

The lack of political and social context in the Marxist understanding of nationalism.

Case study of the French left-wing press under the Third Republic, 1886-1906.

Noémie Abtan

Front page of the newspaper *La Révolte*, 30 Septembre 1893, headlined "Workers' internationalism and social democratic chauvinism".

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Deux faits récents méritent toute notre attention. C'est, d'une part, le sentiment de solidarité internationale, dont les mineurs belges et français font preuve en ce moment ; et d'autre part, le sentiment de nationalisme étroit et de chauvinisme détestable, affirmé au Congrès international de Zurich.

Nationalisme chauviniste des messieurs du quatrième état international ; et internationalisme d'ouvriers qui, heureusement, n'appartiennent pas à cette docte clique.

Mais en économie bourgeoise, c'est tout à rebours. Puisque les lords, propriétaires du sol qui perçoivent tant par chaque tonne extraite, sont une force ; puisque les vautours intermédiaires sont encore une force et le commerce est dans leurs mains — c'est vers l'endroit le plus faible que se sont portés les patrons. Ils décidèrent de faire leurs économies sur les deux francs payés aux mineurs, et non sur les 14 à 20 francs jetés en proie aux vautours et encore moins sur les propres bénéfices.

C'est là-dessus, sur cette réduction du quart des salaires, que la grève a éclaté. — Les patrons savaient que les mineurs du Nord, sortis il y a quinze mois à peine d'une grève, terrible par la misère qu'elle avait infligée, ne pourraient pas faire cause commune avec le centre. Ils avaient compté sur cela.

On connaît aussi les événements de la grève. Le courroux des mineurs ne se porta plus seulement sur les *blacklegs*. Il se porta sur les af-

massacres — soit par le refus du service militaire, soit en déclarant la grève générale internationale dans les gros métiers, surtout nécessaires en temps de guerre.

Idée grande, incomprise, mais qu'il eut été du devoir du Congrès de lancer.

Tous, nous savons combien les passions chauvinistes s'allument lorsque le canon tonne aux frontières, tous nous connaissons les manifestations sauvages de chauvinisme insensé à ces époques. Mais ce n'est pas pour rabâcher les vieilles rengaines que des congrès internationaux ouvriers sont convoqués. C'est pour lancer en circulation des idées nouvelles, contraires à celles qui sont chères aux exploiters bourgeois ; c'est pour réveiller la pensée ouvrière, pour l'inspirer d'idées d'émancipation, de révolte contre les chaînes qui tiennent l'ouvrier attaché au char du bourgeois. C'est enfin pour lancer des idées qui, alors même qu'elles auraient peu de réalisation immédiate, paralysent cependant l'action des exploiters, mettent un frein à leurs orgies, les forcent de

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Abstract

This thesis will be an analysis of the idea of Nation, Nationalism and Patriotism in the French left during the Third Republic. This research will be based on articles of the French political socialist press from 1886 to 1906. The perception and expression of nationalism by the left wing newspapers will be embedded in a national and international context. The annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, the Dreyfus Affair, Polish independence, the London Congress are events that will be further analysed in this thesis, in order to frame what influenced the perception of nationalism in the press. This is a qualitative analysis, the primary sources being press articles. The goal of this thesis is to assess whether Marx and Engels solely influenced Marxist thinkers, or if the context was the dominant factor in the expression of nationalism. Ultimately, what will be proven is that the concept of nationalism is deeply rooted in its environment. Marxism had an impact on its perception, but as an international ideology, it has a lesser impact than the realities in which each country were living in.

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Introduction

"Internationalism does not mean anti-nationalism, or anti-patriotism"¹ stated Alexandre Zévaès in the newspaper *Le socialiste*, in 1897. This quote illustrates that international socialism was not contradictory to nationalism or patriotism, although it was often depicted as such. Marxism was described as an internationalist movement. This led to the belief that it was in favour of the destruction of national borders and in favour of the creation of an international community of workers. However, this simplification was not necessarily true. Although Marx and Engels were advocating for the creation of such international community, they were not advocating against all forms of nationalism.

From the early years of the French Third Republic, several socialist groups were created. Even though the left-wing political landscape of the period was diverse and heterogeneous, Workers' parties were massively following the transnational Marxist ideology. Nationalism was seen as a controversial topic among the French left during the end of the 19th century, as it was associated with the racist right-wing, especially during the Dreyfus Affair (1894-1906). The plurality of opinions regarding nationalism among Marxist figures from that period make this a complex topic. Although the period 1886-1906 seems far removed from the First World War, the context that developed during this period constituted the roots of WWI, as nationalism was a driving concept during the conflict.

Historical context

The Third Republic regime followed the Commune of Paris in 1871, a time of riots caused by the French capitulation after the Franco-Prussian war. In September 1870, France lost the war against the Prussian Empire at the battle of Sedan, this led to the fall of the Second Empire, the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, and the establishment of a new conservative republic. Following this defeat, the new republic planned to sign an armistice with Germany. Paris, which was a more left-leaning city in France, was firmly opposed to this armistice and formed what is known as the Commune of Paris in January 1871. The members of the Committee, head of the uprising, were leaning towards a radical republican left. The Commune of Paris was severely repressed by the conservative republic,

¹ Zévaès, Alexandre. "Nationalisme et Internationalisme", *Le Socialiste*, No 10, 31 January 1897, p1. "Qui dit internationalisme ne dit pas antinationalisme, ni antipatriotisme."

in May 1871.² To escape executions and convictions, the leaders of the Commune, mostly socialists, with strong Marxist leanings, fled the country. Most of them were in exile during the first Decade of the Third Republic.³ However, in the late 1870's, the socialist movements began to take shape again, and in 1879-1880, Jules Guesde and Paul Lafargue founded the French Worker's Party⁴ (POF). The French socialist movement played, at that time, an increasingly important role in the political landscape, leading to the questioning of certain ideological movements such as nationalism.

In this thesis, the analysis will be based on the left-wing French press from 1886, start date of the Boulangist crisis, until 1906, end date of the Dreyfus Affair. Because of the rise of the political press in France from 1881 onward, press articles will constitute the basis of this analysis.

Because of the complex history of France during the long 19th century, press was partially free, meaning that the regimes in power kept an eye on the press releases, and publishers were facing administrative and legal restrictions.⁵ The Third Republic was the first regime to grant complete freedom of the press by law in 1881. Thus, after 1881, "the state no longer controls the press, and its development is mainly driven by economic necessity".⁶ This led to an increase in the number of newspapers, as well as the emergence of the political press and opinion articles.

On January 8, 1886, General Georges Boulanger became Minister of War, under President Freycinet.⁷ It was considered as a protest and a populist movement⁸, in a context of social unrest. A populist movement is usually described as a political operation that opposes the elites against the

² Bourgin, Georges. "Aperçu sur l'histoire de la Commune de 1871", *Revue Historique*, Presses Universitaire de France, 1930, pp. 88-96.

³ Fortescue, William. "The political Right and Left in the early Third Republic", *The Third Republic in France 1870 - 1940: Conflicts and Continuities*, 2001, p24.

⁴ Fortescue. "The political Right and Left", p 36. "Parti Ouvrier Français".

⁵ Albert, Pierre. "Remarques sur l'histoire de la presse sous la IIIe République", *Le Mouvement social*, No 53, 1965, p32.

⁶ Albert. "Remarques sur l'histoire de la presse", p32.

⁷ Combeau, Yvan. "Le boulangisme dans tous ses mouvements (1886-1991)", *Mappemonde*, 1993, p48.

