cent) received capital punishment during the following

[31] Penter, *Local Collaborators on Trial*, pp. 341–364.

[32] According to a decree of the National Defence Committee from July 1942, the immediate family of the collaborators could also become subject to legal prosecution; according to this decree, adult relatives of the collaborators, including parents, spouses, children and siblings were to be banished for five years into remote areas of the Soviet Union; the main purpose of the decree was to deter Soviet citizens from switching sides.

[33] 1/23/684, Central State Archive of public associations of Ukraine; former party archive, p. 8.

[34] For example, four out of the five policemen who stood trial in Kiev in 1951 declined the services of an attorney, RG 31.018M/reel 2 (D. 46837), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

eight years. This was partly due to the fact that the death sentence was officially abolished in the Soviet Union between 1947 and 1950.[35] Out of 29,204 collaborators convicted in 1946, 21,265 were sentenced to a 'minor' sentence of 10 years and another 667 (2.3 per cent) to death.[36] As a reaction to the criticism from the Ministry of Justice, the tribunals instituted a more severe punishment policy, so that over 94 percent of collaborators convicted in the Kiev district in 1950 and 1951 were sentenced to 25 years of forced labour.[37] Almost all trials resulted in conviction, with the acquittal rate as low as 2–3 per cent.[38]

Another peculiar feature of Soviet war crimes trials was multiple convictions. It was not uncommon for the same defendant to stand trial twice, on the same charges and without any new evidence.[39]

The persistent attempts to professionalise the military tribunals yielded certain results, at least within the Soviet context. The amount of trial materials increased significantly in later years, which was mainly due to a more accurate pre-trial investigation and more professional methods of investigation. While in earlier years, most of the trial records were handwritten, later on they were typed. Furthermore, the number of verdict revisions declined. Whereas in 1946 more than one third of verdicts were revised in several regions of Western Ukraine, in 1949 this number decreased to 12 per cent, and in 1951 to a mere 2 per cent.[40] A considerable number of defendants (between 60 and 70 per cent in 1949) used the opportunity to appeal their verdict, though often without much success.[41]

[35] In this particular case, all trials, and not only those of collaborators, are meant; see Nikolsky, *Represyvna dijal'nist' orhaniv deržavnoï bezpeky*, pp. 443–451.

[36] 1/23/4954, Central State Archive of public associations of Ukraine; former party archive, pp. 171–173.

[37] By that time, the absolute numbers of convicted collaborators had significantly diminished, 1/24/100, CDAHOU, p. 101.

[38] Nikolsky, *Represyvna dijal'nist' orhaniv deržavnoï bezpeky*, pp. 443–451; in 1946 only 905 out of 29,204 convicted collaborators were acquitted; see 1/23/4954, CDAHOU, pp. 171–173.

[39] For example, the former policeman Aleksandr Mynzar was sentenced to 25 years of forced labour in Ternopol in 1948; he was arrested for the first time in 1944 but was released shortly after the end of the war; the defendant Mynzar complained in a letter to the Supreme Court in 1955: 'How come that someone could be convicted twice for the same crime in accordance with the Soviet law?'; in 1957 the sentence was reduced to 10 years and Mynzar was released; in 1983, however, additional witness accounts prompted a new investigation into the case of Mynzar; see RG 31.018M/reel 24 (D. 33533), USHMM.

[40] See trial statistics in 1/24/100, CDAHOU, p. 101.

[41] 1/24/100, CDAHOU, p. 109.

According to 1946 figures, no more than 29 per cent of prisoners were granted an appeal.[42]

Trials Against the Donbass Mining Specialists

With regard to trials against the mining specialists, the points of accusation were mainly the following: deliberate avoidance of evacuation; voluntary service for the Germans; hostile attitude towards Soviet power ('anti-Soviet personality'); active support of reconstruction work; registration and recruitment of workers and specialists; handing over secret data to the Germans; political agitation for the Germans and against the Soviet power; handing over communists to the Germans; espionage for the Germans; personal enrichment as leaseholder of small mines; harsh treatment of the workers; and destruction of mines during German retreat.[43]

Engineers and technicians examined the destroyed mines and gave recommendations regarding which mines should be reconstructed first. They provided the Germans with *Markscheider*-data, topographic maps and plans of the mines, data which was of crucial importance for the success of the reconstruction works. Without this information, reconstruction would have been impossible in many cases. Furthermore, specialists with higher education organised the recruitment of the workforce. They composed lists of workers and technicians for the different mines and gave them to the local police who collected the workers, by force if necessary. Sometimes, they also composed lists of 'bad' workers or unemployed people for deportation to Germany, and they took part in the identification of Jews and communists. Several engineers enjoyed considerable responsibilities: they were responsible for the hiring and firing of workers and technical staff and sometimes were even authorised to carry a gun. In some cases, the specialists established a cruel working system for the workers with physical punishment and withdrawal of food in cases of refusal to work—sometimes even without instruction from the German director.[44]

Engineers who worked in leading administrative positions for the Germans could become private entrepreneurs as leaseholders of small mines. Normally they paid 50 per cent of the profit for rent, the rest they

[42] 1/23/4954, CDAHOU, p. 174.

[43] ASBUDO, F. 1, D. 26612; D. 42341; D. 66345; F. 2, D. 1339; CDAHOU, F. 1, Op. 23, D. 3839, Bl.27-41ob.

[44] ASBUDO, F. 1, D. 6634, D. 42341.

kept.[45] Several engineers received a premium from the Germans for exceptional work. This could be land for private use or for a small company, or a private house, built using prisoners of war labour.[46]

Out of 27 mining specialists who—according to the available data—were investigated by the NKVD, two thirds were ethnic Russians, the rest mostly Ukrainians. The average age was 43; their social origins were widely divergent from workers and farmers to teachers and clergymen. Two thirds of the specialists were born in the Donbass, the rest came mainly from other parts of the Ukraine. Almost none of them were members of the Communist party. Only a small part had been repressed in the 1930s, mostly under the accusation of industry sabotage.[47]

It has to be noted here that the Soviet mining managers and engineers' personal gains were relatively small compared to the financial profits of local economic elites in Western European countries. For many of these collaborators, their cooperation was primarily a survival strategy.

Looking at the mining specialists' motivation for cooperating with the Germans, there were a variety of reasons ranging from pure survival to opportunism. However, another factor was also quite decisive for many of the specialists, namely the experience of Stalinist repression during the late 1920s and 1930s. At the end of the 1920s, the Soviet power had started the first general attack against the so called 'bourgeois specialists'. Leading engineers had been sentenced to several years in prison and forced labour camps in numerous show trials under the accusation of 'economic espionage' and 'counterrevolutionary acts'. The 'Shakhty'-trial, which took place in 1928 in the Donbass is one of the most well-known of these show trials.[48] Later, the start of the 'Stakhanovite' movement in the mid-1930s signalled the beginning of another wave of animosity towards engineers, which ended in the Great Terror of 1937/1938.[49] From 1933 to 1936,

[45] ASBUDO, F. 1, D. 26612, Tom 1, Bl. 231–276.

[46] ASBUDO, F. 1, D. 26612, Tom 2, Bl. 375–388; D. 42341, Bl. 3–13.

[47] F. 1, Op. 23, D. 3839, Bl.27-41ob, CDAHOU; F. 1, D. 26612, D. 42341, D. 66345 and F. 2, D. 1339, ASBUDO.

[48] See among others: Hiroaki Kuromiya, 'The Shakhty Affair', in *South East European Monitor* 4 (1997), pp. 41–64; Nikolaij Vasil'evic Krylenko, *Ėkonomičeskaja kontr-revoljucija v Donbasse (itogi Šachtinskogo Dela). Stat'i i dokumenty* (Moskva: 1928); S. D. Šein, *Sud nad ėkonomičeskoj kontr-revoljuciej v Donbasse. Zametki obščestvennogo obvinitelja* (Moskva/Leningrad: 1928).

[49] See for a cultural approach towards the history of Soviet engineers Susanne Schattenberg, *Stalins Ingenieure. Lebenswelten zwischen Technik und Terror in den 1930er Jahren* (München: Oldenbourg, 2002).

1522 managers and engineers from the Donbass mining industry were sentenced to prison and forced labour for offences against security regulations.[50] During the years of the Great Terror, nearly the entire leading staff of the Donbass coal mining industry, even down to the lower level, was repressed.[51] In the 1930s, being sentenced to prison and forced labour was considered to be a 'normal professional risk' for managers and engineers.

Besides the experience of repression there was—at least for some of the specialists—another factor of importance: the disappointment with socialist methods of production and the belief in the Germans' highly innovative modernising potential. Several of the Soviet specialists had first come into contact with German specialists and workers who came to the Donbass as migrant workers during the 1930s. And at least some of them believed in the 'technical superiority and high skill' of the German specialists.[52]

What can we learn from the example of the Donbass mining specialists for our understanding of the Soviet cleansing policy and practice of the conviction of 'economic collaborators' after the war? The public perception of what 'collaboration' meant, as well as the legal practice of the conviction of collaborators, was quite different in the various European countries that had experienced occupation.[53] In the Soviet Union, according to Stalin, any work for the enemy was first and foremost considered treachery. But in practice, not everybody who worked for the Germans was sentenced—that would have been impossible. The Soviet prisoners of war and the *Ostarbeiter* who returned to the Soviet Union experienced massive reprisals. In addition, several tens of thousands were sentenced as 'collaborators'. Who was sentenced and who was not? How did society and the state cope with 'collaboration' in the post-war years? Many aspects of this topic are still topics for future research. For example, the questions

[50] Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror in the Donbas*, p. 213.

[51] F. 8225, Op. 1, D. 7128, Bl. 12–15, pp. 42–59, Russian State Economic Archive (RGAE); the document says that of 483 directors of mines of the Soviet coal mining industry, 478 got into this position only during the years 1937–1939; all of the 184 directors of combinates and trests started their work only during the years 1937–1938; from 1782 "načal'niki uččastok" in the Soviet coal mining industry, 1683 had only been employed in this function since 1937–1939.

[52] Bernhard Chiari, *Alltag hinter der Front. Besatzung, Kollabortion und Widerstand in Weißrußland 1941–1944* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1998), p. 59ff.

[53] See the different contributions in: Werner Röhr (ed.), *Europa unterm Hakenkreuz 1. Okkupation und Kollaboration. (1938–1945)* (Berlin: Hühtig, 1994).

of what role denunciations played in collaboration trials and how far workers participated in the cleansings of managers and engineers need further systematic research. Looking at the trials against mining engineers studied in this article, we can see that workers in many cases participated as witnesses in the trials and gave evidence to the detriment of their former bosses. Furthermore, we know from Donbass party committee opinion reports that workers sometimes openly criticised the practice of specialists, who had collaborated with the Germans, being allowed to remain in their positions. In January 1947, several workers from a machine factory in the Donbass publicly denounced this practice: 'how can it be that pit managers, who had worked under the Germans and now obviously attempt to sabotage production, work in our pits? And nobody takes measures against this.'[54]

As Oleksandr Melnyk has recently shown, trials in the formerly occupied territories often took place in neighbourly contexts and their outcome was influenced by a complex web of neighbourly relationships, which also functioned as a local milieux of memory construction.[55]

The position of the individual war participants in the post-war Soviet Union often resulted from complex social negotiation processes, in which those who were most needed by the state during reconstruction often had an advantage. This was also true for the Donbass mining engineers. Though a certain degree of participation of workers in the prosecution of their former bosses seemed to have been possible, the state's general practice in the conviction of 'collaboration' of economic elites was rather pragmatic: the state needed the specialists in post-war times for the immense reconstruction works. It is therefore unsurprising that the majority of mining specialists quite obviously remained in their jobs after liberation, even several who worked for the Germans in leading administrative positions.[56] Only a minority of the mining specialists who had worked for the Germans were convicted as 'homeland traitors'.[57] So, the responsible secretary of the party committee in Stalino concluded in 1947: 'despite the fact that a

[54] F. P-326, Op. 4, D. 929, Bl. 8, DADO.

[55] See Oleksandr Melnyk, 'Stalinist Justice as a Site of Memory: Anti-Jewish Violence in Kyiv's Podil District in September 1941 through the Prism of Soviet Investigative Documents', in *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 61:2 (2013), pp. 161–171.

[56] F. 326, Op. 2, D. 85, Bl. 2, DADO; see also E.L. Kravčenko, 'Problema inženerno-techničeskich kadrov v ugol'noj promyšlennosti Doneckoj oblasti (1941–1945gg.)', in 'Novi storinky istoriï Donbasu. Statti' Knyha 6 (1998), pp. 198–205.

[57] F. 8225, D. 44, Bl. 1–33; DADO, F. P-326, Op. 2, D. 61, Bl. 22–28, RGAE.

considerable number of engineers and technicians have remained in occupied territory the majority of them works well. (…) It is needless to say, that several of these traitors have already been in the dock and others still have to be convicted. But at the moment we are forced to endure them even in technical management positions.'[58] This rather pragmatic policy towards the economic cadres was maintained until the end of the Stalin era. Thus, even in 1953 party representatives in the Donbass still believed that a mining engineer who had cooperated with the Germans could without any problem be deployed in a mine where the worker collective did not know about his unpleasant past.[59]

Most interestingly, the Stalinist state was much more pragmatic in its cleansing policies against economic elites than against party members. The purges of former members of the Communist party who stayed in occupied territory took place rather uncompromisingly and lasted until the beginning of the 1950s. In most cases, the compromised Communists were excluded from the party, so that the face of the party changed significantly in post-war times.[60]

Conclusion

In conclusion, let us revisit the initial question of whether this is a story of workers who were not able to organise their protest under the conditions of a totalitarian regime. I would argue that the glass is not half empty but half full: workers started to publicly criticise the state's cleansing policies (as we know from the party documents) and participated in trials against their bosses. But looking at the relationships between workers and their bosses, we have to bear in mind that not only the experiences under German occupation were decisive here. They were part of a larger story of repressions, purges and conflicts at the workplace beginning as early as the 1930s and continuing after the war.

Moreover, we have to consider the extraordinarily severe working and living conditions of the Soviet workers, which sometimes even worsened

[58] F. P-326, Op. 2, D. 273, Bl. 23, DADO.

[59] F. P-326, Op. 8, D. 963, Bl. 60–61, DADO.

[60] See Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War. The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 82–126; For the Donbass see similar exclusions of party members (for 1944), in F. P-326, Op. 2, D. 117, Bl. Pp. 88–102; D. 122, Bl. 1–14; D. 128, Bl. 5–18; (for 1946) F. P-326, Op. 4, D. 161, Bl. 1–46, DADO.

in post-war years.[61] The coal miner Vasilij A. Aristov remembered the post-war period in the Donbass: 'directly after the war all conversations centered around the question, how you managed to survive the last day. During the years 1945, 1946, 1947 it was all about pure survival.'[62] The years 1946/1947 brought a hunger catastrophe, which caused between 1 and 1.5 million deaths, and extremely bad living conditions in the mining settlements remained a persistent problem until the end of the Stalin era.[63] During the war, the draconian labour legislation of June 1940 was further tightened, so that workers who offended against labour discipline, for example by being late, could be sentenced to five to eight years in a forced labour camp. Workers reacted with traditional forms of absenteeism: so called 'desertions' (*dezertirstvo*) of workers from their workplace became a mass phenomenon in post-war years and could hardly be controlled by the Soviet regime even by severe punishment.[64]

But the main obstacle in the way of workers holding bosses who had profited from the Nazi regime accountable in an organised manner was probably the fact that they themselves stood under the silent accusation of homeland betrayal. In Stalin's broad understanding of 'collaboration', everybody who had worked for the enemy was a traitor, including even POWs and deported *Ostarbeiter*. Thus, after the war, millions of Soviets who had lived under German rule were considered potential 'enemies of the people' and for decades official questionnaires included the question whether the person had lived in occupied territory. Many ordinary people who had simply lived in occupied territory felt subject to discrimination and stigmatisation. A woman who had worked in a briquette factory under German rule recalled her stressful experiences after the war: 'when our troops arrived, we were terrorized because we had stayed in occupied territory. We were despised because we had lived under German occupation.

[61] Beate Fieseler, 'Innenpolitik der Nachkriegszeit 1945–1953', in Stefan Plaggenborg (ed.), *Handbuch der Geschichte Russlands, Bd. 5: 1945–1991. Vom Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs bis zum Zusammenbruch der Sowjetunion* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 2001), pp. 40–41.

[62] Interview with Vasilij A. Aristov (born in 1921), recorded in June 2003 in Donec'k.

[63] See among others M. Ellman, 'The 1947 Soviet Famine and the Entitlement Approach to Famines', in *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 24:5 (2000), pp. 603–630; See also V. F. Zima, *Golod v SSSR 1946–1947* gg.: *Proischozdenie I posledstvija* (Moskava 1996); *Holod 1946–1947 rokiv v Ukraini: Prycyny I naslidky: Miznarodna naukova konferencija, Materialy, Kyiv* (New York 1998).

[64] See Donald Filtzer, *Soviet Workers and Late Stalinism. Labour and the Restoration of the Stalinist System after World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Penter, *Kohle für Stalin und Hitler*, pp. 360–369.

Later, when I went to the social security office, I was told that I had worked for the Germans. Wouldn't they have worked for the Germans if a pistol had been held to their head? That's how it is. I am suffering terribly from this. Yes, I am even scared to remember these things. It was horrible. We were despised. Why? Were we criminals in any way?'[65] This explains why millions of Soviet citizens who had lived or worked in occupied territory avoided speaking openly about their war experiences for decades until the end of the Soviet Union.

[65] Interview with Vera P. (1922), recorded in June 2001 in Donets'k.

Change or Continuity in the Danish Elites? Social Movements and the Transition from War to Peace in Denmark, 1945–1947

Niels Wium Olesen

Seen from the vantage point of 1950 and looking back to the interwar years, Denmark is characterised by a remarkable continuity with regards to the political and economic elites. Five years of German occupation seemed to have generated only insignificant changes in both spheres. Despite the dramatic upheavals of the occupation and the world war outside of Denmark, the political institutions, the leading parties and to a large extent also the principal political personalities of the interwar years remained the same throughout the war and the post-war period. The same goes with regard to the business world. The business organisations, the companies and the elite of businessmen remained largely the same after the war.[1]

[1] Claus Bundgård Christensen, Joachim Lund, Niels Wium Olesen and Jakob Sørensen, *Danmark besat: Krig og hverdag 1940–1945*, 3. resived edn. (Copenhagen: Informations Forlag, 2009).

N. W. Olesen (✉)
Aarhus Universitet, Aarhus, Denmark

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The Danish continuity in political life and the business world should not lead to the notion that this return to normalcy ensued uncontested. Several groupings advocated change in both spheres. The demands for change were initially formulated during the occupation and they were brought to the centre of public attention immediately after the liberation and stayed there for some years.

As in the rest of Europe, the liberation of Denmark in May 1945 was a time of high hopes for the future. In a national atmosphere of optimism, excitement and vindictiveness, different parts of the resistance movement sought to achieve political influence in liberated Denmark. Two main currents were at play in the last years of the war and in the immediate post-war years. On one side, right-wing groups of members of the resistance made plans for a political renewal carried forward by some kind of 'Association of Freedom Fighters'. On the other side, Danish communists tried to push forward a Popular Front as a medium for their political ambitions.

Both currents took form as social movements, defined themselves as such and saw themselves as something inherently different from the mainstream political parties. The people behind the right-wing political initiatives predominantly were without party affiliation and saw themselves as more national, more righteous and more legitimate than the mainstream political parties. On the left, the Danish Communists (Danmarks Kommunistiske Parti) chose a double strategy. On one hand, the party operated under its official name to garner working class support. On the other hand, it flew under the banner of an alleged non-political Popular Front movement, which they called a social movement and which they saw as a stronger vehicle for acquiring middle-class support.

Both the right-wing movement and the communist led Popular Front movement put forward two fundamental claims. First of all, that the mainstream parties and the political system had failed during the occupation by adapting to and (allegedly) being submissive to the occupying power. Secondly, that all collaborators should be purged, whether they collaborated in politics, business, or ideological and armed service for Germany.

The attempts of both the right and the left to purge the elites, however, turned out to be futile. This article will explain why.[2]

[2] Since the 1980s, there has been some interest among historians in the Danish transition from occupation to the post-war world. This interest has mainly been concerned with the battle for glory in the summer of liberation 1945 between the politicians and the resistance

The Occupation of Denmark

On 9 April 1940, Denmark was invaded as part of the German attack on Norway. In the very moment the invasion started, the German ambassador presented the Danish government with the following two scenarios: if, on the one hand, the government chose to continue the military fight, Germany would relentlessly crush any opposition and bomb Copenhagen. If, on the other hand, the Danish Government complied with a series of demands, Germany would guarantee to 'preserve Denmark's (…) political independence'. This assurance, the ambassador informed them, was given on the condition that the Danish government take on the responsibility of securing law and order and thus, in effect, guaranteeing the security of the German *Wehrmacht* on Danish soil.[3]

After only a few hours of military hostilities and the loss of merely 16 Danish soldiers, the government decided to lay down arms under protest. To secure political stability, a national unity government consisting of the four major democratic parties was established. With the Agrarian Liberals (Venstre) and the Conservative party (Det Konservative Folkeparti) now in government with the ruling parties of the interwar years, the Social Democrats (Socialdemokratiet) and the Social Liberals (Det Radikale Venstre), more than 90 per cent of the parliament supported the government.

The formal recognition of Denmark's 'political independence' was a remarkable exception to the standard practice of the Third Reich, since it implied German recognition of Danish sovereignty, including a

movement. Ditlev Tamm has written the seminal work on the purges and the judicial retributions (Ditlev Tamm, *Retsopgøret efter besættelsen* (Copenhagen: Jurist—og Økonomforbundets Forlag, 1984). He incorporated political dimensions in his analysis, but did not—as this author—regard the political power aspirations of the Danish Communist Party as a significant driving force behind the purges. Instead, he saw the driving force as being an urge for national justice and a more emotional drive for revenge. The historian Michael Kjeldsen has analysed the power aspirations of the communists in Michael Kjeldsen, *Folkets vilje—landets lov? Om DKPs overgangsprogram og demokrati*, Henrik Dethlefsen og Henrik Lundbak (eds.), *Fra mellemkrigstid til efterkrigstid* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanums Forlag, 1998), pp. 447–500; so have this author in Niels Wium Olesen, *Danmarks befrielse 1945—en mislykket revolution?*, *Kontur. Tidsskrift for kulturstudier* (Aarhus: Institut for Historie og Områdestudier, 2009), pp. 29–44. Since finishing this article, a book on the legal reckoning with large firms, mainly big contractors, was published in 2017, namely Chris Holmsted Larsen, *Den folkekære stalinist. En biografi om Carl Madsen*, (Copenhage: Gyldendal 2017).

[3] This part and the following sections are based on Niels Wium Olesen, 'The Obsession with Sovereignty : Cohabitation with the Enemy in Denmark 1940–1945', in John Gilmour and Jill Stephenson (eds.), *Hitler's Scandinavian Legacy* (London: Continuum Press 2013), pp. 45–72.

parliamentary democracy and a Social Democratic Prime Minister. Consequently, the relationship between the two states was characterised by negotiation and compromise agreements rather than repression and violence, as was the norm in occupied Europe.

From a Danish point of view, there were significant advantages to this setup. Firstly, Denmark was spared heavy military combat. Secondly, the Danish government, the judiciary and the police were able to protect its citizens from arbitrary German military rule. Thirdly, the continuance of the existing political system and the German acknowledgement of the democratic government as its negotiating partner marginalised the Danish Nazi Party completely. And lastly, trade agreements between Germany and Denmark were made. These were imperative for the survival of the very foreign-trade–dependent Danish economy. True to the nature of the formal equality between the two states, these agreements were reciprocal arrangements and not outright exploitation as was the case elsewhere in occupied Europe. Additionally, it is worth noting that Denmark never became a member of the pro-German military alliance. The Danish government also managed to maintain a marked distance to Nazi-ideology.

The Germans had a vested interest in maintaining the occupation of Denmark with least possible effort. As long as the German soldiers were allowed to operate freely within the Danish borders, a well-functioning, self-managing Denmark meant that the Germans did not have to waste precious resources.

Although Denmark experienced advantages compared to the rest of occupied Europe, the country still faced severe political and moral dilemmas. The balance of power at the negotiating table was very unequal since the German military gave the occupying power the upper hand. Increasingly, this forced the Danish side to accept undemocratic measures and outright humiliations. For instance, censorship of the press prohibited any criticising of Germany and the occupation, and on 22 June 1941, when Germany demanded the imprisonment of leading Danish communists, the government complied. As an alleged sovereign state, the Danish government and the police carried out the imprisonments themselves. This was a violation of the constitution and a typical example of the sinister dilemma characterising the Danish-German relations: either the Danish side did the dirty job themselves or the Germans would set up a puppet regime.

Several hundred communists were imprisoned in a Danish-run camp. It was a camp with plenty of food and no brutal guards but, of course, it was

still a camp. Even more communists avoided imprisonment and became the pioneers of the Danish resistance. Among their first steps in illegality was the establishment of a Popular Front resistance organisation called Free Denmark (in Danish: Frit Danmark). The leadership consisted of party chairman Aksel Larsen, who evaded imprisonment, and former chairman of the Conservative Party John Christmas Møller. The latter had quit politics after German claims that he was conducting anti-German agitation and was therefore a severe liability to the diplomatic relations between the two countries. Since Christmas Møller did not want to be an obstacle to the government, he offered to step down from his position as minister of trade in late 1940 and shortly after resigned from his parliament seat. Bringing together Larsen and Christmas Møller was Professor Mogens Fog. Fog was a public figure and played the role of the not so politically interested but liberal-minded, progressive professor. In reality, he was a member of the Communist Party with direct access to the party leadership. Free Denmark was supplemented with low-ranking dissident members of the government parties and claimed in its clandestine newspaper to be a cross-party organisation whose only goal was the liberation of Denmark. In May 1942, Christmas Møller escaped to Great Britain and became 'the voice from London' to many a Dane because of his weekly BBC broadcasts. The Germans were not pleased with Christmas Møller's escape and accused the government of complicity. The Conservative Party tried to ease the situation by expelling the former chairman in absentia.

The national unity government enjoyed the support of the majority of the people from the beginning of the occupation until its resignation on 29 August 1943. Nevertheless, from 1942 onwards, a growing minority viewed the acceptance of the German military presence as a national disgrace. This became evermore apparent when acts of sabotage increasingly occurred from the autumn of 1942. The government called for law and order and warned the Danish people about the consequences of a potential German takeover of power. The police and the government persecuted sabotage as a crime, which had the potential of overthrowing the Danish state. In principle, they were right. Consequently, however, they exposed themselves to accusations of running the Germans' errands, siding with Nazism and opposing democracy, as well as the allied cause.

In August 1943, the situation became untenable. After several weeks of extensive sabotage activities, strikes and demonstrations, Adolf Hitler personally demanded a tougher policy in Denmark. Danish authorities were to declare a state of emergency and introduce the death penalty for

sabotage. The government, however, refused and resigned. Instead, the German military declared martial law, implemented the death penalty for various acts of resistance and disarmed the officially still functioning Danish military. The Gestapo arrived, instigated court-martials and took over the battle against the resistance, which the Danish police no longer would take part in. As in other parts of Europe, harsh oppression and executions of resistance fighters now became the norm.

An umbrella organisation of the different groups of the Danish resistance, including Free Denmark, was formed in September 1943. It was called Denmark's Freedom Council (Danmarks Frihedsraad) and consisted of right-wing, centre and communist organisations. In the absence of a Danish government, the German occupation no longer needed to respect sovereignty. Consequently, persecution of the Jews was set in motion by the German authorities in October 1943. Luckily, most Danish Jews managed to flee to Sweden. In 1944, the Germans dissolved the Danish police force.

After the government's resignation, the permanent secretaries of the ministerial departments handled the negotiations. Of course, the Germans were tougher in the negotiations but they still listened. The two most obvious differences between the time before and after August 1943 were the increased German oppression and violence and that the Danish political system was no longer hostage to the occupying power.

The Political Parties' Plans for Denmark's Liberation

The absence of a legitimate Danish government calling for law and order and the more radicalised climate in Denmark made more people side with the resistance movement. The powers that be and mainstream society were worried that the very fabric of society was crumbling. In the late autumn of 1943, officers from the disarmed Danish military struck a deal of cooperation with the resigned former leading politicians from the Social Democratic Party and the Conservative Party. The officers were to offer their services to the Freedom Council to help obtain some control of the resistance movement. However, they would conceal that they in fact were on a mission from the politicians. The Freedom Council accepted the cooperation with the officers. Later, in 1944, the same leading politicians personally contacted the Freedom Council and offered undercover

financial support from the Treasury to buy weapons for the resistance. These weapons were carefully distributed by the army officers to 'trustworthy' resistance groups. The politicians and the officers approached the Freedom Council under the pretence of helping the allied cause and framed it as an act of sympathy for the resistance. In reality, it was more a matter of trying to harness the resistance. Another aim behind the politicians' contact with the resistance was to achieve status as the resistance's brothers in arms. Thereby they hoped to avoid a situation where they—on account of their record before August 1943—would be accused of being collaborators.[4]

The politicians especially feared two scenarios. Either that the communists in soon to be liberated Denmark would form a Popular Front based on the resistance movement and use this as a vehicle for gaining influence while at the same time trying to oust the politicians as collaborators. Or—even worse—that the communists would take advantage of a situation without a Danish police force and a fully operating military and use the weapons of the resistance to overthrow pre-war society.

The Social Democrats especially were aware that a peaceful transition from war to peace and a restoration of the pre-war political system would have to entail more than control of the resistance. The economy and the executive power needed to be strengthened immediately after the liberation. With regards to the economy, bread and jobs had to be provided in order to avoid social unrest. In the last year of the war, the Social Democrats penned an ambitious electoral manifesto calling for a comprehensive planned economy. This was published in the summer of 1945.

With the executive powers severely weakened following the resignation of the government in August 1943, the political parties needed a plan for the reinstatement of a constitutional government that could assume office the very moment Denmark was liberated. By the autumn of 1944, the political parties realised that the Freedom Council held such a strong position in the public that actual they would need to be included in negotiations in order to form a unity government after the liberation. In just one year, the politicians had moved from an idea of forming a government alone, to giving the Council one seat as an act of grace, to a classical political bargaining situation, which even implied the acknowledgment of what the politicians considered an illegitimate and self-appointed political body.

[4] Wium Olesen, *Danmarks befrielse 1945*, pp. 37–39.

The Communist Plans for Post-War Denmark

Despite the favourable economic situation compared to the rest of occupied Europe, Denmark suffered a substantial drop in the standard of living during the war, especially among urban workers. This gave the Communist Party a propaganda platform that it used to discredit the Social Democrats with accusations of class betrayal. After the collapse of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the outlawing of the Communist Party in the summer of 1941, the communists added a plan of national liberation to this socio-economic agenda. This made it possible for the party to lift itself out of its hitherto political marginalisation by proselytising in the ranks of the Social Democratic Party and by connecting with other strata of mainstream society. Motivated by these perspectives, the party operated in secret with future scenarios that showed its willingness to reach for power by striding over the dead body of Danish democracy if necessary. All in all, the Communist Party saw the national struggle for liberation as a continuation of the class struggle, just with other means.[5]

Since resistance was a mostly urban phenomenon, the members of resistance groups were usually workers and young white-collar workers, typically Social Democratic and Conservative voters. But because these parties were part of the government that had outlawed resistance activities, the members of the resistance looked for alternatives. The underground Danish Communists Party worked actively to become the political alternative for workers who felt betrayed by the Social Democrats' involvement in the government and its banning of the resistance. On the other side of the political spectrum, the right-wing Christian party Danish Unity (Dansk Samling) picked up many of the politically homeless conservative resistance members.

Several sources reveal the communists' internal discussions regarding the party's post-war plans. But none in such an elaborate way as a memo from February 1943 by one of the founders of Free Denmark, Mogens Fog, addressed to the party leadership. In this memo, Fog discussed how the power vacuum succeeding a foreseeable German capitulation could be a window of opportunity for Danish communism. The memo stated that the Danish political culture was 'deeply rooted in democracy'.[6] Therefore,

[5] Hans Kirchhoff, *Samarbejde og modstand under besættelsen. En politisk historie* (Viborg: Syddansk Universitetsforlag, 2000), p. 56.

[6] Wium Olesen, *Danmarks befrielsen 1945*, pp. 33–34; covers the following citations.

the methods that had been used in Russia, Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy would 'not lead to revolution'. In Denmark, it was paramount that a Popular Front of the resistance movement be created. Such a Popular Front of the resistance movement, flying under the banner of democracy, would be much more acceptable for the people of liberated Denmark than a claim to power by the Communist Party. The former Conservative politician Christmas Møller would head it, the memo continued. Since his escape to London, he had been in clandestine contact with Fog. Politically, he had evidently moved to the left under the influence of British wartime politics (for instance, the Beveridge Plan). Christmas Møller, the memo went on, was expected to work with the Communist Party on a 'joint programme (…) He will hardly be in favour of a pure communist programme, but I think we can get him far in our direction.' Christmas Møller would mobilise the middle class, which the Communists could hardly reach. On this basis, the Liberation government would be able to 'strengthen state control' to the degree that the party might seize the reins in the case of an emerging crisis—'as did Hitler and Mussolini after their joining the parliamentary governments' in Germany in 1932/1933 and in Italy 1922/1923!

In autumn 1943, the Danish communists regarded the formation of the Freedom Council as a further step towards a Popular Front organisation. However, most senior communists felt that the Freedom Council alone could not bring the party to power. A wider platform was needed in the form of a 'unity of the labour movement', by which they meant an association with the Social Democrats. This unity should come 'from below', i.e. in the workplaces, fired up by 'comrades of the resistance'.[7] The leading communists believed that the resistance and the agitation about the Social Democrats' alleged class betrayal during the occupation had weakened the Social Democratic Party to such a degree that a future organisational unity between the two parties would lead to communist control of the entire Danish Labour Movement.

In early 1945, the party's acting chairman, Alfred Jensen, expected an undefined 'we' to enjoy the support of 70 per cent of the population. The sources are not explicit as to whether Jensen actually meant this dramatic figure to describe the support for the party itself or for the resistance, the Freedom Council or the Popular Front in the making. He probably

[7] Morten Nielsen, *Socialdemokratiet og enheden i arbejderbevægelsen 1943*–1945 (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1978).

alluded to the latter—that is, a coalition of the resistance—which he considered the party to be able to control. As another leading communist later recalled: 'We felt … if we banded together we could win the election with a soaring majority … and finish off August 29', implying that the uprising in 1943 had been more than a quest for national liberation.[8]

In its clandestine press, the Communist Party put forward the question of the composition of the transitional government in post-war Denmark. During 1944, demands of participation of the resistance in the government were voiced with increasing intensity. A government consisting of only the old political guard could lead to 'Belgian conditions', which was a subtle warning for a civil war. Only a 'people's government' (in Danish: Folkeregering) could avoid such a situation. Additionally, the Communists called for a reorganisation of the Danish military with the inclusion of resistance fighters and a lowering of the voting age from 25 to 21. Both issues had the potential of mobilising support for the resistance in the transitional period and of being valuable in a possible takeover of power.[9]

In April 1945, during a meeting of the Freedom Council, communist Alfred Jensen proposed that the Council issue a comprehensive 'social-economic' programme for the post-war period. He presented the programme with its call for nationalisation of companies (especially collaborating companies) and delegitimisation of the (elected but non-functional since August 1943) parliament, referring to the ban of the Communist Party, thus calling it unconstitutional and demanding a swift election after the liberation. He suggested that the Freedom Council should run in the election as a political party. A Council member from Danish Unity supported Jensen. The proposal was strongly opposed by a leading member of the Council, the Social Democrat Frode Jakobsen, who represented the resistance organisation The Ring. The Ring recruited from the political mainstream, moderate Conservatives and Social Democrats. Jakobsen stipulated that the Council was not mandated to issue such a programme. The resistance had been recruited only on a programme of national liberation. After some discussion, the proposal was rejected first and foremost because the undecided members feared a split of the Council.[10]

[8] Morten Møller: *Hvem er Nielsen? En fortælling om kommunisten og modstandslederen Børge Houmann* (Gylling: Gyldendal), p. 226.

[9] Kjeldsen, *Folkets vilje—landets lov?*, p. 467.

[10] Wium Olesen, *Danmarks befrielse 1945*, pp. 35–36.

Right-Wing Plans for Post-War Denmark

In early March 1945, around 30 resistance members rooted in right-wing and Christian ideas gathered in the small village of Ranum in Jutland to discuss the post-war role of the resistance. They were mostly middle-class people; priests, doctors, army officers and students. Many of them were affiliated with or members of the political party Danish Unity but were not high-ranking members or in other ways trained in organised politics. Likewise, the attendees were not connected directly to the highest tiers of the resistance—for instance, the Freedom Council. Even before the war, most of the participants had been deeply disappointed by politics and the centre-left government. They considered Danish politics to be corrupted by materialism, class division, depravation, pacifism and lack of patriotism. The occupation, they thought, had confirmed their beliefs. Firstly, by the—in their view—disgraceful Danish capitulation on 9 April 1940; secondly, by the government's alleged submission to German interests; thirdly, by the government's combatting of the resistance before August 1943; and fourthly, by the politicians' and the military officers' infiltration of the resistance, which they (with good reason) considered to be focused on the post-war situation rather than the fight against the occupier.[11]

The Ranum Convent, as the meeting was called, decided to form an 'Association of Freedom Fighters' which would present itself to the public after the liberation and which would influence post-war politics. Five points were formulated as guiding principles for the association. Firstly, to demand all collaborators be punished as quick as possible; secondly, to provide all freedom fighters or their surviving relatives economic compensation; thirdly, to exert such an influence that a capitulation like in 1940 would be impossible in the future; fourthly, to form a rifle corps of volunteers and to strengthen the will to defend the country; and finally, to publish a journal representing the association. The Association of Freedom Fighters, the meeting stipulated, was not to be considered a political party. The ambition was to exert influence on political life by becoming a 'popular movement'.[12]

[11] O.F. Dostrup, *Ranumkonventet. Et studium i Modstandsbevægelsens politiske historie 1944–1948* (Aarhus: Forlaget Aros, 1976), pp. 43–47; and Henrik Lundbak, 'Modstandsbevægelsen i regeringen', in Henrik Dethlefsen og Henrik Lundbak (eds.), *Fra mellemkrigstid til efterkrigstid* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanums Forlag, 1998), p. 512.

[12] Dostrup, *Ranumkonventet*, p. 45.

Two things were notably not mentioned at the Ranum Convent. What kinds of collaborators were to expect punishment? The concept of democracy also remained unmentioned. Unlike the communist post-war plans, the objectives and demands put forward were vague and lacked coherence. But there is also an evident convergence between the two camps. Both demanded purges and the resistance fighters were expected to keep their weapons in some form of post-war military organisation.

Preparations for a Legal Reckoning

Simultaneously with the endeavours to make a political arrangement between the politicians and the Freedom Council regarding soon-to-be-liberated Denmark, preparations for a legal reckoning after the war were set in motion. The first to put the question on the agenda was the Freedom Council in the autumn of 1943. In a pamphlet, to a large extent penned by its Communist members, the Council called for a reckoning with the people who had helped Germany to hold Denmark in bondage. The most obvious focus was on people who had tried to install a Nazi government, carried arms for Germany or denounced the resistance. According to the pamphlet, there should only be an immediate legal reckoning with politicians who had openly violated the laws or in any way had aimed at overthrowing the constitution by instigating a Nazi regime. After the first free election, a parliamentary commission would decide as to whether any other politicians should be put before the court of impeachment. The purges would refrain from capital punishment.[13] While this hinted at restraint on behalf of the Freedom Council, it was rather ambiguous as to how far the proposed reckoning with the politicians should go. The writers of the pamphlet probably expected a landslide election that would oust substantial parts of the political elite from parliament and make the proposed parliamentary commission hostile to the old political elite.[14] The question of legal actions against economic collaboration was also introduced. The pamphlet called for special tribunals since the ordinary courts allegedly were discredited for having taken part in trials against the resistance and the communists.[15]

[13] Tamm, *Retsopgøret efter besættelsen*, pp. 70–72.

[14] Henning Poulsen, 'Opgør om retsopgøret i 1945', *Historie. Ny rk., bd. 15* (Aarhus: Historiske Samlinger, 1985), p. 562.

[15] Tamm, *Retsopgøret efter besættelsen*, pp. 70–72.

The future purges continued to be a hot topic in the clandestine press during the remainder of the occupation. Sentiments became increasingly vindictive because of a continuing radicalisation of the fight between the resistance and armed Danish Nazi collaborators. Behind the scenes, both the Freedom Council and the leading politicians set up committees to prepare the legal reckoning. The Freedom Council's Judicial Committee was headed by the communist lawyer Carl Madsen, who would later become a prominent person in liberated Denmark as the proponent of a harsh stance against economic collaboration. Signifying the rapprochement of the two sides in the political sphere, the members of the two committees met in late April 1945 in order to negotiate laws against collaborators. These negotiations were not carried to completion before Denmark was liberated.

The Political Compromise

On 5 May 1945, the German forces in the Netherlands, northwest Germany and Denmark surrendered to Field Marshal Montgomery. With the exception of the Soviet liberation of the Baltic island Bornholm, it occurred without military fighting on Danish ground.

The Danish public was informed through radio broadcasts on the eve of 5 May that a national unity government was formed under the premiership of the experienced Social Democrat Vilhelm Buhl. The government consisted of leading men of the resistance and politicians from the established political parties on a 50:50 ratio.[16]

This was the conclusion of a process running from the autumn of 1944 to late April 1945. Since late 1944, the politicians had worked persistently to achieve the status of brothers in arms with the resistance. Despite the communist power ambitions as detailed above and an evident communist interest in keeping the politicians out in the cold, the endeavours of the politicians bore fruit. This was mainly due to the military infiltration of the resistance and a massive influx of resistance fighters from the mainstream political spectrum during the last year of the occupation. International politics also strengthened the politicians. Although the Allies had no explicit agreements about to which sphere of influence Denmark belonged, it was implicitly understood, also in Denmark, that Great Britain was her central point of reference. The British Foreign Office supported the

[16] Bundgård Christensen et al., *Danmark besat*, pp. 653–656.

experienced Buhl as prime minister in liberated Denmark. This rendered Christmas Møller's candidature de facto impossible. The politicians' final accolade was the agreement of April 1945 between the Freedom Council and the politicians to form a national unity government. Last minute attempts by the communists to make the Freedom Council oppose Buhl becoming prime minister failed. These attempts were refuted at the same meeting as their 'socio-economic' programme was rejected.

In the division of portfolios, the communists and the resistance in general were outmanoeuvred too. The Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs were given to two Social Democrats and the Ministry of Defence went to a Conservative. Mostly less important ministries and ministries without portfolio were given to members of the resistance with the exception of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which went to Christmas Møller; the Ministry of Justice, which went to a Social Democratic member of the resistance organisation The Ring; and the Ministry of Traffic that was given to the Communist Alfred Jensen.

Still, the Communists did not give up their plans to maximise their political influence. They still had trump cards to play. In May 1945, they were part of a government for the first (and last) time in Danish history, represented by three ministers. They had plans of setting in motion demonstrations that should call for a unity in the labour movement and they hoped for purges in the political and business elites.

Liberation and the Return of Parliament

With the surrender of the German military, the absence of a Danish police force, a disarmed Danish military and only a small number of British liberation troops, the resistance consisting of about 50,000 men had the monopoly on violence on Danish ground on 5 May 1945. The Freedom Council was in command of these men, including the officers from the Danish army. The resistance immediately started rounding up presumed collaborators. In the first week after the liberation, more than 20,000 Danes were interned. Even though the man in charge of the armed resistance members was the moderate Frode Jakobsen, the old political guard felt rather uneasy about the situation and wanted it normalised. But the Council was in no way inclined to hand over the authority to the traditional chain of command. It claimed that the men were under allied command through the Freedom Council. This was clearly a matter of prestige. However, the liberators came to the rescue of the old political guard when

the British general Henry Dewing requested that the command be given to the leading Danish general who reported to the Conservative defence minister. The British general was the only authority Jakobsen and the Council would not disobey. On 13 May, the police force was operational again.[17]

Political life was to be normalised too. On 9 May 1945, in the presence of the King and General Dewing, the Parliament convened for the first time since August 1943. In a twist of historical irony, since it was yet another violation of the constitution, the Communist Party was given three seats. In his opening address, the Prime Minister acknowledged the unusual and transitional character of the government. An election would be called once the tasks and problems of the transitional period were solved.[18]

In the negotiations preceding the compromise that led to the transitional government, one of the central demands put forward by the Freedom Council, and accepted by the political parties, was to introduce a special criminal legislation against collaborators. As mentioned earlier, this legislation had already been under preparation during the occupation. A bill was rushed through a committee and put before the Parliament on 1 June 1945. The bill included retroactive legislation. It had been a matter of heated controversy in the committee as to whether the bill's retrospective application should begin from 29 August 1943, as argued by the political parties, or from 9 April 1940, which was the resistance's stance. On this question, the political parties lost. The retroactive application began from 9 April 1940, as advocated by the resistance. But the politicians managed to make it an extenuating circumstance if offences were committed before August 1943 following a 'law, order or instruction' from the authorities. The death penalty was reinstated after its abolishment in 1930. The politicians were generally against the death penalty. Legal historians argue that the politicians gave in to resistance pressure for fear of being hit by the retributive currents themselves.[19] Most of the legislation was aimed at criminalising armed collaboration and endeavours directly intended to overthrow the constitution. Severe economic collaboration was also punishable. A parliamentary commission was to judge any

[17] Bundgård Christensen et al., *Danmark besat*, p. 647.

[18] According to the Danish constitution, calling an election is the prerogative of the Prime Minister. Bundgård Christensen et al., *Danmark besat*, p. 662.

[19] Tamm, *Retsopgøret efter besættelsen*, pp. 124–126.

political transgressions. The prosecutor's office was reinforced with newly appointed 'special public prosecutors', among them the communist lawyer Carl Madsen. On 7 July 1945, a special court for public servants was set up. It would judge whether public servants had been members of the Nazi party, acted unpatriotically or had at some point been too friendly towards the Germans. On 29 August 1945, parliament passed a body of laws that addressed the question of economic collaboration more precisely than the few clauses in the special criminal legislation of 1 June. On 2 October 1945, the Prime Minister called an election to be held on 30 October. A week later, two so-called 'confiscation bills' were passed to ensure that excessive profits made during the occupation be returned to the state (from which the Germans had borrowed some of its funding). Now, the complete legislation criminalised economic relations with Germany that were characterised by 'offensive enterprise in particular'. Convicted felons risked prison, fines and/or confiscation of revenues. Firms that violated the confiscation bills were only to pay back excessive revenues.[20]

The complex cases of economic collaboration could not be solved swiftly. However, the Minister of Traffic, the Communist Alfred Jensen, got a prestigious scalp while he was still in office. Shortly after the liberation, he suspended the general director of the State Railways on the charge that he had been too friendly towards the Germans. While the mainstream politicians generally found this kind of specific purging unjust, they kept silent for fear of steering the retributive currents in their own direction. After the election, the general director was brought before the special court for public servants and sentenced to dismissal and the loss of his pension.[21]

Negotiations for Unity of the Labour Movement

During May and June 1945, several strikes took place all over the country. The strikes were to a large extent prompted by communist union representatives on the shop floor. In Copenhagen, the strikers often demonstrated at the parliament calling for harsher measures in the purges. It even came to armed occupations of prisons by resistance members who claimed that the detainees were treated too well. Increasingly, the strikes and

[20] Tamm, *Retsopgøret efter besættelsen*, pp. 144–157.
[21] Tamm, *Retsopgøret efter besættelsen*, pp. 548–566.

demonstrations also demanded a union of the Social Democratic Party and the Communist Party.[22]

In early June 1945, the Communist Party sent an open letter to the Social Democratic Party with an invitation to enter into negotiations with the aim of a union of the two parties. The Social Democrats felt too vulnerable to decline the invitation but entered into the negotiations with great suspicion. During the negotiations, the Social Democrats insisted that the negotiations be conducted on a central level and that the Communists stop encouraging negotiations on the local level. The Communists maintained that negotiations on the local level would not do any harm, that they were a sign of the aspirations of all Danish workers who had fought shoulder to shoulder in the resistance and that they were not in control of what happened locally.

The Social Democrats demanded that the Communist renounce the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. In response, the Communists claimed to be democrats and that they even wanted to 'expand democracy'. In mid-August, the negotiations foundered on account of the persistent Social Democratic demand that the Communists were to give up the notion of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. This the Communists found themselves incapable of doing.

The Resistance Movement's Joint Council

Despite the abortive efforts to make the Freedom Council publicise a socio-economic programme and thereby constitute a political party in the guise of a social movement, the Communists had not given up their attempts to form a Popular Front movement with a substantial say in Danish politics. The Free Denmark organisation continued their press activities after the liberation by publishing a legal weekly journal under the same name. Mogens Fog remained the driving editorial force. The first edition appeared on 18 May 1945 with an editorial article under the headline 'The Freedom Movement marches into the future'. The journal published weekly articles about the purges, calling for more severe punishment especially with regards to industry and business sectors, while at the same time calling for a renewal and development of democracy. The latter alluded to deficiencies in parliamentary democracy.

[22] Nielsen, *Socialdemokratiet og enheden i arbejderbevægelsen*, pp. 118–129.

In early June, a group of people who had attended the Ranum Convent in March 1945 summoned resistance fighters from all over the country to a meeting to establish an 'Association of Freedom Fighters'. Members of the Freedom Council were also present. It quickly turned out that opinions differed substantially. The Ranum group was very disappointed with the government. In their view, the Freedom Council had sold the resistance to the politicians. The government's assertion that it did not want a revision of the Danish-German border further disappointed these nationalists. The people of the Freedom Council had, for obvious reasons, a more pragmatic view of the government. Organisational issues proved, however, to be the greatest obstacle for cooperation. The Freedom Council wanted to create an association based on representation of the major resistance organisations, Danish Unity, The Ring, the Communist Party and Free Denmark, whereas the Ranum group wanted to base the organisation on individual membership.[23] The more politically trained and savvy people of the Freedom Council outmanoeuvred the Ranum group. The Freedom Council group formed a new organisation called 'The Resistance Movement's Joint Council' and the Ranum group's 'Association of Freedom Fighters' slowly turned into a non-political veterans' organisation.

Over the summer, simultaneously with the negotiations for unity in the labour movement, the journal *Free Denmark* enthusiastically advocated the prospects of a united resistance movement. In the edition of 17 August, it anticipated a 'Popular Democratic bloc' (in Danish: *Folkedemokratisk blok*; equivalent to the German concept: *Volksdemokratie*). This popular front should consist of the 'progressive parts' of the resistance, 'existing (political) parties, associations and trade unions'. It should 'firmly' address the purges and the 'burning economic and social problems'. The central issue was to obtain 'a renewal of the parliament's politicians' which was 'so strongly asked for by all sides of the people'.[24]

Even with the Ranum people out, the Resistance Movement's Joint Council was a disparate assembly. Like Free Denmark, the leading communist Alfred Jensen wanted the Joint Council to constitute an election bloc for the upcoming election, but he was opposed by Christmas Møller, Danish Unity and The Ring headed by Frode Jakobsen. Christmas Møller had lost confidence in any political future for the resistance and returned

[23] Dostrup, *Ranumkonventet*, p. 68.
[24] *Frit Danmark*, August 17, 1945.

to the Conservative Party in August, who were pleased to welcome 'the voice from London'. On the Joint Council's congress in early October, more than three weeks before the election, Frode Jakobsen pulled out his organisation, The Ring, and ran on the Social Democratic ballot.[25]

The Election, October 1945

During the occupation, Prime Minister Buhl had already been conscious that it was important not to hold the election too early. The erratic and vindictive atmosphere after the liberation were to his mind a dangerous environment for an election.[26] It was better if these sentiments faded away so that the future and the economy would be the dominant election themes rather than the past and the occupation. In early October, he felt it was time and called the election. The Social Democratic Party ran on an ambitious programme of state regulation and a planned economy. The Liberal Agrarians called for abolition of war regulations and promised foreign goods, bananas, chocolate, coffee and tobacco instantly. The Conservatives were split between a fraction that wanted a revision of the border with Germany and Christmas Møller, who stated that a revision was unjust and dangerous to Denmark's security. Besides, he had aired his rather leftist views during the summer of liberation, even proclaiming 'we are all socialists', referring to his admiration for the Red Army and his inclination towards progressive social policies. Danish Unity called for a revision of the border and vague allusions to a renewal of the national spirit inspired by the resistance. The Communist Party ran on a fairly moderate socialist programme and the glory of their resistance record.[27]

The result was a devastating blow to the Social Democrats with a loss of 12 per cent of the votes and a gain for the Communist of the same size. The Conservatives lost ground—Christmas Møller's statements were hard to stomach for the core electorate—and the Agrarian Liberals enjoyed significant gains. Danish Unity only received 3 per cent of the votes. The outcome was a minority government of the Agrarian Liberals, the party farthest away from the resistance. In total, only 15 per cent of the votes went to the parties that were directly linked to the resistance

[25] Henrik Lundbak, *Danish Unity. A Political party between Fascism and Resistance 1039–1947* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2003), pp. 248–250.

[26] Bundgård Christensen et al., *Danmark besat*, p. 627, p. 661 and p. 713.

[27] Bundgård Christensen et al., *Danmark besat*, pp. 713–716.

and not affiliated with governments during the occupation. The loss suffered by the Social Democrats could be explained by the erosion of legitimacy owing to 14 consecutive years of leadership and by the radicalisation of the working class during the occupation. In the elections in 1947 and in 1950, the party regained the lost votes. Simultaneously, the Communists lost popularity due to a general weakening of the special war sentiments and a disappointment among former communist voters that the political right gained influence when that of the communists was strengthened. And of course, the cold war climate marginalised the party even further.

The 1945 election should be interpreted as a popular craving for normality and opposition to experiments and renewal. The outcome is also evidence that the communist aspirations were based on an incredible overrating of the party's support. This was probably to a large extent caused by confusing widespread admiration for the resistance with popular support for dramatic political changes and rejection of the mainstream political elite. The latter simply did not exist. And, finally, the mainstream political parties, especially the Social Democrats (despite the party's loss), displayed cunning political manoeuvring and a nuanced understanding of the basics of political power.

The Purges in Business Elites

The election had shown that the vast majority of the electorate was not interested in a political renewal. The minority, consisting of individuals and social movements that called for change, was left disappointed. Still, the reckoning with political and business elites was not over. The parliamentary commission that was set up to evaluate the acts of the political system dragged on for 10 years. Since the parliamentary majority was composed of the old political guard, the commission came to the hardly surprising conclusion that no parliamentary politicians were guilty of any offences.

In the summer of 1945, the Communist attorney Carl Madsen was appointed as 'special public prosecutor' for the special court's office in Copenhagen. This office was especially established to charge felonies in industry and business sectors. Madsen concentrated on cases related to Big Business. His notion was that if he could bring down the larger firms—for instance, the big contractors that had built fortifications for the Germans—it would pave the way for a more general purging of private

companies and thereby would hit one of the pillars of capitalist society.[28] This top-down approach, however, proved counterproductive to Madsen's purposes. The cases were extremely complex and time-consuming. Time and again, he ran into difficulties concerning the state of the evidence and hidden opposition from the political elite and the central administration. They were keen not to trouble the industry and business sectors in the reconstruction process. Out of 4000 cases, only 340 were brought to trial and of them, only one third led to acquittal. Compared to the other prosecutors' offices working with other forms of collaboration, this was a very poor success rate.

In April 1946, frustrated with his lack of progress, Madsen threw all his energy into two special cases. The first case was against a large building contractor, Wright, Thomsen and Kier, which had built fortifications and airports for the Germans. However, since the summer of 1945, the balance of power had changed dramatically for the Communists and for other proponents of purging in general. In *Free Denmark*, the cases were used to mobilise public opinion. In the case against Wright, Thomsen and Kier, Madsen's efforts were hampered considerably by the fact that the building contractor could disclose that the Prime Minister and Minister of Trade, in 1940, had requested the company to work for the German military because the government feared the effects of German infiltration in the industrial sector and the labour market. The Minister of Trade in 1940, Christmas Møller with the resistance credentials, confirmed this disclosure by the contractor. This was such a blow that the case crumbled and ultimately was withdrawn. Yet, the case did not pass without consequences. One of the three owners of the contracting company was also chairman of the employers' organisation. He abandoned the chairmanship after an internal clash but maintained his membership of the executive committee. The withdrawal of the case left the question whether the company had earned too much revenue under the 'confiscation bill'. This was not, however, a case for Carl Madsen's office. The case under the 'confiscation bill' was appealed and not completed until in 1957 at the Supreme Court. Since the contractor had deposited a sum in the National Bank for any possible future regulation of the revenues during the war years, the verdict was that the National Bank owed the contractor money.

[28] Tamm, *Retsopgøret efter besættelsen*, pp. 474.

The other of Madsen's profiled cases was against business magnate Gunnar Larsen, who was accused of improper dealings with the Germans. Though Larsen was Minister of Public Works from 1940 to 1943, he was no real politician. He was asked to join the government as a non-political minister, as some sort of expert or technocrat. He quickly received a reputation as being too friendly with the Germans and the professional politicians suspected him of mixing his private business with his work for the government. He was stigmatised in the clandestine press and in the Danish-language BBC broadcasts. Larsen's lack of networks in political circles no doubt made him more vulnerable in the purges. Madsen actually managed to win the case against Larsen in the municipal court. Larsen was sentenced to 10 months in prison for improper economic dealings with the Germans. However, Larsen appealed to the High Court and the Supreme Court and was acquitted on both levels.[29]

The failure of the purges against the business elite reached a symbolic climax even before the case against Larsen was closed, when in late 1946 Carl Madsen was sentenced for drunk driving and lost his office.[30]

In general, the purges of the industrial and business sectors mostly hit smaller firms who had not obtained clearance from the government or other authorities. The firms were typically small building contractors and transportation contractors working on building fortifications, and dry cleaners who offered their services to the German military. In all, 1148 firms were sentenced, typically resulting in the imprisonment of the owner for one to six months. A substantial amount of the convictions concerned offenders who had started new companies in order to fulfil the demand of the German occupying power. This was considered to be aggravating circumstances. It may be that these parvenus were hit harder than big business because their enterprise constituted a social and economic transgression.[31] Ironically, in that sense, the legal reckoning with economic collaboration turned out to be quite the opposite of what Carl Madsen and the Communists had hoped for. Instead of a transformation of capitalist business, the legal reckoning facilitated a return to the old order.

[29] Tamm, *Retsopgøret efter besættelsen*, pp. 480–482.

[30] Tamm, *Retsopgøret efter besættelsen*, pp. 477–478.

[31] Lulu A. Hansen, 'Besættelse og social identitet Esbjerg 1944–1948', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Southern Denmark (2010); Tamm, *Retsopgøret efter besættelsen*, pp. 485–493.

Conclusion

Neither the Danish government nor the general public hailed Nazi ideology during the war. In fact, they clearly opposed it and put their hopes in an allied victory. Still, their actions were not especially heroic and do not fit well into the allied scheme of history. They tried to save the fabric of pre-war society as best as they could. Because the special German occupation regime provided the right conditions, they managed to do so quite successfully. To some, this was not acceptable. To parts of the political right wing, it was intolerable on nationalist grounds and because they had never supported the centre-left government's policies in the interwar years. To the Communists, it was unacceptable because of their loyalty to the Soviet Union and because they saw the resistance as an expedient opportunity to wage class war with other means. For both camps, the resistance put them in contact with mainstream milieus, which provided them with the opportunity to break out of their isolation. The spirit and ethos of the resistance fight and its righteousness encouraged them to seek, even demand, political influence in post-war society. Both camps considered the formation of social movements to be adequate vehicles.

The right-wing Ranum group failed early in the process. They were short on political experience and probably also on resolution. Complacency due to their mostly middle-class backgrounds might also have weakened their determination. It was different for the Communists. They had plenty of zeal, discipline and, through their ideological training, also awareness of political mechanisms. When mobilising the working class, they utilised the weakening of the Social Democratic Party because of its government responsibilities to its utmost. Mustering outside the working class, they were conscious of the general scepticism towards communism in Danish society and bridged the gap to the centre and to nationally concerned conservatives by emphasising their agenda of national liberation. Still, they never forgot their agenda of class war and the prospect of increasing political influence in post-war society, if not even a takeover of power. A popular front formed as a social movement and based on the spirit and enthusiasm of the resistance was considered the most appropriate method. Still, the Communists failed too. This was mainly because they overestimated their support and underestimated the scepticism towards them.

Denmark's development in the transitional period between war and peace is similar to many cases found in Europe. In France and Italy, collaboration, the fight of the resistance and subsequent regime changes after

liberation resulted in purges and changes in both political life and business that were partly owed to social movements stemming from the resistance. The extreme case is the interwar democracy of Czechoslovakia. Here we see a popular front government that led to a long-lasting communist takeover of power after the Prague Coup in 1948. Except for the important difference that Czechoslovakia was situated in the Soviet sphere of influence, the same Communist aspirations are discernable in Denmark. The methods—a Popular Front and purges—were also the same. The outcome was different, however. Why?

The three most important factors are probably the lenient occupation regime, the relatively well-working economy and the absence of extensive military fighting on Danish ground. Of course, these factors are partly interrelated. They curbed the political radicalisation of the Danish people and they can to various degrees be attributed to both the Danish side and the German side. The conduct of the Danish political elite and the fact that at least some political and administrative structures remained largely undamaged during the war also explain the ability to withstand the demands for change. The relatively stable democracy of the 1930s must also be taken into account. Additionally, the political elite manoeuvred with considerable prudence in the last years of the war and in the transitional period. They were very observant, and in some ways maybe even overrated the Communists' strength. Or to put it more accurately: they took every possible worst-case scenario into account. Finally, it must be noted that since the turn of the century, Denmark had developed into one of the most organised countries in the world. The labour market held the highest percentage of organisation of all countries, and politically and culturally the country was covered with highly structured and regulated organisations at both the central and the local level. This left little space for new social movements—especially for ones that to the reserved eye seemed radical, undisciplined and relatively incoherent.

Political Radicalisation and Social Movements in Liberated Norway (1945–1947)

Harald Espeli

In Norway, as in most western European countries, World War II and five years of German occupation led to a distinct political radicalisation. An obvious indicator was that in autumn 1945, the Norwegian Labour Party won a parliamentary majority for the first time in a general election. So began the 'golden days' of the Labour Party and the labour movement dominated by social democrats.[1] The Labour party held a parliamentary majority until 1961 and was in power almost continually for 20 years. Moreover, the Norwegian Communist Party (NCP) received 11.9 per cent of the votes in the 1945 election, gaining parliamentary representation for the first time since the 1920s. Never before and never since did the so-called socialist parties hold such a large share of the votes—almost 53 per cent.[2] The NCP had about 34,000 members in 1946 compared to

[1] Trond Bergh, *Storhetstid (1945–1965), vpl. 5: Arbeiderbevegelsens historie i Norge* (Oslo: Tiden, 1987).

[2] 52.9 per cent to be exact, see *Historik statistic 1994 C 188, 1995 table 25.3 and 25.4,* Statistik Sentralbyra Oslo.

H. Espeli (✉)
BI Norwegian Business School, Oslo, Norway

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Labour's 170,000 members; about half of these were so-called collective party members through their local union membership. NCP's principal daily, *Friheten*, had a daily circulation of 130,000, half of them among subscribers, making it the second largest paper in Norway, smaller only than the conservative paper *Aftenposten*, and probably the largest paper within all the Nordic countries' labour movements at the time.[3] Norway had 3.1 million inhabitants in 1945; half of them lived in sparsely populated areas and only a third in urban municipalities. A third of the labour force worked in manufacturing industries.[4]

But did political radicalisation during the occupation facilitate or lead to the development of large spontaneous social movements among workers in the period immediately following liberation (1945–1946) or in the reconstruction period (1945–1949)? Did workers try to take control of companies or demand nationalisation of numerous companies or whole industries because of the collaboration of owners and management during the occupation? The short answer is no. Although such social movements have been subject to only scattered and unsystematic research, on which this paper is largely based, there is little reason to believe that future research will significantly change the conclusion.

However, there were examples of social movements that could be said to have challenged the policies of the economic elites in the first years after liberation. In our context, three aspects of the economic elites are important. First, the business elite was organised in the Norwegian Confederation of Employers (NCE), one of the few leading business organisations not Nazified by the Quisling regime during occupation. The NCE could thus swiftly resume its activities after liberation with an untarnished public image and an unchanged leadership.[5] Second, the government played a role because most wartime economic regulations from rationing to detailed price regulations were extended into the reconstruction period. Thus, most forms of economic activity were dependent on detailed

[3] Per Selle, *NKP Norges kommunistiske parti 1945–1950* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1983), pp. 149–155; Torgrim Titlestad, *I Stalins skygge: om korleis ein politisk leiar byggjer og taper makt: Peder Furubotn, NKP og SUKP 1945–1949* (Bergen: Fagbokforl, 1997), pp. 158–159; Tore Pryser, *Klassen og nasjonen (1935–1945), Arbeiderbevegelsens historie i Norge vol 4* (Oslo: Tiden, 1988), pp. 57–569.

[4] *Historik statistic 1994 C 188, table 3.1 and 3.2, 1995,* Statistik Sentralbyra Oslo.

[5] Harald Espeli, 'Organiseringens makt. Næringslivets hovedorganisasjoner, deres politiske strategier og innflytelse gjennom 1900-tallet med hovedvekt på industrien', in Sverre A. Christensen, Harald Espeli, Eirinn Larsen and Knut Sogner (eds) *Kapitalistisk demokrati? Norsk næringsliv gjennom 100 år* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 2003), pp. 216–218.

governmental and administrative regulations and approvals in the period under consideration here. After the government in exile in London returned in June 1945, it was replaced by a broad-based coalition government led by Prime Minister and newly elected chairman of the Labour Party Einar Gerhardsen. After Labour's election victory in October 1945, Gerhardsen formed a Labour government. The leadership of the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (NCTU) was the third economic elite because of its close and formalised relationship with Labour party leaders and its role in the system of centralised wage bargaining in Norway beginning at the start of the twentieth century.[6]

This paper is limited to the period up until the communist coup in Czechoslovakia in February 1948, which dramatically influenced political debate and relations in Norway. The sentiments of the Cold War quickly became dominant. In a famous public speech shortly after the coup, Labour's leader and Prime Minister, Einar Gerhardsen, said: 'The most important task in the struggle for Norway's independence, for democracy and the rule of law is to reduce the Communist Party and its influence as much as possible.' Labour movement leaders were willing to use both legal and illegal means to achieve this aim in subsequent years.[7]

Before considering the social movements challenging economic elites, I will explain why these movements were relatively few in number and politically unsuccessful. I will also explain why demands from workers for the nationalisation of numerous companies or whole industries were almost entirely absent. The role and form of the domestic resistance during occupation is important in this respect.

Resistance Against the Quisling Regime Rather Than Against the Germans During Occupation

Norway was the only German-occupied western European country where a collaborationist Nazi party was allowed to form a puppet government. It was headed by Vidkun Quisling, who led the Nasjonal Samling (NS).

[6] Torgeir Aarvaag Stokke, *Lønnsforhandlinger og konfliktløsning: Norge i et skandinavisk perspektiv*, *Fafo-rapport; 246* (Oslo: Fafo, 1998); Terje Halvorsen, *Jern og metall 100 år Bind 2 1940–1991* (Oslo: Tiden, 1990); Finn Olstad, *Jern og Metall 100 år. Bind I 1891–1940.* (Oslo: Tiden, 1990); Pryser, *Klassen og nasjonen*.

[7] Finn Olstad, *Einar Gerhardsen—en politisk biografi* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1999), p. 226 (citation) and p. 226ff.

Domestic resistance during occupation was primarily directed against the Quisling regime's attempts to Nazify important national and civil institutions such as schools and the protestant state church. Organised resistance against Nazification attempts was passive and non-military and based on broad popular support, and it was largely successful in blocking these attempts. Incidentally, these methods later became an inspiration for American non-violence pioneers and theorists fighting oppressive regimes.[8]

Only a few days after Germany attacked Norway, the political, economic, administrative and legal elites in occupied areas initiated a policy of close economic and administrative cooperation with the Germans through a new body, the Administrative Council (Administrasjonsrådet). The council worked to legitimise economic collaboration, even during the military campaign in Norway that ended on 10 June 1940.[9] Norwegian business leaders quickly adapted to the new situation. By late autumn 1940, the effects of German orders for Norwegian goods, and especially for military-related building and construction activity, had created a booming economy. Unemployment was practically eliminated between late autumn 1940 and autumn 1944, except during the coldest winter months.[10] In summer 1941, between 150,000 and 175,000 Norwegians, or more than 15 per cent of the workforce, were working on German military-related building and construction projects, as well as expanding basic infrastructures. This was the highest number of Norwegians working directly on German building projects during the occupation.[11]

A much larger part of the workforce and business, however, was in effect working directly for Germany's war economy. Only during the last two years of the occupation was the effect of working slowly of any significance, and few business leaders actively abstained from working for the Germans. The non-communist resistance movement issued few if any

[8] Magne Skodvin, *Den norske ikkevoldelige motstanden under den tyske okkupasjonen* (Oslo: Pax, 1969); Gene Sharp and Marina Finkelstein, *The politics of nonviolent action*, *Extending horizons books* (Boston: Porter Sargent Publisher, 1973).

[9] Harald Espeli, 'The German occupation and its consequences on the composition and changes of Norwegian business elites', in *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 2 (2010), pp. 113–116.

[10] SSB *Statistisk-økonomisk utsyn over krigsårene*, 1945, p. 221 and 277, Statistisk Sentralbyrå Oslo.

[11] SSB *Statistisk-økonomisk utsyn over krigsårene*, 1945, pp. 218–223, pp. 276–277, Statistisk Sentralbyrå Oslo; Morten Tuveng, *Arbeidsløshet og beskjeftigelse i Norge før og under krigen*, *Sak og samfunn nr.13* (Bergen: Christian Michelsens Institutt, 1946), pp. 124–137.

watchwords against working directly for the Germans until the occupation's last year. It opposed sabotage of economic activity and businesses benefitting the Germans more consistently, and criticised the communist guerrillas for their sabotage activities against infrastructure and businesses. Thus, until 1944 few Norwegians actively opposed, much less sabotaged, extensive economic cooperation with the Germans, including activities that were of direct military relevance. Obviously, massive voluntary direct participation in the German war economy by large parts of the working class made it morally and socially difficult for worker-dominated social movements to demand severe punishment of business leaders who had facilitated worker participation. The extensive direct involvement by Norwegian business in the German war economy also helps to explain why the national treason settlement was almost exclusively directed against NS members.

A Comprehensive Treason Settlement Against NS Members

The provisional treason decree formulated by the exile government in London in 1944 in cooperation with the non-communist resistance movement in occupied Norway formed the basis for the large-scale judicial day of reckoning, often called the national treason settlement (landssvikoppgjøret) after liberation. According to the settlement, after 9 April 1940, any membership of Quisling's party, NS, was considered *prima facie* a criminal offence. More than 50,000 people who had been members of NS or one of its subsidiary organisations during the occupation were thus defined as criminals, making it the largest judicial settlement among the occupied western European countries. NS members were defined to be collectively responsible, through the principle of absolute or strict liability, for the societal damages done by the Quisling regime.[12] Thus, they had to pay compensation in the form of fines and confiscations, often on draconic levels. The wealthier NS members generally lost control of their property and firms to judicially appointed custodians, usually lawyers who had too large a workload and were thus forced to neglect the management of the assets, adding to the NS members' losses.

[12] Erik Solem, *Landssvikanordningen: prov. anordn. av 15. desbr. 1944 med tillegg* (Oslo: Tanum, 1945), p. 79 ff.

Ordinary membership of the domestic Nazi party was not considered a criminal offence in Denmark, The Netherlands or Belgium. Such membership was punished only by administrative means, and punishments were concentrated on party members who had worked in state institutions and organisations. Only party leaders and particularly active members were treated as criminals.[13] The fine-meshed judicial settlement against NS members removed an important basis for social movements among industrial workers who might otherwise have demanded a purge of business leaders belonging to the Nazi party. On the other hand, few NS members had held prominent positions in Norwegian business prior to the war or could be said to belong to the business elite in other ways.[14]

An important part of the legal basis for the national treason settlement in our context concerned the provisions against economic collaboration. Commercial activity 'for the enemy' was considered a criminal offence if it was performed 'in such a way or under such circumstances that the behaviour *must be considered improper*'. Generally the behaviour would be considered improper if the firm 'itself has started the relationship with the enemy or worked in close understanding with him or has tried to speed up or extend the activity without being forced to do so'. Improper prices or profits were also considered a criminal offence. These offences combined were characterised as economic treason.[15] The problems of sufficient proof in such cases often forced the prosecutors to conclude that the criminal case had to be dismissed because of the state of the evidence.

In the semi-official commentary accompanying the provisional treason decree, published in autumn 1945, it was made clear that 'a very significant part of Norwegian business had worked for the enemy' because of 'the prolonged occupation'. Although most work for the enemy had been done voluntarily, coercion and force had sometimes been used. Thus, it would be 'inexpedient and also impracticable to punish all those that had contributed to the enemy'. Consequently the police and the prosecuting authority should concentrate on those who had 'intentionally' and 'actively' collaborated with the enemy and extended their businesses without being coerced to achieve such a goal, rather than 'show the obliged

[13] Hans Fredrik Dahl and Øystein Sørensen (ed.); *Et rettferdig oppgjør? Rettsoppgjøret i Norge etter 1945* (Oslo: Pax, 2004), pp. 19–23.