⁸ Guarrigues, Jean. "Le boulangisme comme mouvement social, ou les ambiguïtés d'un social-populisme", *Histoire des mouvements sociaux en France*, La découverte, 2014, p239. "Ce mouvement protestataire et populiste trouve son origine et son terreau dans la crise économique qui touche de plein fouet la société française dans les années 1880."

population, where the feeling of exclusion is predominant. Boulanger wanted to change the Constitution, and blamed the government of being corrupted, while its population faced an important economic crisis. Michel Winock described it by saying that "Boulangism was perceived by its contemporary opponents as an avatar of Caesarism or Bonapartism: a leader with a standing ovation who spoke in the name of the people to seize power."⁹ Boulanger also used strong nationalist stances to distance himself from the rest of the French left. Indeed, at that time there was a growing nationalist fervour, following the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine by Germany in 1871. It was considered as "the first and most serious crisis of the French republican regime between 1886 and 1889."¹⁰ The Boulangist movement was tied to the social movement of the late 1880's¹¹, while at the same time being the voice of nationalist demands.

The Dreyfus Affair occurred in 1894, General Dreyfus, an Alsatian Jew was accused of spying the French army for Germany. Press was playing an important role during the whole affair, as Pierre Miquel described it, press was at that time a "power of opinion".¹² Indeed, the debate surrounding Dreyfus' guilt was played out in the partisan press on both the left and right wing. Right-winged nationalism used him as an argument for their racist policies, as Dreyfus was considered a foreigner, while the left-winged press was uneasy about what they saw as a "family quarrel".¹³ However, a few left-wing journalists were defending his right to a fair trial and denouncing the prevailing antisemitism.

⁹ Winock, Michel. "Le boulangisme, un populisme protestataire", *Après-demain*, No 43, 2017, p34. "Le boulangisme, dont le mouvement se développe en 1887, date à laquelle le général Boulanger est limogé, avant d'être mis à la retraite de l'armée, et 1889, marquée par l'apogée de l'élection à la députation de Boulanger à Paris, a été perçu par ses adversaires contemporains comme un avatar du césarisme ou du bonapartisme : un chef ovationné qui parle au nom du peuple pour prendre le pouvoir."

¹⁰ "Boulangisme", Encyclopedia universalis, consulted 9/10/2023, <https://www.universalis.fr/encyclopedie/boulangisme/>, "C'est la première crise et la plus grave du régime républicain français entre 1886 et 1889".

¹¹ Guarrigues, Jean. "Le boulangisme comme mouvement social, ou les ambiguïtés d'un social-populisme", *Histoire des mouvements sociaux en France*, La découverte, 2014, p240.

¹² Miquel, Pierre. "Introduction", *L'Affaire Dreyfus*, Paris : Presses universitaires de France, 1973, p9 "Presse comme puissance d'opinion".

¹³ Miquel. *L'Affaire Dreyfus*, p13. "On comprend dès lors à la fois l'emparas des républicains et la méfiance des socialistes, devant le cas Dreyfus : les uns refusaient de ramasser cette pomme de discord au moment où ils venaient enfin de faire leur paix. Les autres dénonçaient le côté 'querelle de famille' d'une affaire exclusivement bourgeoise. "

Historiography

The academic literature that will help support the analysis was mainly from the second half of the 20th century. Nationalism, Marxism and the Third Republic were popular subjects among historians. The Third Republic became a popular subject, particularly for French historians, from the second half of the 20th century. This can be linked to the creation of the Fifth Republic in 1958. It is possible that historians had the ambition to study the roots of the French society of the mid 20th century, with the idea of giving legitimacy to the new regime.

Nationalism in the Marxist ideology has been studied under a lot of different angles. However, no study has tied nationalism with the left-wing political press in the French fin de siècle. Some academic papers analysed the relationship between Marxism and nationalism, like Maxime Rodinson in the article "Le marxisme et la nation".¹⁴ Other scholars studied the topic of nationalism among the left-wing, specifically in the Workers' parties like Robert Stuart in *Marxism and National Identity: Socialism, Nationalism, and National Socialism During the French Fin de Siècle*.¹⁵ Overall, analysis of nationalism in the Marxist ideology can be divided in two groups.

A large amount of scholars were studying the meaning of the nationalist idea in the philosophy of some eminent Marxist thinkers. Maxime Rodinson's approach for example is to study Marxism and Marx's work from a nationalist perspective, and then to oppose Marxism to important events, in regards to nationalism, in the 19th century and early 20th century. A. Loubère also uses this approach to study the ideas of Louis Blanc, a French journalist and politician from the extreme left during the Third Republic, on nationalism.¹⁶ Louis Blanc is the main subject of Loubère's study, and nationalism is the tool to analyse his work. In both these cases, the analysis is a theme-based approach. In this approach cross-sectional analysis could also be found. Another example would be Ephraim Nimni, who is comparing the ideas of Marx and Engels, nationalism being the point of comparison in this study.¹⁷ All of these studies are themed-base approaches, with an eminent figure

¹⁴ Rodinson, Maxime. "Le marxisme et la nation", *L'Homme et la société*, N. 7, 1968. numéro spécial 150^e anniversaire de la mort de Karl Marx, pp. 131-149.

¹⁵ Stuart, Robert. *Marxism and National Identity: Socialism, Nationalism, and National Socialism During the French Fin de Siècle*, State University of New York Press, 2006, preface p ix-x.

¹⁶ Loubère, A. "Les idées de Louis Blanc sur le nationalisme, le colonialisme et la guerre", *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, tome 4, N°1, 1957. pp. 33-63.

¹⁷ Nimni, Ephraim. "Marx, Engels and the National Question", *Science & Society*, Vol 53, No 3, 1989, pp. 297-326.

as the main object of study and with nationalism as the angle or the tool to analyse the thinker's ideas.

The other approach, though less frequent, is also a theme-based analysis and consists in the study of nationalism in a certain time period, with Marxism used as a tool to understand its place in the left-wing ideology. Stuart is an example of the second approach, in his work nationalism is the main object of study, contrarily to the authors mentioned above.¹⁸ Marxism and, more generally, the left-wing ideology are only contextual elements to understand how the nationalist ideology was perceived in France during the fin de siècle. In these types of studies, eminent thinkers are only some players within the broader research framework of nationalist ideology.

What is highlighted in the literature mentioned above is that the analyses are mainly focusing on theory only. There is a lack of connection between Marx's theory, as well as its analysis by scholars, and the realities in which these ideas were evolving. The vast majority of the research on this topic aims to show that, although not self-explanatory, there was a link between nationalism and Marxism. The common conclusion being that the nationalist idea existed in the transnational Marxist ideology. Yet the reality was often more nuanced.

Europe was seen as the "vanguard of the socialist movement"¹⁹ by Marx. For Louis Blanc, France and more specifically Paris, should be the "capital of a European federation of free nations"²⁰, France being the most European country, and so Paris being the most European city. Hence, by focusing on France during the Third Republic, this thesis has the ambition to recontextualise the theories developed by the scholars mentioned above. France offers here a good subject to study, since the socialist press was flourishing and Marx's ideas were widely shared among the left parties of that time. However, if nationalism exists in Marx's ideas, it also existed in other parties. The

¹⁸ Stuart, Robert. *Marxism and National Identity: Socialism, Nationalism, and National Socialism During the French Fin de Siècle*, State University of New York Press, 2006, preface p ix-x.

¹⁹ Rodinson, Maxime. "Le marxisme et la nation", *L'Homme et la société*, N. 7, 1968. numéro spécial 150^e anniversaire de la mort de Karl Marx. p134.

²⁰ Loubère, A. "Les idées de Louis Blanc sur le nationalisme, le colonialisme et la guerre", *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, tome 4 N°1, 1957, p38. "A mesure que sa ferveur nationaliste allait croissant, se développait également son amour pour Paris, et il en rêvait comme de la capitale d'une fédération européenne de nations libres. La tâche d'organiser la croisade nécessaire à la réalisation de cet idéal revenait naturellement à Paris, car si la France était le pays le plus européen, Paris était la cité la plus européenne."

Dreyfus Affair, as well as the question of Alsace-Lorraine, impacted greatly how nationalism was viewed in the Third Republic's society.

Thesis assumptions

Existing literature proves that nationalism was an idea present in the Marxist ideology. This thesis will analyse mainly the perception and the expression of nationalism by the French left-wing. What was commonly known as the French left under the Third Republic will be further analysed in the first chapter. The terms socialists and left-wing will be used interchangeably to designate groups with a social democratic, communist, Marxist or anarchist orientation. In France, the term socialist was the generic term for the entire left, whether moderate or radical. Hence, this thesis chose to keep the same terminology used in the primary sources. This means that the term socialist will designate, in an undifferentiated way, the whole left.

In order to analyse this, assumptions on the context need to be made. The first assumption is that, indeed, nationalism was part of the Marxist ideology. The second assumption is that the French section of the socialist international, and so the left-wing parties, were following Marx's doctrine, assuming that the whole left had the same conception of Marxism and nationalism. The general hypothesis of this thesis is that the social and political context of France, from 1886 to 1906, had an impact on the way nationalism was perceived by the French left. Hence, the research question of this thesis is as follows: to what extent did the French social and political context played a role in the framing of nationalism by the left-wing during the Third Republic? This leads to four subsidiary questions. Was there a unified opinion on nationalism among Marxist thinkers? How was nationalism perceived by French socialists? How was it expressed in the left-wing press? To what extent the French left had detached itself from Marxism on the question of nationalism?

This thesis will be structured in three chapters. The first one has the ambition to define nationalism as an important concept in international relations, and to further analyse its definition and its place within the Marxist movement. The second chapter analyses the French political press in France, and its expression of nationalism on different topics, such as the Dreyfus Affair or the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine. The last chapter studies the impact of the national and international context of France from 1896 to 1906 on the expression of nationalism in the press, and more generally within the socialist movement.

Methodology

The analysis of this thesis will be based on a collection of French newspapers articles from 1886 to 1906. These articles are from the French digital archives, via the French National Library (BNF). All of the articles studied are from the French political left-wing press. The press covered in this thesis consists mainly of the party press, the trade union press and the mouthpieces of political groups that are not political parties. Hence, opinion articles will constitute the primary sources for this research. The range of articles are from well-known left-wing newspaper, like *Le Socialiste*, spokesperson of the POF, *Le Parti ouvrier*, organ of the socialist workers, *Le Révolté*, one of the leading anarchist newspapers with libertarian communist tendencies, *Le Travailleur*, official organ of the POF in the North of France, *L'Humanité*, organ of the French section of the Socialist International, *L'Aurore*, newspaper of the progressive and humanist left, and, *L'Intransigeant*, newspaper of the nationalist extreme left. All the articles studied are a representation of the political landscape at that time. Newspapers were not only a representation of society, especially after 1881, they also had an influence on it. By dictating a way of thinking through articles published in the newspapers, the press had a clear impact on the population and its political leaders. Hence, studying the press leads to an analysis of the society of that time and allows to understand its influences.

First of all, a definition of all concepts and actors is made in the first chapter. Nationalism, as it will be further demonstrated, was an evolving concept. Its meaning depended on who used it, and, for which purpose. Explaining the definition of nationalism will lead to define a clear frame for the analysis. The actors analysed in the thesis were the members of the Marxist movement, and those who were close to Marxist ideas, without being officially affiliated to it. As France, and especially the socialist press, had close links with other European countries, and members of the socialist movement, this thesis will also focus on other Marxist parties. Hence, the Polish Socialist Party (PPS), and the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) will also be part of the analysis. The study of international actors such as members of the PPS and the SPD allows to have a better understanding of the international context surrounding France from 1886 to 1906. The Polish and German Marxists are particularly relevant to this thesis as they were the main actors to key events, like the London Congress in 1896 or the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, which will be further developed later in the analysis.

In order to analyse the articles, a classification has been made. Three categories of articles are defined in the second chapter, it corresponds to the different stances the authors took to defend their point of views. The ideological positioning, political positioning, and factual positioning are the three categories that will be further analysed later. These categories are the result of an in-depth qualitative analysis of the left-wing journalistic landscape from 1886 to 1906. However, they are only the result of an analysis of the expression of nationalism in the press. This classification is not intended to be universal, but specific to the subject of this thesis.

In the third chapter, three important events are studied, to provide context for the articles studied in the second chapter. These events were chosen because of their relevance to the subject of the thesis. The London Congress of 1896 and the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine provide an international context to the socialist positioning on the question of nationalism. The Dreyfus Affair represents one of the biggest controversies of the Third Republic and is still used nowadays to illustrate an important split in the French society.

Limits of the analysis

The analysis of this thesis is based on press articles from 1886 to 1906. Although a great numbers of newspapers have been digitalised, the corpus cannot represent the entirety of the left-wing press from that time period. Indeed, some newspapers only have a few volumes that are digitalised. This is for example the case for the newspaper *La Solution sociale*, which only has three volumes that are digitalised, although it was a bi-monthly newspaper. The quality of the primary sources available therefore have an impact on the analysis.

First chapter: Theoretical framework, Marxist definition of nationalism

In order to understand how the left-wing framed nationalism, it is important to first examine the Marxist definition of nationalism. First of all, a definition from Marx and Engels must be established in order to properly analyse its perception within the Marxist movement. Then, other definitions from important figures from the SPD, and the Social Democratic Party of Austria, will be highlighted. Ultimately, a comparison will be made between the French Marxist thinkers and the international Marxist figures on the question of national independence, particularly in relation to the issues of Alsace-Lorraine and Polish independence. This chapter will try to clarify the first two subsidiary questions: was there a unified opinion on nationalism among Marxist thinkers and how was nationalism perceived by French socialists? This last question will be answered in part in this first chapter and will be discussed in more detail in the other chapters.

Definition of Nationalism

Nationalism is not a new concept, analysed within the scope of International Relations, nationalism had been conceptualised many times in different ways. However, one definition of nationalism, made by Benedict Anderson in his book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, published in 1983, became prevalent in the field of IR and social studies. Before that, nation, and so nationalism, were treated by scholars as something natural.²¹ Nationalism became a very popular concept in the 19th century, when nation-state started to unify, like Italy in 1859 or Germany in 1871. As Timothy Baycroft explained it,

nationalism was a growing political force, challenged through the nineteenth century by the reactionary right and the internationalist left, and which gradually developed an entire throw of legitimacy because nationalist's claims that the most legitimate way to organise states was according to the natural division between the various peoples which existed.²²

Another explanation for the appearance of nationalism in IR studies is the development of capitalism. The economy started to follow a capitalist model in the 19th century, when people

²¹ Bergholz, Max. "Thinking the Nation, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, by Benedict Anderson", *American Historical Review*, Oxford University Press, 2018, p521.