[14] Espeli, *The German occupation and its consequences*, pp. 122–124.

[15] Solem, *Landssvikanordningen*, p. 51.

reserve' as a loyal citizen.[16] In the first months after liberation, the police and prosecuting authorities were overwhelmed by the cases against NS members. Within a few months, the Supreme Court had made precedent judgements in plenary session reviewing both the provisions regarding criminalisation of NS membership as well as NS members' collective responsibility for the damages of the Quisling regime. It concluded that both provisions were legal under the Constitution. The Supreme Court never made similar precedent judgements on the boundaries of economic collaboration. In summer 1945, it was unclear how the prosecuting authorities and the courts would interpret the provisions on economic collaboration. In this open and fluid situation, social movements could influence the outcome.

Confiscation of German Property in Norway

Another element that undermined demands for widespread nationalisation of industry owned by collaborating Norwegians was the confiscations of German property. On the day of the German capitulation on 8 May 1945, all property owned by German individuals and firms was confiscated by the government, as it was in other German-occupied countries. It fell to the Directorate for Enemy Property to administer the assets—ranging from small shareholdings to subsidiaries of German companies—as well as oversee the continued operation of confiscated companies. The confiscated firms and other forms of property were largely made up of mining companies, and 44 per cent of the shares of the large fertiliser producer Norsk Hydro, which had expanded into light metals in collaboration with IG Farben during the occupation. Confiscations also included the relatively large German investments in the fish processing industry during the occupation.[17]

As a result of the confiscations, the government suddenly became the largest single owner of profit-oriented businesses in Norway. No plans, much less public proposals, were made by the exile government in London or the coalition government that succeeded it in summer 1945 on what to do with confiscated companies. There was little public debate concerning whether the state should keep and run them as state-owned companies or

[16] Solem, *Landssvikanordningen*, p. 55 and p. 56.

[17] St. meld. Nr. 24 1945–1946, st. meld. Nr. 51 1951, st. meld. Nr. 8 1953, Norwegian Parliamentary Records (NPR).

sell some or all of them wholly or partly to private owners in the first years of the occupation. Neither the Labour Party nor the NCP made explicit programmatic promises in 1945 that the state should continue to own or control confiscated companies and shares.[18] Nevertheless, none of the known social movements seem to have engaged themselves in the debate on future state ownership of these firms.

This is a bit surprising considering that union membership was very high in the mining industry and that confiscated mining firms were cornerstone companies in their local communities. In addition, the national union (Norsk Arbeidsmannsforbund) of this industry had traditionally been among the most radical and strike oriented within the labour movement. The main explanation for this was that the national union did not expect the government would give up its ownership of these mines. This indeed proved to be the case. A complete nationalisation of the mining industry was only proposed by a few individuals within Labour in summer 1945. This proposal was followed up by a vaguer proposal by the national union, but not until 1948.[19]

Feeling of Community and the Common Programme

The most important element in undermining widespread and prolonged support with radical political aims was probably a psychological factor manifesting itself in a political manifesto. A feeling of community developed, especially among leaders of the organised non-communist resistance in Norway and those serving longer sentences at prison camps, particularly at Grini near Oslo, which transcended previous social, economic and political differences, manifesting itself in a wish to create a better and more equal society with fewer conflicts than in the interwar period.[20] From spring 1945 onwards, this feeling also seems to have been shared by most Norwegians. During the occupation, the resistance's aims had a narrower

[18] Tore Grønlie, *Statsdrift. Staten som industrieier i Norge 1945–1963* (Oslo: Tano, 1989).

[19] *Det norske Arbeiderparti Landsmøtet 31. august—2. september 1945, Referat ved Bjarne Jullum* (Oslo: Arbeidernes Aktietrykkeri, 1947), pp. 116–117; Kåre Odlaug, *Norsk arbeidsmandsforbund gjennom 60 år Bind II* (Oslo: Tiden, 1956), pp. 720–721.

[20] See preamble to *Fellesprogrammet* in NSD & ISF, *Vi vil.Norske partiprogrammer 1884–1997 (CD)* (Bergen/Oslo: Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste & Institutt for samfunnsforskning, 1997) included in the whole text of the Common Programme; see Jon Aanerud, *Fellesprogrammet* (Magistergradsavhandling i statsvitenskap Universitetet i Oslo, 1963), p. 32 for an early study of the programme.

scope than in post-war narratives, focusing on the struggle against the Quisling regime and the German occupation, against Nazism and for national sovereignty and independence. After liberation, support for the basic principles of democratic governance, the importance and respect of the Constitution, rule of law and the principles of parliamentary democracy became much more important. The occupation had, in short, to a large extent unified a nation state split and torn by numerous social and political conflicts in the 1920s and 1930s.[21]

The most obvious and important expression and symbol of political unity across traditional party differences was the Common Programme (Fellesprogrammet) prepared during the last year of the occupation by representatives from all major parliamentary parties prior to 1940. The final formulations of the programme were completed shortly after liberation before the four parties signed it. The Common Programme was presented for the first time on 7 June 1945 on King Haakon VII's return from exile—a day of national rejoicing, agreement and unity. Soon afterwards, the programme was also supported by the two other parties that gained parliamentary representation after the 1945 election, including the NCP on 19 June. The NCP, however, added a declaration stating that the Common Programme was unclear and inadequate at formulating the overall goal of economic policy: to enhance the forces of production in accordance with the best production techniques in modern science. Despite the explicit use of Marxist concepts, the party did not distance itself from the Common Programme, which did not allow for nationalisation. It also said explicitly that during the reconstruction period any labour conflict should be solved without the use of 'strike, lockout or boycott'.[22] Thus, it was difficult for the NCP to openly back illegal strikes in subsequent years.

The Common Programme was a combination of vague visions and forward-looking realism. Conflicts of interest could be solved by good will, experts and broad-based committees, often based on corporative representation, building compromises. The main and most clearly stated aim was the swift economic reconstruction of war damage. Longer term goals

[21] Hans Fredrik Dahl, 'Okkupasjon og integrasjon', in *Historisk Tidsskrift* 51 (1972), pp. 285–307.

[22] Citation from NSD & ISF *Vi vil..Norske partiprogrammer 1884–1997 (CD),* Fellesprogrammet Section II; See also NKP, *Vårt partis politikk etter krigen Fredspolitikken*, Oslo: Norges Kommunistiske Parti, 1945, pp. 24–27, pp. 43–44; Gustav Heiberg Stortinget et al., *Innstilling fra Undersøkelseskommisjonen av 1945: Regjeringen Nygaardsvolds virksomhet fra 7. juni 1940 til 25. juni 1945* (Oslo: Stortinget, 1947), pp. 213–214.

were vaguer. The programme advocated social and geographical equality, as well as for abolishing interwar unemployment—which the Germans had wiped out during most of the occupation. Economic planning would be central to the national reconstruction. The programme's content and rhetoric were closer to the Labour Party's than the Conservative Party appreciated. Some of the Conservative leaders were very critical of the programme's state planning ideology but they eventually accepted it because they feared that public opinion and voters would neither understand nor accept a refusal of the programme's cooperative spirit.[23]

A similar logic was probably behind the later acceptance, with a few minor comments, by the NCP. A few days prior to the NCP's acceptance of the Common Programme, the party displayed a more radical profile. It demanded that the authorities should take steps '*to confiscate* all property and wealth' belonging to 'war criminals and traitors' but also to confiscate property and assets from everyone who had gained wealth through working for the Germans during the war.[24] The Common Programme's central passage on that issue stated that all elements in the treason settlement 'must be done according to Norwegian legislation and law and no one must take the law into his own hands'.[25]

The Common Programme advocated cooperation, state regulation and planning. Nationalisation was not on the agenda. Labour's programme in 1945 continued to state that socialism was the future goal of its policies but nationalisation was only mentioned in two areas. The state monopoly on food grains should be expanded to feed grains. In addition, the state or the counties should take over scheduled ship services within Norway and regular bus services. Nationalisation of these elements of the economy had not been considered strategically important in the struggle towards a socialist society. The debate on formulating the party programme shows that most representatives thought that additional nationalisation proposals would undermine a swift reconstruction by creating political conflicts with non-socialist parties and business interests, thus destroying the spirit of the Common Programme.[26]

[23] Francis Sejersted, *Opposisjon og posisjon. Vol. III av Høyres historie* (Oslo: Cappelen, 1984), pp. 19–23.

[24] NKP, *Vårt partis politikk etter krigen Fredspolitikken*, 20. Italics in the source.

[25] NSD & ISF, *Vi vil..Norske partiprogrammer 1884–1997 (CD)*, Fellesprogrogrammet first section.

[26] DNA, *Det norske Arbeiderparti Landsmøtet 31. august—2. september 1945*, pp. 111–134.

There seems to have been no parallel to the Common Programme in the other German-occupied countries in Western Europe. The basic agreement among parliamentary parties on the programme and the aim of avoiding open political conflicts as much as possible lasted largely until the next parliamentary election in 1949. During the parliamentary period 1945–1949, most parliamentary decisions were unanimous. There were also fewer formal dissents in the standing parliamentary committees' recommendations than in any period after the parliamentary system of government was introduced in 1884, including the time after 1950.[27] This is surprising considering the NCP's relatively large parliamentary group and the beginning of the Cold War. If we measure the level of political conflict by these means, the domestic level of conflict was probably lower in Norway than in all other occupied countries in Europe with functioning parliaments and democratic elections after liberation, Denmark included.

An example of the seemingly small political differences in summer 1945 is the negotiations between the NCP and Labour to form a new united labour party. These negotiations arose because of appeals from trade unions and shop steward committees in numerous companies urging a united labour party. The negotiations, which had a parallel in Denmark, failed because of a lack of trust between negotiators and parties. The negotiations have been characterised as 'elite playacting'.[28]

A very important element of cooperation and the common will for a swift reconstruction was the agreement made in exile in London between NCE's chairman and NCTU's acting chairman in exile that labour disputes on wages should be settled through negotiations and, if necessary, through compulsory arbitration. The agreement covered only a relatively small part of the Norwegian labour market, most manufacturing industries in addition to the building and construction industry.[29] However, the exile government in London decided that compulsory arbitration would be the rule for all employees if agreement was not reached through negotiations, in order to avoid free riders. Thus, strikes, lockouts and boycotts were illegal until 1950. Punishment of such lawbreakers was not stipulated in

[27] Hilmar Rommetvedt, *Borgerlig samarbeid Sprikende staur eller laftet tømmer?* (Stavanger: Univ.forl., 1984).

[28] Pryser, *Klassen og nasjonen,* p. 546 (citation) and pp. 546–557; Inger Bjørnhaug and Terje Halvorsen, *Medlemsmakt og samfunnsansvar LOs historie 1935–1969 bind II* (Oslo: Pax, 2010), pp. 228–230; Titlestad, *I Stalins skygge,* pp. 202–212.

[29] Bjørnhaug and Halvorsen, *Medlemsmakt og samfunnsansvar LOs historie,* pp. 273–280.

the provisional decree or in later provisional legislation.[30] Regulations were considered legitimate by most employees, reducing their propensity to strike. Even the NCP voted for the provisional legislation banning strikes when the draft legislation was passed in 1947 but not when the provisional legislation was prolonged in 1948.[31]

Despite the ban on strikes, there were a few strikes in summer and early autumn 1945. According to Statistics Norway, only 16 labour conflicts occurred in 1945, involving just above 4000 wage earners, leading to 65,000 'working days lost', mostly in manufacturing industries. The level of illegal strikes and conflicts was even lower in 1946 and not significantly higher than in 1945 in subsequent years. Thus, we may conclude that the ban on strikes and work stoppages was, with few exceptions, accepted.[32] I will address the illegal strikes in 1945 that were most clearly linked to social movements.

Spontaneous Strikes in 1945

These strikes were linked to two issues. The first issue concerned a wage reduction NCTU had acquiesced to a few weeks after the German invasion in 1940. After liberation, numerous local unions and the national union of chemical industry workers demanded that the wage cut in 1940 should be paid back retrospectively. NCTU initially refused to back such claims in any way, not least because the large amounts involved could undermine the national reconstruction. NCE would refuse to negotiate on such a demand. Such a claim was highly unlikely to be supported by the Labour Court (Arbeidsretten), which was the obvious body to settle such a conflict. Even more radical local union leaders thought that the issue should be settled as an ordinary labour dispute.[33]

NCTU's decision was not accepted by a number of local unions, which threatened to go on strike if NCTU did not demand concessions from

[30] Justis—og politidepartementet, *Norsk lovtidend 1. og 2. avdeling ("Londonutgaven") Samling av prov.anordn,, res. m.m.* (Oslo: Justis—og politidepartementet, 1946), pp. 311–323.

[31] PR, Ot. Prp. Nr. 162 1945–1946, Odelstingstidende (OT) 1947, pp. 217–224, Lagtingsitende (LT) 1947, pp. 147–166; Ot. Prp. Nr. 125 1947, Innst. O. nr. 3 1948, OT 1949, pp. 40–74, LT 1948, pp. 27–38.

[32] SSB, *Historisk statistikk 1994 C 188, table 9.18* (Oslo: Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 1995).

[33] Targjerd Nomeland, *Striden om 12-øringen lønnsnedslaget i oslo 1940 og oppgjeret om det i 1945* (Hovedoppgave i historie Universitet i Oslo, 1973), pp. 69–70.

NCE. Under this grassroots pressure, NCTU agreed to send their claim to the Labour Court. The writ of summons was sent three days after large spontaneous worker demonstrations in Oslo. NCTU argued that the court proceedings could stop or prevent illegal strikes and labour actions. Nevertheless, a strike broke out in Norway's largest private company, the paper and pulp company Borregaard in Sarpsborg, in the middle of August 1945. A similar strike was started at another large paper mill in Halden to support the demands. Because the paper and pulp industry was essential to the country's earnings of foreign currency, the strikes threatened to destroy the cooperative spirit of the Common Programme and the goals of a quick reconstruction. The Prime Minister and chairman of the Labour Party, Einar Gerhardsen, characterised the strikes as 'tragic' and at odds with the goals of national solidarity. In addition, the illegal strikes could undermine the general confidence that the labour movement would respect the country's laws and thus reduce Labour's support during the coming elections.[34] After four weeks, the two strikes were ended on the promise of speedy Labour Court proceedings. However, the proceedings were delayed, largely because of NCTU decisions. Consequently, the proceedings did not start until after the general election in October 1945. The proceedings created much public interest. The Labour Court acquitted NCE in December 1945 because NCTU had not documented that its decision in 1940 was the result of illegal coercion. The court's decision resulted in a series of spontaneous protest strikes in many parts of Norway, ranging from a few hours to three days. Even local communist union representatives and the NCP argued for short protest strikes only, thus accepting that the cause was lost.

The second issue was related to workers demanding the purging of foremen and supervisors for alleged unpatriotic activity.[35] On 20 August 1945, close to 30,000 people, mostly union workers, gathered at Youngstorvet in Oslo. It might have been the largest single demonstration of workers in Norwegian history.[36] Similar large-scale worker demonstrations took place in a number of other cities. Demonstrators protested against what they considered to be a slow and lenient national treason settlement. Workers' indignation was directed against business leaders and

[34] DNA *Det norske Arbeiderparti Landsmøtet 31. august—2. september 1945,* pp. 148–149.

[35] The following is largely based on Kåre Stormark, *Thune-streiken august 1945* (Hovedoppgave i historie Universitet i Oslo, 1978).

[36] According to Pryser, *Klassen og nasjonen,* p. 542.

larger companies. The first illegal strikes shortly after liberation were linked to local union demands towards individual companies to purge individual foremen and supervisors who they claimed had behaved in an 'unpatriotic' manner during the occupation.[37] Local unions meant that foremen and supervisors who had been too cooperative with the occupier, in the sense that they had continued to work for more efficient production even if the company produced for Germany, should be punished. Such foremen and supervisors should either be sacked or relegated to subordinate positions, the local unions argued. Foremen and supervisors who had opposed the widespread go-slow activities during the last part of the occupation were especially exposed to criticism and anger from workers on many shop floors. These demands were linked to the continuous power struggle on the traditional management prerogative to appoint foremen and supervisors. Through the Main Agreement (Hovedavtalen) in 1935 between NCTU and NCE, NCTU had accepted the management prerogative in this respect. Consequently, NCE was unwilling to compromise on this principle.

The first strikes on these issues started at the end of May 1945. NCTU and NCE's response in order to stop these strikes was to agree that such conflicts should be solved through voluntary arbitration led by a judge. The arbitration tribunal should investigate the charges and make a final judgement. NCE accepted that accused foremen and supervisors could be suspended while the charges against them were investigated. There were at least 29 such conflicts shortly after liberation, sometimes also including plant managers and main engineers. Most companies involved belonged to the iron and engineering industry and had played a more or less direct part in the German war economy. Local unions involved had been among the most radical and conflict-oriented of the industry prior to the occupation. Shop floor stewards and other local union leaders probably thought that it would be inexpedient to raise such explicit charges against top management, including the CEO and board of directors, at this stage.

Thune Mek. Verksted in Oslo became the focus of strike activity. Its main activity during the occupation was the maintenance of locomotives

[37] 'Unpatriotic' ('unasjonal') was not a legal concept used in the provisional treason decree, but the concept was central after liberation in popular characterisations of people who had not been member of NS but whom many felt had been all to cooperative towards the occupant.

for the state railways, with the Wehrmacht as its biggest customer. Efficient maintenance of the locomotives was obviously of great importance to Wehrmacht. Thus in December 1944, Thune was one of the relatively few manufacturing companies exposed to sabotage by the non-communist resistance movement during the occupation.

The union at Thune accused three supervisors of opposing go-slow activities, as well as counteracting organised covert resistance activities. The union would not accept that three supervisors, including a main engineer, continue in their positions but did not demand that the three should be forced to leave the company. Immediately after the investigative panel had acquitted the three, the senior shop steward gave management a day's strike notice if the suspended supervisors returned to their positions. Thune's CEO, after consulting with NCE, replied that the acquittal must be respected. On 1 August, a strike started that lasted for four weeks. The strike leaders were predominately Labour members, not NCP members. The national union of iron and engineering industry workers quickly declared the strike illegal. The strikers nevertheless received widespread support from unionised workers. The acquittal of Thune supervisors was the last in a series of similar acquittals that had created much anger and frustration among union workers.

NCE's response to the Thune strike was to declare that it would not participate in the first planned national wage negotiations with NCTU after the liberation because the agreed principle of labour peace had been broken. NCE's confrontational line undermined not only NCTU's leadership but also the whole strategy of cooperation and partnership between the leaderships of the two influential organisations. NCE's decision was severely criticised by representatives throughout the labour movement. The enormous support for the 20 August demonstrations should be considered just as much a response and warning against the uncompromising behaviour of NCE as a criticism of the treason settlement. The rhetoric of the slogans and speakers during the Oslo demonstration was a reminder of the rhetoric used in the bitter labour conflicts of the 1920s. The declaration from the Oslo demonstration explicitly supported Thune strikers' demands. The main complaint, however, was that it was insufficient in bringing all NS members, 'traitors' and 'profiteers' swiftly to justice. In addition 'all men who had cooperated with the enemy', as well as all 'unpatriotic and provocative elements which had exploited the fact that the organizations of workers had been silenced

during occupation' should be included. In order to swiftly clean out such elements, normal rule-of-law procedures had to be abandoned.[38]

The demonstrations' angry mood seems to have led to more compromising attitudes in NCE regarding the Thune conflict, as well in relation to the national wage negotiations. The Thune strike came to an end when two foremen were suspended until an agreed solution could be found. The demands against the third disputed supervisor, a main engineer, seem to have been dropped altogether by the union representatives on the basis that he would return to the engineer's office, ending his role as supervisor. It seems that local labour union influence regarding employees considered to have behaved unpatriotically during the occupation was not necessarily weakened by the outcome of the Thune conflicts. Norsk Hydro's company history documents this.[39]

Demands for Investigating Management for Collaboration

There is no known example of workers occupying company headquarters or buildings related to these demands.[40] In an unknown number of manufacturing companies, which had extensively cooperated with the Wehrmacht or war-related industries, the senior shop stewards, on behalf of organised workers, demanded that police and public prosecutors should investigate their companies' management for illegal and punishable forms of collaboration. These worker demands are the least researched of the questions considered in this paper. A few examples are documented in business histories. In the case of Elektrisk Bureau, one of two major domestic producers of telephone and radio communications equipment, the unions demanded that management in general and CEO Albert Kvaal, the largest owner next to LM Ericsson and a former NS member, be investigated for collaboration. Although the police investigation concluded

[38] Stormark, *Thune-streiken august 1945*, pp. 184–185.

[39] Finn Erhard Johannessen, Asle Olav Rønning and Pål Thonstad Sandvik, *Nasjonal kontroll og industrell fornyelse Andre bind av Hydros historie 1905–2005* (Oslo: Pax, 2005), pp. 132–135.

[40] The closest we come to an example of this was the former CEO of Langesunds Mek. Verksted, who was released from custody in October 1945; he wanted to return to his house situated within the premises of the company but the workers refused to let him through; the district sheriff had to provide a hotel room for him in the closest city, Dag Ellingsen, *Krigsprofitørene og rettsoppgjøret* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 1993), pp. 171–172.

that both Kvaal and the firm should be fined and pay compensation, the case was dropped by the public prosecutor in spring 1948, ostensibly because of insufficient evidence.[41]

Another example is that of the largest pyrites producer in Norway, Orkla Grube aktiebolag, which had been one of Nazi Germany's largest pyrites suppliers during the war. Orkla was probably the only major Norwegian mining company that had been able to maintain production during the occupation at the same levels as in the last pre-war years. In October 1945, the miner's union at the company charged that management through various means had forced the workers to work at normal speed as in peacetime. Workers who had attempted to slow down work had been punished by having their food and tobacco rations reduced, and their absenteeism was met with equivalent wage reductions. The investigation concluded that Orkla's management and CEO Torry Kiær had not cooperated more closely with the Germans than conditions at the time had demanded. Thus, the Director General of Public Prosecution decided to drop the case as no criminal offence had been committed.[42]

The Failed Boycott Campaign Against Franco's Spain[43]

The Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) had been a big issue in Norway in the 1930s. Numerous volunteers travelled to Spain to fight for the Republican government. Norway and Franco's Spain had mutual diplomatic relations from the end of the civil war in 1939. Spain never recognised the Quisling regime. After liberation, there was no trade agreement and trade between the countries was organised as private countertrade business. Spain was important to the Norwegian merchant fleet, Norway's largest foreign currency earner, especially when fuelling. Economic interests and the fact that Norway, like Britain and France, was unwilling to support the international diplomatic isolation of Spain, became decisive for the Labour government's systematic activities against spontaneous worker boycotts of

[41] Sverre A. Christensen and Harald Rinde, *Nasjonale utlendinger. ABB i Norge 1880–2010* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 2009), pp. 134–135.

[42] Trond Bergh, Harald Espeli, and Knut Sogner, *Brytningstider Storselskapet Orkla 1654–2004* (Oslo: Orion, 2004), pp. 106–113.

[43] This section is based on Edgeir Benum, *Maktsentra og opposisjon: Spaniasaken i Norge 1946 og 1947* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1969).

Spain and against demands that Norway should take unilateral diplomatic action against Spain.

Numerous spontaneous boycott actions were taken because of new executions of political opponents by the Spanish government in February 1946. Most boycott actions were related to dock or transport workers who refused to participate in the loading and unloading of goods to or from Spain. A few boycott actions continued until July 1946 but most actions were discontinued earlier. The Labour government and NCTU's leadership cooperated closely and successfully to end the boycotts. Their main argument was that it would be contrary to national interests and to a swift reconstruction if Norway took individual diplomatic action against Spain. They also emphasised that foreign policy issues should be decided by the government and parliament, not by private actors or boycott committees. Although the Labour government was unable to break down significant internal opposition among Labour's MPs until early 1947, no boycotts by organised workers took place after July 1946.

Political Radicalisation at the Polls But a Moderate Communist Party

In contrast to some western European countries, notably Austria, Britain and France, where substantial nationalisations took place immediately following the war, nationalisations in Norway were restricted to confiscations of German property. Not even the NCP worked for large-scale nationalisations of core industries in the reconstruction period, in contrast to what most western European communist parties did. An important explanation for this difference is the role and ideology of the secretary general of the NCP from 1942, Peder Furubotn, who organised and led the communist armed resistance during the rest of occupation. He was the party's influential leader until 1949, when he was ousted from his position and later excluded from the party by Moscow's loyalists.[44] Furubotn, who declined both to become a member of the coalition government and to become an MP in summer 1945, played an important role. Because of his public standing as a military resistance leader, his political views and priorities were important in shaping the political basis for radical social movements in the first two years after liberation.

[44] The following is based on Titlestad, *I Stalins skygge*, p. 195ff.

Furubotn was an atypical communist party leader in Western Europe in 1945–1947 in formulating national communist policies. He even tried to establish good relations with Christian organisations. Furubotn argued for national economic reconstruction through cooperation between workers, farmers and fishermen. He argued explicitly against old-fashioned forms of class struggle, including strikes, which were characterised as a primitive method. Spontaneous worker actions and strikes would only isolate the working class from the rest of the nation. NCP would take responsibility for the nation and its swift economic recovery. The workers' main contributions in the economic reconstruction effort were to work smarter and more efficiently and to fight against a poor work ethic in their ranks; a poor work ethic had become habitual in many firms and organisations during the occupation.[45]

Furubotn argued that the revolutionary spirit should be used to increase work ethic and production rather than for political actions/strikes. He also supported the production committees (produksjonsutvalg) created at the firm level as a cooperative body with advisory functions between employers and employees to increase production.[46] Production committees were established based on the ideas and plans from a joint committee of NCTU and Labour in exile as an integrated element in a new corporatist governance structure from the national level to the shop floor.

The most special aspects of Furubotn's policies were his high prioritisation of agriculture and his support of peasant proprietors' and farmers' demands for higher prices. While the Labour government wanted high investments in waterpower production and heavy industries, Furubotn argued for a large investment plan for agriculture in 1946. 'The agricultural billion', as it was called, aimed at building a long-term political alliance with smallholders, peasant proprietors and farmers. The farmers had been among the traditional political enemies of the labour movement.[47]

Conclusions

A few social movements challenged the NAE, the leadership of NCTU and the coalition government in summer 1945 and the succeeding Labour government, especially in the first year after liberation. However, the

[45] Bjørnhaug and Halvorsen, *Medlemsmakt og samfunnsansvar LOs historie*, p. 255.
[46] Titlestad, *I Stalins skygge*, pp. 197–201.
[47] Titlestad, *I Stalins skygge*, pp. 213–238.

challenges were only provisional because the Labour and NCTU's leaderships cooperated closely and successfully in curbing the influence of these movements. The same was largely true for the leaderships of the NAE and the NCTU, who had no interest in weakening their traditional opponent on which their own political influence was largely based. The cooperation between these and related elites, which had widespread popular backing, was based on a new sense of community and on consensus concerning basic values and goals created and shaped during the occupation. The social movements' aims and methods were considered as opposed to the almost unanimous national consensus manifested in the Common Programme, which the NCP also adhered to. The social movements after liberation also lacked organisational capabilities and leaders that would have been able to effectively challenge the economic elites, who successfully weakened their popular support fairly quickly.

Capitalism Under Attack: Economic Elites and Social Movements in Post-War Finland

Niklas Jensen-Eriksen

Introduction

For Finland, the post-war era began in September 1944 when it switched sides in the Second World War. The country, which had fought alongside Germany against the Soviet Union from the summer of 1941 onwards, was now left within the Soviet sphere of influence.[1] In this altered political situation, new social movements, in particular those led by communists and other leftist activists, challenged the existing economic and political order. However, this article argues that the traditional economic elites were remarkably successful in defending their interests. When the 'years of danger', as the period 1944–1948 has been called in Finland, ended, it remained a country with traditional Western-style parliamentary democracy and a capitalist economic system.

[1] In English, see for example Tuomo Polvinen, *Between East and West: Finland in International Politics, 1944–1947*, edited and translated by D.G. Kirby and Peter Herring (Porvoo: Werner Söderström Osakeyhtiö, 1986).

N. Jensen-Eriksen (✉)
University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland

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Before the parliamentary elections of 1945, Finnish Prime Minister J.K. Paasikivi, the main architect of the country's new foreign policy (which was based on the attempt to maintain warm relations with the Soviet Union), urged voters to elect 'new faces' to Parliament.[2] The voters did so. A new communist-dominated political party, the Finnish People's Democratic League (*Suomen Kansan Demokraattinen Liitto*, SKDL) received a quarter of the seats. When Paasikivi was elected the President of the Republic the following year, a member of SKDL, Mauno Pekkala, became the Prime Minister, while another party member led the Ministry of Interior and transformed the country's security police into a communist organisation.

Finland was clearly moving to the left. The influence of businessmen and non-socialist parties declined. 'The bourgeoisie' are now just 'passive bystanders', chairman of the Confederation of Finnish Trade Unions (*Suomen Ammattiyhdistysten Keskusliitto*, SAK) and a prominent social democrat Eero A. Wuori told his fellow trade unionists in October 1944. Other socialists agreed and pointed out that it was the perfect time to push through important reforms. Many of them advocated nationalisation of large private companies, 'democratisation' of the business sector and various social reforms, as well as a more extensive government regulation of economic life.[3] Workers defended their rights in workplaces as well. Marjaana Valkonen, the historian of SAK, called 1945 the 'breakthrough' year of the Finnish trade union movement.[4] Non-organised workers started strikes and demanded higher wages with equal or even greater enthusiasm. In 1945, more workers participated in strikes than in any year during the interwar period.[5]

People had suffered a lot during World War II and wanted a better life. A large part of the population was not convinced that the traditional

[2] Jorma Kallenautio, *Suomi katsoi eteensä: Itsenäisen Suomen ulkopolitiikka 1917–1955* (Helsinki: Kustannusosakeyhtiö Tammi, 1985), p. 266.

[3] Marjaana Valkonen, *Yhdessä elämä turvalliseksi: Suomen ammattiyhdistysten keskusliitto 1930–1947* (Helsinki: Suomen Ammattiliittojen Keskusjärjestö SAK, 1987), p. 420 and p. 446; Tapani Paavonen, *Talouspolitiikka ja työmarkkinakehitys Suomessa toisen maailmansodan jälkeisellä jälleenrakennuskaudella vuosina 1944–1950*, Turun yliopiston julkaisuja. Sarja C, Scripta lingua Fennica edita, osa 64 (Turku: Turun yliopisto, 1987), p. 37, p. 39 and p. 77; Tapio Bergholm, *Sopimusyhteiskunnan synty I: Työehtosopimusten läpimurrosta yleislakkoon. SAK 1944–1956* (Helsinki: Kustannusosakeyhtiö Otava, 2005), p. 77.

[4] Valkonen, *Yhdessä*, p. 484.

[5] Ibid., p. 478.

economic system could help them get it. They, as well as politicians, were also aware of international trends. Governments in many European countries were taking over private companies and adopting other interventionist policies. Why would Finland choose another path?[6] Yet upon closer inspection, we find that the situation was far from hopeless for businessmen. Those reforms that posed the most serious threat to the 'bystanders' were blocked or watered down. Why and how did this happen?

The late 1940s were a restless and eventful time in Finnish history, but we will focus on selected issues that were crucial for the survival of private capitalism. Who should own and lead industrial companies? Were old managers, who were key members of the traditional economic elite, 'cleansed' from companies? This article can build on excellent studies written by historians. For example, Markku Mansner, Tapani Paavonen and Raimo Parikka have written about production committees and nationalisation, and Markku Kuisma has highlighted the role of elite networks.[7] We will also utilise printed sources and documents of leading business organisations.

In the late 1940s, Finland was a semi-agricultural country, but we will nevertheless concentrate on the industrial sector. There are several reasons for this: industry had to earn foreign currencies to pay for imports of foodstuffs and raw materials, as well as supply war reparations goods to the Soviet Union. The forest industry companies (timber, pulp and paper) successfully re-established their traditional trading links with Western Europe, in particular the United Kingdom, and also supplied a part of war reparations goods Finland had to hand over to the Soviet Union. The latter wanted goods worth $300 million (valued in 1938 prices), but most of this consisted of engineering products, ships and cable.[8]

The agricultural sector was in turmoil as well but it was nevertheless a less controversial field. Most cultivated agricultural land had been in the hands of small-scale farmers before the war. As 420,000 people had been evacuated from areas ceded to the Soviet Union, they had to be resettled. Many of them received new farms and as a result, the land ownership

[6] Raimo Parikka, *Työväenliike ja yhteiskunnan muutos 1944–1947* (MA thesis, University of Helsinki, 1988) p. 4 and p. 221; Anna Leinonen 'Sosialisoimiskomitea ja Suomen talouselämän suunta', *Faravid* 33 (2009), p. 187.

[7] See below.

[8] Kai Hoffman, 'Teollisuus', in Kaukiainen and Hoffman (eds), *Sotakorvauksista vapaakauppaan: Kauppa- ja teollisuusministeriön satavuotisjuhlakirja* (Helsinki: Valtion Painatuskeskus. Kauppa- ja teollisuusministeriö, 1988), p. 130.

structure became even more egalitarian. The Finnish forest industries, the country's most important export sector, grumbled because they lost some of their best plots of land, but it was generally accepted that those who had been engaged in agriculture should get new farms.[9]

Labour as a Fighting Force and a Battleground

SKDL was a new party but its popularity reflected persistent economic and social problems, as well as the bloody Finnish Civil War of 1918, which had left deep scars. The Finnish Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the left-wing militia known as the Red Guards had tried but failed to take over the country. After the war, the party gave up armed struggle and committed itself to the parliamentary system and gradual social reform. Some members, however, fled to Soviet Russia and formed the Finnish Communist Party (*Suomen Kommunistinen Puolue*, SKP). The Finnish labour movement was now split in half. During the Winter War (1939–1940), most left-leaning men fought in the Finnish army against the Soviet invaders. In the peace treaty signed in March 1940, Finland had to cede a part of its territory to the Soviet Union but did not lose its independence. The relations between Finland and the Soviet Union remained tense, and when the Germans attacked the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941 the Finns joined in and reconquered areas lost earlier, as well as large parts of Soviet Karelia, partly populated by Karelians, people ethnically related to the Finns.

Throughout the Continuation War (1941–1944), as it was called in Finland, the Finnish social democrats sat in government alongside non-socialist parties. During the wartime years, the 'brothers-in-arms socialists' (*asevelisosialistit*) and bourgeois groups learned to work with each other both in the political sphere and in labour markets. Employers had recognised trade unions as negotiation partners in January 1940.

After the battle of Stalingrad, cracks within the political elite emerged when a group of social democrat and centrist politicians, often referred to as the 'Peace Opposition', urged the government to take the country out of the war. Yet the ruling coalition had wide-ranging support in the

[9] The annual report of the Central Association of the Finnish Woodworking Industries (CAFWI) 1945; Finnish Forest Industries Federation (FFIF), file 381; Suomen Elinkeinoelämän Keskusarkisto, Mikkeli, Finland (ELKA, The Central Archives for Finnish Business Records).

freely-elected parliament and never lost its legitimacy in the eyes of most members of the public. The Finnish communists had tried to organise armed activity in 1941 but the authorities were able to counteract these efforts quickly. When the armistice agreement between Finland and Soviet Union was signed in September 1944, no real grass-roots resistance movement that could claim that it was speaking for the people of the country existed.[10]

The treaty did, however, stipulate that all those who had worked on behalf of the Allies had to be freed. As a result, a number of communists emerged from jails and underground to resume political activities. SKP allied with some other leftist forces to set up the SKDL and then formed a coalition government with the social democrats and the centrist Agrarian Party. Together, these three parties held three quarters of the seats in Parliament. In Eastern European countries, communists gradually concentrated power in their own hands and pushed their allies into subordinate roles. In Finland, it was more difficult to do so. The old parties had never lost their legitimacy in the eyes of most voters and as Finland had not been occupied, it was harder for the Soviets to help SKP eliminate its competitors.[11]

In the beginning, the Soviets did not even try. The Soviet-controlled Allied Control Commission complained quickly and in harsh words whenever it concluded that Finns were violating the armistice agreement in some way. Finnish officials received a steady stream of negative messages about major and minor issues, but the Soviets did not actively try to push the Finnish Government out of office. As long as the war against Germany was going on, it was better to calm things down on the 'Northern Front'.[12] The Soviets also learned to appreciate the goods they received from

[10] Kimmo Rentola, *Kenen joukoissa seisot? Suomalainen kommunismi ja sota 1937–1945* (Porvoo: Werner Söderström Osakeyhtiö, 1994), pp. 340–344; Osmo Jussila, *Suomen tie 1944–1948: Miksi siitä ei tullut kansandemokratiaa* (Porvoo: Werner Söderström Osakeyhtiö, 1990), pp. 253–254; Seppo Hentilä, 'Työväenliikkeen puolue-ja järjestöelämän herääminen' in *Suomi 1944: Sodasta rauhaan* (Helsinki: Kustannusosakeyhtiö Tammi, 1984), p. 143.