²² Baycroft, Timothy. "Introduction", *Folklore and Nationalism in Europe During the Long Nineteenth Century*, Brill, 2012, p1.

sought a perpetual increase in wealth for its own sake, rather than for comfort brought by it.²³ An increase in a nation's capital was a marker of success, and it highlighted the superiority of one country over another. According to John Breuilly, "it is within the context of power struggles to control modern states that nationalism has its potential as a political force able to mobilise"²⁴, thus capitalism played a major role in the expression of national identity. Nationalism was then used as a tool to gain power over other states, capitalism being another tool to show and legitimate this power.

Because of the importance of capitalism in the conception of nationalism, scholars assumed for a long time that Marxism set aside the concept of nationalism, which is untrue. It is precisely because of the importance of capitalism in the conception of the nation that Marx and Engels theorised in their ideology the difference between "nation" and "nationalities".²⁵ Indeed, capitalism created more interactions, because of the division of labour which led to the unification of languages in Western Europe.²⁶ According to Marx and Engels, language was one of the criteria to identify a nation as a unified community. Having a large population, enabling a capitalist division of labour, and a large geographical area, with a centralised economy, were two other important criteria for Marx and Engels' vision of nationalism.²⁷ Having a large and centralised economy would lead to the proletariat constituting itself as a homogeneous class.²⁸ For them, the term "nation" designated "the permanent population of a nation-state", when "nationality" designated "an ethno-cultural community that had not achieved full national status because it lacked a state of its own".²⁹ Hence, France was seen as an example of a "nationality" that succeeded in becoming a "nation". France was a large enough country, with a unified language and a large population, that formed a capitalist

²³ Greenfeld, Liah. "Emergence of nationalism", *Nationalism: A Short History*, Brooking Institution Press, 2019, p23.

²⁴ Baycroft, Timothy. "Introduction", *Folklore and Nationalism in Europe During the Long Nineteenth Century*, Brill, 2012, p7.

²⁵ Nimni, Ephraim. "Marx, Engels and the National Question", *Science & Society*, Vol 53, No 3, Fall 1989, p305.

²⁶ Nimni. "Marx, Engels and the National Question", p299.

²⁷ Ibid, p300.

²⁸ Elliott, Charles F. "Nationalism and Proletarian Consciousness", *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol 26, No 2, April-June 1965, p5.

²⁹ Nimni, Ephraim. "Marx, Engels and the National Question", *Science & Society*, Vol 53, No 3, Fall 1989, p305.

society, with a market economy. This was also the case for Poland. The "modern nation" was an epiphenomenon, resulting from the constitution of the bourgeoisie as a hegemonic class.³⁰

Nationalism, although existing in Marx's philosophy, always took second place to proletarian struggle.³¹ Thus, if a population had the desire to riot against an entity which did not recognise its national legitimacy, and if this uprising harmed the interests of the proletariat, then it could not be accepted by the Marxist ideology. Because of this, in 1848, Marx was against the independence movement of the Czechs and Croats, as he thought that it would be harmful to the proletariat and felt that this independence movement could be manipulated by the reactionary Russia, against Hungarians. Hungarian's fight for independence was considered interesting by Marxists for the future of the proletarian struggle.³² Nationalist interests had to be sacrificed in favour of the class struggle, especially in the case of nations that did not have historical roots. Indeed, "national traditions"³³ that later constituted the state's structure, and therefore its class society, were the direct consequences of a state's historical roots. National traditions reflected the economic development of society, as well as class relations throughout history.³⁴ In this context, the historical roots of large state entities such as France, Germany or Poland were, for Marx and Engels, essential elements in nationalists claims. On the other hand, smaller national communities, such as the Czechs or Croats, whose national history was inevitably linked to larger entities such as the Austro Hungarian Empire, had no legitimacy for Marx and Engels in the question of national independence.

Another approach on nationalism

Marx and Engel's definition of nationalism was not the only definition to exist within Marxism. Otto Bauer, member of the Social Democratic Party of Austria, and "the leading Austrian theorist on the national question"³⁵, published in 1907 a study about the national question in Marxism, called *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie*, in English, *The Question of Nationalities*

³⁰ Nimni, Ephraim. "Marx, Engels and the National Question", *Science & Society*, Vol 53, No 3, Fall 1989, p304.

³¹ Rodinson, Maxime. "Le marxisme et la nation", *L'Homme et la société*, N. 7, 1968. numéro spécial 150^e anniversaire de la mort de Karl Marx, p133.

³² Rodinson. "Le marxisme et la nation", p134.

³³ Ibid, p132.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Cliff, Tony. "Lénine et la question nationale", *Lénine*, 1975, p39. "Le principal théoricien autrichien sur la question nationale était Otto Bauer."

and Social Democracy. In his book, he established that it was not because of the fact that a community always considered itself as a nation that it explained why it would be a legitimate nation-state. He believed that past events had consequences for contemporary behaviour, which resulted in the creation of what he called "communities of character".³⁶ Because of this, individuals would tend to make the same choice. Each individual would rationally choose according to the common good, which often represented the desire for national independence³⁷. On this specific point, Bauer deviated from Marx and Engels' definition. Marx and Engels did not address the will of the populations on the question of national independence. They only addressed the topic in relation with the proletarian struggle.

Not only did he believe that socialism was compatible with nationalism, in other words that class relations and national relations were not mutually exclusive, he also believed that for most workers "nationalist and pro-independence rhetoric bore more truth than proletarian internationalism and socialism".³⁸ Hence, Bauer put the national interest above the proletarian's interest. According to him, socialism must serve the interests of workers, not the interests of an ideology. Because of this fundamental distinction on the interest of the workers, Lenin, although he thought Bauer's work was valuable, criticised his views on nationalism. As stated in the Communist Manifesto, "proletarians have no homeland"³⁹, because in a bourgeois and capitalistic model, workers were dispossessed of their homeland, and thus formed an international fraternal community. For Bauer "in a socialist society, proletarians will finally have a homeland"⁴⁰, thus, socialism was also about recreating meaningful national communities.

³⁶ Rodinson, Maxime. "Le marxisme et la nation", *L'Homme et la société*, N. 7, 1968. numéro spécial 150^e anniversaire de la mort de Karl Marx, p137. "Il la définit (la nation) comme l'ensemble des hommes liés par la communauté de leur destin historique en une communauté de caractère."

³⁷ Czerwinska-Schupp, Ewa. "The National Question", *Otto Bauer (1881-1938)*, Brill, 2017, p122.

³⁸ Czerwinska-Schupp. *Otto Bauer (1881-1938)*, p127.

³⁹ Rodinson, Maxime. "Le marxisme et la nation", *L'Homme et la société*, N. 7, 1968. numéro spécial 150^e anniversaire de la mort de Karl Marx, p137. "Si, pour reprendre la phrase célèbre du Manifeste communiste, les prolétaires n'ont pas de patrie, cela n'est pas une proclamation antipatriotique, mais la constatation du fait que la société bourgeoise les a dépouillés de leur participation à une patrie donnée."

⁴⁰ Rodinson. "Le marxisme et la nation", p137. "dans la société socialiste, les prolétaires auront enfin une patrie."

Ideological differences

In order to study nationalism in the Marxist ideology properly, there is a need to look at how thinkers in the movement understood the national question, how they theorised it, and the place it had in their dogmas. The question of national independence did not have a unanimous response among Marxists thinkers. For instance, the Polish figure of Marxism, Rosa Luxemburg, member of the SPD, and of the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania (SDKPiL), thought that the national struggle was an obstacle to communism.⁴¹ According to Luxemburg, the concept of "national interest"⁴² was a bourgeois concept that was used to undermine "the international solidarity of the working class"⁴³ because it took up the energy of the workers for the wrong cause. In this context, Luxemburg was against the Polish independence, although she felt deeply Polish.⁴⁴ She considered that the Polish proletariat needed Russia, as a capitalist state with a large market economy, so that the working force could develop and become an enlightened proletariat⁴⁵. She based her thought on Marx and Engels' thesis and "negative attitude towards the nationalists aspirations of the small non-historical Slavonic nations".⁴⁶ However, Marx and Engels considered Poland as a historic nation, as it was previously mentioned. Other figures in her party were not so strongly opposed to the Polish independence. It was the case for Julian Marchlewski, another important figure in Polish Marxism, who was in favour of the restoration of a Polish state.⁴⁷

As for Lenin, he was also in favour of the independence of Poland, in his opinion, the right to national autonomy should be recognised, which did not necessarily mean that it should be an obligation.⁴⁸ In short, a national community should have the right to assert its desire for independence, but Marxism could only support the national struggle if it was in line with the

⁴¹ Zuzowski, Robert. "Nationalism and Marxism in Eastern Europe", *Politikon*, 2006, p73.

⁴² Zuzowski. *Politikon*, p73.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Walicki, A. "Rosa Luxemburg and the Question of Nationalism in Polish Marxism (1893-1914)", *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol 61, No 4, Oct 1983, p572.

⁴⁵ Rodinson, Maxime. "Le marxisme et la nation", *L'Homme et la société*, N. 7, 1968. numéro spécial 150^e anniversaire de la mort de Karl Marx, p135.

⁴⁶ Walicki, A. "Rosa Luxemburg and the Question of Nationalism in Polish Marxism (1893-1914)", *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol 61, No 4, Oct 1983, p569.

⁴⁷ Walicki, A. "Rosa Luxemburg", p575.

⁴⁸ Rodinson, Maxime. "Le marxisme et la nation", *L'Homme et la société*, N. 7, 1968. numéro spécial 150^e anniversaire de la mort de Karl Marx, p136.

proletarian struggle. In the case of Poland, supporting their independence would mean rallying forces to the fight against Tsarism, symbol of a capitalist, bourgeois and autocratic regime.⁴⁹ Russia was considered as the "citadel of reaction" against which national movements were fighting.⁵⁰ Lenin was aware that nationalist forces could form a revolutionary force, meaning that nationalism could be used by the socialist struggle.⁵¹ The fight for self-determination was part of a democratic plan. Lenin considered that socialism existed because of democracy, therefore self-determination and socialism did not have to be mutually exclusive. It was precisely this struggle against national oppression that enabled close and fraternal cooperation between workers around the world.⁵²

What explained such an ideological difference between Luxemburg and Lenin, even though they were both members of the same communist ideological movement? Although Luxemburg relied on Marx and Engel's rejection of the desire for independence of the small nations of eastern Europe, as mentioned above, she also established that marxian positions were too far removed from the reality she lived in. Russia was no longer the capitalist state it was during Marx and Engels' time. Indeed, in the mid-19th century, the centre of revolution was Central and Western Europe, and Russia's role had been to provide a capitalist support for nations in revolt, in order to crush them. In the late 19th century, Russia faced popular revolts that were comparable to those suffered by Central European countries fifty years earlier.⁵³ Another contextual element helps to explain such a strong ideological difference between Luxemburg and the other Marxists thinkers of her time. Pilsudski, leader of the PPS and future dictator of Poland, was rallying nationalists from the right wing in order to gain more power and influence. Luxemburg, who was against this political practice, rejected all nationalist ideas from the PPS, and was therefore firmly opposed to the question of Polish national independence.⁵⁴ Hence, because of their different backgrounds, Lenin and Luxemburg had different opinion on nationalism, although they were from the same political group. Thus, Luxemburg

⁴⁹ Rodinson, Maxime. "Le marxisme et la nation", *L'Homme et la société*, N. 7, 1968. numéro spécial 150^e anniversaire de la mort de Karl Marx, p136.

⁵⁰ Cliff, Tony. "Lénine et la question nationale", *Lénine*, Pluto Press, 1975, p41. "Citadelle de la réaction, contre laquelle les mouvements nationaux jouaient un rôle progressif."

⁵¹ Cliff, Tony. *Lénine*, p40.

⁵² Ibid, p47.

⁵³ Ibid, p41.

⁵⁴ Ibid, p42.

appeared to be the most radical on the national question, where most Marxists were in general following Marx and Engels' words, especially on the matter of the Polish independence.

What constituted the French left?

Defining nationalism within the French left is an even more difficult task than defining nationalism within Marxism. Indeed, the French left during the beginning of the Third Republic was not a homogeneous whole, but rather a collection of parties, groups and trade unions, constituting a heterogeneous and ill-defined whole. The French left at the beginning of the Third Republic was often described as two groups, one called the "opportunists", who were the moderate republicans, the other being the "intransigents", who were radical republicans. These two groups have long been studied as two groups with no clear distinction.⁵⁵ The opportunists and the radicals, although they had differences regarding their position toward the church or the economy, often banded together to confront the more conservative and monarchist right wing. The opportunists advocated a more liberal economy, while the intransigents, generally Marxists, tended to advocate workers' internationalism and proletarian struggle.⁵⁶ However, the situation was more complex than just two groups, one being Marxist and one being more liberal. As David Mollenhauer explained:

What is special about France is that the various founding currents of the modern political party coexisted for a very long time, without any attempt being made to bring them together. Parliamentary groups, electoral committees, para-political groups such as free-thinking societies, social circles, etc. formed a non-hierarchical political universe, in which the political parties were not necessarily the same, in which each element remained largely independent of the others, and in which the boundaries between the various neighbouring parties remained blurred.⁵⁷

What David Mollenhauer highlighted in this quote is the plurality of the left-wing, which was far from being made up of just two opposing groups. Some major figures in the left-wing movement

⁵⁵ Mollenhauer, Daniel. "A la Recherche de la vraie République : quelques jalons pour une histoire du radicalisme des débuts de la Troisième République", *Revue Historique*, Presses Universitaires de France, 1998, p582.

⁵⁶ Miquel, Pierre. "Introduction", *L'Affaire Dreyfus*, Paris : Presses universitaires de France, 1973, p9.