[11] Literature on Finnish communism is extensive. In German and English, see for example, Hermann Beyer-Thoma, *Kommunisten und Sozialdemokraten in Finnland 1944–1948*, *Veröffentlichungen des Osteuropa-Institutes München, Reihe Geschichte vol. 57* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1990); Anthony F. Upton, with contributions by Peter P. Rohde and Å. Sparring, *The communist parties of Scandinavia and Finland* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973).

[12] Jukka Nevakivi, 'Tulevaisuuden kynnyksellä', in *Suomi 1944: Sodasta rauhaan* (Helsinki: Kustannusosakeyhtiö Tammi, 1984), pp. 174–177; Tuomo Polvinen, *J.K. Paasikivi:*

Finland as war reparations. For this reason, the Soviets and the Finnish communist leaders discouraged strikes that might disrupt these deliveries. In the spring of 1945, SKDL had also become a part of the governing 'democratic' coalition and participated in its efforts to stabilise social and economic conditions. It did not seem necessary to adopt a more revolutionary approach. The communist leaders were convinced that time was in their favour: capitalism was gradually disappearing and the 'anti-fascist' coalition of workers' and peasants' parties was the first step on the road to socialism.[13]

At the end of the Continuation War, SAK had just 82,000 members but membership had risen to 341,000 by 1947.[14] Furthermore, wildcat strikes, which were not authorised by trade unions, became increasingly common. Some new members were not familiar with the rules and traditions of unions. Others did not care or had not joined them in the first place. Non-communist politicians and employers often blamed the communists for these strikes but in practice, the latter were aware that it was not easy to control 'proletarian masses'.[15]

Traditional Elites Adapt to New Conditions

When Finland cut its ties with Germany, most of the politicians who had held ministerial office between 1941 and 1944 were excluded from the government. Many of the replacements were nevertheless closely linked to traditional political and economic elites, who had historically been closely intertwined. The President of the Republic Risto Ryti, an anglophile former central banker who for practical reasons had led his country to an alliance with Nazi Germany, resigned. The Cabinet followed but the new leaders of the republic were not that new. The Commander-in-Chief of the Finnish military Marshal C.G.E. Mannerheim became the President, and he appointed Antti Hackzell, the managing director of the Finnish Employers' Confederation (*Suomen Työnantajain Keskusliitto*, STK) and

Valtiomiehen elämäntyö 4. 1944–1948 (Porvoo: Werner Söderström Osakeyhtiö, 1999), p. 517.

[13] Rentola, *Kenen joukoissa seisot?*, p. 522; Valkonen, *Yhdessä*, pp. 472–473; Markku Mansner, *Suomalaista yhteiskuntaa rakentamassa: Suomen Työnantajain Keskusliitto 1940–1956* (Helsinki: Teollisuuden Kustannus Oy, 1984), pp. 168–169 and pp. 276–277; Parikka, 'Työväenliike', pp. 21–22 and pp. 193–194.

[14] Valkonen, *Yhdessä*, p. 422; Mansner, *STK 1940–56*, p. 125.

[15] Valkonen, *Yhdessä*, pp. 470–473.

a former Foreign Minister, as the Prime Minister. The new Foreign Minister Carl Enckell (1944–1950) had, among other things, worked as a diplomat and a managing director of engineering and insurance companies during his long career. General Rudolf Walden, the founder of the United Paper Mills and a confidant of Mannerheim, continued to serve as the Minister of Defence, an office he had held since 1940.[16]

Hackzell and Walden soon fell ill and died; the former suffered a stroke in Moscow during the beginning of the armistice negotiations. After a brief interlude, J.K. Paasikivi was appointed as Prime Minister. This former politician, diplomat and the head of the conservative Kokoomus party and the Kansallis-Osake-Pankki (KOP, country's largest commercial bank) had often represented Finland in negotiations with the Soviets. The latter trusted him, even though they knew very well that Paasikivi had no sympathy towards communist ideology. Paasikivi did not sit in the Cabinet during the Continuation War, and the Finnish-German links had therefore not tarnished his image in the Soviet Union. In the instructions drafted in Moscow for the new Allied Control Commission, Paasikivi was characterised as a 'well-known Finnish industrialist'; but more importantly, he was the only leading person in Kokoomus whom the authors of the memo described in neutral terms.[17] Both Paasikivi and Enckell spoke Russian, which helped them to come to terms with the Soviets. As a young man, Enckell had served as a second lieutenant in an elite unit of the Imperial Russian Army. In 1917–1918 he worked in Petrograd (St. Petersburg) representing first the Grand Duchy of Finland and then independent Finland.[18]

Paasikivi's business career had ended years ago but he still had a sizeable stock portfolio.[19] Many of those who still worked in business tried to adapt to the changing international position as well. During the Winter War, a discussion group called the 'Nystén circle' had been born because the war brought few industrialists, social democrats and other influential people in close quarters. This unofficial group, which is mentioned in countless Finnish works on political and economic history, was named after Holger

[16] Markku Kuisma, *Kahlittu raha, kansallinen kapitalismi: Kansallis-Osake-Pankki 1940–1995*, Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran Toimituksia 973 (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2004), pp. 50–51.

[17] Rentola, *Kenen joukoissa seisot?*, p. 470 and p. 518.

[18] Cecilia af Forselles, *Enckell, Carl (1876–1959)* Kansallisbiografia 2001, http://www.kansallisbiografia.fi/kb/artikkeli/3273/ (accessed 16 April 2013).

[19] Kuisma, *Kahlittu raha*, p. 52.

Nystén, the managing director of the second department of the Finnish paper industry sales organisation Finpap.

During the later stages of the Continuation War, the group took in new members and tried to promote a Finnish exit from the war. Some members of the group could be classified as members of the Peace Opposition, but the industrials were also loyal to their colleagues who were sitting in the Cabinet. For example, Nystén was fiercely loyal to Walden, the Minister of Defence and one of his superiors in the civilian economy, while Walden, in turn, was loyal to Mannerheim. Both the government and the opposition were looking for a way to get the country out of the war, and Finnish business elite had a strong foothold in both camps. Paasikivi's later Cabinet included no fewer than five members of the circle.[20] Most of these and other ministers were socialists but business was also represented. Åke Gartz, the Minister of Trade and Industry, was also the assistant managing director of the important A. Ahlström forest and engineering company, Vice-President of STK and a member of the Central Commission of Finnish industry (*Teollisuuden Keskusvaliokunta*), which tried to co-ordinate the political and lobbying activities of all industrial branches. He even participated in debates on who should get the money the businesses were distributing to political parties. He argued that they should go to non-socialist parties who were willing to support the election of those individual candidates the industry favoured.[21]

After the armistice agreement was signed, Jaakko Kahma, the head of the Finnish Foreign Trade Association, tried to form a Finnish-Soviet friendship society with the support of Paasikivi. Such an association had existed before the Continuation War as a strongly leftist force and Kahma wanted to ensure that the new one would not resemble the old one. The industry did eventually get a firm foothold within the society but its role turned out to be smaller than Kahma had hoped. Paasikivi had to pressure

[20] Sakari Heikkinen, *Paper for the World: The Finnish Paper Mills' Association—Finnpap 1918–1996*, trans. Malcolm Hicks (Helsinki: Otava Publishing Company Ltd., 2000), p. 176 and pp. 205–210; Juhani Suomi, *Myrrysmies: Urho Kekkonen 1936–1944* (Kustannusosakeyhtiö Otava: Helsinki, 1986), pp. 473–476; Kuisma, *Kahlittu raha*, 47; Paavo Rantanen, *Vaikea tie rauhaan: Suomi Saksan, Ruotsin ja Neuvostoliiton puristuksessa 1944* (Jyväskylä: Atena, 2010), p. 35, p. 155.

[21] Minutes of Suomen Teollisuuden Keskusvaliokunta (TKV), 7 December 1944. ELKA. TKV's collection is not yet properly organised, but can be used for research purposes.

leading individual businessmen to join the board of the new society. They and other non-communists were there to ensure that communists could not 'monopolise' the field of Finnish-Soviet relations but some of the industrialists elected attended to their duties only reluctantly.[22] 'I am left sitting on the Devil's buttocks,' Nystén, one of the men, complained to his wife. He only agreed to join after Paasikivi had recruited Walden to put pressure on the younger businessman. 'It was the suggestion of my boss [Walden], and I got a proper telling off [from Paasikivi] for claiming that there were other, more suitable people.'[23]

Paasikivi worked hard to lay the foundations of Finland's new foreign policy, which he hoped would lead to a peaceful co-existence with the two former enemies and remove any need for aggressive Soviet moves against Finland. Yet, as Andrei Ždanov, the head of the Control Commission remarked, Paasikivi domestic policy 'differed sharply' from his foreign policy. Paasikivi was determined to block any attempts to change Finland's economic and political system.[24] Paasikivi had demanded 'new faces' to the parliament but he had also pointed out that the purpose was not to change Finland's social system, but merely to get rid of those politicians that the Soviets would never trust.[25]

Paasikivi and other key policymakers often had to concentrate all of their attention on purely political issues but as we will see, together with the businessmen, they also managed to effectively contain the expansion of communism in the economic sphere.[26] Yet, a strong-willed and quick-tempered Paasikivi was not a puppet of private companies. In fact, Paasikivi's relations with the bank he had previously led were not particularly warm. Paasikivi had been forced to retire, and he had often criticised the way other business leaders conducted their affairs. When he suddenly became Prime Minister, the current head of the KOP humbly had to repair the bank's relations with the statesman. Paasikivi received substantial

[22] Rentola, *Kenen joukoissa seisot?*, pp. 478–479; Polvinen, *Paasikivi 1944–48*, pp. 7–12.

[23] Heikkinen, *Paper for the World*, p. 209.

[24] Polvinen, *Paasikivi 1944–48*, Rentola, *Kenen joukoissa seisot?*, p. 518.

[25] Tuomo Polvinen, *Jaltasta Pariisin rauhaan*, Suomi kansainvälisessä politiikassa III: 1945–1947 (Porvoo: Werner Söderström Osakeyhtiö, 1981), p. 49.

[26] Pentti Poukka, 'Valtiososialismista liikemiehen arvostamiseen—Paasikivi talouspoliitikkona', in Matti Mannerkorpi (ed.), *J.K. Paasikivi* (Hämeenlinna: Arvi A. Karisto Osakeyhtiö, 1970), p. 227; Tuomo Polvinen, *J.K. Paasikivi: Valtiomiehen elämäntyö 5. 1948–1956* (Helsinki: Werner Söderström Osakeyhtiö, 2003), p. 23.

'negotiation fees' from the bank to remove any negative thoughts he might still harbour against the bank.[27]

Who Will Own Companies?

In 1944–1945, the most vocal supporters of nationalisation could be found within the ranks of the SDP. The party had already drafted a nationalisation programme in 1930 but concentrated more on promoting less drastic policies later on. When the Continuation War ended, the left wing of the party declared that it was time to shift to 'socialism', as capitalism was doomed and could only lead to chaos. Many of these politicians soon migrated to the new SKDL but those who remained in SDP also urged the government to take concrete steps.[28] The communists claimed that the social democrats were simply trying to win votes by advocating policies that were believed to be popular among the leftist voters. Some contemporary observers and historians have suggested that tactical consideration did indeed play a role,[29] but as Raimo Parikka has shown, the social democrats spoke so consistently and extensively about nationalisation, also in their internal debates, that it is hard to dismiss all of these discussions as mere propaganda.[30]

Surprisingly, the communists originally seemed less enthusiastic about nationalisation than the social democrats. The communist leaders acted cautiously and argued that the issue was not 'urgent'. It was better to continue to build a broad progressive centre-left coalition and advocate more moderate reforms. The attitude of Finnish communists reflected those of their Soviet comrades, who were not eager to promote nationalisation in their neighbouring country. A large part of Finnish industries were at this time producing goods for the Soviets, who needed all the material they could get, first for warfare and then for reconstruction. A drastic move like nationalisation could disrupt the delivery of Finnish reparations.[31]

[27] Kuisma, *Kahlittu raha*, p. 52.

[28] Paavonen, *Talouspolitiikka ja työmarkkinakehitys*, pp. 209–212; Mansner, *STK 1940–56*, p. 237; Leinonen, *Sosialisoimiskomitea ja Suomen talouselämän suunta*, p. 187.

[29] Mansner, *STK 1940–56*, 238; Polvinen, *Paasikivi 1944–48*, pp. 87–88; Paavonen, *Talouspolitiikka ja työmarkkinakehitys*, pp. 211–212.

[30] Parikka, 'Työväenliike', p. 13, pp. 26–28, 81–83, and 218–221.

[31] Kuisma, *Kahlittu raha*, p. 53.

In February 1946, the government set up a Socialisation Committee to either develop practical plans, as was officially stated, or, as many believed, to bury the issue of nationalisation in piles of paper.[32] In reality, the members of the committee had sharply differing views on its purpose. Uuno Takki, a moderate social democrat and the minister responsible for the process, privately stated to a leading industrialist that he had pushed the formation of the committee because otherwise there would be a parliamentary interpellation. He himself felt that it was not the right time to proceed with actual nationalisation.[33]

Other leftist members worked hard both within the committee and outside of it to develop practical plans. Thus, they produced those piles of paper, which, ironically, were later seen as a proof of the ineffectiveness of the committee. The members who represented private industry opposed nationalisation but soon became frustrated and considered resigning. However, the Central Commission of Finnish Industry asked them to stay.[34] It took the threat of nationalisation seriously and set up a joint anti-nationalisation fund and a research institute, which in addition acted predominantly as a pro-business propaganda unit. In August 1947, when the institute had been working for a year, it calculated that on an average day, five or six newspapers published content supplied by its staff. In 1948, the number was between 11 and 12.[35] The main task of the institute, according to the Central Association of the Finnish Woodworking Industries (CAFWI), one of its backers, was to explain to the public why nationalisation was such a dangerous policy for the country.[36]

The industrialists had good reason to be worried. In the spring of 1946, the Soviets adopted a more aggressive policy towards Finland and in April, the Finnish communists obtained permission from Moscow to take the gloves off. They launched a campaign for widespread structural reforms. The civil service was to be cleansed from 'fascists', land reform implemented

[32] Toivo Heikkilä, *Paasikivi peräsimessä: Pääministerin sihteerin muistelmat 1944–1948* (Helsinki: Kustannusosakeyhtiö Otava, 1965), pp. 126–127.

[33] TKV, minutes 29 January 1946. ELKA.

[34] Parikka, 'Työväenliike', p. 104; The annual report of CAFWI 1946. FFIF, file 381; TKV, minutes 12 December 1946. ELKA.

[35] TKV, minutes 17 February 1947, 13 January 1949; Annual report of Taloudellinen Tutkimuskeskus for 1948, an appendix to TKV minutes 18 May 1949; 'Muistio Taloudellisen Tutkimuskeskuksen toiminnasta', an appendix to TKV minutes 28 August 1947. ELKA.

[36] The annual report of CAFWI 1946. FFIF, file 381. ELKA.

and key industries and financial institutions nationalised.[37] According to Parikka, the last goal became, 'a matter of life and death' for them.[38]

The social democrats, in turn, began to have second thoughts. The party started to talk about planning instead of nationalisation and argued that the Finns should adopt state-led policies from other Nordic countries and Western Europe. In the spring of 1947, Väinö Leskinen, a leading member of the party, visited Czechoslovakia and noticed that nationalisation strengthened the position of communists at the expense of more moderate socialists. The policies of Scandinavian social democrats were more attractive: the state regulated economic affairs but also left room for private enterprise and free society. After a period of soul searching, the Finnish social democrats decided in a favour of a 'third way' between US-style free capitalism and Soviet command economy. This sealed the fate of the Socialisation Committee. The social democrats were still willing to consider the nationalisation of some limited sectors of the economy but SKDL was nevertheless the only party advocating the elimination of private ownership. It was too weak to push through this policy by itself.[39]

The Socialisation Committee became increasingly irrelevant. In its annual report for 1946, CAFWI had described nationalisation as 'our most important issue' in the field of internal Finnish politics.[40] Three years later, J.O. Söderhjelm, an MP and the head of CAFWI, gave the committee a *coup de grâce*. The parliament accepted Söderhjelm's motion that the committee should receive no more funding from the government.[41]

Who Will Run Companies?

The industrialists managed to maintain ownership of the companies in private hands but they also had to defend the right to lead them. During the Continuation War, Eero A. Wuori of SAK had already suggested that the workers had done so much for the country that they should get a say in how companies are run. SAK proposed the formation of production

[37] Polvinen, *Paasikivi 1944–48*, 278, 285, 373, pp. 529–530.

[38] Parikka, *Työväenliike*, p. 117.

[39] Paavonen, *Talouspolitiikka ja työmarkkinakehitys*, pp. 220–223; Parikka, *Työväenliike*, pp. 167–171 and pp. 189–191.

[40] FFIF, file 381. ELKA.

[41] Leinonen, *Sosialisoimiskomitea ja Suomen talouselämän suunta*, pp. 195–196; Paavonen, *Talouspolitiikka ja työmarkkinakehitys*, pp. 259–260.

committees where both the employers and employees would be represented. Wuori saw production committees as a step forward in his plan to expand democracy within the factory gates.[42]

The social democrats got the ball rolling but they soon lost it to SKDL. The communist Second Minister for Transport and Public Works Yrjö Murto and his officials drafted a plan which he outlined in vague terms to his Cabinet colleagues in September 1945. Murto argued that the committees would improve efficiency of production and help solve various practical problems. The minister, who had received ideological training in the Soviet Union and had spent nine years in prison in Finland, called these new bodies production councils (*neuvosto*). This brought back memories from the days of the Russian revolution. In 1917, soldiers' and workers' councils (soviets, *neuvostot* in Finnish) had challenged the *ancien régime* and eventually given their name to the new country (*Neuvostoliitto* in Finnish), which was set up in the ruins of the Romanov Empire. It felt like a bomb had been dropped in the meeting room, the Prime Minister's secretary recalled later.[43]

Paasikivi lost his temper: the proposal was going to weaken the 'entrepreneurial spirit' and hence the country's ability to pay war reparations, creating 'a false impression' in foreign countries. By this, Paasikivi presumably meant that Western countries might assume that Finland was moving towards socialism. Murto assured that he was not trying to set up socialist soviets. Ministers calmed down and organised a working group to further consider the issue. Murto moved on to describe his plans to SAK and STK. The Minister was more outspoken this time than he had been in the Cabinet. He argued that the new committees should receive the right to supervise production, wages and prices, and could make proposals on a wide range of issues. The committees would consist of representatives of workers, trade unions, employees and the government, but they would only form the lowest level in a new three-level structure. Above local bodies were provincial ones, and a new department within Murto's ministry was going to supervise the whole system. Hence, both the government and trade unions would acquire extensive new powers.[44]

[42] Mansner, *STK 1940–56*, 250–251; Valkonen, *Yhdessä*, p. 505.

[43] Heikkilä, *Paasikivi peräsimessä*, p. 123; Bergholm, *SAK 1944–56*, 78, 515; Uola, Mikko (2005) 'Yrjö Murto (1899–1963)', in *Kansallisbiografia* 2005. http://www.kansallisbiografia.fi/kb/artikkeli/925/ (accessed 8 April 2013).

[44] Mansner, *STK 1940–56*, pp. 252–253; Heikkilä, *Paasikivi peräsimessä*, pp. 123–124.

The industrialists suspected that the setting up of production committees was going to be just a first step in the eventual nationalisation of the Finnish economy.[45] CAFWI later argued that the implementation of the original proposal would have led to 'complete chaos' in business life.[46] Yet, the leaders of STK also knew that production committees had been set up in many other countries and that this fact had been widely reported in Finland. The idea that workers should receive more power in production plants seemed to be popular in non-communist circles as well. Officially, the purpose of the reform was to improve efficiency of production. This gave it added legitimacy, as all parties and interest groups recognised that it was vital to do so.[47]

The proposal to set up production committees could not be killed off; therefore, the leaders of STK decided to try to water it down. Murto wanted to introduce new legislation but the employees argued that the reform should be based on a private agreement between STK and SAK. They also wanted to make committees purely advisory organs. The industrialists failed to stop the introduction of a new law but achieved their second goal. Non-communist officials, ministers and MPs introduced various amendments to the proposed bill, including a specific mention that the committees would be advisory organs. They would consider various ways to improve production and the welfare of workers but could not in practice challenge managers' right to lead the companies.[48] In some enterprises, production committees managed to promote co-operation between managers and workers,[49] but in many others, their inefficiency became apparent. In the important industrial town of Valkeakoski, workers called them 'production comedies'.[50]

This result reflected wider changes, or rather the lack of them. In the end, the political turmoil of the 1940s had little impact on the management

[45] Mansner, *STK 1940–56*, p. 250.

[46] The annual report of CAFWI 1945. FFIF, file 381. ELKA.

[47] Mansner, *STK 1940–56*, pp. 252–253.

[48] Mansner, *STK 1940–56*, pp 254–262; Valkonen, *Yhdessä*, pp. 500–501; Yrjö Blomstedt and Matti Klinge, (eds) *J.K. Paasikiven päiväkirjat 1944–1956*, vol. 1: 28.6.1944–24.4.1949 (Porvoo: Werner Söderström Osakeyhtiö, 1985), 27 December 1945 and 8 January 1946; TKV, minutes 7 February 1946; 16 April 1946; TKV, The report of activities 27 November 1945–13 December 1946. ELKA.

[49] Mansner, *STK 1940–56*, p. 266

[50] Kaj Tapani Raiskio, *Henkilöstön johtaminen Valkeakosken tehdasyhteisössä Rudolf ja Juuso Waldenin aikakaudella 1924–1969*, Jyväskylä studies in Humanities 193 (Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2012), pp. 142–143.

structure of Finnish industry. The United States' authorities had blacklisted some businessmen who had traded with Germany during the Continuation War, but a few years later, these men already appeared at the cocktail parties of the British and US Legations in Helsinki.[51] Many of them rose to even more important positions. For example, Rainer von Fieandt, a banker and a key figure in Finnish-German trade, became the Governor of the Bank of Finland in 1955 and two years later, he served briefly as the Prime Minister of the country.[52]

There were very few individuals who had to vacate their positions. V.A. Kotilainen, the head of the mainly state-owned forest and engineering giant Enso-Gutzeit, had led the administration of the occupied East Karelia during the Continuation War. For this reason, he felt that it was safer to move to Sweden rather than return to his civilian job. His successor in Enso-Gutzeit was a non-political professional, who had studied and worked in the United States.[53] Many other business executives had a military background. A number of officers had lost their commissions as a result of cuts in armed forces. Marshall Mannerheim was worried about this and asked companies to find new jobs for them. Leading Finnish businessmen were eager to help. For example, in the early 1950s, roughly 10 per cent of branch managers of KOP were former officers.[54]

There was only one group of companies where leftist 'new faces' replaced old ones. In September 1944, German nationals owned 65, mostly small, joint stock companies in Finland. In compliance with the agreement of the victorious allies in Potsdam in the summer of 1945, these were handed over to the Soviet Union.[55] The German managers had already either been interned or forced to flee the country and the Finnish managers often decided to resign or were forced out. As a result, these companies and others that the Soviet Union acquired received new leaders. These included people like Teuvo Rouvali, a former political prisoner,

[51] Heikkilä, *Paasikivi peräsimessä*, p. 277.

[52] Rainer von Fieandt, *Omaa tietään kulki vain* (Helsinki: Kirjayhtymä, 1970).

[53] Jorma Ahvenainen, *Enso-Gutzeit Oy 1872–1992. Osa II 1924–1992* (Jyväskylä: Enso-Gutzeit Oy, 1992), p. 428, p. 445.

[54] Kuisma, *Kahlittu raha*, pp. 92–94.

[55] Niklas Jensen-Eriksen, 'Die Ursprünge der "Kreml-AG": Die sowjetische Beschlagnahmung deutschen Eigentums in Finnland 1945–1948', in Walter M. Iber and Peter Ruggenthaler (eds), *Stalins Wirtschaftspolitik an der sowjetischen Peripherie: Ein Überblick auf der Basis sowjetischer und osteuropäischer Quellen* (Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2011).

army deserter and officer of the communist-controlled security policy, who embarked on a business career that continued until the 1980s.[56] In the post-war Finnish business elite, he was, however, the odd man out.

The End of the Post-War Era

The year 1948 became a turning point in the Finnish post-war history.[57] In the spring, it was widely rumoured that the communists were planning a *coup d'état*. They had just organised one in Czechoslovakia. Paasikivi, (non-communist regular) police and the armed forces made preparations to defend the government against such moves but in the end, the communists did nothing. In May, the communist Minister of Interior Yrjö Leino lost his job because he had handed Finnish citizens over to the Soviet Union. The parliament passed a motion of no confidence and when Leino refused to resign, Paasikivi fired him. The communists responded by organising a number of strikes: 100,000 people participated but there were no positive results.[58] At the end of 1948, the communist-led security policy was abolished. A new organisation, Suojelupoliisi, inherited its predecessor's files and offices but none of its staff or ideological baggage. Suojelupoliisi identified communists as the main threat against the security of the nation and gradually gathered the courage and strength to fight against them and even against the Soviet intelligence services.[59]

SKDL suffered a defeat in the parliamentary elections in July 1948. In the subsequent negotiations, they nevertheless demanded the same number of ministerial positions as before and a number of key positions. The social democrats refused to accept this and received support from Paasikivi.[60] The party eventually formed a minority government, which ruled until 1950 despite Soviet disapproval and economic pressure. When local grievances led to strikes in Arabia, a porcelain factory in Helsinki

[56] Kuorelahti, Elina (2011), 'Kauppaneuvos Teuvo Rouvali (1921–2001)', in *Suomen talouselämän vaikuttajat. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura*. http://www.kansallisbiografia.fi/talousvaikuttajat/?iid=1514 (accessed 14 April 2013).

[57] See for example, Jukka Nevakivi, 'From the Continuation War to the Present 1944–1999' in Osmo Jussila, Seppo Hentilä, and Jukka Nevakivi (eds), *From Grand Duchy to a Modern State: A Political History of Finland since 1809* (London: Hurst & Company, 1999), p. 245.

[58] Mansner, *STK 1940–56*, pp. 291–292.

[59] Kimmo Rentola, 'Suojelupoliisi kylmässä sodassa 1949–1991', in Matti Simola (ed.), *Ratakatu 12: Suojelupoliisi 1949–2009* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2009).

[60] Polvinen, *Paasikivi 1948–56*, p. 9.

known for tense labour relations, and in Kemi, an important northern industrial centre, communists tried to use these events to undermine the position of the government. SAK refused to grant permission to the strikes and declared both Arabia and Kemi open to outside workers. There were violent clashes and in Kemi, two people died in chaotic circumstances. Yet, in the end, the communists could not resist the combined forces of the government, SAK and the employers.[61] Historians have argued that this proved once and for all that the Finnish communists were not strong enough to rise to power without outside assistance.[62]

The Americans recognised the effectiveness of anti-communist groups and increased their support to the social democrats, who continued to fight the communists over which party was going to control the trade union movement. The US diplomats argued in 1953 that the 'bastion of national political strength here against communist inroads lies in the Social Democratic Party.' It 'possesses courageous and politically discerning leaders who are alive to the menace confronting the country.'[63]

Private assets remained in private hands and under private management, but it would be a mistake to conclude that the struggles of the late 1940s had no impact on the position of leftist employees. While the struggle over nationalisation and production committees was going on, the social democrats and communists did their best to win the support of workers in other ways as well. They and other competing political parties introduced important pieces of social legislation, which laid the foundations of the Finnish welfare state.[64]

The workers also got paid better. Before the Second World War, the competitiveness of Finnish export industries (at the time mainly timber, pulp and paper) had been based partly on cheap wages. In the era of reconstruction and war reparations, it was hard to keep them at a low level. Industry was working at full capacity and needed all the hands it could get. Furthermore, strikes could lead to chaos and undermine

[61] Kimmo Rentola, *Niin kylmää että polttaa: Kommunistit, Kekkonen ja Kreml 1947–1958* (Helsinki: Kustannusosakeyhtiö Otava, 1997), pp. 70–73, p. 81 and pp. 90–97; Juhani Salminen, *Kemi 1949, Suomen kohtalonratkaisu* (Jyväskylä and Helsinki: Gummerus, 1995).

[62] Rentola, *Niin kylmää, että polttaa*, p. 99; Polvinen, *Paasikivi 1948–56*, p. 39.

[63] American Legation, Helsinki, to State Department, 20 March 1953. 760E.00/3–2053. State Department. Record Group 59. Decimal Files on Finland (DFF) 1950–1954, box 3794. National Archives, College Park, Maryland, United States.

[64] For a list of these in English, see for example, Nevakivi, 'From the Continuation War to the Present', pp. 239–240.

existing social structures and Finnish independence. After all, the Soviets were quick to complain when there were delays in war reparations deliveries. When the workers demanded higher salaries, employers and the government, which continued to regulate prices and wages even after the war had ended, often gave in.[65] When accelerating inflation made Finnish exports to free markets uncompetitive, the central bank responded by devaluing the currency. It did so no less than five times during the late 1940s.[66]

Conclusions

When the 1940s ended, the leftist social movements no longer posed a serious threat to the existence of the Finnish capitalist economic system. It had become more corporatist than before, but the traditional business elite still owned and led most companies. In 1944–1945, many in Europe claimed that capitalism was doomed. In practice, it was difficult for ambitious reformers to kill its Finnish version. The political and economic elites did receive a lot of criticism for their actions during the war but never lost their legitimacy in the same way as in those countries that had been occupied by Germany or ruled by non-democratic governments. No one had both the desire and the necessary power to 'cleanse' companies of old managers. Communists never had the authority to do so, except in rare exceptions. Other political groups saw no need.

Economic elites also managed to successfully adapt to changes in political environment and certainly did not behave like 'bystanders'. During the war, they had learned to work with social democrats and a number of persons with business background held key positions in the government even after the end of the Second World War. The business organisations could ally with non-communist politicians, who worked hard to promote 'Soviet-Finnish friendship', but at the same time tried to block communist efforts to expand their influence in the domestic scene. Plans for nationalisation of industries were gradually watered down and in 1949, there was still no 'democracy within factory gates', but just better-paid employees.

[65] Mansner, *STK 1940–56*, p. 116.

[66] Niklas Jensen-Eriksen, 'Luuserimarkka: Itsenäisen Suomen kansallisen valuutan epäkunniakas historia', in Niklas Jensen-Eriksen et al. (eds), *Kansallinen kapitalismi, kansainvälinen talous* (Helsinki: Kustannusosakeyhtiö Siltala, 2012), pp. 258–259.

When the Cold War began, Finland became one of its many battle grounds. Within the country, the frontline was located between the social democrats and the communist-led SKDL, not between socialist and non-socialist parties, or between 'democratic' centre-left groups and others. The social democrats lost their desire to abolish the basic structure of the capitalist system, and focussed on fighting communists and building a Nordic welfare state. In retrospect, the members of leftist social movements had a reason to be happy about their failure. In the coming decades, the capitalist system produced great economic benefits to Finland and the more interventionist state distributed a substantial part of them to ordinary people.

The Swedish Labour Movement and Post-War Radicalisation: Social Democracy Between Economic Elites and the Trade Union Movement

Lars Ekdahl

There are strong arguments in favour of viewing the post-war development in Sweden, officially a neutral country during the Second World War, as a clear contrast to the more dramatic situation in many other parts of Europe. For a long time, it was also broadly accepted in history writing that the foundation for the post-war development in Sweden, later on called the Swedish Model, was mainly laid during the interwar period. From this perspective, the war and its immediate aftermath, characterised by a temporary conflict over planning, are primarily seen as an interregnum on the road from pre- to post-war society.

Yet, from another perspective, it could be argued that the years around the end of the war in Sweden were rather a period of confrontation and social conflicts, which was of decisive importance for the future road to the Swedish Model and its basic aims and elements. To develop this alternative perspective, it is important to subject this period of confrontation to closer

L. Ekdahl (✉)
Södertörn University, Södertörn, Sweden

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analysis and to attempt to define post-war radicalisation in Sweden. This would be to presuppose that the war experiences and the social conflicts in the second half of the 1940s contributed in different ways to laying the foundation for the Swedish welfare and full employment society of the coming decades.

A New Perspective on Post-War Development in Sweden

Swedish historians have for a long time upheld the idea of the war years and the immediate post-war period as an interregnum in an otherwise continuous development of Swedish society from the 1930s onwards.[1] It has even been proposed that the war years in themselves offered possibilities to further strengthen the accommodation of different interests within society, the accord between labour and capital, that had its roots in the 1930s and that are said to be a central element in the coming Swedish Model. This perspective has underlined a fundamental continuity between the interwar rapprochement between the dominant forces in society, the Labour movement and the economic elite, and their post-war accommodation. From this point of view, the war years are primarily seen as a period of national rallying to safeguard neutrality and to meet the difficult challenges of the war situation. Furthermore, the broadly accepted and supported neutrality has been considered a successful strategy to keep Sweden out of the war, although nowadays it seems to be common knowledge that another precondition for avoiding war was the uninterrupted close trade relations with Nazi Germany during the war. There is no longer any denying that the Swedish export of iron ore contributed to keeping the German war-machine going. The national rallying during the war was politically expressed by a coalition government that only excluded the Communist Party and the parties of the labour market, the Trade Union Congress (Landsorganisationen, LO) and the Swedish Employers Association (Svenska Arbetsgivareföreningen, SAF), were given central roles and positions in the state apparatus that tried to

[1] Walter Korpi, *Class in Welfare Capitalism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978); Anders L. Johansson, *Tillväxt och klassamarbete* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1989).

meet the challenges of the war. Thus, so the argument goes, corporatism became a hallmark of post-war Swedish society.[2]

Nowadays, this rather harmonious perspective on the war and its immediate aftermath has been questioned and criticised in different ways. More emphasis has been laid on the fact that there had already been several conflicts about the road to a post-war Swedish society early on during the war. It has been shown that as early as the beginning of the 1940s, the trade union movement and the employers respectively aimed for and started to mobilise for a post-war confrontation around not only the future relations on the labour market but also around fundamental questions of future economic, social and political developments. And, no doubt, the years immediately after the war were characterised by such a confrontation, a more or less open conflict over the shaping of the post-war society. To some extent, it could be argued that this was a confrontation between different visions of a new, post-war economic, social and political order, among other things raising questions of industrial and economic democracy. The fundamental issue of the role of the state in the development of society also became the subject of heated debates over economic and industrial planning. In this way, even in Sweden, which to a great extent has been a blind spot in the earlier history writing, the Cold War cast its shadow on the development of post-war society.[3]

So, even if one can argue for the earlier perspective on the post-war years with its emphasis on the continuity between the interwar and post-war periods, this perspective could be criticised for underestimating the importance of the conflicts about the future development of society that characterised the years immediately after the war and its consequences for the development of the Swedish Model. In other words, even if it could be argued that the first steps towards an accommodation in Swedish society that was to become a central element in the Swedish Model were taken

[2] For a discussion, see Werner Schmidt, 'Vems anda var 1930-talets Saltsjöbadsanda?' in Hakan Blomqvist, Werner Schmidt (eds), *Efter guldåldern. Arbetarrörelsen och fordismens slut* (Falun: Carlssons, 2012); See also Lars Ekdahl, *Mot en tredje väg. En biografi över Rudolf Meidner. I. Tysk flykting och svensk modell* (Värnamo: Arkiv förlag, 2001); for Swedish relations with Nazi Germany, see Werner Schmidt, *Antikommunism och kommunism under det korta nittonhundratalet* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2002) and Klas Åmark, *Att bo granne med ondskan* (Pössneck: Albert Bonniers förlag, 2011).

[3] Ekdahl, *Mot en tredje väg I*, p. 115f.; Schmidt, 'Vems anda var 1930-talets Saltsjöbadsanda?', p. 227f; Per Nyström, *Historia och biografi* (Lund: Arkiv förlag, 1989).

during the 1930s, this perspective with its underestimation of the post-war conflicts results in an inadequate understanding of this model and its preconditions, as well as basic aims and elements, a misunderstanding that is deepened by the tendency to leave the role of the Cold War out of sight. To fully understand the background and the concrete aims and elements of the Swedish Model, there is an obvious need to see the war and the social conflicts during the second half of the 1940s as a decisive moment in the post-war development of Swedish society.