⁵⁷ Mollenhauer, Daniel. "A la Recherche de la vraie République : quelques jalons pour une histoire du radicalisme des débuts de la Troisième République", *Revue Historique*, Presses Universitaires de France, 1998, p590. "La particularité de la France tient à ce que divers courants fondateurs du parti politique moderne coexistèrent très longtemps, sans que s'opère entre eux aucune tentative de rapprochement. Groupes parlementaires, comités électoraux, groupes para-politiques comme les sociétés de libre-pensée, cercles de sociabilité, etc. formaient un univers politique non hiérarchisé, dans lequel chaque élément restait très largement indépendant des autres, et dans lequel les délimitations entre les différents partis voisins restaient floues."

moved back and forth between the different groups, even going so far as to create their own movement, like Jules Guesde, blurring the boundaries even further. The movements and parties from the left, analysed in this thesis, the Guesdists, Parti Ouvrier, POF and collectivists can be described as the "militantly anti liberal socialist left, the French Marxism of the Belle époque".⁵⁸

Nationalism among French leftists

Hence, the plurality of the French left reflected as many different opinions on nationalism. Jules Guesde, as mentioned earlier, leader of the Guesdist movement, and founder of the POF⁵⁹ was fiercely opposed to any nationalist conception or regional claims. According to Guesdism, the interests of the proletariat was independent of any national question. Robert Stuart depicted this conception by saying: "This anational, even antinational, sensibility recurred sporadically throughout the POF's history, and was deeply grounded in the Guesdists' passions and preoccupations".⁶⁰ Guesdism advocated for the revolution through international class struggle. In this framework Jules Guesde, and by extension the entire Guesdist movement, was against any nationalistic preoccupations. It is also worth noting that the leaders of the POF had very strong links with other socialist parties in Europe, in particular the SPD. As mentioned in the introduction, some influential socialists were forced into exile after the Paris Commune, because of their rebellion.⁶¹ These riots happened after the French capitulation after the defeat of Sedan against Prussia, and the loss of Alsace-Lorraine. A major insurrectionary workers' movement was then in place, which included Jules Guesde and other leaders of the future POF. Because of this, the leaders of the POF lived in exile, which had an impact on their socialist commitment. Furthermore, Jules Guesde, and other French socialist figures, had close ties with the German left-wing press.⁶² Both German socialists and French socialists wrote in each other's newspapers. Thus, in theory German socialists and French socialists shared the same views on nationalism, including on the question of the

⁵⁸ Stuart, Robert. *Marxism and National Identity: Socialism, Nationalism, and National Socialism During the French Fin de Siècle*, State University of New York Press, 2006, Appendix A "Ideology and Terminology", p180.

⁵⁹ Fortescue, William. "The political Right and Left in the early Third Republic", *The Third Republic in France 1870 - 1940: Conflicts and Continuities*, 2001, p36.

⁶⁰ Stuart, Robert. "For us the world!: the Guesdists against the Nation", *Marxism and National Identity: Socialism, Nationalism, and National Socialism During the French Fin de Siècle*, State University of New York Press, 2006, p9.

⁶¹ Fortescue, William. "The political Right and Left in the early Third Republic", *The Third Republic in France 1870 - 1940: Conflicts and Continuities*, 2001, p24.

⁶² Georgen, Marie-Louise. "La place de l'Allemagne dans les biographies des militants français (1871-1914)", *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps*, No 34, 1994, pp. 18-20.

annexation of Alsace-Lorraine by Germany in 1870. As Marie-Louise Georgen pointed out: "For many years, the French socialists, and in particular the Guesdists, constantly reminded their compatriots of the heroic behaviour of the social democrats in 1870-1871".⁶³ This shows a fraternal understanding between the two socialist groups, blurring national borders.

Although Jules Guesde represented a rather radical fringe of the Marxist movement in France, his vision of nationalism and the place of the nation in the left-wing ideology was relatively shared by the whole French left. Indeed, following the Dreyfus Affair, during which nationalism was the number one issue, the left expressed itself by describing the affair as a "family quarrel".⁶⁴ This means that for the left, the Dreyfus Affair was not a matter of state, but rather a military case. Since it was judge by the military tribunal, politicians, and the press did not have to get involved. Nationalism in this case was for the left only a tool used by the right to get the working class' attention and thus, to get them interested in the affair.

However, Louis Blanc, journalist, historian and French politician, eminent figure of the French left, in particular within the Marxist movement, believed that nationalism had a place in socialism. Despite the fact that he admitted that the "national sentiment is no more than the selfishness of peoples"⁶⁵ and that he pleaded "the cause of universal fraternity"⁶⁶ during his early years as a journalist, he believed that socialist interests could only be realised in a France united around the same national values. According to him, France had the role of socialist leader in Europe, meaning that in order to fulfil its role, France had to be unified in front of the other European nations. A Loubère expressed this in these terms:

Nationality is the product of time and historical evolution. But the democratic national organisation results from the desire of all those who share the same nationality to form a nation. Blanc also

⁶³ Georgen, Marie-Louise. p19. "Pendant de longues années, les socialistes français, et notamment les guesdistes, n'ont cessé de rappeler à leurs compatriotes le comportement héroïque des sociaux-démocrates ne 1870-1871."

⁶⁴ Miquel, Pierre. "Introduction", *L'Affaire Dreyfus*, Paris : Presses universitaires de France, 1973, p13. "Les autres dénonçaient le côté querelle de famille d'une affaire exclusivement bourgeoise."

⁶⁵ Loubère, A. "Les idées de Louis Blanc sur le nationalisme, le colonialisme et la guerre", *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, tome 4 N°1, 1957. p 34. "Le sentiment national, écrivait-il, n'est autre que l'égoïsme des peuples."

⁶⁶ Loubère, A. "Les idées de Louis Blanc", p34. "Louis Blanc débute dans la carrière de journaliste en plaidant vigoureusement la cause de la fraternité universelle."

declared that only a nation of this kind could become a true homeland, because patriotism could only grow and flourish under a free government.⁶⁷

Blanc, with this argument, did not represent the majority of the French left. Nonetheless, he was one of the founding figures of the extreme left and the Marxist movement in France. It seems that Guesde was more in tune with the arguments developed by Marx and Engels on the national question, than Louis Blanc. Blanc seemed to be out of touch with the ideological progress in the Marxist movement. On the question of the Polish independence for instance, Louis Blanc expressed his support for Polish national independence early on. As one of the founding figures of the French Marxist movement, and so of the European Marxist movement, Blanc was considered as a "master" that must be followed by the Polish socialists who fought for independence.⁶⁸

Conversely, Jules Guesde was much more in line with the ideas of Rosa Luxemburg on the matter of the Polish independence. Members of Guesdism, as well as other left-wing groups considered that Polish independence could potentially harm the Polish working class and its interests. Indeed, just like Rosa Luxemburg, Guesde and Lafargue thought that this fight "might distract the workers' attention from their main goal: class struggle for their own social liberation".⁶⁹ During the International socialist congress in London in 1896, Jules Guesde and Paul Lafargue, POF representatives, voiced their disagreements with the PPS resolution in favour of Polish independence. According to Kelles-Krauz, a Polish philosopher and member of the PPS, present during the congress in London in 1896, Guesde said:

But it's impossible! Stop it. An international congress cannot pass anything like that, cannot change the map of Europe. If this resolution were taken seriously by the governments, there would be only one result: the renewal of the Holy Alliance of three emperors against Poland, and this we consider a most dangerous thing for European socialism.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Loubère, A. "Les idées de Louis Blanc sur le nationalisme, le colonialisme et la guerre", *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, tome 4 N°1, 1957, p42. "La nationalité est le produit du temps et de l'évolution historique. Mais l'organisation démocratique nationale résulte du désir de tous ceux qui ont la même nationalité de former une nation. Blanc déclarait également que seule une nation de cette espèce pourrait devenir une vraie patrie, parce que le patriotisme ne pourrait croître et fleurir que sous un gouvernement libre."

⁶⁸ Brock, Peter. "The political program of the Polish democratic society ", *The Polish Review*, Vol 14, No 3, 1969, p17.

⁶⁹ Tych, Feliks. *The Polish question at the International socialist congress in London 1896, A contribution to the history of the second international*, Acta Poloniae Historica, 1982, p115.

⁷⁰ Tych. *The Polish question*, p104.

This resolution, Guesde considered not only dangerous, but also contrary to the socialist struggle. For him, socialism should abolish the national barriers and create an international community of fraternity, thus the creation of new nation should not be a concern for the Socialist International. Hence, Rosa Luxemburg and the Marxist movement in France shared a lot of similar views on nationalism. Blanc then seemed to have an ideology that can be considered out of date at the end of the 19th century in regards of nationalism, and compared to the Marxist thinkers' views during the London congress in 1896.