Aims and Questions

To develop this alternative perspective on the war and its immediate aftermath in Sweden further, it will be necessary to analyse more closely the social conflicts of the period and the social forces that confronted each other in these conflicts. Which visions of or demands for a new economic, social and political order were the main objects of these conflicts? Which social forces were primarily involved in this confrontation around the future development of society? And on what grounds could it be argued that this confrontation was of decisive importance for the development of the Swedish Model?

To answer these questions, a picture of the social forces behind and involved in this confrontation will be presented first. Secondly, an attempt will be made to define the concrete content of the conflicts more precisely. Finally, in a concluding discussion, the possibility of outlining a new perspective not only on the post-war conflicts, but also on post-war radicalisation in Sweden and on the Swedish Labour movement, will be discussed.

The Post-War Economic Elite in Historical Perspective

Today, it seems to be an uncontested view that the economic elite in Sweden, dominated by representatives of the highly concentrated industrial capital in a close alliance with financial interests, played a decisive role in the conflicts around the development of the post-war society.[4] It also seems obvious that in Sweden, unlike in many other countries in Europe,

[4] Jonas Pontusson, *The Limits of Social Democracy. Investment Politics in Sweden* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 47f; see also Gregg M Olsen, *The Struggle for Economic Democracy in Sweden* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1992), p. 55f.

the war and the immediate post-war years did not in any sense cause a critical review of the economic elite and its trade relations with Nazi Germany; attempts at such a settlement came much later. Rather, this period was a time of consolidation and in some ways strengthening of the position of the economic elite. To understand the background to and basis for its strong position of power, it must be put in a wider historical perspective.

The concentration of capital and of the private ownership of industry in Sweden was an early phenomenon going back to a rapid process of industrialisation in the second half of the nineteenth century, further strengthened by the interwar depression. Quite early on this, industrial capital developed close links to strong financial interests in the form of three dominant banks that over time came to control their own industrial spheres. By the time the Second World War broke out, the merging of industrial and financial interests was well under way. Later official and other studies, from the 1950s and onwards, showed that the concentration of capital in Sweden had gone further than in any other comparable country.[5] Other studies have analysed the network between the owners of the big Swedish industrial companies, which was already well developed during the war. And in the early 1960s, a picture of the 'fifteen families' who controlled the larger part of Swedish industry emerged.[6]

Furthermore, the economic elite, with its main basis in industry, already had a dominant position in the Swedish Employers Association before the war. They had developed close links with the liberal party and with the right-wing party. No doubt, the Swedish Employers Association, dominated by the economic elite, could be described as quite militant. By the time of the war, it already had a history of recurrent and large-scale lockouts and of a systematic use of often internationally recruited strikebreakers in conflicts. The Association was well organised and had developed effective instruments to defend what it considered its interests. It also had

[5] CH. Hermansson, *Monopol och storfinans* (Rabén&Sjögren, 1961); Koncentrationsutredningen, *Ägande och inflytande inom det privata näringslivet* (Stockholm: Statens offentliga utredningar, 1968).

[6] Lars Magnusson, *Sveriges ekonomiska historia* (Stockholm: Rabén Prisma, 1996), p. 424f; Niklas Stenlås, *Den inre kretsen* (Lund: Arkiv förlag, 1998); Lars Ekdahl, *Mot en tredje väg. En biografi över Rudolf Meidner. II. Facklig expert och demokratisk socialist* (Lund: Arkiv förlag, 2005).

a clear view on how society should develop and where the lines must be drawn against too radical demands for change.[7]

There is no doubt that the Labour movement in the 1930s recognised the strong position of the economic elite and the Employers Association not only in industry but also in society. In 1938, the Trade Union Congress and the Employers Association signed a General Agreement in Saltsjöbaden stipulating fundamental rules for the relations on the labour market, one aim being to address the high level of conflicts. In the autumn of the same year, Ernst Wigforss, the Minister of Finance in the Social Democratic government, made a speech to representatives of industry. The fundamental message was clearly articulated: the Labour movement and private industry had to find ways to come to some kind of agreement and try to define a common interest in the economic and industrial development of the country. To achieve this aim, he proposed that closer contacts and discussions between government and businesses be made.[8]

This initiative was interrupted by the outbreak of war. However, during the war, the national rallying contributed to develop closer contacts between the Labour movement and industry. In these years, representatives of the economic elite as well as the trade union movement were given central positions in the state apparatus in different government departments and in war commissions. Furthermore, both sides were invited to take an active part in political discussions about the post-war society being well represented in a public commission on planning, initiated in 1944 to discuss the post-war organisation of economy and industry and the future relations between the state and industry. In other words, at the end of the war, the economic elite seemed to be integrated into a system with strong corporate traits that would become a central element in the Swedish Model.[9]

However, to the economic elite of that time, the situation looked more complex and even threatening. On the whole, there was no strong opposition to the pre-war invitation to develop closer contacts or even various forms of cooperation with the Social Democratic government. The fundamental question was rather on what basis such an accommodation could

[7] Hans De Geer, *Arbetsgivarna* (Stockholm: Svenska Arbetsgivareföreningen, 1992); see also Peter A. Swenson, *Capitalists against the Markets* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[8] Tim Tilton, *The Political Theory of the Swedish Social Democracy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 39f.

[9] Ekdahl, *Mot en tredje väg II*, p. 189f; Pontusson, *The Limits of Social Democracy*, p. 47f.

be accepted. There was no lack of voices warning of radicalisation of the Labour movement and of different kinds of political initiatives trying to undermine the position and power of industry. In this context, fears of demands for a more developed state system of economic and industrial planning, as well as of industrial democracy at the workplaces, were expressed. No doubt, prominent representatives of the economic elite were deeply concerned about the coming transition to a peace economy.[10]

Consequently, there were clear signs of expectations of a coming confrontation. New research has pointed out a whole range of initiatives that were taken to meet the expected conflicts in post-war society. No doubt, the economic elite used the Employers Association to achieve this aim. Just before the war, a research institute had been established which soon was given the task of developing arguments against state planning of the economy, showing, rather, that industry itself could meet the need for a more coordinated industrial development. Also, extensive resources were spent on 'industrial propaganda' that tried to explain to the public the importance of keeping the state out of businesses. In different contexts, the message that industry could handle its own affairs without any kind of state interventionism was spread. Resources mobilising for a comprehensive anti-planning campaign at the end of the war were channelled into newspapers and bourgeois political parties.[11] So, parallel to the national rallying during the war, the economic elite not only foresaw but also mobilised for an upcoming confrontation with the Labour movement, having, no doubt, a clear idea of where to draw the line at the expected attempts to develop a new economic, social and political order.

The Labour Moment and Post-War Radicalisation

At the end of the war, there was a popular demand to move beyond the situation of the 1930s, which had been characterised by economic crises, galloping unemployment and unsecure living conditions. As a leading trade union economist put it at the end of the war, no government would survive without full employment and welfare reforms on its agenda.[12]

[10] Stenlås, *Den inre kretsen*; See also Ekdahl, *Mot en tredje väg I,* p. 212f.

[11] Ekdahl, *Mot en tredje väg I,* p. 128f; Stenlås, *Den inre kretsen*; Pontusson, *The Limits of Social Democracy*, p. 50.

[12] Ekdahl, *Mot en tredje väg I,* p. 99.

Consequently, the fundamental question for the social movements was how to mobilise and translate these ideals into political demands for a different economic, social and political order.

There were few radical voices clamouring for change outside of the Labour movement in post-war Sweden. Of course, there were some anti-fascist, often liberal, groups but few had survived the war and they did not have a new post-war order on their agenda and there were no new social movements emerging.[13] On the other hand, the Labour movement, in the broader sense of the word, was not only intact and growing in strength but also better organised after the war than it was before. This was also the case for the trade union movement, which provided the vast amount of members for the Social Democratic Party. During the war, the trade union movement had taken decisive steps towards centralisation and bureaucratisation. After 1945, it could rely on highly centralised decision-making processes that could be communicated from the leadership to the rank and file through strong local unions at the workplaces.[14] Therefore, any post-war radicalisation in Sweden primarily emerged from this blue-collar trade union movement. Radical demands for planning and industrial and economic democracy were raised at the shop-floor level, as well as in discussions at the top union level, supported by a new trade union research institute established by LO that came to play a crucial role in the post-war development in Sweden.[15] The other branch of the Labour movement, the Social Democratic Party, had gained a dominant parliamentary position during the war with a majority vote in 1940. They again gained a majority in parliament after the war with the support of the Communist Party. In the summer of 1945, the Social Democratic Party left the coalition government that had been put together during the war and formed its own government.

However, this parliamentary situation did not result in the formulation of a common strategy for the post-war society by the Labour movement. After the war and the dissolution of the Comintern, the Communist Party began to take steps to come to terms with its Stalinist heritage. As

[13] Klas Åmark, *Att bo granne med ondskan. Sveriges förhållande till nazismen, Nazitysland och Förintelsen* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers förlag, 2011), p. 463f.

[14] Peter A. Swenson, *Fair Shares. Unions, Pay, and Politics in Sweden and West Germany* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 42f.

[15] Ekdahl, *Mot en tredje väg I*, p. 115f.

a result of the war, until the coup in Prague in 1948, the party had a stronger position in the parliamentary elections than before and an even stronger position in some parts of the trade union movement. In 1945, it managed to use this position to launch a large-scale strike for higher wages in the engineering industry. They also tried to find different ways to approach the Social Democrats, by giving the support to the post-war programme presented by the Social Democratic Party in 1944 and even by raising the question of a possible fusion of the two parties. For a short period of time, a unification of the Labour movement that in turn could contribute to a further radicalisation of Social Democracy seemed possible.[16]

Instead of exploiting this possibility, the Social Democratic Party launched an intensive anti-communist campaign, already having forced the more or less reluctant trade unions to marginalise the communist influence and to evict communists from leading positions in the trade union movement during the war. The result was a post-war confrontation *within* the Labour movement. At the end of the 1940s, against the background of the imminent Cold War, Social Democratic hegemony in the trade union movement was manifest. If not openly, this campaign was also directed to and marginalised the Social Democratic left. The argument of the left, quite openly expressed in the debate on the new party programme at the party congress in 1944, that the welfare state should be looked upon as a provisional arrangement and that an extensive nationalisation of industry must still be the ultimate goal for the Social Democratic movement, was attacked and losing support in the Labour movement.[17] The question of private ownership of industry was no longer on the agenda. In other words, capitalism was no longer viewed as a fundamental problem but as a precondition for welfare policy. The question was rather how to organise the capitalist economy to create the foundation for a welfare society.

[16] Lars Ekdahl, 'Mot en ny värld? Rörelse mellan kriser', in Lars Olsson, Lars Ekdahl, *Klass i rörelse. Arbetarrörelsen i sensk samhällsutvecklimg* (Arbetarhistoria, 2002), p. 93f.

[17] Lars Ekdahl, 'Svensk arbetarrörelse på den tredje vägen?', in Hakan Blomqvist and Lars Ekdahl (eds), *Kommunismen. Hot och löfte. Arbetarrörelsen i skuggan av Sovjetunionen 1917–1991* (Stockholm: Carlsson, 2003), p. 201f; Schmidt, *Vems anda var 1930-talets Saltsjöbadsanda?*, p. 209f.

Social Democratic Reorientations

Even so, there were clear signs of radicalisation in the Social Democratic movement around the end of the war demands being raised for a new social order in the society at large. In the trade union movement, demands for some kind of industrial democracy, with arguments pointing to the need to challenge the power of capital over labour process and its organisation, were raised. To some extent, it was a protest against the permanent intensification and taylorisation of work but also against the ongoing concentration of capital. In the Social Democratic party, the demands were directed to what was called a democratic planning of the development of industry with the aim of strengthening political control over investments in society. There were some attempts to formulate a unified strategy combining the demands for industrial democracy with the demands for economic democracy. The relations of power in society and working life would be challenged by a democratic process, on the one hand from the top in the form of democratic planning, and on the other from the bottom in the form of work councils.[18]

This strategy had its background in the Social Democratic political reorientation in the interwar period. Definite steps were then taken to move away from a strategy built around the idea of an extensive nationalisation of private industry. The new strategy that now began to take shape was, at least in the rhetoric, launched as a democratic project. The society would be democratised in three steps: first, through political democracy in the form of universal suffrage and parliamentary government; second, through social democracy which became an argument for the development of the welfare state; and finally, through economic democracy which had been actualised at the end of the Second World War.[19] For the Labour movement, this was a decisive moment because they now had to formulate their new strategy for the third step, economic democracy, in more concrete terms. In more general terms, an attempt to do this had been made in the new party programme of 1944 and in the Labour movement's postwar programme of the same year, pointing out democratic planning and industrial democracy in a welfare society as an alternative to an extensive nationalisation of private industry.[20]

[18] Ekdahl, *Mot en tredje väg I,* p. 206f.

[19] Lars Ekdahl, 'Svensk arbetarrörelse under demokratins århundrade', in: Hakan Blomqvist and Werner Schmidt, *Efter guldåldern. Arbetarrörelsen och fordismens slut* (Stockholm: Carlssons, 2012), p. 90f.

[20] Ekdahl, *Svensk arbetarrörelse under demokratins århundrade*, p. 94.

To some extent, the attempt to develop a unified strategy for industrial and economic democracy was inspired by parallel discussions in Norway and Denmark. During the immediate post-war years, contacts between the social democratic movements in the Nordic countries were intensified and there was a genuine exchange of ideas and proposals. No doubt, there are striking similarities between the Social Democratic post-war programmes in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Inspired by this discussion on a Nordic basis, the Swedish movement developed a three-level strategy for the third step of the democratic project: there were to be work councils at the work sites, branch councils at the industrial branch level and a planning commission at the national level. Furthermore, this structure on three levels was to be integrated into a new Department of Planning. In this way, political and union influence over working life, industry and society would be strengthened, challenging the power positions of capital and leading to a more democratic society.[21]

However, with regard to the prospect of challenging the power positions of capital and establishing a new economic, social and political order, there were some fundamental problems with this strategy. On the one hand, there was really no attempt to mobilise the rank and file in the union movement or to use extra-parliamentary methods in the struggle for the third step of the democratic project. Rather than trying to channel a broader radicalisation in society into political support for a new social order, the Social Democratic Party to some extent went against radical trade union opinion, which, in accordance with the new party programme, viewed industrial and economic democracy as an instrument for a fundamental transformation of society. On the other hand, the governing party had a more or less outspoken ambition to further develop the strategy not in opposition to but in a social dialogue with industry and the economic elite. As a result, demands for industrial and economic democracy increasingly were undermined by the political ambition to strengthen the post-war accommodation with capital. Quite soon, consequently, the basic idea the Labour movement presented to the economic elite was that these so-called democratic institutions on three different levels—work and branch councils and planning commission—should be composed on a corporate basis with representatives of state, capital and labour.[22] So, at least in practice, these institutions, rather than being an effective instrument for challenging the power positions of capital, could be seen as part of a political

[21] Ekdahl, *Mot en tredje väg I*, p. 194f.
[22] Ekdahl, *Mot en tredje väg I*, p. 206f.

ambition to further deepen the national rallying of the war years by once more inviting representatives of the economic elite into the state apparatus.

Even so, the Employers Association turned down the invitation in quite harsh words, refusing to appoint any representatives to these institutions and condemning the Social Democratic post-war strategy as a decisive step to a future socialist society. The message was not to be misunderstood: the third step of the democratic project of the Labour movement could not be accepted by industry as a basis for cooperation and accommodation; rather, it was seen as a threat to industry and as an apparent rejection the Social Democrats' pre-war invitation to cooperate, as well as of the national rallying during the war. This total rejection of the post-war strategy of the Labour movement was underlined by an intense and broad anti-planning campaign, mobilising not only the Employers Association but also the bourgeois political parties aiming at victory in the 1948 elections.[23]

However, already before the election, which did not result in a new government, it was quite obvious that there was not much left of the post-war social democratic strategy; there would be no Department of Planning, no planning commission and no branch-councils. In other words, there was no third step in the form of economic democracy, meaning in effect no decisive step to a new economic, social and political order along the lines of the Social Democratic strategy. The only result was an agreement in 1946 signed by the Trade Union Confederation and the Employers Association on advisory work councils, which were already criticised by the trade union movement for being powerless and not living up to the demands for industrial democracy before their establishment.[24]

From Failure to the Swedish Model

It could be argued that Social Democracy failed to transform its strategy, which it had formulated in the interwar period, into a new economic, social and political order after the Second World War, having been confronted by an offensive economic elite backed up by a well-organised and mobilised Employers Association and bourgeois political parties. This is not an uncommon perspective in earlier research: it is

[23] Ekdahl, *Mot en tredje väg I,* p. 212f; Olsen, *The Struggle for Economic Democracy in Sweden*, p. 84; Stenlås, *Den inre kretsen*.

[24] Ekdahl, *Mot en tredje väg I*, p. 214f; Pontusson, *The Limits of Social Democracy,* p. 50f.

argued that in the post-war confrontation over democratic planning and a new order of society, the Labour movement failed to realise its new strategy and to change in any fundamental way the relations of power in society and working life.[25] Even so, it could be fruitful to make the Social Democratic movement and its presumed aim of fundamentally changing society the object of a closer analysis.[26] No doubt, there was strong industrial and political resistance to the Social Democratic visions of the post-war society as expressed in the new party programme and the post-war programme of the Labour movement. A few years after the war, another kind of political and economic hindrance surfaced from the escalating Cold War and the increasing pressures from the USA and its Marshall Plan, drawing up even narrower limits to economic planning and state interventionism. Even so, it remains to be clarified to what extent it is relevant to talk about a Social Democratic failure and, if relevant, how to explain such a failure. Within the Labour movement at that time, two different views on the new strategy and its ideas of democratic planning as a combination of economic and industrial democracy could be discerned. On the one hand, there was a more principal, even ideological view claiming a need for a fundamental transformation of the relations of power in society, underlining that such a democratic transformation had its intrinsic value and could be seen as a step to a future socialist society. On the other hand, there was a more pragmatic, even economistic view claiming the need for economic growth and industrial development as a precondition for the foundation of welfare state. According to the latter, at the time more dominant view, it was necessary to have a mutual understanding with industry and its economic elite. Furthermore, in this view, planning was looked upon primarily as a necessary instrument to handle an expected economic depression after the war and industrial democracy foremost as an instrument to increase productivity. With the absence of a post-war depression, there were no more substantial arguments for any kind of planning. Focusing on social democracy and the development of the welfare state, there was no need for economic democracy. In the unexpected post-war situation of rapid economic growth and industrial expansion, an attempt to challenge the

[25] Gregg M. Olsen, *The Struggle for Economic Democracy in Sweden* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1992), p. 56f.

[26] Ekdahl, *Svensk arbetarrörelse under demokratins århundrade*, p. 120f.

economic elite and the relations of power in society and work life could rather be seen as a threat to the party's mutual understanding with private capital that represented the basic preconditions for social democracy.[27]

This dominant view, already established in 1946–1947, created apparent tensions within the Social Democratic movement by more or less abandoning the demands for economic democracy. To a large extent, it was a conflict between the governing party and the trade union movement, the latter being more radical in its demands, claiming the need for a democratisation of society and work life by economic and industrial democracy. In its critique of the government's one-sided focus on economic growth and welfare reforms, the trade union movement expressed its discontent with a policy that left the relations of power in society and working life untouched. During the last years of the 1940s, this union dissatisfaction with the party line resulted in a broad and intense debate on the possibilities of formulating an alternative strategy to challenge the power of private capital.[28]

A point of departure for this union discussion was supplied by the postwar radicalisation in Swedish society, not to say among the members of the trade union movement. In this context, there was a strong conviction that a return to the galloping unemployment and conspicuous class differences of the interwar period, which paved the way for fascism and Nazism, undermined democracy and, ultimately, ended in war, was by no means acceptable. At the same time, the specific conditions of the war had created a state of full employment in Sweden for the first time. The question why unemployment could successfully be fought during the war but not in times of peace was widely discussed at trade union meetings after the war. Finally, the answer was given by two trade union economists in the research institute of LO, the Trade Union Congress, who formulated a politico-economic model on how to combine full employment and low inflation, later on called the Rehn-Meidner Model.[29]

[27] Ekdahl, *Svensk arbetarrörelse under demokratins århundrade*, p. 93f; Pontusson, *The Limits of Social Democracy;* See also Lars Ekdahl, 'Tva traditioner eller en inom svensk fackföreningsrörels?', in *Arbetarhistoria* 2 (1994), p. 13f.

[28] Lars Ekdahl, 'Mellan fackligt och politiskt dilemma. En bakgrund till Rehn-Meidnermodellen', in Lennart Erixon (ed.), *Den svenska modellens ekonomiska politik* (Stockholm: Atlas Akademi, 2003), p. 13f; Pontusson, *The Limits of Social Democracy,* p. 60f.

[29] Ekdahl, *Mot en tredje väg I,* p. 201f.

The basic ideas behind and aims of the Model, including not least the demands for full employment, were finally presented at a trade union congress in 1951. They provoked controversy not just outside, but also inside the Labour movement. Leading economists as well as representatives of the bourgeois political parties unanimously criticised the Model for being unrealistic, claiming that the economy could not be managed without unemployment around at least five per cent. Even the leading representatives of the Social Democratic Party voiced a similar critique, rejecting the Model as utopian. It was not until the middle of the 1950s that the Social Democratic government adopted a more positive view on the Model and began to be influenced by it.[30]

However, for its architects, the Model was not only an instrument to fight unemployment. They also wanted it to help the creation of a new kind of society, a full employment society characterised by a transformation of the relations of power in working life and society. The full employment society was declared by the trade union economists to change the relations of power in society and work life and to offer a political and trade union platform for raising demands for industrial democracy, as well as for increased state interventionism in the economy, strengthening the space of action for a more democratic influence of the development of society at the cost of private capital. With the interwar period still fresh in memory, the Model was also launched as a bulwark against threats to democratic society. So, in this sense, the Model's aim to create and safeguard a society of full employment was politically controversial because it proposed a basis for a political and union challenge of the power positions of the economic elite.[31] No doubt, full employment, which was to characterise Swedish society for some decades up to the beginning of the 1990s, could be seen as an indirect consequence of the post-war radicalisation that had a decisive influence on the relations of power in society and working life. In various ways, it strengthened the trade unions in their confrontation with the economic elite.

[30] Ekdahl, *Svensk arbetarrörelse på den tredje vägen?*, p. 13f.

[31] Rudolph Meidner, 'Our concept of the Third Way. Some remarks on the Socio-political Tenets of Swedish Labour Movement', in *Economic and Industrial Democracy* 1:3 (1980), pp. 343–369; Ekdahl, *Mot en tredje väg I,* p. 357f.

Post-War Radicalisation and a New Social Order?

It seems that a closer look on the post-war radicalisation in Sweden results in a paradox. On the one hand, it is quite clear that the initiative to take the third step of the democratic project of the Labour movement failed. Economic and industrial democracy was put on the agenda but never realised. In this sense, post-war radicalisation did not pave the way for a new economic, social and political order. On the other hand, there were fundamental differences between the interwar and post-war societies, not the least of which were those concerning the relations of power in working life and society. In that sense, the ending of the war marked the development of a new society.

This paradox can be solved by looking at the post-war development in two different time perspectives. In a short-term perspective, it could be argued that initiatives to put the question of a new economic, social and political order on the agenda were taken in the years immediately after the war. However, in 1947–1948, time was running out for this possibility, partly because of the strong opposition from the economic elite and the bourgeois political parties and the coming of the Cold War, but partly also as a consequence of the changed agenda of the Social Democratic government. As to the latter reason, not only did the government make no serious attempt to seize the opportunity offered by the post-war radicalisation but it also failed to transform its programmatic strategy for economic and industrial democracy into concrete political demands.[32] Rather than mobilising the rank and file in the trade union movement, the Social Democratic Party opposed the radical union opinion demanding industrial and economic democracy. Focusing more and more on establishing mutual understanding with the economic elite, the only real mobilisation in this short-term perspective, which lead to confrontation, was the one directed against the Communist Party.

In a long-term perspective, on the other hand, there is no doubt that other elements of post-war radicalisation were of central importance for the Labour movement. There was a strong conviction that this radicalisation contained demands for employment, social security and better housing and living conditions, meaning effectively demands for social democracy and full employment. Furthermore, these demands were taken up by the trade union movement and became the point of departure for a

[32] Pontusson, *The Limits of Social Democracy*, p. 55f.

new post-war strategy of the Labour movement, aiming, even if in a rather indirect way, to change the relations of power in society and working life. According to this strategy, of course, the Labour movement was not prepared to avoid a conflict with the economic elite, the bourgeois political parties and the academic economists. In the development of the Swedish Model with its full employment and welfare state, there were, after all, limits to the ambition of the Labour movement to reach a mutual understanding with the economic elite.

This long-term perspective brings to the fore the question to what extent post-war society in Sweden established a new economic, social and political order. No doubt, it could be argued that the Swedish Model paved the way for a new *social* order. It is no exaggeration to claim that the coming decades represented a revolution in everyday life, meeting, to a large extent, the demands of post-war radicalised public opinion.[33] Although it cannot be denied that the original visions of the Labour movement, expressed in demands for economic and industrial democracy, did not materialise, the alternative strategy around full employment, developed by the trade union movement, did not leave the relations of power in society and at the work places untouched. Furthermore, from the long-term perspective, this full employment society could be seen as an important precondition for a new wave of radicalisation in the late 1960s, with its new demands for economic and industrial democracy that resulted in a new labour law and a union proposal for wage-earner funds.[34] Maybe it could even be said that it is a part of the history of post-war radicalisation and its consequences that during the last decades, the society of full employment and welfare has been under heavy attacks from an alliance of bourgeois political parties, the Employers Association and the economic elite, which has resulted in a shift of relations of power between the economic elite and social movements.

Social Democracy and Radicalisation

There is a final and more fundamental question concerning the Social Democratic movement to be raised. It has been argued that the attempt to realise the new Social Democratic strategy after the war was met with strong opposition, both nationally and internationally. However, it is more

[33] Ekdahl, 'Mot en ny värld? Rörelse mellan kriser', p. 101f.
[34] Ekdahl, *Mot en tredje väg II*.

difficult to argue that this broad resistance from national and international social forces can be accepted as the decisive explanation for the Social Democratic failure. A closer look at the Social Democratic Party, its aims and strategies, points in two other directions. First, the attempt to transform the programmatic ideas of economic and industrial democracy into practical political demands not only failed in the first instance but was also quite soon given up with no new attempt to explore other ways for its realisation. Second, the unexpected non-appearance of a post-war economic depression, contrasting with the situation after the First World War, resulted in a political reorientation of the governing Social Democratic Party. In the new situation, with its economic growth, industrial expansion and expanded space for welfare reforms, where the most acute problem was a lack of labour, the demand for planning and state interventionism in the economy tapered off. In this sense, the failure of the third step of the democratic project was to a large extent a result of the Labour movement's own doing. In other words, a comprehensive explanation of the failure of the post-war strategy could not leave out the political reorientation of the Social Democratic Party.

Following this line of thought, possibilities to better understand the post-war tensions in the Social Democratic movement arise. The blue-collar trade union movement after the war was more openly 'politicised' than it was in the interwar period, expressing the ambition to widen the union agenda beyond the traditional trade union questions and, thereby, trying to meet the demands of its radicalised membership. In the struggle for economic and industrial democracy, the trade union movement was in the forefront, criticising the party's turn away from the visions of a new economic, social and political order. Unwilling to give up the demands for a challenge of the positions of power of private capital, the trade union movement formulated an alternative strategy to change the relations of power in society and working life. So, it could be argued that post-war radicalisation was a decisive precondition for the trade union movement developing into a more distinguished political force in society and capturing a stronger position in the Labour movement in the period of the Swedish Model.[35]

[35] Klas Åmark, 'Sammanhållning och intressepolitik. Socialdemokratin och fackföreningsrörelsen i samarbete och på skilda vägar', in Klaus Misgeld, Karl Molin, Klas Åmark, (eds), *Socialdemokratins samhälle* (Kristianstad: Tiden, 1988), p. 57f; Pontusson, *The Limits of Social Democracy*, p. 24f.

It could be added that history repeated itself in the 1960s and 1970s when renewed trade union demands for economic and industrial democracy were met with strong opposition not only from the economic elite and the bourgeois political parties but also from the governing Social Democracy. Even then, a wider radicalisation in society and among the union membership was brought about and turned into demands for a challenge to the relations of power in society and working life by the trade union movement, meeting, however, strong opposition from the Social Democratic Party once again primarily safeguarding a mutual understanding with the economic elite. The question remains to be answered to what extent this repetition of the history of the relationship between social democracy and the economic elite can cast light on today's Labour movement.

The Labour Movement and Business Elites Under Waning Fascism: Spain 1939–1951

Marc Prat

Spain was ruled by a right-wing, dictatorial regime in the second half of the 1940s. Despite the defeat of fascist regimes in the Second World War and the formation of left-leaning governments by popular resistance movements, right-wing dictatorships managed to hold onto power on the Iberian Peninsula, immune to the political and social changes sweeping the continent. While neighbouring Portugal maintained strict neutrality, Franco's Spain clearly aligned itself with the Axis Powers and sent volunteer troops to fight alongside the Nazis during the invasion of the Soviet Union. Many anti-fascists at the time, Spanish and others, were convinced that for the Franco regime, which had emerged from the Spanish civil war and had been constructed to mirror German Nazism, its days were numbered. Now we know that they were wrong.

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M. Prat (✉)
Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain

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The capacity of the Franco regime to cling to power in this critical period of its existence can be explained by two factors: the fierce repression initiated during the civil war and kept up during the 1940s, and the *Realpolitik* pursued by the United States and Great Britain. The first factor guaranteed the regime's domestic strength, with assassination, incarceration, exile and fear decimating the ranks of parties and trade unions of the left. The second factor safeguarded the regime's tranquillity on the international front, which proved to be critical for weakening the internal opposition. Attempts at armed resistance from 1944 onwards only appeared meaningful if they could succeed in gaining the involvement of the victors of the Second World War in the regime's toppling. As a result, the indulgence of the Western powers toward the Spanish dictatorship, despite appearances and gestures, enabled Franco to withstand the years of isolation, first enduring and then moving forward within the context of the Cold War.

Built on the back of the rebel victory in April 1939, the Franco regime represented an enormous political, cultural and social change. In many respects, it treated not only the immediate history of the Spanish Second Republic, but also Spain's more distant past, as if they were a *tabula rasa*. In the spirit of revenge, the new regime sought first to bring about the final eradication of the workers' movement, which had played such a key role in several attempts at revolution and democratisation during the first third of the twentieth century. Thus, the period 1939–1951 was a time in Spain marked by the establishment and maintenance of a regime with an ideology very close to Fascism. First, I analyse the regime's policies in the area of labour relations, focusing on the vertical trade unions. This involves an examination of the role of the official trade-union organisation in the Francoist economic and social policies and the extent to which it attained its objectives. Furthermore, I analyse the role of business elites in the new regime. Second, I study the activities of the opposition during these harsh years, with particular regard to the guerrilla movement and the opposition trade unionism. In several respects, the year 1951 was to mark a turning point in this area. The tram boycott in Barcelona was the first act of mass popular resistance since the civil war and it demonstrated the failure of the regime's trade-union policy and the limitations of the opposition's strategy. After this experience armed resistance was abandoned and the struggle of the unions was taken up. In the long-run, this shook the foundations of the regime.

The New Regime: Hard with Workers, Deferential with Business Elites

The Spanish Second Republic (1931–1936) constituted an experience of democratisation that had to tackle a number of conflicts that had festered during the first third of the twentieth century. It faced also a global economic crisis and growing instability in Europe. Historiography has identified four such conflicts: the social, the religious, the military and the nationalist. In my view, the first one was the most significant for sparking the military uprising of 18 July and it would mark the policies of the New State imposed by the victorious rebels at the end of the war. In addition, religious and military conflicts divided the Spanish people into two camps that closely overlapped with the two sides of the social conflict. The Republic was viewed by the rural and urban working classes as an opportunity to improve their living conditions, reduce inequality and gain access to land ownership. The owning classes saw their interests threatened and reacted by opposing reformist policies, using electoral means at first and later, after their defeat in February 1936, inciting the uprising of the armed forces. The military and the Church were perceived as the guarantors of the old status quo by the majority of the population and their conduct during those years fully confirms this perception.[1] Thus, we can state that the civil war was to a large extent a class war, although cultural, ideological, religious and nationalist factors also played important roles.

As the rebels gained a stranglehold over the various provinces of the country, they engaged in repressing everything identified with the Republic—secularism, left-wing political parties and the labour movement. Indeed, Franco prolonged the war with the deliberate intention of conscientiously 'cleansing' the areas that had been gradually 'liberated'.[2] The aim was not merely to achieve a military victory, but also to eliminate for all time any possibility that the Left, the labour movement or progressive forces in general would ever be able to construct an alternative Spain. In this respect, Francoism enjoyed an enormous advantage over Hitler and Mussolini's regimes: the war gave the regime free reign to repress the population of Spain much more broadly right from the outset. Franco could erect a New State out of a ravaged country because the vast majority

[1] Nationalist conflict did do a little to blur this clear division between the Right and the Left, particularly in the Basque Country.

[2] Paul Preston, *Franco: Caudillo de España* (Barcelona: Grijalbo Mondadori, 1994).

of his opponents were now dead, in exile or in prison and the population was left traumatised by the war, as well as by repression on both sides and revolution in the republican camp. The defence of the traditional status quo could not be carried out by means of a return to either the distorted parliamentary system of the Restoration (1875–1923) or the relatively mild dictatorship of Miguel Primo de Rivera (1923–1930). Five turbulent years of the Republic and three tragic years of the civil war had changed everything. Now the interests of the landowning classes, businessmen, the Church and the military would have to be defended by a fledgling regime that modelled itself after fascism: it attempted to mobilise the masses, was more invasive in the private sphere than any other regime before and presented itself as modern.

The fascist nature of Francoism has been the subject of active debate among historians and political scientists. In my opinion, the regime established during the early years bore many hallmarks of Fascism. Robert Paxton determines the degree of a regime's fascism on the basis of its totalitarian character, measured by the smallest amount of space left to civil society, business and religious organisations. If we use Paxton's taxonomy, then Francoism proves to be less fascist than Nazi Germany or even Fascist Italy, but more fascist than Salazar's Portugal or Vichy France.[3] In the Spanish case, the single party in power was much weaker than its Italian equivalent, but the military wielded more power and the Catholic Church played a much more active role in the regime than was the case in Italy. However, Mussolini also reached agreements with business people and the traditional elites, and the combination of repression and consensus in the Italian case was less bloody than in the Spanish one.[4] From the outset, the Falange aimed to mobilise people in support of the regime, but after 1942 it was progressively marginalised by Franco because of its inefficiency and unpopularity. From that date onwards, the New State sought to depoliticise people, utilising negative war memories and, when necessary, using repression against the Falange activists.[5]

[3] Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France, Old Guard and New Order, 1940–1944*, rev. ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); Robert O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004).

[4] R. de Felice, *Mussolini il Duce*, (Turin: Einaudi, 1974).

[5] Antonio Cazorla, *Las políticas de la Victoria: La Consolidación del Nuevo Estado Franquista (1938–1953)* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2000), pp. 240–243.

In the field of labour relations, the intention clearly was to create a new system, an authentic counter-revolution.[6] In the same way that a single party had been forged during the civil war by merging the Falangists and the Carlists, the trade-union organisations that gave their support to the revolt also had to be unified.[7] This led to friction and mutual mistrust between the Falangists on the one hand and the Catholics and the Carlists on the other, because their two distinct conceptions of industrial relations clashed. All of the political parties that supported the *coup d'état* against the Republic had sought to reach workers by promoting trade unions, but until the outbreak of the civil war they had had little success among workers and their trade unions were utterly marginal.

The approach of the Catholics and the Carlists was rooted in the social doctrine of the Catholic Church first put forth in the *Rerum Novarum* (1891). This doctrine favoured the management of social strife through the acknowledgment of the two opposing parties, represented by their respective corporations and encouraged their agreement by means of collective contracts. This system became distorted when applied in the context of authoritarian regimes, such as the Salazar regime in Portugal, or in directly fascist regimes, such as Mussolini's Italy, because these lacked trade-union pluralism.[8] Curiously, a system of this kind had been established in Spain in the 1920s during the dictatorship of Miguel Primo de Rivera, but it did feature some pluralism: the anarchist Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT) was banned but the socialist Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT) not only was legal, but also enjoyed a privileged position in the system for electing delegates. It was precisely Spain's Catholic trade unionists who did not hold fond memories of this system because even though it fit their model fairly closely, it had not been very advantageous. Indeed, the minister of labour during the Republic had been Largo Caballero, leader of the UGT, and he was the one who had maintained and strengthened this system.[9] As one would expect, the

[6] Roque Moreno Fonseret, 'El Régimen y la Sociedad. Grupos de Presión y Concreción de Intereses', in *Ayer* 33 (1999), pp. 88–113.

[7] Carme Molinero and Pere Ysàs, *Productores Disciplinados y Minorías Subversivas. Clase Obrera y Conflictividad Laboral en la España Franquista* (Madrid. Siglo XXI, 1998), pp. 4–5.

[8] 9 Francisco Bernal, *El Sindicalismo Vertical: Burocracia, Control Laboral y Representación de Intereses en la España Franquista, 1936–1951* (Madrid: Asociación de Historia Contemporánea and Centro de Estudios Constitucionales, 2010), pp. 96–99.

[9] Marc Prat and Oscar Molina, 'State Corporatism and Democratic Industrial Relations in Spain 1926–1935. A Reappraisal', *Labor History* 55:2 (2014), pp. 208–227.

Catholics and the Carlists who advocated a corporatist system of labour relations in the midst of the civil war did not wish to repeat the 'errors' of Primo, and they drew inspiration from the Italian *Carta del Lavoro* and the Portuguese *Estatuto do Trabalho Nacional*. In 1937, they applied pressure in that direction.

At the outset of the civil war, before their forced merger with the Carlists in April 1937, the Falangists represented the union of two parties: the Spanish Falange (the Falange Española, or FE) and the Assemblies of the National Syndicalist Offensive (the Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional-Sindicalista, or JONS). The latter group, particularly its leader Ledesma Ramos, gave the trade unions a central place in its political project. The JONS held that a national revolution, during which the trade unions would play a fundamental role in mobilising both the workers and the organisers of the State's economy, was necessary. They complained that the revolutionary trade-union movement, the anarchist CNT, was not national in the way that the Italian revolutionary trade unionists had been. They proposed that it be 'nationalised', that is, that the CNT leaders be won over, but they had little success in doing so. Ledesma did not view trade unions as arenas for collective bargaining because he believed that the State should establish labour conditions from the top down. When the FE and the JONS merged in February 1934, the new organisation adopted the trade-union programme of Ledesma Ramos, which clearly differed from corporatism by urging that business people and workers not form part of distinct organisations based on class, but rather that they join a single organisation, within vertical trade unions.[10]

It was precisely this question of integration within a single organisation that polarised the two trade-union camps of the side of the rebels. Throughout 1939, the issue pulled the Carlists and Catholics in one direction and the Falangists in the other. As we have seen, this disagreement was rooted in a doctrinal difference regarding whether industrial relations involved social agents in negotiation or the State engaged in top-down management. This difference also entailed a political battle over the degree of freedom that business organisations would have under the new regime, that is, the degree of the New State's totalitarianism. This conflict had already occurred within Italian fascism and had been resolved in November 1928 with the defeat of Rossoni's trade unionists and the victory of the business people and Giuseppe Bottai, Mussolini's minister of industry. In

[10] Bernal, *El Sindicalismo Vertical*, pp. 38–42.

Italy, business people were integrated in organisations that were different from the organisations for workers and they retained a wide freedom of action.[11] In Spain, this struggle tipped in favour of the Falangists and joint integration of business people and workers in vertical trade unions in 1938, although, as we shall see, it was more a triumph on paper than a real one. In March 1938, the *Fuero del Trabajo* was approved. This document contained social elements drawn from the Catholics and the Carlists, but it also clearly distanced itself from the Italian model, in which the collective contract served as a central tool of industrial relations. In the Spanish case, contracts between business people and workers were prohibited and the State set labour conditions, following the German model of 1934 inspired by relational theories that viewed the enterprise as a non-confrontational entity.[12]

The Falangists only partly succeeded in imposing their model of trade unions. With the enactment of the *Fuero del Trabajo*, they repudiated their conception of the trade union as a form of private property, one of the most revolutionary aspects of their thinking.[13] Moreover, the implementation of the vertical model also enabled business organisations to largely maintain their identity and autonomy. The National Trade Unions (the Sindicatos Nacionales) brought together business people in each sector, while workers were put in provincial delegations of a different trade union, the Central Nacional Sindicalista (CNS). This separation was maintained when, in the mid-1940s, each National Trade Union created an Economic Section for business people and a Social Section for workers. In other words, in practice, the model closely resembled the Italian one.

To summarise the position of the CNS in the first 20 years of Francoism, we could say that it lost its battle with the business people and the State and it won a dominant position solely over the workers because its essential role was to control and shackle the workers' movement. Despite the Falangist rhetoric, their workers discourse and their pending revolution, Spain's economic elites and the government itself assigned the CNS a very

[11] Francesco Perfetti, *Il sindacalismo fascista: I. Dalle Origini Alla vigilia Dello Stato Corporativo (1919–1930)* (Rome: Bonacci Editore, 1988), pp. 155–165; Perfetti, however, does not take the view that Mussolini's concession to the demands of the business people marked the final surrender of fascism to business; see also Giuseppe Parlato, *Il Sindacalismo Fascista: II. Dalla 'Grande Crisi' Alla Caduta del Regime (1930–1943)* (Rome: Bonacci Editore; 1989), pp. 114–115.

[12] Bernal, *El Sindicalismo Vertical*, pp. 106–125.

[13] Bernal, *El Sindicalismo Vertical*, p. 131.

specific role to play: to neutralise the workers' movement, to serve business interests and to stifle social conflict. To a large extent, it achieved its objective. During these first two decades, the number of strikes and labour disputes was much lower and real wages remained below the pre-war levels throughout the mid-1950s.[14] However, the CNS convinced very few workers and its undemocratic character robbed it of any claim to legitimacy. If the regime achieved social peace, the cause lay in its effective use of fear to control workers.

Beyond acting as a guard dog against the workers, the trade-union organisation was unable to wield much greater power. As already noted, business people were not genuinely brought into the fold. They continued to enjoy organisational autonomy under the umbrella of the unions. The organisation played a secondary role to the Ministry of Labour, which dictated the working conditions in each sector, and to the Ministry of Industry and Trade, which took control of autarkic policies and negotiated regulations with business people in each sector. The role of the trade-union bureaucracy was restricted to managing the regime's economic interventionism, not decisions on economic policy.[15] In short, the CNS was not a counterbalance to the Francoist State, but a tool of that State to control the workforce and manage economic interventionism.

Although business elites enjoyed the defeat of the labour movement and the 'social peace' introduced by the new regime, and while they were able to maintain much of their organisational autonomy despite the Falangists, a number of conflicts between the New State and the business classes were recorded. The most controversial one was the impact of the autarkic economic policy. Following the example of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, Franco's regime implemented an industrialisation process that was governed, above all, by its military priorities. It introduced government price fixing, central allocation of factors of production, strict foreign exchange control and an overvalued currency. Moreover, it set up a state-owned industrial holding, the *Instituto Nacional de Industria* (INI).[16] Spain suffered major raw material and energy bottlenecks during the Second World War, which, in the second half of the 1940s, were to

[14] Jordi Catalan, 'Francoist Spain Under Nazi Economic Hegemony, 1936–1945; in Christoph Buchheim and Marcel Boldorf (eds.), *Europäische Volkswirtschaften unter deutscher Hegemonie: 1938–1945* (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2012), pp. 229–265.

[15] Bernal, *El Sindicalismo Vertical*, pp. 124–125 and pp. 133–186.

[16] Catalan, *Francoist Spain*, p. 242.

severely hamper the industrial recovery from the effects of the civil war. The New State's economic and foreign policies were largely responsible for this economic stagnation at below pre-war levels.[17]

Interventionism at this scale resulted in the creation of a huge black market that caused massive distortions in private incentives, since the quick way to get rich during the 1940s was by trafficking in rationed consumer goods, raw materials, import permits or foreign currency. The businessmen who enjoyed the best connections with the regime were able to make huge profits; the others, meanwhile, were often unable to produce anything because of the lack of raw materials and energy, or they missed out on investment opportunities as they failed to gain official permission to import machinery. This was especially true in the consumer goods industries, which suffered the most under the policy of autarky.[18] Thus, among business elites, there were winners as well as losers.

While there is a wide consensus among Spanish economic historians regarding the pervasive effects of autarky, the INI's role as a substitute for private capital is more controversial.[19] Some claim that business expectations remained very low throughout the 1940s, and for this reason, levels of industrial investment stagnated. Against this backdrop, the INI took responsibility for the required investments for which private capital was unavailable.[20] In contrast, others argue more convincingly that the INI in fact blocked several private initiatives—in the shipbuilding,[21] automobile[22] and chemical[23] sectors, for example—so as to ensure state control over the sectors that the regime regarded as its priorities.

The building of the New State saw the formation of a new political elite, more professional and middle-class in character than the one that

[17] Catalan, *Francoist Spain*; Jordi Catalan, 'Franquismo y Autarquía, 1939–1959: Enfoques de Historia Económica', in *Ayer* 46 (2002), pp. 263–283.

[18] Catalan, *Francoist Spain*.

[19] See a good survey of the controversy in Catalan, *Franquismo y Autarquía*.

[20] Pablo Martín Aceña and Francisco Comín, *INI 50 años de industrialización en España* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1991); Francisco Comín, 'El Triunfo de la Política sobre la Economía en el INI de Suanzes', in *Revista de Economía Aplicada* (2001), p. 26.

[21] Jesús M. Valdaliso, 'La E.N. Elcano y el 'Coco' de las Navieras Privadas', in Antonio Gómez Mendoza (ed.), *De Mitos y Milagros: El Instituto Nacional de Autarquía (1941–1963)* (Barcelona: Fundación Duques de Soria-Edicions Universitat Barcelona, 2000), pp. 137–158.

[22] Elena San Román, *Ejército e Industria: El Nacimiento del INI* (Barcelona: Crítica, 1999).

[23] Antonio Gómez Mendoza (ed.), *De mitos y milagros*.

had been in existence before 1931. Although not many members of the traditional business elites could be found among the regime's top officials, plenty of them held positions on local government and trade union bodies.[24] From here, they were able to defend their interests and enjoy access to local councils and the boards of financial firms.[25] During these years, many politicians and army officials became members of the business elite.[26]

The Opposition Movement Against Francoism

When the Spanish Second Republic was defeated after nearly three years of civil war, the political, social and trade-union forces that had supported the Republic were absolutely decimated. Executions, incarceration and exile had broken the backbone of the left-wing parties and the workers' movement in Spain. Despite the regime's continued repression and its trade-union structures, some resistance and simple protest did take place in the first dozen years of the dictatorship. This section briefly examines the three tools used by the opposition to Francoism during those years: international diplomacy, guerrilla activity and trade-union activism. These three activities intertwined with each other and with the international context. As we shall see, the first two activities ended in failure, while the third, despite facing a number of difficulties, showed itself to be the most fruitful path to follow in 1951. It did not overthrow the regime but, together with activism in the universities, it posed serious problems for it.

The opposition to the regime was made up of a wide array of political and trade-union forces that were severely divided in the aftermath of the civil war. Not all of the opposition forces had the same level of commitment to the three activities mentioned above. The strictly republican parties, and also to a large extent the Spanish socialist party PSOE, opted to exclusively pursue the diplomatic route and rejected the construction of a clandestine organisation on home soil.[27] The Communist Party of Spain (PCE) was the party that opted for armed resistance more than others

[24] Miguel Jerez Mir, 'El Régimen de Franco: Élite Política Central y Redes Clientelares (1938–1957)', in Antonios Robles (ed.), *Política en penumbra: patronazgo y clientelismo políticos en la España contemporánea* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1996), pp. 253–274.

[25] Roque Moreno Fonseret, 'El Régimen y la Sociedad: Grupos de Presión y Concreción de Intereses', in *Ayer* 33 (1999), pp. 101–102.

[26] Jerez Mir, *El Régimen de Franco*.

[27] The PSOE maintained a guerrilla force in Asturias until the members were evacuated in 1948.

after 1944, although it never gave up on diplomatic strategy. For its part, the CNT, which was split from 1945 onwards, had a much more moderate leadership that favoured diplomatic action with potential allies on the home front, while most members of its overseas organisation pushed for guerrilla incursions launched from the south of France, particularly into Catalonia. The CNT within Spain worked hard to rebuild its domestic organisation into a union with mass membership, but fierce repression after mid-1947 made this impossible and in fact destroyed the union completely by 1952. It did not reappear for another 10 years. Before it vanished, the CNT did pursue trade-union action, but the success of the few strikes that took place in the period 1945–1951 was uneven.

The international context conditioned the Spanish opposition's activity and its chances of success. Simply put, when the Axis Powers were riding high on their military triumphs from 1939 to 1942, the activity of the Spanish opposition was almost non-existent, with a fascist regime in Spain feeling very secure and enjoying the international success of other fascist countries. After 1943, however, when the tide of the Second World War began to turn, Francoism become more insecure and the opposition at home and in exile became more hopeful that the end of the dictatorship was in sight. The regime was forced to relax its repression a little, the release of opposition members from prison enabled the CNT to rebuild its structure in Spain and the Allied liberation of France provided a territorial base and troops for armed action from the summer of 1944.[28] The international isolation of the Franco regime and its consequent weakness were at their most extreme between 1945 and 1946.

In this apparently propitious context, the forces of the Spanish opposition clearly opted for the diplomatic route, putting their trust in the ability of international pressure, including Allied military intervention in Spain, to quickly bring the fascist regime to an end. It must be said, however, that in the Tripartite Declaration of March 1946, the United States, the United Kingdom and France made it clear that regime change would have to occur by peaceful means and without the intervention of foreign powers.[29] The republican government in exile, led by the socialist José Giral, drew

[28] Ángel Herrerín, *La CNT Durante el Franquismo: Clandestinidad y Exilio (1939–1975)* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 2004), pp. 19–20.

[29] Josep Sánchez Cervelló, 'El contexto nacional e internacional de la resistencia (1939–1952)', in Julio Aróstegui and Jorje Marco (eds.), *El Último Frente: La Resistencia Armada Antifranquista en España* (Madrid: Los Libros de la Catarata, 2008), p. 29.

on a broad political spectrum, including republicans, Basque nationalists, socialists, CNT anarchists and communists, as well as a few conservative figures. The National Alliance of Anti-fascist Forces (*Alianza Nacional de Fuerzas Antifascista*), which was created in October 1944 by the PSOE, the CNT in Spain and the left-wing republican party Izquierda Republicana (IR), acted moderately and attempted to reach an agreement with the pro-monarchy forces about the return of democracy to Spain; they were ready to accept a monarchical regime if voters would give their approval to it in a referendum. This strategy of rapprochement with monarchists backing Don Juan, the son of the last king of Spain Alfonso XIII who had died a few years earlier, had the support of Great Britain, where the Labour government tried hard to bring its own socialist supporters to endorse such an alliance in Spain.

The year 1947 marked a turning point in the international context of the post-war era, with the beginning of the Cold War. This affected the position of Spain and the Franco regime. The Republican government in exile, at the moment led by the socialist Rodolfo Llopis, expelled the communists in the summer of 1947, following the path taken earlier by France, Italy and Belgium. The government itself was dissolved in August as a result of the PSOE's agreement with the monarchists and the end of its commitment to the institutions of the Republic. The new republican government did not gain the support of the socialists, the communists or the CNT and became completely irrelevant.[30] The liberal socialist Prieto signed a pact with the monarchist Gil Robles at San Juan de Luz in May 1948, agreeing on the transition to liberal democracy together with holding a referendum to decide whether it would be a monarchy or a republic. However, this pact was called off, because three days earlier Franco and Don Juan had reached an agreement stating that the official branch of the house of Bourbon would return to the Spanish throne one day.[31]

Franco played his cards well. When the regime felt its international isolation most acutely, he made cosmetic changes, eliminating the Ministry of the Movement and enacting the *Fuero de los Españoles*. In the Lausanne manifesto of March 1945, Don Juan called on Franco to step down and offered himself as a democratic alternative. Franco responded with the

[30] Gregorio Morán, *Miseria i Grandeza del Partido Comunista de España, 1939–1985* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1986), pp. 125–126.

[31] Sánchez Cervelló, *El contexto nacional*, p. 33.

Law of Succession in March 1947, opening the door to a change in the dynastic line to the Spanish throne, frightening the heir and ultimately destroying his alliance with the republicans.[32] Franco was quick to realise the shift in the international landscape in mid-1947. He increased police repression of the opposition, decimating the clandestine structure of the CNT,[33] and openly used the military to fight against the guerrillas, weakening them enormously.[34] He surmised that, given the threat of communism, the Western democracies would look the other way and he was right. In the wake of the Soviet blockade of Berlin (from June 1948 to May 1949) and the birth of NATO (April 1949), amid an all-out war in Korea (from June 1950 to July 1953), the UN rescinded its condemnation of the Franco regime and recommended the return of ambassadors (December 1950). In the spring of 1951, the US, British and French ambassadors all came back to Madrid and Spain was admitted into UNESCO in 1952. Subsequently, the regime signed the Concordat of 1953 with the Vatican (in August of that year) and a bilateral agreement with the USA (September 1953), and Spain was finally admitted into the UN (December 1955).[35]

For the Communist Party of Spain (PCE), the diplomatic strategy necessitated armed action at home: a guerrilla strategy. The guerrilla war was a complex situation. The guerrilla army consisted of left-wing activists who had sought refuge in the mountains to escape from repression, peasants persecuted because of their involvement in wartime collectivisations and the members of those parties and trade unions in support of organised armed struggle against the regime. Bands of guerrillas cropped up in various mountainous areas of Spain at the end of the civil war. They reached their zenith and achieved a certain level of organisation from the latter stages of the Second World War through the end of the 1940s. It is calculated that between 1946 and 1951, some 15,000 guerrilla fighters met their deaths in Spain. The PCE was the organisation that gave them the greatest support in this period, as a mechanism to mobilise the population against the regime and draw the Allies into a war to end Francoism.[36] Participation in the guerrilla bands, which were fed by

[32] Since the 1830s, the dynastic Carlist party supported an alternative Bourbon branch to the Spanish throne.

[33] Herrerín, *La CNT Durante el Franquismo,* pp. 117–145.

[34] Morán, *Miseria i Grandeza*, pp. 117–122; Sánchez Cervelló, *El contexto nacional*, p. 34.

[35] Sánchez Cervelló, *El contexto nacional*, p. 30.

[36] Morán, *Miseria i Grandeza*, pp. 117–122.

cadres trained in the French Marquis, included not only communists, but also anarchist and socialist militants. In 1946, the *Politburo* of the PCE calculated that it had 582 activists fighting as guerrillas in Spain.[37] The PCE's objective was for the cadres returning from exile to organise and give political direction to already existing guerrilla bands or train bands where none existed.

For its part, the CNT in exile also sent guerrillas during the period of 1945–1951 from the South of France to Catalonia to carry out attacks and stage boycotts, but these were largely wiped out. Estimates put the numbers of CNT members entering the country in this period at 350, with 65 per cent falling into the hands of the police and 100 assassinated.[38] The guerrilla activity of the PSOE was limited to a single band in Asturias, which was successfully evacuated by sea in 1948.

The most intense period of guerrilla activity occurred in 1946 and 1947. From 1947 onwards, the regime made massive use of the military to combat the guerrillas. Its tactic was to infiltrate units of false guerrillas among the peasants to identify who would lend their support. The repression of the peasants and the evacuation of the farmhouses hit the guerrillas badly, as they were losing valuable support from the population. By the end of 1948, most of the guerrilla bands of the PCE had been snuffed out, leaving only the bands of Galicia and Aragon-Levante. The former fell into decline at the end of that year when its more politically orientated leaders were assassinated, and it soon descended into banditry. As for the Aragon-Levante band, the flagship of the PCE, the party's deputy leader in exile in France, Santiago Carrillo, planned to step up operations with the help of paratroopers sent from Yugoslav bases in the Mediterranean, but the project was aborted with the split between Stalin and Tito. In the late 1940s, Carrillo realised that a stop had to be put to the guerrilla war because it was decimating many cadres in the party and it was failing to achieve its aim of mobilising peasants and sowing rebellion among the population.[39] The official version of the story presented by the party is not true; it was not Stalin himself who in a meeting advised a PCE delegation to halt the

[37] Morán, *Miseria i Grandeza*, pp. 117–122.

[38] Data from Pons Prades cited in Herrerín, *La CNT Durante el Franquismo,* pp. 93–113.

[39] Morán, *Miseria i Grandeza*, pp. 117–122; Hartmut Heine, 'El Partido Comunista Español y la organización del fenómeno guerrillero', in Julio Aróstegui and Jorge Marco (eds.), ARÓSTEGUI, *El último frente. La resistencia armada antifranquista en España 1939–1952* (Madrid: Catarata, 2008), pp. 81–97.

guerrilla strategy.[40] The final decision was not taken until the spring of 1951 and the last guerrillas evacuated from Spain reached France in 1952.

In that year, Carrillo himself put the failure of the guerrilla strategy down to their believing that it was possible to apply the model of the French Maquis, whose clashes with foreign troops attracted much broader support from the population and garnered the collaboration of some members of the police and the gendarmerie. This did not occur in the Spanish case. Carrillo failed to mention the assistance of the Allied forces who had ultimately liberated France from fascism and were conspicuous in Spain by their absence. An acknowledgment of the role played by the British and the Americans was too complicated for a communist leader in 1952.[41]

The CNT within Spain attempted to rebuild its organisation from 1943 onwards, when the changing course of the war in Europe caused the Franco regime to release CNT militants from prison. Between 1945 and 1947, it regained strength and rapidly expanded its membership and the circulation of its publications. By the end of 1946, the affiliated members in Barcelona city totalled 14,203. However, this growth turned out to be a mirage. The number of members was relatively high, but the number of militants—that is to say, the number of trade-union cadres—was not. When the ferocity of the repression was turned on the CNT in mid-1947 and successive national committees fell into the hands of the police until 1952, it became increasingly difficult to replace the militants because affiliated members refused to risk their lives or the lives of their families. After its downfall in 1952, the CNT was left without leadership in Spain and its members were totally disorganised. The anarchists were not organisationally present in Spain for another 10 years. The drive to replicate the CNT's pre-war organisational structure, a structure of the masses, and its open character enabled the CNT to grow rapidly, but also made it highly vulnerable to infiltration and repression. Its inability to adapt to the situation of a fascist dictatorship or learn to be clandestine proved fatal.[42]

As noted earlier, the Spanish working classes had been crushed in the civil war. The regime enforced systematic repression against the workers'

[40] Jorge Marco, 'La Resistencia armada. El último combate del antifascismo en España', in Ángel Viñas (ed.), *En el combate por la historia. República, guerra civil y franquismo* (Barcelona: Pasado y Presente, 2012), p. 643; Morán, *Miseria i Grandeza*, pp. 117–122; Heine, *El Partido Comunista*, pp. 81–97.

[41] Morán, *Miseria i Grandeza,* pp. 117–122.

[42] Herrerín, *La CNT Durante el Franquismo,* pp. 117–145.

movement in those early years, hugely favoured business people and built an official trade-union structure that sought to corral and control workers. The workers passively repudiated the regime and their attitude was very clear to the governing authorities, members of the single party and the ranks of the vertical trade unions. However, the fear provoked by repression, destitution, traumatic memories of the civil war, the internal divisions of the republican area and the despondency generated by defeat often prevented this hostility toward the victors from erupting into a protest or a rebellion.[43]

Nevertheless, between 1945 and 1947, the defeat of the Axis Powers stoked expectations of regime change and several strikes occurred in various parts of the country, particularly in the industrial areas of Catalonia and the Basque Country, although smaller protests also took place in the regions of Valencia, Andalusia, Galicia and Madrid. These protests were driven by economic motivations such as the workers' high cost of living and rationing. Although militants of the anarchist, socialist and communist parties took part, their participation did not follow the instructions of their party leaders. The strikes of the immediate post-war period were not openly political in nature, but rather economic. However, they did raise questions about the official system of labour relations and the regime's economic policies, and they clearly broke the law, being characterised as crimes of sedition.[44]

Fresh disillusionment with the regime's continued survival led to a decline in workers' strikes and protests in the period 1948–1950. However, the year 1951 witnessed an explosion of popular protest that became a turning point for the anti-Franco opposition. In Barcelona, a popular protest against an increase in the price of tram tickets was organised in March and the resulting boycott was successful. The government had to backpedal and eliminate the price hike. And that was not the end of it. When the Spanish Trade-Union Organisation (the Organización Sindical Española, or OSE) tried to capitalise on the government's withdrawal of the measure at a meeting of stewards, the matter got out of hand and the gathering wound up calling a general strike, which drew the support of between 250,000 and 500,000 workers in the industrial area of Barcelona. In the months that followed, the events in Barcelona spread first to Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa, then to Álava and Navarre, and ultimately to Madrid.

[43] Molinero and Ysàs, *Productores Disciplinados,* pp. 28–29.
[44] Molinero and Ysàs, *Productores Disciplinados,* p. 34.

This was the first mass protest since the civil war; it showed, on the one hand, that the official trade-unionism was ineffective at controlling workers and managing social conflict and, on the other hand, that it was possible to undermine the regime by appealing to economic grievances, an approach that had been little used by opposition organisations before that time.

By 1951, the opposition's diplomatic strategy had utterly failed. The regime had overcome its isolation and begun to negotiate an economic and military agreement with the USA to safeguard its survival. The PCE had taken the decision to end its failed guerrilla strategy and the last committee of the CNT was on the verge of being dismantled. It was at this point that the Achilles heel of the regime, its poor acceptance among the working classes, was exposed. From that moment, the PCE decided to focus its strategy on exploiting the economic grievances of the workers to weaken Francoism. In the late 1950s, the party opted to harness the structures of the vertical trade unions, which were opening up a little at the bottom, to bring the regime down from within. This strategy was also shared by a number of Catholics on the Left, but the socialists and the CNT did not go along with it. Opposition forces began to make headway against Francoism when they accepted that the strategies of the Republic and the civil war were outdated and they realised that the regime represented a very solid reality and that only a long-term strategy could bring it to its knees.

Conclusion

Franco triumphed in Spain after three years of civil war. The victors were able to treat the country as a *tabula rasa*, establishing a new political and social system that set the permanent resolution of social conflict in favour of businessmen and landowners as its main priority. In this sense, the Franco regime can be classified as similar to the fascist regimes of Germany and Italy. The regime's labour policies were fundamental to this mission and vertical trade unions were its principal tool. Making use of revolutionary rhetoric and a supposedly social sensibility, the Falangist trade unionists came to play the role of a guard dog against the working class, while the State and business people restricted their influence in the areas of economic policy or the autonomy of business organisations.

This policy of corralling and controlling the workers, together with the fierce repression during the civil war and the post-war period, made it

possible to defeat the workers' movement that had been an important force in many attempts at revolution and democratisation during the first third of the twentieth century. Paraphrasing Miquel de Unamuno, we could say that official trade unionism won, but did not convince. It failed to garner workers' support for the regime. It failed to gain support for its proposals and to convince workers that it was an effective tool for defending their interests. The strikes of 1946 and 1947 and the explosion of 1951 showed the deficiencies of vertical trade unionism and paved the way for a new approach to undermining the regime.

The events of 1951 also demonstrated that the guerrilla strategy no longer made sense. It did not endanger the regime, particularly after the regime had gained international acceptance in the context of the Cold War. The PCE abandoned the strategy and opted to promote opposition trade unionism that could use economic grievances as a basis for mobilising workers against the regime. This long-term strategy, which proved less perilous than the guerrilla strategy and therefore more effective against a regime that was firmly entrenched, eventually turned the Workers' Commissions (the Comisiones Obreras, or CCOO) into a fundamental tool for the betterment of workers' rights and conditions, and the party achieved this end through infiltration of precisely those structures that Francoism had devised to subdue workers.

Francoism proved to be a highly adaptable system with a keen instinct for survival. It developed in keeping with shifts in international politics and within Spanish society. Its success lay in its ability to maintain itself while its founder remained alive and to control the transition towards a post-Francoist regime. The opposition movements succeeded at last in making the regime's disappearance in 1975 inevitable and in being able to exert their influence on the construction of the new democratic reality that ensued.

Saving Social Democracy? Hugh Clegg and the Post-War Programme to Reform British Workplace Industrial Relations: Too Little, Too Late?

Peter Ackers

'Beneath these minor oscillations there lay a single major undulation which bore no simple relationship to political party, and whose long-term outcome remains unclear. This undulation entailed the rise from the 1940s to the 1960s of corporatist approaches to economic management, the struggle till 1979 to make them work better, followed by their quite sudden collapse in the late 1970s. With 1979 as a "critical" election marking off the UK corporatist from its free market phase … prudence in the short term and democracy in longer term both required that the corporatist strategy be tested to destruction.'[1]

[1] Brian Harrison, *Finding a Role: The United Kingdom, 1970–1990* (Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 516 and p. 289.

P. Ackers (✉)
Loughborough University, Loughborough, UK

Griffith University, Brisbane, QLD, Australia

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Introduction: Social Movements, Policy Elites and Historical Turning Points

In 1945, Britain held a unique position among European nations. Victorious in the war against Fascism and with no experience of foreign occupation, the country's long-established political institutions suffered no sudden rupture or challenge. The leading figures in the first majority Labour Government had served in Churchill's wartime coalition governments and the central role of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) in the 'corporate bias' of public policy could be traced back the previous war.[2] The *trade union movement* was set to play a still more central role in national life, but this was the culmination of a long, steady, constitutional 'Magnificent Journey'.[3] Only in this moderate institutional sense was a *social movement* central to the British story and this marched hand-in-hand with a new *public policy elite* that emerged to manage the post-1945 social democratic settlement. This chapter observes this post-war renegotiation of relations between trade unions, employers and the state through the eyes of Hugh Clegg (1920–1995), a key figure in the new Industrial Relations (IR).[4]

In the year of Margaret Thatcher's death, most historians paired her with Clement Attlee as the two great peacetime British Prime Ministers of

[2] See Keith Middlemas, *Politics in Industrial Society: The Experience of the British System Since 1911* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1979); and Hugh Armstrong Clegg, *A History of British Trade Unions Since 1989, Vol. 3: 1933–1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[3] Francis Williams, *Magnificent Journey: the Rise of the Trade Unions* (London: Odhams, 1954); see Robert Taylor, *The Trade Union Question in British Politics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993); Alastair J. Reid, *United We Stand: A History of Britain's Trade Unions* (London: Penguin Books, 2004); and Chris Howell, *Trade Unions and the State: The Reconstruction of Industrial Relations Institutions in Britain, 1890–2000* (New Jersey: Princeton, 2005).

[4] See Peter Ackers, 'Collective Bargaining as Industrial Democracy: Hugh Clegg and the Political Foundations of British Industrial Relations Pluralism', in *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 45:1 (March 2007), pp. 77–101; Peter Ackers, 'The Changing Systems of British Industrial Relations, 1954–1979: Hugh Clegg and the Warwick Sociological Turn', in *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 49:2 (June 2011), pp. 306–330; Peter Ackers, 'More Marxism than Methodism: Hugh Clegg at Kingswood Boarding School, Bath (1932–1939)', in *Socialist History* 38 (2011), pp. 23–46; Peter Ackers, 'Finding the Future in the Past? The Social Philosophy of Oxford Industrial Relations Pluralism', in Keith Townsend and Adrian Wilkinson (eds), *Research Handbook on the Future of Work and Employment Relations* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2011), pp. 45–66; and Peter Ackers and Ruth Hartley, 'A Social Science Apprenticeship? Hugh Clegg at Mass Observation, 1939', in *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations* 25/26 (Spring/Autumn 2008), pp. 197–218.

the twentieth century, on the grounds that both led a 'social revolution'. As the opening quote suggests, 1979 is widely accepted as a great *turning point* for the British System of IR, linked to considerable social turmoil—strikes and riots—culminating in the destruction of the social democratic settlement, the relentless decline of British unions and a rapid transition from a coordinated market to a liberal market economy.[5] By contrast, 1945 is not—despite the scale of other social changes. The reason is that relations between trade unions, employers and the state simply continued and further developed an ad hoc corporatism that can be traced back to the previous war, while no major institutional changes or rethinking of roles and relationships took place. There was social democratic planning and a full employment guarantee, but unions quickly returned to their pre-war role of 'free collective bargaining'. This meant that the long-mooted problem of wage bargaining under full employment in a coordinated market economy was not addressed until the 1960s, when the 'British IR problem' of unofficial strikes, inflation and restrictive working practices became a national political issue. In this respect, the British post-war experience only makes full historical sense when we take in the *longue durée*, from 1945 to 1979.

Any study of post-war British trade unions has to look backwards from the 1979 rupture, to understand how a movement that became the 'Fifth Estate' after 1945, collapsed so quickly in the 1980s. Alan Fox has raised the issue of IR *suppressed historical alternatives*:

'points at which events might conceivably have taken a somewhat different course; to indicate movements and forces which might have influenced industrial relations development had they been stronger; and to indicate some strategic accidents of personality that affected it'.[6]

Here four counterfactual questions stand out:

1. To what extent were British trade unions the agents of their own destruction, through a failure to reform their modus operandi in the new corporatist economy?
2. Could social democracy or a coordinated market economy have been made to work in Britain?

[5] Peter A. Hall and David Soskice (eds), *Varieties of Capitalism: The Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[6] Alan Fox, *History and Heritage: The Social Origins of the British Industrial Relations System* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1985), p. xi.

3. Did the oppositional militancy of the Communist Party and the 'broad left' contribute to the ultimate victory of neo-liberalism?
4. Did a suppressed historical alternative occur and, if so, when and why was it not taken?

Most IR historians answer 'No' to all four questions, backed by the now fashionable *path dependency* view that some sort of liberal-market DNA predetermined the future of British IR:

1. Our unions could not reform themselves.
2. Liberal individualism foredoomed corporatism.
3. Oppositional left politics made little difference one way or another.
4. Ergo, there was no suppressed historical opportunity.[7]

My aim here is to reopen this debate about British IR exceptionalism. The central argument runs as follows. The crucial IR dimension to social democratic corporatism, at both national and workplace levels, was not addressed by either Labour (1945–1951) or the Conservatives (1951–1964). Britain's IR crisis was delayed by two decades and only came to a head in the 1960s and 1970s. This was a crisis of corporatism and social democracy (two separate but intimately intertwined concepts); yet in IR terms, it was a crisis of corporatism delayed and incomplete. While Harold Macmillan began to modernise British institutions after 1957, it took another generation of Labour Governments (1964–1970) to try, unsuccessfully, to build a stable corporatist framework for British IR. Hugh Clegg and the 1965–1968, Donovan Commission were central to this process, which did represent a real opportunity to achieve a durable British IR settlement along similar lines to those established in other North European coordinated market economies.[8] Had this reform been

[7] See Alan Fox, *History and Heritage*; Robert Currie, *Industrial Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979); Paul Smith, 'Order in British Industrial Relations: From Donovan to Neoliberalism', in *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations* 31/32 (2011), pp. 115–154; Taylor, *The Trade Union Question*, is critical of TUC inertia but suggests they could not help themselves; even the later Clegg, *A History of British Trade Unions*, vol. 3 is deterministic; for a hostile view of trade unions, see Correlli Barnett, *The Verdict of Peace: Britain Between Her Yesterday and the Future* (Basingstoke: Pan Macmillan, 2002.

[8] Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations 1965–1968, *Donovan Report*, London: HMSO, June 1968, Cmnd 3623; for Clegg's account see: Hugh Armstrong Clegg, 'The Oxford School of Industrial Relations', *Warwick Papers in Industrial Relations*

successful, it would have secured the social democratic settlement and its manufacturing base well beyond 1979. The reasons for failure have as much to do with the politics of the British labour movement as with the deep structure of the unions—and the two elements are deeply interlinked. The central problem of post-war British social democracy—and the reason for its ultimate demise—lay in a failure to incorporate labour in an era of peacetime full employment. Hence there is a strange and fateful link between the IR inertia of 1945, the policy failures of the late 1960s and the Thatcher neo-liberal transformation that followed.

Social Transformation and Industrial Relations Stasis: 1945–1951

Whereas many other European countries experienced great political and economic conflict after 1945—strikes, factory occupations, strong Communist challenges—Britain carried forward, almost uninterrupted, the wartime mood of patriotic social cohesion. Labour's major nationalisation and welfare reforms had been partly anticipated by the wartime coalition and were implemented from above in an orderly way. There was no fighting on the streets. Constitutional propriety on all sides coloured relations between trade unions, employers and the state. Yet the 'social democratic settlement' after 1945 entailed a major transformation of British society: a comprehensive welfare state; a mixed economy following a major programme of nationalisation (20 per cent of employment); and a state commitment to full employment by Keynesian demand management.

The final element should have been a reassessment of the role that British trade unions would now play in the new coordinated economy. Yet, as Robert Taylor argues, the IR aims of British trade unions were highly conservative.[9] Ernest Bevin, Minister of Labour in the wartime coalition and Foreign Secretary under Attlee, epitomised the mentality of the 1940s right-wing trade union leadership. For them, the British war effort was a triumph of free trade unionism over foreign totalitarianism. So while the TUC supported statist economic planning and corporatist consultation in

31 (1990); *An Autobiography* (c.1995); *The Clegg Version of the Donovan Commission* (c.1995); Brian Harrison, 'Interview with Hugh Clegg', 29.09.1987; the last two are unpublished and in my possession.