Conclusion of the chapter

What has been analysed throughout this chapter is that nationalism was not a fixed concept and thus, opinions on nationalism were not homogeneous within Marxism. This was a concept that evolved according to who used it and at what period in history. Hence, it is important to define it according to the purpose of the study. Criteria to define who was legitimate to claim nationalist sentiment and national independence also changed. For instance, Marx and Engels considered that a community must have a common language, an extended territory, and a large population, as well as an industrial revolution already underway. Then, in this context nationalist expressions were legitimate, as long as it did not harm the proletarian struggle. For Otto Bauer, whatever the context in which a community evolved, what counted was the common will of a unified group around the same national values. Hence, the community's will came before the class struggle and so, before any type of ideology.

Because of such differences in the definition and perception of nationalism, opinions on topics related to nationalism were also quite heterogeneous. The Polish case is a good example of the lack of unity among the important figures of the Marxist movement. As it is mentioned above, the PPS tried to obtain socialist support for the Polish independence's fight, during the congress in London in 1896. However, a lot of Marxist thinkers expressed their disagreement and considered that this would be contrary to the interests of the Polish proletariat and therefore of the international proletariat. Some used contextual arguments, like Jules Guesde and Paul Lafargue. They believed that because of the context in Poland, the Polish independence would cause an alliance between the three empires, the Austrian Empire, the Prussian Empire and the Russian empire, jeopardising the international balance. Others, like Rosa Luxemburg, used ideological arguments, stating that cutting

off the Polish economic market from the Russian economic market would harm the workers' struggle, and would therefore be contrary to the Marxist ideology.

This chapter highlighted, particularly through the debate surrounding Polish independence in the late 19th century, that it was extremely difficult for Marxists to present a united front on a subject such as nationalism. Thus, in the following chapters, this thesis will attempt to focus on how nationalism was perceived by the French left-wing and how it was expressed in the political press, to later assess whether or not the context impacted the expression of nationalism in the left-wing press.

Second Chapter: analysis of the French left-wing political press from 1886 to 1906

The French press, as mentioned earlier, expanded rapidly in the 1880s, following the law of 1881 on press freedom. Because of its expansion after 1881, the press started to play an increasingly important role in the French political and social life. In this chapter the analysis will focus on understanding what constituted the French press, what were the different positionings, and if there was, or not, a correlation between the positioning of an article, its political leanings and its political and social influence. Three common positions will be analysed: an ideological position, a political position and a factual position. These three categories are defined like this for the purpose of this thesis, and to clarify the various arguments made by the authors in the left-wing political press. These categories are the result of an in-depth analysis of the political press, and they are specific to this thesis. These different postures toward nationalism will provide key elements to understand how nationalism was expressed in the press, and to later fine-tune this study into an analysis of the impact of social elements in the political transcription of nationalism. The main hypothesis is that the French press had a clear and unified opinion on nationalism, that followed Marx and Engel's theory, unlike eminent thinkers of the movement. This chapter will try to answer the two sub questions that are: how was nationalism perceived by French socialists, and how was it expressed by the left-wing press?

The French press

To analyse the press, there is a need to understand who wrote, for which newspapers, what their political leanings were and for which audience. Indeed, in the highly hierarchical political context of the belle époque, each newspaper was forced to adapt to the social class to which it was addressed.⁷¹ In this thesis, three political groups, that constituted the majority of the socialist press, are analysed. First of all, the POF press will be analysed, it was constituted of the official mouthpiece and other official newspapers from the party that were important in the political landscape. The radical libertarian press with communist leanings constituted the second political tendency. This press was not officially affiliated to a political party but represented trade unions, and ideological groups. The last group is made up of the so-called socialist press, representing the

⁷¹ Albert, Pierre. "Remarques sur l'histoire de la presse sous la IIIe République", *Le Mouvement social*, No 53, 1965, p33.

far left. This group consisted of official organs of political parties, workers' unions such as the federation of socialist workers of France (FPTSF), and the mouthpiece of the French section of the socialist International.

Most of the sources analysed in this study were based in Paris, hence they were targeting a Parisian audience. Paris, because of its proximity with the government, and so with the power, was gathering a large number of political newspapers, compared to the rest of France. The Parisian press had a power that the provincial press did not have. Indeed, Paris was and still is the seat of the French power, the Parisian press could quickly mobilise the Parliament, the government and, more generally, the influential opinion of the time.⁷² The only provincial newspaper in the corpus studied in this thesis is *Le Travailleur*, which was the organ of the POF in the north of France. Although they claimed to be aimed at a working-class audience, the newspaper in the corpus were often aimed at the French intelligentsia of the Marxist and Communist left. This Parisian intelligentsia was not only the audience but also the main authors of the socialist press. Hence, most left-wing newspapers were written by intellectuals for intellectuals.

Three types of article, that could be described as major trends marked the positioning of the press. The main position was ideological. The authors adopted a disdainful attitude for ideas that differed from their own. The other position was a factual one, where the author did not take a clear stand. The last type of positioning that can be found was the political positioning. All three groups will be analysed in the following subsections. The political and ideological stances could be seen as quite similar, but in the political positioning, the idea of the socialist victory over the rest of the French political parties was prevalent.

Ideological positioning of the left-wing press

In most articles about nationalism, the tone was usually mocking, and sometimes sharp and bitter. Authors often accused those who disagree of doing what they call "phraseology".⁷³ By "phraseology"⁷⁴, they meant the use of lexical units with a fixed sense, used by their opponent to

⁷² Kayser, Jacques. "La Presse de Province sous la Troisième République", *Revue française de science politique*, Vol 5, No 3, 1955, p549.

⁷³ Zévaès, Alexandre. "Nationalisme et Internationalisme", *Le Socialiste*, No 10, 31 January 1897, p1. "La phraséologie boursoufflée des rhéteurs républicains bourgeois de la fin du second Empire."

⁷⁴ Zévaès. "Nationalisme et Internationalisme", p1.

gather the mass opinion, without giving a proper signification behind these lexical units. Alexandre Zévaès, French socialist politician, writer, historian and journalist, used this term to describe Maurice Barrès' nationalist stance. Barrès was a fervent nationalist, he criticised the international socialist position developed in Marxism. For him, the internationalism of the workers' struggle, one of the basic principles developed by Marx and Engels, and nationalism were opposite, hence socialists were the enemy of nationalism. In an article published in the newspaper *Le Socialiste*, mouthpiece of the POF, Zévaès formulated an answer to Barrès, this response was representative of the disdainful tone often adopted. He used certain words employed by Barrès to dismantle his argument and prove that the socialist conception was more noble, and thus, socialist nationalism was more noble than Barrès' simple conception of nationalism. In this article, the way in which Zévaès showed the superiority of socialism and socialist nationalism was strongly emphasised. Zévaès ended the article with this quote, that illustrated the moral superiority of socialism:

Internationalism is therefore not the abasement or sacrifice of nation; it is its recognition, its consecration. And that is why we, internationalists are, in a way, complete nationalists. Mr Maurice Barrès and his friends are simply narrow-minded nationalists.⁷⁵

The expression of this superiority was all the more apparent because this article was a direct response to the ideological position of a nationalist journalist and politician. The article did not deal with a specific subject, as could be the case with other articles on the question of Alsace-Lorraine or Polish independence, which will be analysed later. Zévaès' article dealt solely with the concept of nationalism and its alleged opposition to socialist internationalism. Zévaès' stance was clear, and it can be considered as a moralising ideological positioning. However, his position did not automatically represent the position of *Le Socialiste*. Indeed, he signed the article with his full name, which was not so common in the political press of the time. Before representing the newspaper's stance, he represented his own political position. As mentioned above, Zévaès was a Member of Parliament before being a journalist. Thus, he defended his position as a leftist without necessarily representing the newspaper's editorial line. It is worth noting that most of the articles with a strong ideological and moralistic stance were signed, meaning that the author could be identified, which was less the case for factual articles that were less virulent. This means that when

⁷⁵ Zévaès, Alexandre. "Nationalisme et Internationalisme", *Le Socialiste*, No 10, 31 January 1897, p1.