[9] Taylor, *The Trade Union Question*, pp. 1–65.

all other spheres of society, free collective bargaining over wages was sacrosanct. And though these responsible union leaders displayed great personal loyalty to the 1945 Labour government and were prepared to broker *ad hoc* wage restraint, notably between 1948 and 1950, they were unwilling to entertain a formal national Incomes Policy. Strong personal leadership plus moral exhortation would have to suffice; and thus no major rethinking took place of the role of trade unions under the changed conditions of social democracy and full employment.

Indeed, British unions quickly reverted to 'free collective bargaining', as wartime restrictions on strike action were rescinded and workplace 'joint production committees' lapsed. The TUC's *voluntarist myth* involved both a high degree of self-deception and a failure to balance new rights with new responsibilities. Although the unions presented themselves as purely voluntary bargaining agents, raising members' wages through their own efforts alone, their new bargaining power was heavily shaped and sponsored by the corporatist state and employers.[10] The Ministry of Labour (and its predecessor, the Labour Department of the Board of Trade) had encouraged the spread of collective bargaining by administrative and ideological means since the late nineteenth century. Not only was this state support extended, especially in the greatly expanded public sector, but national economic policy provided the full employment conditions that bolstered bargaining power. Yet, under the 1945–1951 Labour governments, neither the state nor employers pressed for IR reform in exchange. The unions came out of the war with great prestige and collective bargaining represented the British genius for voluntary compromise and pragmatic, piecemeal reform. Patriotic hubris and institutional conservatism ruled the day.

During this period, the still controversial issue of public ownership or 'nationalisation' first drew Hugh Clegg into the emerging IR debate. In the late 1930s, the TUC had rejected 'workers control' and accepted that public corporations would be run as conventional bureaucracies, with normal arms-length collective bargaining. By the late 1940s, a debate had opened about how much further public ownership should go. A Communist at Oxford in the late 1930s and member of G.D.H. Cole's Socialist discussion circle, Clegg returned from the army to complete his degree in 1945 and found the intellectual atmosphere transformed. Studying Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Magdalen College, he encountered a new generation of Keynesian economists committed to

[10] See Howell, *Trade Unions and the State*.

moderate Labour. A political philosophy tutor, Harry Weldon, broke his Communist faith and he left the Party in 1947. That year, he began post-graduate research on nationalisation at Nuffield College, under Norman Chester, and contributed to the 'revisionist' social democratic retreat from Socialist public ownership.

Cole, still a 'workers control' advocate, convened a Fabian research group on *Labour in Nationalised Industry*, sponsored by the engineering union.[11] But Clegg's report accepted Herbert Morrison's bureaucratic model and rejected utopian notions of industrial democracy—a theme he was to pursue for the next decade. His historical study of London Transport, nationalised in 1933, challenged the notion that changes in ownership would transform relations between managers and workers. This writing fuelled the thinking of the leading social democratic politicians of the next decade, Hugh Gaitskell and Anthony Crosland. Clegg rendered the TUC's practical argument for voluntary collective bargaining as a pluralist theory of industrial democracy: trade unions are 'an opposition that can never become a Government'. While changes in ownership make very little difference to managerial relations, strong independent trade unions do. Clegg became a Fellow in IR at Nuffield College, Oxford in 1949, where he forged a close partnership with Allan Flanders, a new senior lecturer in IR and leading social democratic intellectual and activist.

Ad Hoc Corporatism and the Social Democratic Consensus: 1951–1964

Little changed in state IR policy between 1951 and 1964, as Conservative governments maintained a close relationship with the trade unions. Walter Monckton at the Department of Labour was instructed by Churchill to maintain industrial peace at almost any cost. As the Tories abolished the planning controls and rationing of the 1940s while retaining full employment, trade unions were encouraged to pursue unbridled free collective bargaining within a market economy. By the late 1950s, however, there was growing public concern about strikes, restrictive practices and inflation

[11] Hugh Armstrong Clegg, *Labour in Nationalised Industry* (London: Fabian Research Series 141, 1950); see also by Hugh Armstrong Clegg, *Labour Relations in London Transport* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1950); *Industrial Democracy and Nationalization* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1951); and *A new approach to Industrial Democracy* (1960).

arising from an increasingly chaotic and decentralised IR system.[12] After 1948, the small but industrially influential British Communist Party became an enthusiastic advocate of militant free collective bargaining, breaking with productivist and cooperative wartime policies. The most visible sign of these underlying workplace discontents were high profile strikes.[13] Moreover, after the 1956 Suez Crisis, there was broader public unease about national economic decline and the archaic character of British institutions. The virtues of the 1940s had become the vices of the 1960s.

These problems gave a new stimulus to Oxford IR research, in the productive decade between *The System of Industrial Relations* in 1954 and the commencement of the 1965 Donovan Royal Commission.[14] Clegg and Flanders orchestrated an 'Oxford School' around a weekly Nuffield IR seminar. Labour economists Kenneth Knowles and later Derek Robinson studied 'wage-drift' or the growing deviation of real wage levels from those set by national collective bargaining agreements. Clegg himself began a 1956 project on trade unions, funded by the Leverhulme Trust, while Arthur Marsh and Bill McCarthy studied the growing role of shop stewards in Oxford engineering, and Alan Fox developed a more sociological approach to IR problems. Flanders' influential 1964 study of an Esso refinery, *The Fawley Productivity Agreements*, published as Labour returned to power, showed how management could regain control of wages and working practices by reforming and actively managing company bargaining.[15]Around these core figures clustered other academics and postgraduate students.

[12] See three Penguin Specials: Andrew Shonfield, *British Economic Policy Since the War* (London: Penguin Books, 1958); Michael Shanks, *The Stagnant Society* (London: Penguin Books, 1961) and Eric Wigham, *What's Wrong with the Unions* (London: Penguin Books, 1961); Shonfield and Wigham served on Donovan.

[13] See: Roger V. Seifert and Tom Sibley, *Revolutionary Communist at Work: A Political Biography of Bert Ramelson* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 2012); and Hugh Arsmtrong Clegg and Rex Adams, *The Employers' Challenge: A Study of the National Shipbuilding and Engineering Dispute of 1957* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1957).

[14] Allan Flanders and Hugh Armstrong Clegg (eds), *The System of Industrial Relations in Great Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1954); this is often seen as the founding text of British academic IR.

[15] Peter Ackers (ed), 'Symposium: The Oxford School of Industrial Relations: Fifty Years after the 1965–1968 Donovan Commission', in *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations* 37 (2016), pp. 201–235; Allan Flanders, *The Fawley Productivity Agreements: A Case Study of Management and Collective Bargaining* (London: Faber and Faber, 1964); Jeremy Bugler,

Oxford placed Clegg close to the post-war corridors of power and he became a major public policy player. In 1952 and 1958, Sir Raymond Street, chairman of the Cotton Board (and a Nuffield Visiting Fellow) invited him to explore the reform of employer and trade union organisation. In June 1958, his first request to settle a railway pay dispute came from the Transport Commission, via TSSA General Secretary Bill Webber, who had helped with Clegg's postgraduate research on London Transport. Clegg then nominated Webber for one of the two Nuffield's Visiting Fellowships reserved for trade unionists, who in turn nominated Clegg to the 1959 Guillebaud Railway Pay Committee of Inquiry, concerned with pay and job comparability with workers elsewhere. Ministry of Labour officials 'were watching the work of the committee closely'. The 1964 Devlin Committee of Inquiry into the Port Transport Industry or the 'Docks' was another high-profile investigation into an industry notorious for casual working and unofficial strikes. On 26 May 1966, the Minister of Labour included Clegg in a Court of Inquiry into the controversial seamen's strike. On 29 June 1966, he single-handedly conducted an inquiry into a strike of forklift truck drivers at the Albert Edward Dock, North Shields; an inter-union dispute between the GMWU and the NUR. Such forays into the workplace hot spots were rich sources of knowledge about the everyday texture of workplace IR.[16]

Donovan and Social Democratic Industrial Relations Reform: 1964–1970[17]

The 1964–1970 Labour governments provided Clegg and his Oxford colleagues with a major opportunity to reshape IR public policy. After over a decade in opposition, Labour returned to power committed to harness the

'The New Oxford Group', in *New Society* (15 February 1968); John Kelly, *Ethical Socialism and the Trade Unions: Allan Flanders and British Industrial Relations Reform* (London: Routledge, 2010)—reviewed Ackers, *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 49.4 (2011), pp. 807–809—and Hugh Armstrong Clegg, Anthony John Killick, and Rex Adams, *Trade Union Officers: A Study of Full-Time Officers, Branch Secretaries and Shop Stewards* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1961).

[16] Clegg, *An Autobiography*, p. 48, p. 47 and p. 51.

[17] This discussion is a condensed version of Peter Ackers, 'Game Changer: Hugh Clegg's Role in Drafting the 1968 Donovan Report and Defining the British Industrial Relations Policy-Problem', in *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations* 35 (2014), pp. 63–88, with overlapping passages.

'white heat of technology' and modernise British industry. A new tripartite architecture was to manage the economy, formalising Britain's long-standing but *ad hoc* corporatist tradition.[18] The Ministry of Labour expanded its role of encouraging collective bargaining and mediating in industrial disputes. The previous Conservative government had belatedly created a tripartite National Economic Development Council (NEDC) in 1963. To these Labour added a Department of Economic Affairs, headed by the former trade union officer, George Brown, thus separating economic planning from the Treasury; and a National Board for Prices and Incomes (NBPI), as a new research and policy forum to monitor and support Incomes Policy.[19] Unions and employers were expected to rise to the challenge. The TUC, already well-established as a state policy actor, formed an Incomes Policy Committee for its new enhanced role, while British employers finally unified in 1965 as the CBI. With the national IR institutions in place, Donovan turned to the workplace.

In a December 1964 'Declaration of Intent', the TUC and CBI had supported in general terms Labour's plan to increase productivity and growth. The NEDC was to monitor the movement of prices and incomes, while the NBPI was to examine specific cases and advise on their impact on the national interest. Oxford was deeply involved in the latter, with Clegg as a board member and Flanders as IR advisor; a division of labour echoed at Donovan. The NBPI elaborated on the inquiry method by using multi-disciplinary working parties, conducting its own research and championing formal, written productivity agreements, negotiated in the workplace.[20] The Donovan Commission was appointed by Ray Gunter, the Minister of Labour, on 8 April 1965.[21] The 11 members were led by Lord Donovan, a judge, and included Sir George Pollock, former director of the British Employers' Confederation (about to merge into the CBI); George Woodcock, head of the TUC; and two academics associated with the Oxford school, Clegg and Otto Kahn-Freund. Clegg secured the

[18] See Leo Panitch, *Social Democracy and Industrial Militancy: The Labour Party and Incomes Policy 1945–1974* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

[19] Hugh Armstrong Clegg, *How To Run an Incomes Policy and Why We Made Such a Mess of the Last One* (London: Heinemann, 1971).

[20] See Allan Flanders, 'Collective Bargaining: Prescriptions for Change' (originally published 1967) in Allan Flanders (ed), *Management and Unions: the Theory and Reform of Industrial Relations* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), pp. 194–195.

[21] See Peter Jenkins, *The Battle of Downing Street* (London: Charles Knight, 1970), pp. 11–25.

appointment of his former PhD student, Bill McCarthy, as research director, thereby controlling the flow of research evidence. Of the 11 research papers published by Donovan, only two were not authored by Oxford-based researchers.[22] The Commission's brief was wide:

'to consider relations between managements and employees and the role of trade unions and employers associations in promoting the interests of their members and in accelerating the social and economic advance of the nation, and with particular reference to the Law affecting the activities of these bodies'.[23]

The 1968 Donovan Report was notable for the clarity of both its analysis and prescription for change. The *formal system* of national collective bargaining that had served Britain so well between the wars during a period of high unemployment was no longer regulating wages and conditions. An *informal system* of workplace bargaining had developed within the formal system, largely unacknowledged by national union officers and employers' associations. In well-organised manufacturing and especially engineering, informal bargaining between local managers and lay union representatives or shop stewards had far more influence on the real wages and conditions of workers than national agreements, which merely set the minimum standards followed in small, more marginal workplaces. However, the informal system was chaotic and unprofessional, often no more than crude haggling. This led to opportunist unofficial strikes by small groups of workers that disrupted the lives of many others; restrictive practices like the payment of systematic overtime to merely raise wages; and a messy and competitive 'wages drift' that made orderly Incomes Policy impossible and further fed both inflation and strike action.

In short, the British IR problem was *institutional* at its roots, not a manifestation of underlying class conflict, as IR Radicals would later suggest.[24] Donovan rejected, as unrealistic, proposals to return to orderly centralised bargaining or to use the law to tackle strikes and restrictive

[22] *Donovan Report*, p. 337.

[23] *Donovan Report*, p. 1.

[24] See Peter Ackers, 'Rethinking the Employment Relationship: A Neo-Pluralist Critique of British Industrial Relations Orthodoxy', in *International Review of Human Resource Management* 25:17–18 (October 2014), pp. 2608–2625; for the radical view, see John H. Goldthorpe, 'Industrial Relations in Great Britain: A Critique of Reformism', in T. Clarke, and L. Clements (eds), *Trade Unions under Capitalism* (Glasgow: Fontana, 1977), originally published in 1974; and Alan Fox, *Beyond Contract: Work, Power and Trust Relations* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974).

practices. Instead, the report argued that management should lead a voluntary reform of workplace IR by 'formalising the informal' and regaining control of wages and working practices through productivity bargaining. Unions were allocated a lesser responsibility of recognising and training the new cadre of shop stewards who had now developed extensive bargaining roles. The state's part was to encourage voluntary reform and best practice through a new Commission on IR (CIR). In an ideal Fawley future, company collective bargaining would become formal and ordered, restricting the scope of unofficial strikes, unproductive working practices and strange pay anomalies. Professional managers would conduct integrative bargaining with moderate, well-trained workplace union representatives. The outcome would be well-paid, high-productivity workers and stable, constructive IR.

Donovan was the first serious British public policy attempt to address the problem of managing strong but highly fragmented trade unions under full employment. The Oxford School programme is best seen as a key element of a broader attempt to *institutionalise* British social democracy along what we now think of as continental, north European lines, through a joined-up strategy of macro-economic Incomes Policy and micro-economic Productivity Bargaining. Together, these state and workplace strategies would address the national 'IR problem', stabilise IR and create more productive workplaces of secure, well-paid, unionised workers capable of funding an extensive welfare system. Donovan brought together the leaders of three key *economic elites*: employers in the CBI; trade unions in the TUC; and the most influential academic social democratic IR thinkers of the era, Hugh Clegg, Allan Flanders and Otto Kahn-Freund. Together, they grappled with the underlying problem of how to reconcile strong, free trade unions with a successful capitalist economy. They met in the midst of a strike wave and economic crisis; yet at a moment when a stable social democratic solution still seemed possible.

Donovan reported in June 1968. By then Barbara Castle had replaced Ray Gunter at the Ministry of Labour, now renamed the Department of Employment and Productivity and given responsibility for Incomes Policy. There was a national atmosphere of economic crisis accompanied by high-profile unofficial strikes and the 1969 *In Place of Strife* white paper was an attempt at quick, dynamic state intervention. Even though the threatened legal penalties are best remembered, Oxford's Bill McCarthy drafted Labour's policy incorporating the central Donovan proposals to reform

workplace bargaining, including the CIR. Likewise, even Edward Heath's Conservative 1971 Industrial Relations Act, with its more comprehensive legal framework to control unofficial strikes and reinforced CIR, carried forward Donovan's corporatist message about the voluntary reform of workplace bargaining to create a more ordered and productive IR system. Labour's 1974 Social Contract shifted the focus to Incomes Policy and national tripartite relations, but, in the long run, the success of workplace bargaining reform was central to the future of corporatism. All these IR reform programmes failed in the face of union opposition. The 1977 Bullock Report on Industrial Democracy was one last futile attempt to foster state–management–union partnership by a reform of company boards.[25]

The Road to Thatcherism: Why did Industrial Relations Reform Fail?

After 1979, Thatcherism abandoned corporatist policies, such as Incomes Policy and Productivity Bargaining, in favour of free market economic solutions, leading to massive deindustrialisation and an increasingly casualised, flexible labour force. Thus, Clegg and Flanders' proposal for the state-assisted, voluntary reform of collective bargaining remained the last chance for a union-centred solution to the British national economic crisis. Now, with hindsight, we can see that corporatism had to be made to work because, for all the talk of Marxian 'Socialist' alternatives' at the time, this was the only coordinated capitalist alternative to neo-liberalism. As social democracy or 'socialism waned, free market ideas waxed' to fill the economic policy vacuum.[26] Clegg himself never seemed to fully grasp why and how Donovan had failed. One obvious explanation is the parlous state of the 1960s British economy, coupled with the rising expectation of affluence, which made corporatist compromise hard to reach.[27] However, I would suggest three other tentative and partial explanations more closely related to the programme of Donovan itself.

[25] Department of Trade, Report of the Committee of Inquiry on Industrial Democracy, *Bullock Report*, London: HMSO, 1977, Cmnd. 6706.

[26] Harrison, *Finding a Role*, p. 522.

[27] Richard Whiting, 'Affluence and Industrial Relations in Post-War Britain', in *Contemporary British History* 22:4 (December 2008), pp. 519–536.

1. *Political impatience with the slow, voluntary IR reform?*

The Donovan solution of gradual voluntary reform of collective bargaining from below was too little, too late for politicians and the general public. 'Unofficial strikes … were a limited and subsidiary problem', for Flanders, in pursuit of a long view, composed of 'fundamental and universal problems to be solved', of 'causes' not 'symptoms'.[28] But political time runs much faster than this and to a politician, Donovan was a 'blueprint for inaction'.[29] Law, by contrast, was a way to speed up IR change. Yet this reality of democratic politics was not the only obstacle. Many of the Donovan policies for the expansion and reform of bargaining were actually implemented by management, especially in manufacturing, without creating the partnership and productivity hoped for.[30] Clegg[31] later argued, 'the Achilles Heel of the whole thing was incomes policy', a strange chicken-and-egg claim, since the reform of workplace bargaining was precisely designed to make Incomes Policy work, with unions central to both; and it is hard to see how coordinated capitalism could ever work without some national wages framework.[32]

2. *Too few social democrats?*

In later years, Flanders stressed the failure of union leadership and this needs to be understood in broader ideological terms.[33] In the first place, it now seems obvious that partnership and productivity required union leaders to be actively committed to those goals at all levels—as in, for instance, West Germany or Sweden. By contrast, Labour's social democratic reforms coincided with a lurch to the left in the leadership of major industrial unions like the Engineers and the Transport and General Workers. Key

[28] Flanders, *Collective Bargaining*, p. 156.

[29] The Conservative politician, Ian McLeod, quoted in Jenkins, *The Battle of Downing Street*, p. 24, for whom, p. 22, three years had already been 'too long', and 'Donovan's emphasis on the evolutionary reform of workplace ran counter to the public mood'; Paul Smith, *From Donovan to Neo-Liberalism*', p. 127, says 'two years too late'.

[30] See Ackers, *The Changing Systems* for further discussion.

[31] Harrison, *Interview with Hugh Clegg*, p. 12.

[32] As Clegg had long advocated: see Peter Ackers, 'Free collective bargaining and incomes policy: learning from Barbara Wootton and Hugh Clegg on post-war British Industrial Relations and wage inequality', in *Industrial Relations Journal* 47:5–6 (November 2016)

[33] Kelly, *Ethical Socialism,* pp. 138–140.

leaders like Hugh Scanlon and Jack Jones supported militant free collective bargaining during the 1960s (their views moderated in the 1970s). Clegg and Flanders, pessimistic about the ability of unions to reform, avoided this crucial obstacle by allocating the responsibility for change to management, as if they alone could move a heavily unionised workforce at will. To current eyes, there is something ironic about expecting management to become the main architects of a new social democratic industrial order. In that sense, the British labour movement must take primary historical responsibility for its own failure of vision.

Arguably, Clegg[34] in particular was too loyal to the unions—'the more anti-intellectual element of the movement'—for their own long-term good. At the same time, however, Oxford IR had established a unique position in the labour movement polity, which meant that Clegg and Flanders came closest to addressing this central social democratic problem. As he explained:

'Labour Party intellectuals and the trade-union leaders didn't really get on, because from the trade unions' point of view, these intellectuals were full of wild and woolly ideas, like, for example, incomes policy … And they were extremely pleased to come across people who were willing to apply their techniques and rationality … to trade union problems with some knowledge of the problems. You see, people who knew what a shop steward was, and how a shop steward worked, who knew how wages behaved, who knew what a piece-work system was … Previously most intellectuals had discussed trade-union problems from a position of extreme ignorance, and assuming that because they were intellectuals they could deal with these problems without actually informing themselves. I think that's fair. And the difference with our group was that we tried to inform ourselves'.

This suggests a larger problem with the ideology of post-war British Labour and trade union leaders: there were too few real social democrats, as these are understood in continental terms. Allan Flanders was just such a model social democrat, linking industrial and political positions, but it is hard to find many others. Instead, the labour movement often seemed divided between social Liberals and romantic Socialists, with a small but industrially influential Marxist wing. Despite Barbara Castle's bold attempt at IR reform, Labour's Bevanite Left or their Bennite successors still talked vaguely about some finer 'Socialist' solution and lifted their eyes from

[34] Harrison, *Interview with Hugh Clegg*, pp. 12–13.

making social democracy work. The explicitly 'social democratic' wing of Hugh Gaitskell, Roy Jenkins and others seems to have had little interest in the *politics of production*, focusing instead on Keynesian demand management, welfare and civil rights. Thus Anthony Crosland's famous 1956 statement, *The Future of Socialism*, has little to say on social democracy as a system of coordinated capitalism and borrows its IR analysis almost entirely from Clegg.[35]

Equally, British trade union leaders tended to be either moderate or militant free collective bargainers.[36] The former often resembled their American 'business union' cousins. In the latter case, the rhetoric of the small Communist Party and larger 'broad left' sweetened the acquisitive pill with homilies about the inequities of capitalism and the prospects of a socialist planned economy sometime in the future totally detached from the present. As we now know—and as Clegg and Flanders saw at the time—the 'Socialist alternative' was pie in the sky. But that did not prevent it from becoming a powerful *obstacle* to social democratic reform within the trade union movement. For 'Socialism tomorrow' provided a powerful rhetoric for legitimising economic militancy, drawing on the liberal-market reflexes of British union members and mobilising these against difficult social democratic compromises on Incomes Policy or workplace productivity. On the other hand, while there were plenty of moderate, pragmatic British political and union leaders—probably more than in most countries—too few had the stature and vision to drive through a lasting social democratic industrial settlement.

3. *The sectional, factional character of British trade unions?*

But this takes us back to path dependency and the complex sectional and factional character of the British unions that made them hard to lead anywhere, even where the social democratic will existed. Unlike the tidy industrial union structures of some countries that facilitated disciplined leadership, British manufacturing unions were characterised by a craft and general union complexity at industry and workplace level that almost defies description. As Donovan recognised, workplace bargaining had

[35] Anthony Crosland, *The Future of Socialism*, with foreword by Gordon Brown (London: Constable and Robinson, 2006), originally published in 1956 by Jonathan Cape.

[36] See Richard Hyman, *Understanding European Unionism: Between Market, Class and Society* (London: Sage, 2001).

further detached shop stewards from national union control, while failing to reduce the problem of demarcation disputes. It was a lot to ask of management-led productivity bargaining to overcome these problems of union structure. In short, the TUC's unitary façade belied rampant occupational sectionalism overlaid with political factionalism; and the latter made the former much harder to solve. Contrary to their international image as a unified movement, British unions were deeply divided politically. Social democratic union leadership required ideological cohesion, discipline and solidarity at all levels, from the workplace to the state, while balancing short-term and long-term economic goals. One of the joys of the simple 'economic' trade unionism practiced by the militant opponents of corporatism was that it entailed none of these subtleties. Only a strong and united social democratic union leadership could hope to succeed.

The flaws in the Donovan plan are now only too apparent. In retrospect, the bargaining reform element of the Oxford school IR solution *was tried* and given a decade or more to succeed.[37] In the end, the policy failed because it made the false assumption that British IR could be stabilised and modernised without a major reform of trade union practice and ideology, supported by appropriate legal reforms. Excessive voluntarism was one weakness of British IR pluralism but so too was a failure to directly address the 'trade union problem' or to take seriously forms of workplace participation and consultation other than collective bargaining.[38]

Conclusion

'However, if the term "Oxford School of Industrial Relations" is taken to denote a group of scholars who thought that they had diagnosed the major defects of the British system of industrial relations and that they could design a programme of action to correct them, there is today no such school. There once was such a school, and there was a moment when

[37] Smith, *From Donovan to Neo-Liberalism*, p. 135: 'By the late 1970s the Donovan programme for the reform of industrial relations was all but complete'; this is a partial reading, since Clegg and Flanders' social democratic model was about more than just reform of bargaining structures and was predicated on behavioural changes at national and workplace levels.

[38] See Ackers, *Industrial Democracy as Collective Bargaining*; and 'Trade Unions as Professional Associations', in Stewart Johnstone and Peter Ackers (eds), *Finding a Voice at Work? New Perspectives on Employment Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 95–126.

it appeared that there would be an opportunity for its ideas to be proved right or wrong. But the opportunity was snatched away; and since then the world has moved on'.[39]

During the 1980s, Thatcherism engineered the rapid transition of Britain from coordinated to liberal market capitalism (taking both as over-simplified ideal types). The dust has settled and we can now see Labour's 1960s corporatist experiment and its crucial Donovan component as a suppressed historical alternative: a serious if belated post-war attempt at the social democratic reconstruction of Britain's IR and manufacturing economy. We can see also the consequences of its failure for organised labour.[40] Today, British trade unions influence a minority of workplaces, mainly in the public sector; and manufacturing accounts for less than 10 per cent of employment. Back in 1965, Clegg and his Oxford colleagues could not envisage this labour future-world, but they did foresee the social and economic dangers posed by strikes, restrictive practices and inflation in a failing manufacturing economy.

Current British IR academics look enviously towards continental northern Europe, seeing a coordinated variety of capitalism, with organised labour influencing state and workplace policies.[41] In this 'social model', competitiveness arises not from buying labour in the cheapest external market; but by investing in well-paid, highly committed and productive employees. Unionised workforces form partnerships with management to enhance productivity and competitiveness. For the labour movement, social democracy is about more than social welfare; it is also a productive model. National versions vary but, in broad terms, this was the Oxford vision for British IR. In Britain, however, 'social democracy' has more often been about consumption, especially the consumption of public goods like health, education and social care, as in Crosland's writings or the policies of Gordon Brown's last Labour Government. Here redistributive taxation simply skims private sector surplus, leaving the productive world as *terra incognita*. As Clegg argued, few Labour politicians of the

[39] Clegg, *The Oxford School*, p. 7.

[40] See Trevor Colling and Michael Terry, *Industrial Relations: Theory and Practice* (London: Wiley, 2010); and Peter Ackers, 'The Warwick School of Industrial Relations', in *Work, Employment and Society* 26:5 (2012), pp. 879–882.

[41] Hall and Soskice, *Varieties of Capitalism*; and see Colin Crouch, 'British Industrial Relations: Between Security and Flexibility', in Trevor Colling and Michael Terry (eds), *Industrial Relations: Theory and Practice* (London: Wiley, 2010), pp. 29–53.

post-war period knew much about the productive (or unproductive) IR heart of the British economy.

In the long run, the viability of British social democracy depended on a successful *politics of production*, which gave a necessary, positive role to organised labour and was a long-term prerequisite for good, stable wages and a well-funded welfare state. Clegg and Flanders' project was not just to 'stop strikes', but to raise the 'status' of labour and replace crude shop floor haggling over wages and conditions with 'joint regulation' by management and unions. Perkin has noted the failure of British industry to 'professionalise' industrial labour in the way that had been successfully achieved in West Germany, Japan or Scandinavia.[42] Thus, the central problem for British IR was not excessive incorporation of the trade union bureaucracy, as suggested by Radicals, but precisely the opposite. If strong trade unions were to thrive in a competitive economy, effective forms of IR regulation needed to be established. Wartime victory and national cohesion allowed Britain to postpone dealing with the central post-war problem of how to integrate strong unions into a competitive, full employment economy, capable of supporting a large welfare state. Donovan was a belated attempt to address this issue. However, British trade unions were never successfully incorporated in the post-war period. Nor were they able to exercise central discipline over the sectional economic militancy of the 'unofficial' workgroup. The price of this failure was Thatcherism.

How far this social democratic policy failure was the product of a genuine social movement from below is a matter of historical interpretation. For Oxford school IR pluralists, unofficial strikes, restrictive practices and inflation were anomic, accidental disorders, arising from weak national institutions.[43] Clegg was a liberal-pluralist, suspicious of state-socialism, who favoured voluntary civil society solutions. Yet he sensed that some variety of bargained corporatism was essential to avert IR chaos and, ultimately, the demise of both trade unions and social democracy.[44] Hence other comparable countries found (partial) solutions to these problems. Indeed, Clegg's historical writing traced tensions between British union

[42] Harold Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society: England since 1880* (London: Routledge, 1989).

[43] Allan Flanders and Alan Fox, 'Collective Bargaining: From Donovan to Durkheim', in *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 7:2 (July 1969), pp. 151–180.

[44] See Peter Ackers and Alastair J. Reid (eds), *Alternatives to State-Socialism in Britain: Other Worlds of Labour in the Twentieth Century* (London: Palgrave, 2016), especially the introduction.

leaders conducting national bargaining with employers and the state on the one hand, and union workplace groups on the other, right back to the end of the nineteenth century. These tensions became particularly strong during periods of full employment and tripartitism, like the First World War, when a 'shop steward movement' briefly arose.[45] In his reading, a small minority of Socialist militants exploited this real IR tension: first as Syndicalists and then as Communists.

By contrast, some Marxist historians see the breakdown of post-war British IR as a fairly straightforward instance of a working class social movement against employers and the corporatist state. Bert Ramelson, the influential Communist Party Industrial Organiser, from 1965 to 1977, fought a long war against social democratic IR policies, such as Incomes Policy and Productivity Bargaining.[46] Communists and their 'broad left' allies championed wages militancy and won union positions that helped them to weaken social democratic solutions, using the persuasive rhetoric of 'free collective bargaining'. However, the British Communist Party remained tiny and without electoral influence. To pluralist eyes, this was evidence of an effective faction at work within the unions, facilitated by declining membership participation, rather than a social movement. These leaders asked little of their followers other than to support as high a pay claim as possible. Yet, at times, they managed to mobilise large numbers against IR reform. Even if this was a social movement, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that by blocking social democratic reform, the ostensible 'movement from below' paved the way for neo-liberalism. 'If the quest for modernity had succeeded there would have been no need for the radical alternative of Thatcherism, but it failed'.[47] That is the moral of this story.

So we reach a tentative alternative answer to the four counterfactual questions, posed above:-

1. Yes, British trade unions contributed towards their own long-term destruction and a more far-sighted social democratic leadership might have achieved the necessary reforms, overcoming problems of union structure.

[45] Hugh Armstrong Clegg, Alan Fox and A.F. Thompson, *A History of British Trade Unions since 1889, vol. 1: 1889–1910*, and Hugh Armstrong Clegg, *vol 2: 1911–1933* and *Vol 3: 1934–1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964, 1985, 1994).

[46] Seifert and Sibley, *Revolutionary Communist at Work*.

[47] Paul Addison, *No Turning Back: The Peacetime Revolutions of Post-War Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 135.

2. Yes, social democracy could have been made to work in Britain, as elsewhere in northern Europe, though this needed more than purely voluntary IR reform.
3. Yes, the Communist Party and the oppositional trade union 'broad left' paved the way for Thatcherism by ensuring that British coordinated capitalism could not be made to work and by fostering an illusory 'Socialist' labour movement political alternative.
4. Yes, there was a suppressed historical opportunity, but, no, this did not lie in the 1940s when the failures of British IR were not yet evident, but in the 1960s when they clearly were.

Social Movements and the Change of Industrial Elites: A European Approach

Marcel Boldorf

Initial Situation: Occupation and Collaboration

The Second World War was waged with relentless brutality across most of Europe. Innumerable military and civilian war crimes were committed, including the extermination and annihilation of large sections of the population. Almost all of these crimes invariably resulted from the German policy of occupation, which in most cases was supported by the local administrative and industrial elites. This complex, a prerequisite for the formation of social movements and the change of industrial elites during the post-war years, requires closer examination.

When the power of National Socialist Germany reached its zenith in 1942/1943, the *Wehrmacht* had conquered vast territories that bordered the Reich on every side. The cases of France, Belgium and The Netherlands in Western Europe, Denmark, Norway and Finland in Northern Europe and Czechoslovakia and the Ukraine in Eastern Europe have been looked at in this book. Werner Best, an NS ideologist,

M. Boldorf (✉)
Université Lyon 2, Lyon, France

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devised a typology of the occupying regime which divided the administration into four categories[1]: (a) alliance administration, characterised by a policy of diplomatic representation; (b) supervisory administration, where the local administrations were closely controlled by the occupier; (c) governmental administration, where the key administrative activities were carried out by direct order of the occupying power; and (d) colonial administration, where the occupied territory and population were oppressed in such a way that participation in the administration was impossible.

Denmark was the only state in which the German occupation was represented by a single authorised representative of the Reich, who avoided any sort of radical intervention in the legal and administrative systems already in place, allowing the first category of alliance administration to prevail. The countries in Western and Northern Europe, including France, Belgium, the *Reichskommissariat Niederlande* (Reich Commissariat for the Occupied Dutch Territories) and Norway fell under the category of supervisory administration, according to Best. The representatives of the *Führungsvolk* (leading nation) were to control and monitor the respective administration using local experts.[2] This method of rule left no room to doubt the supremacy of the NS regime because the obligation of local administrations to follow directives issued by the occupiers was clearly stated. These countries continued as formally independent states with their own administrations.[3] However, only France was granted the right to have its own government, which became known as the Vichy Regime. The Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was an example of the third category, governmental administration. Strategically important positions were gradually filled by immigrant Germans or by members of the North Bohemian group of Sudeten Germans after the Czechs had been forcibly

[1] Werner Best, 'Großraumordnung und Großraumverwaltung', in *Zeitschrift für Politik* 32 (1942), pp. 406–412; see also C.J. Child, 'The Concept of the New Order', in Arnold & Veronica M. Toynbee (eds.), *Hitler's Europe* (London: Oxford UP, 1954), p. 53.

[2] Quoted by: Werner Röhr, 'System oder organisiertes Chaos? Fragen einer Typologie der deutschen Okkupationsregime im Zweiten Weltkrieg', in Robert Bohn (ed), *Die deutsche Herrschaft in den "germanischen" Ländern 1940–1945* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1997), p. 14.

[3] Johannes Bähr and Ralf Banken, 'Ausbeutung durch Recht? Einleitende Bemerkungen zum Einsatz des Wirtschaftsrechts in der deutschen Besatzungspolitik 1939–1945', in Johannes Bähr and Ralf Banken (eds), *Das Europa des "Dritten Reichs". Recht, Wirtschaft, Besatzung* (Frankfurt/Main: Klostermann, 2005), pp. 5–6.

removed. This process in the business sector can also be interpreted as part of a Germanisation strategy.[4]

All of the countries mentioned and, to a certain extent, the Protectorate, are ascribed an occupation administration based on the basic western model in the literature. In this case, the waiver of a model of society based on ideology can be seen as a prerequisite to successfully establishing a collaboration.[5] Despite a certain amount of room for manoeuvre that resulted from cooperating with the occupiers, the local administrations had very little real opportunity to influence basic questions of economic order.

It is possible to differentiate between this western type of occupation and an eastern type, which largely corresponds to the colonial administration described by Best. The racist ideology of National Socialism did not allow the retention of independent forms of administration in Central Eastern and Eastern Europe. The ideological will to reshape referred to the social system as a whole, and the example given in this book of the Donbass in the Reich Commissariat Ukraine perfectly illustrates this point. Severe measures of control and destruction were implemented to enslave the occupied territories, prohibiting the involvement of local leaders in the administration. As already pointed out, the imposition of this type of strict regime was hardly feasible in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia because of its industrial structure.[6]

An approach based on nation was chosen for the contributions to this book. This represents, to a certain extent, a continuity of the nationalist logic of racist NS ideology. The NS regime segregated demographic groups using national, ethnic and racist criteria, which in many cases led to a collapse of social structures. For this reason, the political and economic reconstruction that was necessary after the war can be described as a process of nation building. The industrial elites had to toe the line in this process, just like the social movements that were striving for grassroots

[4] Harald Wixforth, 'The Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia under German Control, 1939–1944', in Marcel Boldorf and Tetsuji Okazaki (eds), *Economies under Occupation. The Hegemony of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan in World War II* (forthcoming, Routledge, 2015).

[5] Bähr and Banken, *Ausbeutung durch Recht*, p. 6; referring to Robert Bohn, 'Deutsche Wirtschaftsinteressen und Wirtschaftslenkung im "Reichskommissariat" Norwegen', in Johannes Bähr and Ralf Banken (eds), *Das Europa des "Dritten Reichs". Recht, Wirtschaft, Besatzung* (Frankfurt/Main: Klostermann, 2005), pp. 105–122.

[6] See the chapter by Balcar and Kučera in this book.

social reform. A twofold break occurred in many cases: first of all with National Socialism or fascism, perhaps as a result of the occupation, but also with the pre-war political system.

For this reason, many states in Europe, including countries that were not occupied by Germany, experienced a process of reconstruction and reform of the nation itself after the war. The debate about the pre-war regimes played a particularly important role in the deeply divided French and Italian nations that were facing the threat of civil war. A straightforward return to the *status quo ante* was not really supported by any section of society. Even countries like Spain, which did not break with fascism because the fascists had come out of the civil war victorious, recognised that national reconstruction was necessary.

The formation of social movements after the war can be understood by examining the reconstruction of civil social conditions. As is generally typical of the way social movements see themselves, the difficulties of the post-war period were perceived as a universal problem: the movements were united, first and foremost, by anti-fascism and by the will to remove all traces of the NS regime. Within this context, the industrial elites were often perceived to be responsible for the war, which led to calls for the removal and demotion of industrialists and top management. The central focus of the investigations in this book was to find out to what extent the change of industrial elites became a specific aim within the social movements.

The Formation of Social Movements

It has been shown in the different contributions to this book that the methods used during the purges of the industrial elites after 1945 are linked to the set-up of the occupation. The social movements grew out of different situations: in countries such as France and Italy, and in Germany to a certain extent, they evolved from the struggle against fascism and National Socialism. The resistance movements in both Romance countries carried particular weight because they were armed and had played an active part in the liberation of both nations. As a result, the political left developed a considerable degree of influence that was partially in conflict with middle-class circles, e.g. the former exile government of General Charles de Gaulle in France. A number of powerful social movements grew out of this conflict situation; however, the social movements in regions where the resistance movement had been less active were of lesser

importance. These observations apply not only at a national level, but at a regional level also in all of the countries covered. As the new social movements grew, the old labour movement, especially the trade unions, re-established itself, but a will to push through radical political reform was generally wanting.

Based on the initial premise that the post-war situation was closely linked to the conflicts of the war years, two standard models are introduced below: a conflict model and a consensus model. The term 'conflict model' is used for case studies with powerful social movements, the term 'consensus model' for case studies where social movements were underdeveloped or lacking. The latter certainly did not rule out the establishment of a left-wing post-war regime. This is followed by a description of a third, a socialist model, and of the divided Germany that featured elements of all three models.

The Conflict Model

An important common feature of the countries occupied by Germany during World War II, especially countries in southern Europe, was the deep division between supporters and opponents of National Socialism in post-war society, which threatened the overall stability of these countries. Leading examples of this process would be countries such as France and Italy, of which only the first could be examined in this book. Moreover, Yugoslavia and Greece could have been included in this book because groups of partisans in both countries persecuted collaborators and carried out wild acts of arbitrary justice.[7]

The sharp contrast between post-war governments and regimes that collaborated during the war is clearly expressed by the use of the term National Liberation Committee. In France, it was the *Comité français de la Libération nationale* (CFLN), which was established in June 1943 in Algeria, and in Italy the *Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale*, which operated as the provisional government from 1943 onwards in the fight against the last bastion of fascism, the *Repubblica Sociale Italiana*. In both coun-

[7] Ekkehard Völkl, 'Abrechnungsfuror in Kroatien', in Klaus-Dieter Henke and Hans Woller (eds), *Politische Säuberung in Europa. Die Abrechnung mit Faschismus und Kollaboration nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Munich: dtv, 1991), p. 371 [pp. 358–94]; Žarko Lazarević : 'The Replacement of Economic Elites in Slovenia after World War II', in *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte/ Economic History Yearbook* 2 (2010), pp. 147–164.

tries, the process of political reformation was mainly under the control of these two National Liberation Governments. The political cleansing process was organised under circumstances that were dominated by the polarisation of society into two irreconcilable camps. In France, for example, there was the threat of civil war–like conditions between the Gaullists, i.e. the exile government of the war years, and the Pétainists, supporters of the Vichy regime. There had also been a strong partisan movement in Italy and the country was deeply divided. In general, those who had been persecuted and disenfranchised under fascism and National Socialism, namely the socialists, communists and trade unionists, experienced a new lease of political life during this period.

The discernible deep division was mostly caused by actions taken by the counter governments: in the case of France, the CFLN, under Charles De Gaulle, developed ideas about the liberation of France which were to be organised and implemented by the *Comités de Libération nationale*. After the subsequent liberation, a law from 26 August 1944 defined a so-called *indignité nationale* (national unworthiness), which could in turn lead to a *dégradation nationale* (national stripping of rank).[8] This legitimised the establishment of *comités interprofessionnels d'épuration* (vocational purge committees), which were concerned with the professional sanctioning of collaborators. In France, open criticism of the business community was voiced in October 1944 at the latest, when De Gaulle publicly criticised their collaborative behaviour.[9]

A temporary power vacuum was an important requirement for the development of a social movement that opposed industrialists and strove to take over factories. The commissions referred to were meant to be used as instruments by the new leadership, but they were also a potential environment for left-wing activity. Given the weapons of the *Résistance,* more radical aims were also enforceable. Factory occupations as a result of this power vacuum only occurred in certain regions of France. The *Comités de gestion,* set up at the beginning of 1945, were workers' committees that spontaneously seized power in a number of factories, e.g. in the Marseilles region and in the Allier department. They symbolised workers' power in the factories, familiar from the traditional labour movement, but they were short-lived organisations. They were soon absorbed into the *Comités*

[8] Henry Rousso, 'L'Épuration en France. Une histoire inachevée', in *Vingtième siècle* 33 (1992), p. 87 [pp. 78–105].

[9] See the chapter by Vigna in this book.

d'entreprise, where trade union representatives formally cooperated with company management.

Developments in Italy were similar to those in France in many ways: the *Resistenza* was armed and grew from a united left, which had come together to fight fascism. The demand for the self-organisation of workers was high on the political agenda. In the former fascist republic in Northern Italy, it was possible to fall back on the *Consigli di gestione*, which had been established by the fascists. Striking examples of this sort of workers' council existed in the engineering factory in Ivrea, Fiat in Turin and Alfa Romeo in Milan, some of them even managing to survive up to the late 1940s.[10] Because they were linked to the corporate tradition of fascism, the *Consigli di gestione* had a special structure from the very beginning with their inclusion of engineers and executive staff members. In general, they were very similar to the French *Comités d'entreprise*, which superseded the first wave of revolutionary uprising in the neighbouring country.

The three involved groups—employers, trade unions and industrial workers—interacted in this period of reorganisation. Most of the industrial employers tried to divert attention from their involvement in the past regime. In Italy, the attitude towards fascism was crucial but also towards the German occupier after 1943. In France, the debate on collaboration was dominating. On the opposite side, the working class was segmented: some of the workers were involved into the Resistance movement, others came back from war captivity, others had tried to come to terms with the political conditions under fascism and occupation. Most of them took care of their families and struggled for surviving in the post-war distress. The trade unions tried to play an intermediate role by trying to avoid strikes as can be seen in France 1946 and 1947.[11] In the vacuum of power within these diverging interests, the grassroots movements emerged.

The fact that these sort of movements did not come about in other parts of Europe can be examined using counterfactual argument. The situation in other occupied countries differed greatly from that in France and Italy. In Belgium, the resistance movement was quickly disarmed and the government took additional measures so that it would not become a power factor in the post-war period. There was no comparable movement

[10] Ferruccio Ricciardi, 'L'échec de la démocratie industrielle dans l'Italie d'après-guerre: l'expérience du "conseil de gestion" chez Alfa Romeo, 1945–1951', in *Histoire, Economie & Société* 26 (2007), p. 127.

[11] See the chapter by Vigna in this book.

in the Netherlands because the resistance movement did not have a tight organisational structure. Because social conflicts occurred in both countries, e.g. in the form of strikes, they can be placed in the transitional area between the conflict model and the consensus model, which is epitomised by the countries in Northern Europe.

The Consensus Model

The widely differing concepts of occupation and administration in the four Scandinavian countries ranged from the occupied Reich Commissariat Norway where the *Nasional Samling,* a strong pro-Nazi collaborating party governed, to the comparatively lax occupation in Denmark, and from the specific and problematic situation in Finland between national autonomy with regard to the Soviet Union and dependence on the NS regime to neutral Sweden, which did not experience occupation. Nevertheless, the similarities between the Scandinavian countries were stronger than the differences, as shown below. They are particularly representative of the second typological category to be presented, the consensus model.

Communist parties were set up in the Nordic countries during and after the First World War (Finland 1917, Denmark 1919, Sweden 1917/1921, Norway 1921) but they remained weak.[12] In the case of Finland, the party was in a somewhat complicated position because of its geographical closeness to and intertwined history with the Soviet Union. After the civil war in Finland (1917/1918), the ideological similarity of the party with the Soviet government in Moscow conflicted with the nationalist question. The victory of the 'Whites' and liberation from Russian rule was based on an alignment with Germany, and the process of parliamentarisation in the 1920s was also dominated by the Whites. Even 'Red Finland' did not support Soviet Bolshevism. Because of these experiences, autonomous self-organisation was always suspected of being Sovietisation. Finland was stuck between the fronts during the Cold War in the 'years of danger' (1944–1948), but it managed to keep its western parliamentary system despite pressure from the Soviet Union. The risk posed by an absorption of Soviet interests explains the absence of a basis for a grassroots resistance movement in Finland.[13]

[12] Patrick Salmon, *Scandinavia and the Great Powers, 1890–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997), pp. 227–229.

[13] See the chapters by Jensen-Eriksen and by Espeli in this book.

The perceived situation in Finland also had an effect on the other Scandinavian countries. Neighbouring Sweden especially participated in the outlined area of conflict, as can be seen in the ambivalent role played by the Swedish communists: during the Finnish-Soviet war in the winter of 1939/1940, it was the only political party in the neutral country that supported the Soviet Union. As a result, the coalition of left-wing parties formed at the same time was only tenable because of the war. Immediately after the war, a social-democratic campaign was started to remove communists from senior positions in the trade union movement.[14] The wearing down of the communists between the party membership's belief in Stalin's Soviet Union and internal Scandinavian problems led to a weakening of the party and a discrediting of its political position in the eyes of the public. The situation led to the Social Democrats remaining in power unchallenged for many years.

A summary of the different ideas expressed in this book attempts to answer the question why the Scandinavian countries chose the consensus model after 1945. Harald Espeli emphasises that the installation of a social democratic government in Norway after the war was a political innovation that could not have been envisaged before the war. A feeling of community developed and even the Norwegian communists were convinced that labour disputes should be resolved during the reconstruction period without resorting to strikes, lockouts or boycotts.[15] In Denmark, the post-war situation appeared to be less fraught with conflict because there had been no obvious split within society, even during the war years. This was due to the relatively mild form of occupation that also guaranteed a high standard of living, with the result that a significant resistance organisation did not develop.

Nevertheless, the question should be asked why there were no radical social grassroots movements calling for change in the Scandinavian countries even though there were examples of this in other countries. One effect of the different forms of occupation was that industrialists were not called to account for their actions in quite the same way as in France in October 1944, for example, when De Gaulle publicly accused them of collaboration. Despite the surfacing of occasional public and media pressure, there was no stigmatisation of industrial circles in Scandinavia compared with the Romance countries.

[14] See the chapter by Ekdahl in this book.
[15] See the chapter by Espeli in this book.

In this context, it should be noted that there were fewer industrial centres in Scandinavia than in Central Europe. Only in Norway did the state interfere in important industries, by nationalising regionally important mining companies, for example. When the German entrepreneurs withdrew at the end of the occupation, the Norwegian government seized their assets. However, the power vacuum described in France and Italy which led to the formation of social movements, never developed. Because Sweden was never occupied and remained neutral during the war years, the type of power vacuum that developed in the larger factories of other countries could not really be expected. In Finland, the Soviet-dominated Allied Control Commission ensured that there was no revolutionary development. In addition, the Finnish communist leaders were convinced that time was on their side.[16] In conclusion, it can be said that factory occupations and other forms of social conflict played no part in the social movements of the Scandinavian countries. However, in most European countries, the tendency went towards reconciliation. For the Nordic countries, this holds true from the beginning and in the Western European countries, the status of cooperation is reached within some years.

The Socialist Model

The socialist model is based on the continuation of class conflict with the industrial elite that owns the means of production. The industrialists and senior managers were not only to be punished for war crimes and for supporting the German war economy, but also kept under control in the long term by a political system dominated by the labour movement. The denouncement of 'capitalists' was used, in particular, to justify expropriations, especially in the industrial sector.

As can be seen from Czechoslovakia, commissions and works councils played an important role in the early phase of the system transformation. The works councils were an attempt at self-organisation, comparable with the antifascist commissions in western and southern European countries. Their historical development fits the pattern described above as the conflict model. At the beginning, the reformed works councils and unions brought many dissatisfied elements together. This social movement soon became part of the reconstruction of society and was involved in the communist coup in 1948. Although the works council movement had enor-

[16] See the chapter by Jensen-Eriksen in this book.

mous potential, it was incorporated into the Central Council of the Revolutionary Trade Unions, i.e. it became part of the centralised structures. It was integrated into the 'movement of national revolution' as the transformation process was officially known in Czechoslovakia. The conflict in Eastern European countries during the process of transformation was quickly pacified by the victory of the traditional labour movement. Certain requirements were prioritised because the process of national cleansing was intended to promote the restart of production rather than hamper it.[17]

There were deep conflicts underlying the socialist model, but they were quickly converted into a consensus model. The antagonistic conflict between the working and capitalist classes was permanently defused by establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat. The continuing dominance of the workers' party had a lasting and paralysing effect on social movements because their methods, e.g. strikes, were increasingly restricted.

In line with this way of thinking, the example of the Soviet Ukraine could be interpreted as the development or completion of a socialist Stalinist model. It is characterised by the complete absence of social movements that resemble the other case studies in this book. Here, too, the lines of conflict during the post-war years were based on the divisions during the collaboration: when the Red Army returned in 1944, the technical elites faced massive persecution because of their collaboration with the army of occupation during the Third Reich. Although the predominating conflicts were similar to those in other European countries, the dominance of the state party was quickly restored.

Between the Models: Germany, the Principal Aggressor

A major difference between the defeated Germany and the other case studies in this book was the presence of the Allies. In other countries, e.g. in Finland and Italy, where an Allied High Commission existed until March 1946, they were only present for a short period. In Germany, however, the Allied occupation administration specified the substance of political change and monitored its implementation by a restored German administration. The Allies considered the possibility of political continuity in Germany to be such a threat that they made a general statement about the liquidation of National Socialism and militarism with total disarmament and denazification

[17] See the chapters by Balcar and Kučera in this book

at the Yalta Conference.[18] After this declaration of intent, one would have expected a rapid process of political purging under Allied control after the takeover of governmental power.

However, a political vacuum developed as soon as the war ended. Antifascist committees were formed spontaneously in the western zones and eastern zone of Germany.[19] Factory occupations with general political demands in southern parts of Saxony and Thuringia were only a temporary manifestation, an intermezzo between the American and Soviet occupation.[20] This type of appropriation of economic and political power only lasted for a short period of time in all of the German occupation zones because they were not supported by the Allied Military Administration, the upholder of law and order. The nature of the subsequent political purges in the economy depended on the zone, and especially on the legislation of the Allied occupier. The trade unions and the public administrations began to dominate the political reorganisation by incorporating the spontaneously formed civil movements.

There was no social basis for a social movement that was striving for political and economic power. During the war, the resistance had developed to a much lesser degree than in France and Italy, for example. In fact, the workers identified themselves with their factories and, regardless of class difference, made the interests of the factory their own.[21] Even in the Soviet Occupation Zone, the works councils worked with the provisional company management, primarily to end dismantling of the factories.[22] Despite an initial situation full of conflict, consensual structures based on corporatist tradition began to reappear in Germany. In principle, this keeping with tradition can also be identified in the eastern zone, even if the state party SED successfully carried out a 'real socialist' transformation based on its absolute dominance. For instance, the reorganisation of the East German welfare state shows a particularly strong path dependency because the institutional framework established in the Bismarck era was maintained.

[18] Christoph Klessmann, *Die doppelte Staatsgründung. Deutsche Geschichte 1945–1955*, 5th edn. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht, 1991), p. 30.

[19] See the chapters by Kössler and by Boldorf in this book.

[20] Jeannette Michelmann, *Aktivisten der ersten Stunde. Die Antifa in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2002), pp. 245–265.

[21] Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte, vol. 4: Vom Beginn des Ersten Weltkriegs bis zur Gründung der beiden deutschen Staaten* (Munich: Beck, 2003), p. 964.

[22] Marcel Boldorf, *Governance in der Planwirtschaft. Industrielle Führungskräfte in der Stahl- und Textilbranche der SBZ/DDR (1945–1958)* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), p. 87.

Counterformation of the Industrial Elites

In the Sight of Justice

The judicial prosecution of the elites, insofar as it affected the restriction of property rights, can be examined taking Germany as an example, because the primary aggressor came under Allied control after its capitulation. In the occupied country of the perpetrators, the Military Administrations were the main players along with the domestic opposition forces. Using their judicial powers, the Allies regulated the political cleansing in the business sector, to varying degrees depending on the zone affected. Installed by the Allies as the highest court, the Nuremberg Tribunal was given the responsibility of prosecuting the most prominent war criminals: 42 industrialists and bankers stood shoulder to shoulder with a number of NS functionaries, all of them accused of war crimes.[23] In most cases, prison sentences were handed down, which not one of those found guilty fully served.

Some of those suspected of war crimes managed to flee from the Allies to countries in South America, for example, but there is no evidence that the industrial elites were over-represented in this group. Major industry was not strongly affected by the first unregulated Soviet prosecutions either, unless the individuals involved had also carried out an important NS function. However, there was an anomaly in the case of Germany: the industrialists and economic elite frequently fled from the East, especially from the Soviet Occupation Zone, to the western zones. This had the effect of leaving the eastern occupation zone with no representatives of top management when the judicial prosecution finally began there.[24]

There were examples of similar occurrences in other countries, especially in those included in the conflict model. In France, the *épuration judiciaire* (judicial prosecution) covered a number of large companies, which had been strongly involved in the German war economy. The car manufacturers Louis Renault and Marcel Berliet, as well as a number of other industrialists, were severely punished.[25] The calls for this type of

[23] Norbert Frei, Ralf Ahrens, Jörg Osterloh and Tim Schanetzki, *Flick. Der Konzern, die Familie, die Macht* (Munich: Blessing, 2009), p. 406.

[24] Peter Hübner, 'Durch Planung zur Improvisation. Zur Geschichte des Leitungspersonals in der staatlichen Industrie der DDR', in *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 39 (1999), p. 200.

[25] See the chapter by Vigna in this book; Dominique Barjot, 'Die politische Säuberung der französischen Wirtschaftselite nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg', in *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte/ Economic History Yearbook* 2 (2010), pp. 131–146.

cleansing and its implementation came from the *Résistance*. In Italy also, extraordinary courts were set up as a result of pressure from the Liberation Committee: however, they were politically controversial and exercised very little vigour when it came to punishing industrialists.[26] Interestingly, Belgium used military courts to try individuals accused of collaboration to prevent the membership and sympathisers of the resistance movement influencing the decisions of the court.[27] Even still, only a small number of collaborators was found guilty. In Denmark also, a judicial process was set up as a result of public pressure. The specially appointed public prosecutor was even a member of the communist party, but more than 90 per cent of the proceedings were discontinued. The small number of verdicts were insufficiently implemented because the confiscation bills for companies were rarely enforced and industrialists who were charged remained in prison for a very short period of time.

All of these examples show that the proceedings were politically tainted even when an attempt was made to have a neutral system of justice. Not only the social movements were significant, but also the counterformation of the industrialist side when it came to the dismissal of proceedings or the passing of mild sentences.

Self-Assertion of the Economic Elite

Empirical examinations and exemplary studies show a high level of personnel continuity in the boardrooms of large companies in western and northern European countries. How were changes in the boardrooms prevented and why was the top management of the war economy seldom prosecuted? To answer these questions, the counterformation of the industrial elites must be looked at. The perseverance strategies, which the compromised managers used to stay in their positions, need to be examined. Various barriers to a sweeping change of elites are looked at below.

Because of the German occupation, it was possible for the local elites to portray themselves as victims. In autobiographies, public statements or court hearings, they maintained that they had no choice when it came to working with the occupying power. The argument most frequently put forward was that they found themselves in a dilemma with no room for

[26] Hans Woller, 'Die Abrechnung mit dem Faschismus in Italien 1943 bis 1948' (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1996), pp. 296–307.

[27] See chapter by Luyten in this book.

manoeuvre. These self-serving declarations have been frequently reversed by historic research.[28] There is little evidence to suggest that collaboration was forced or that the pressure exerted by Germans on industrialists was ubiquitous. As seen, this defence strategy was used successfully after the war for acquittals, even in countries that set up their own courts for prosecuting individuals who had collaborated by working for the war economy.

The case of neutral Sweden shows that senior management in large industrial companies moved closer together during the war, without pressure from an occupying regime. The formation of a network of companies was a response to an international economic climate that was shaped by the limitations imposed by war and the international regulation of the movement of goods. It was clearly rational to enter into market-sharing agreements during a time of widespread protectionism and develop common solutions for mastering the crisis. An international tendency towards cartelisation was already evident during the interwar period. In Sweden, the interrelations established during the war also characterised the post-war years.[29]

Under the conditions of the consensus model, the situation in Norway was very similar despite the country having been occupied: the Norwegian Association of Employers successfully prevented restructuring through the Quisling regime. As a result, it could swiftly resume its activities after liberation with an untarnished public image and the same leadership. The economic logic remained much the same because the post-war government left many of the regulations from the war economy in place.

Network structures proved to be even more important in the conflict model where the political powers were strongly opposed to each other. These structures became even stronger when the companies of individual branches of industry worked together in corporate organising committees, e.g. in Vichy France. The traditional argument was also put forward that the solidarity among industrial elites was based on the years they had spent together studying at the prestigious educational institutions, the *Grandes Écoles*.[30] Long-lasting private networking structures were established

[28] Marcel Boldorf, 'Neue Wege zur Erforschung der Wirtschaftsgeschichte Europas unter nationalsozialistischer Hegemonie', in Marcel Boldorf and Christoph Buchheim (eds), *Europäische Volkswirtschaften unter deutscher Hegemonie 1938–1945* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2012), pp. 19–20.

[29] See the chapter by Ekdahl in this book.

[30] Pierre Bourdieu, *La noblesse d'État. Grandes écoles et esprit de corps* (Paris: Minuit, 1989).

around these institutions. Collaboration in Vichy at administrative level was, for example, strongly characterised by solidarity among *Polytechniciens*. This formidable and regenerated group continued to operate in the post-war years and was able to transform itself into a defence alliance against the imminent cleansing. However, it could not be taken for granted that the elites would succeed. As Vigna shows in this book, the assessment of a situation always depends on the approach taken: he assumes that the business community had been weakened because the social movements were able to develop to such a degree that they were in a position to call the business elite to account. That the purges, on the other hand, did not live up to the expectations of the social activists is a different matter.

The war economy in Italy fell into line with the fascist structures that were already in place. The network connections of the elite economic circles reached as far as the justice sector, with the result that prosecutions could be blocked and the implementation of convictions imposed prevented in the post-war years. The managers in large companies, in particular, were able to use political influence to create a protective wall around themselves. The strengthening of industrialists through the formation of social networks is also emphasised in a number of other case studies in this book, especially with regard to the reconstruction of employer associations. It is shown in the case of the Netherlands and Denmark that they possessed a great deal of power in post-war society.[31]

Resisting Nationalisation

Demands for socialisation were at the top of the political agenda in post-war Europe. As already shown, the organised labour movement only managed to implement socialisation in a very small number of cases. France was the western country in which a large number of nationalisations were carried out after 1945. It is said that this created a state hegemony over the industrial sector.[32] Energy, aircraft manufacture, transport, the automotive industry and major banks were affected. This was triggered by moral condemnation of war profiteers, which gave the nationalisation cause an enormous boost. In addition, there was a political will to drive

[31] See the chapters by van der Velden and by Oleson in this book.

[32] Guy Groux, 'France: The State, Trade Unions, and Collective Bargaining—Reform or Impasse?', in Craig Phelan (ed), *Trade Unionism since 1945: Towards a Global History, vol. 1: Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East* (Bern: Lang 2009), p. 43.

the economy forward by installing the system of planification. However, the movement towards socialisation was also strong in other countries such as Britain or Norway.

In the majority of countries examined, the industrialists managed to block nationalisation.[33] This has already been shown above in the case of Italy, where the industrialists had contacts within judicial circles, and in the case of Denmark, where the decisions reached by the special courts had practically no effect on the industrialists. The resistance to nationalisation in Finland was an integral part of the national concern to distance itself from developments in the Soviet Union after the October Revolution. In Norway, the state confiscated property, especially when the capital assets belonged to Germans. Frequent demands for planned socialism had been made in Belgium since the 1930s; however, large nationalisations and ideas on how to transform the economic system never came to fruition.

There were few calls for socialisation from within the antifascist movement in Germany after the Second World War, as had been the case in the Council Movement of 1918. The question of nationalisation soon got caught up in the conflicts surrounding the growing Cold War. The demands for nationalisation quickly ebbed in the West as a result of the conflict between the two systems. The western Allies ordered a sequestration and break-up of cartels in heavy industry for reasons of security only. In the Federal Republic of Germany, employer organisations were partially weakened by the Allies but they quickly reorganised and successfully opposed all demands for socialisation. The sequestration carried out in the interests of security did not constitute a precursor to socialisation but only lasted for a number of years and ended with the restitution of property rights.

In the Eastern bloc, the industrialists who were under pressure from the system transformation were not able to secure their property rights. A description of the approach taken in the Soviet Occupation Zone is a good example. Shortly after the war, a small number of communists demanded the nationalisation of all base industries, especially of the coal industry in Saxony and the Flick steel works. A sequestration order in October 1945 issued by the Soviet Military Administration was only aimed at guaranteeing reparation deliveries. It was only under pressure from the SED after a referendum in Saxony in June 1946 that the socialisation of the industrial sector began. Without further voting taking place, the result of the refer-

[33] See the corresponding country studies in this book.

endum was applied to all other states in the Soviet zone and as a result, additional expropriations were prepared by the central state control and monitoring authorities and implemented by the state-controlled judiciary. This development was in keeping with the socialist model that was applied across the entire hegemonic territory.

Persistence and the Resolution of Antagonisms

Strike Movements

During the war, there were spontaneous strikes in the Netherlands against the conditions of the occupation and war and for better living conditions, despite the expected severe reaction by the German occupiers.[34] In France, the railway workers and miners went on strike in similar conditions to protest against compulsory labour. The huge miners' strike of 1941 in northern France involving 100,000 workers is legendary. There were also strikes in 1942 in Belgium and in 1943 in Italy and Denmark.[35] It was also not unusual for the protagonists to be actively involved in the resistance movement against the NS regime.

There were also strikes in some countries directly after liberation. Freed from the yoke of occupation, the protesters returned to the principle demands of the war years and went on strike for wage increases, as well as for an improvement in their standard of living and working conditions. This happened in the Netherlands, France and Finland, but also in the Czech Republic, Norway, Sweden and Spain.[36] General political demands were mostly outweighed by everyday needs. If the resistance movement was in a position to exert pressure, its main demand was to participate in rebuilding the political system in the post-war years.

It was only later that strike movements became more political. This can be traced back to the organisers of the former *Résistance*: Vigna emphasises that the strikes of 1947/1948 were caused by the ongoing post-war split within the French Resistance. In Belgium, the strikes were also caused by a split in the labour and trade union movement. The conflicts were manifest along a number of problem lines that partially resulted the col-

[34] See the chapter by van der Velden in this book.
[35] See the corresponding country studies in this book.
[36] See the corresponding country studies in this book.

laboration, but also as a result of old rifts, e.g. between the socialist and Christian trade union movements.[37]

However, the persistence of the strike movements was also connected to the strength and political direction of the communist parties. It can be seen in the case of the Netherlands that strikes were mostly demanded by communists and became less frequent as the party attempted to present itself as a reliable political partner. The dockers' strike of 1948 in Rotterdam was caused by the agitation by a small and radical left-wing splinter group. In Belgium and France, the communist party and affiliated trade unions also lost the will to fight after they became involved in government business and proceeded to follow a moderate course in relation to labour disputes. The French leftist trade-union *Confédération Générale du Travail* even went so far as to denounce the wild strikes of 1946 as 'obnoxious, Trotskyist unrest'.[38]

In contrast, there were only sporadic strikes in the Nordic countries. A number of wildcat strikes occurred in Finland in 1947, which the communist party once again viewed with some scepticism. Strikes were illegal in Norway until 1950 and this law was even supported by the Norwegian communist party. In Franco's Spain, strikes were also rare and because they were illegal, they happened spontaneously, especially in the industrial part of Catalonia and the Basque country.

Conflict Resolution Through Co-Determination and Social Policy

In the three decades that followed 1945, the European trade unions reached 'the pinnacle of their influence'.[39] In the consensus model of the Scandinavian countries especially, an increase in worker participation nipped the emergence of social unrest in the bud. In Finland, production committees uniting workers and employers were established to resolve social and industrial conflict. This happened despite a widespread fear that they were a first step toward the nationalisation of Finnish industries.[40]

A look at the resolution of social conflict in other European countries using a policy of co-determination shows that the consensus approach was

[37] See the chapters by Vigna and by Hemmerijckx in this book.

[38] See the chapters by van der Velden, by Hemmerijckx and by Vigna in this book.

[39] Craig Phelan: Introduction, in Craig Phelan (ed), *Trade Unionism since 1945: Towards a Global History, vol. 1: Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East* (Bern: Lang 2009), p. IX.

[40] See the chapter by Jensen-Eriksen in this book.

not limited to the Nordic countries. In Europe, at least in the western-oriented states, the development of co-determination served to reduce social conflicts. The spontaneously formed *Comités de gestion* in France were merged into the *Comités d'entreprises*.[41] This phase of workers' self-determination ended quickly; however, it was replaced by long-lasting structures of workers' co-determination. The Belgian case study also shows that the employer organisations showed a remarkable ability to transform themselves. Employers endeavoured to create different social initiatives at factory level, such as separate organisations to pay unemployment benefits and company-based health insurance provisions.[42] Collective bargaining was reinstalled in 1948 when entrepreneurs and trade unions established joint committees.[43] In West Germany, workers' co-determination was also quickly and firmly anchored in law shortly after the war had ended by linking it politically to the *Betriebsrätegesetz* (Works Council Act) of 1920. Employee representation on the supervisory boards of joint-stock companies was introduced.[44] At the same time, there was a move away from the unions with particular ideological or party political links of the Weimar Republic. The absence of major strikes and labour disputes created favourable conditions for considerable wage increases during the reconstruction phase. As in Sweden, there was a high level of union participation in company decision-making.

In many parts of Europe and especially in West Germany, the trade unions became supporters of the capitalist economic system. They met with the employers in an atmosphere of distrust of their own members based on their NS experiences.[45] Anti-communism, which manifested itself during the Cold War, was an additional unifier. The idea of social partnership, which benefited from this convergence, was integrated into German corporate tradition at the same time.

[41] See the chapter by Vigna in this book.

[42] See the chapter by Hemmerijckx in this book.

[43] Patrick Pasture, 'Belgian Trade Unions. Between Social Movement and Service Centre', in Craig Phelan (ed), *Trade Unionism since 1945: Towards a Global History, vol. 1: Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East* (Bern: Lang 2009), p. 14.

[44] Stephen J. Silva, 'German Trade Unionism in the Postwar Years: the Third and the Fourth Movements', in Craig Phelan (ed), *Trade Unionism since 1945: Towards a Global History, vol. 1: Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East* (Bern: Lang 2009), p. 72.

[45] See the chapter by Kössler in this book.

The welfare state grew strongly in most European countries after 1945, which also helped to resolve many of the conflicts underlying the unequal distribution of income. Most European countries moved from a partial and selective granting of social security benefits to a comprehensive welfare state, whose creation was in very many ways influenced by the report of the British politician, William Beveridge. In Belgium, for example, a national social security system for workers was introduced. Sweden and the United Kingdom became symbols for the expansion of the welfare state, with both countries calling for the establishment of a corporate social model. It can be said in relation to the issues dealt with in this book that the welfare state was used as a valve during the post-war years in response to smouldering social conflicts.

The Paradigms of Growth and Reconstruction

The economic reconstruction that was required in all European countries meant that post-war governments adopted a pragmatic approach to doing business. This future-oriented approach led to an expedient rationality with regard to the judgement and implementation of sanctions against the industrial elite. A number of high-profile individuals were exonerated in North Rhine-Westphalia due to the economic necessity of reconstruction in this industrial heartland.[46] This was the approach taken shortly after the war, even in countries that had been occupied by Germany, as the example of France proves.[47] The nationalisations that continued there were part of an overall strategy and were not carried out to punish individuals who collaborated during the war.

The waning of the will to prosecute ensured that the collaborating industrial elite remained unpunished. The enactment of amnesty laws, e.g. in Italy in June 1946, in the Soviet Occupied Zone in March 1948 and in Austria in April 1948, should also be understood in relation to the requirements of reconstruction.[48]

[46] Ralf Ahrens, 'Von der "Säuberung" zum Generalpardon: Die Entnazifizierung der westdeutschen Wirtschaft', in *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 2010/2, pp. 25–45.

[47] Barjot, *Säuberung der französischen Wirtschaftselite*.

[48] Woller, *Die Abrechnung mit dem Faschismus in Italien*, pp. 378–391; Dieter Stiefel, *Entnazifizierung in Österreich*, (Vienna: Europaverlag, 1981), pp. 307–310; see the chapter by Boldorf in this book.

The Difficulties of a European Typologisation

In conclusion, the problems that arise when creating a generic European approach should be pointed out. When a detailed analysis is carried out, it becomes clear that even in countries that were occupied by the NS regime and fit the approach taken by this book, the differences and individual development of each nation state prevail. However, it is still possible to bring taxonomic order to the post-war situation in Europe using analytical categories such as 'conflict model' and 'consensus model'. It is even possible to include neutral Sweden in the consensus model, because the war represented a deep and distinctive caesura in all European countries regardless of the side they fought on during the war or whether they were neutral.

In some situations, the war even cemented the existing structures, as the British example shows.[49] Great Britain did not fulfil the assumption that social movements grow out of a wartime occupation. The country was characterised by changes that occurred later. Thus, like in other European countries, the war seems to have been important in strengthening the Labour party and its surprising election victory in 1945. Moreover, the organised labour movement, the trade unions, grew in strength after 1945 and held their position within a corporate system until it collapsed under the strain of Thatcherism.

In Spain, the mostly underrated and for the post-war period untypical role played by a right-wing social movement can be clearly seen. The establishment of Franco's regime led to strong continuity in the industrial elite. Nevertheless, the counterformation of left-wing social movements had a not insignificant value, e.g. during the public transport strike in 1951. The shift to the right, which was not reflected in other European countries, meant that Spain represented a type of negative foil to widespread liberalism.

The Ukraine, which after the defeat of Germany was subjected to a Stalinist regime, is the only area examined that was completely without social movements. After the return of the Red Army, the professional groups that had collaborated with the German occupiers were dealt with severely. The technical managers in coal mining who had worked under severe pressure from the Germans were particularly affected. The Soviet Union distanced itself even more than fascist Spain from the path taken by

[49] See the chapter by Ackers in this book.

the rest of post-war Europe through an extreme form of dictatorship, yet it is still not possible to exclude it from a pan-European analysis. The Donbass can be included in the conflict model of the post-war years because it switched from the persecution of one large social group to another under two forms of dictatorial regime.

As often the case in post-war Europe, the variety of transformation stages is remarkable. Its shaping depended on the constellation of players such as industrial workers, trade unions and employers. In most of the transformation processes, the rules of path dependency prevailed. Within a short time, the needs of reconstruction swept away the conflict constellation: the social movements' resistance and potential for change only lasted for a short period. The trend was towards a subordination into the new form of statehood. A radical transformation was only possible under strong, mostly authoritarian regimes as to be found in Eastern Europe.

Index[1]

[1] Note: Page numbers followed by 'n' refer to notes.

S. Berger, M. Boldorf (eds.), *Social Movements and the Change of Economic Elites in Europe after 1945*, Palgrave Studies in the History of Social Movements, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77197-7