"L'internationalisme n'est donc pas l'abaissement ni le sacrifice des nations ; il en est la reconnaissance, la consecration. Et c'est pourquoi nous, les internationalistes, nous sommes en quelque sorte des nationalistes complets. M. Maurice Barrès et ses amis sont simplement des nationalistes bornés."

newspapers were publishing opinionated articles, authors used the newspapers as a platform to defend their political ideas.

Another example of what has just been analysed above is the article written by Sigismond Lacroix, also Member of Parliament, in the newspaper *Le Radical*. Lacroix's article was really similar to Zévaès'. In *Le Radical*, Lacroix gave his opinion on the positions taken by left-wing German intellectuals on the question of Alsace-Lorraine.⁷⁶ He stated that

They consider a proof of great moderation of their part, of the great lie they profess for peace, to be contente with what they have taken and not to claim Bourgogne in the West and the Baltic provinces in the East.⁷⁷

Lacroix criticised the German position that he considered as dismissive towards France, and in particular towards the population of Alsace-Lorraine. In the article the author's opinion could be detected and interpreted as being in favour of the return of Alsace-Lorraine to France. Yet, this position was not the most obvious one, as he did not explicitly stated it. It could be interpreted because of his heavy criticism of German position. In this sense, Lacroix and Zévaès argued in the same way, by constructing their position in opposition to those they criticised. The pungent tone used by Lacroix was well shown by this quote: « as long as the Germans think they are right, everything is said, the others do not even have to argue; they just have to bow down ».⁷⁸ In this article, Lacroix mocked the German position, which was to want to keep Alsace-Lorraine as German, to highlight his opposition, without positioning himself as a nationalist. Yet, the use of mockery placed him, like Zévaès, in a position of moral superiority compared to the opposing side.

Political positioning of the left-wing press

The political positioning was quite similar to the ideological positioning, the difference that can be found was that ideological articles were above all in opposition to an idea, a person, or a party, as demonstrated above. Political articles stated their attitude toward nationalism depending on what

⁷⁶ Lacroix, Sigismond. "Les Intellectuels allemands", *Le Radical*, No 271, 28 September 1905, p1.

⁷⁷ Lacroix. "Les Intellectuels allemands", p1. "Ils considèrent comme une preuve de grande modération de leur part, du grand amour qu'ils professent pour la paix, le fait par eux de se contenter de ce qu'ils ont pris de ne pas réclamer, à l'Ouest la Bourgogne, à l'Est les provinces baltiques."

⁷⁸ Ibid. "On n'est pas plus aimable : du moment que les Allemands pensent avoir raison, tout est dit ; les autres n'ont même pas à discuter ; ils n'ont qu'à s'incliner."

the goal was. The two articles analysed below had different views, however their common point was the triumph of socialism, or at least the promotion of socialism, superior to the country's other political parties. The articles defended values such as honour, especially on the question of Alsace-Lorraine, or justice, during the Dreyfus Affair for example. The article from *La Solution sociale* for instance represented a fight for honour, without taking a clear nationalist stance. Alsace-Lorraine, would inevitably return to French hands, whether through war or through what the author called "the march of ideas"⁷⁹, which meant by diplomatic means. It was clear that the author was critical of war, and hoped that Alsace-Lorraine would be returned to France by diplomatic means, but this seemed unlikely. Thus, although war was seen by the socialists, and by the author, as something used by the bourgeoisie to their advantage, in the case of Alsace-Lorraine, war was seen as "holy" since it aimed to recover a territory and a population defied by the German enemy. As it is written in the article:

Wars serve only to exalt the pride of the powerful, who regard those they call their subject as a herd of cattle; the people cannot benefit from them, whatever the outcome. This is why people do not like war, and they are right. But there are holy wars! A war is holy when it is waged by a population to conquer freedom. A war is holy when it is waged by a population whose honour or possession has been outraged.⁸⁰

What is being said here was that in this specific case, war would not make people suffer for the benefit of the rulers. Despite the fact that the nationalist cause was not clearly named, the author named the population of Alsace-Lorraine as outraged.

Contrary to an ideological positioning, the political positioning was usually written in a serious tone, the authors gave themselves importance and gave importance to what they were defending. The articles focused on defending a specific cause as the authors perceived to be their moral duty. Unlike the ideological articles which most often attacked their opponent. Ultimately, the main difference between an ideological posture and a political posture was the aim. Political articles sought the triumph of socialism. This category related directly to French policy, whereas the

⁷⁹ "Alsace-Lorraine", *La Solution sociale*, No 1, 15 January 1888, p3.

⁸⁰ "Alsace-Lorraine", p3. "Les guerres ne servent qu'à exalter l'orgueil des puissants, qui regardent ceux qu'ils appellent leurs sujets, comme un troupeau de bétail ; les peuples ne sauraient y trouver profit, quelqu'en soit le résultat. Voilà pourquoi les peuples n'aiment pas la guerre ; et ils ont raison. Cependant il y a des guerres saintes ! Une guerre est sainte quand c'est celle d'un peuple pour conquérir la liberté. Une guerre est sainte quand c'est celle d'un peuple outragé dans son honneur ou dans sa possession."

ideological position related to concepts that were sometimes more international concepts. Paul Lafargue, in *Le Socialiste*, was a great example of this moral duty that socialism should have, in this case to succeed to nationalism:

Nationalism, which has neither the surface nor the intensity of Boulangism, will not last long: many of those whom it drags along with it, having seen its powerlessness to reform, will turn to socialism; it is not for us to insult them and call them savages and to advocate for cooperation as the supreme means of action; on the contrary, we must redouble our fervour and enthusiasm to propagate the emancipatory theories of revolutionary socialism in all circles. Let's get to work, comrades! Nationalism is one of the precursors of the triumph of socialism.⁸¹

According to the author, the triumph of socialism must come first, it should be the first outcome. In the case of the article in *La Solution sociale*, although it was not explicit, the author was against nationalism because it generated war that would later favour the capitalistic system. When honour was mentioned, the author was not referring to the French honour, but rather the honour of the population of Alsace-Lorraine that was not taken into consideration during, and after, the war. In other words, the population here was used as a pawn for the benefit of the capitalistic system, maintained by France and Germany. Hence, the author was against nationalism that gave rise to this type of war, where populations were scorned. The interests of the population, and more specifically the proletariat, must be defended at all costs, meaning here that a war would be beneficial. The good of the proletariat, and thus the Marxist doctrine, came before anything else.

Ultimately, political articles were more often against any form of nationalism, as it was opposed to the political agenda of French socialism. Yet, some events called for a reaction that could be perceived as the expression of nationalism, as it was the case in *La Solution sociale*, although it was not the initial goal. For the case of Alsace-Lorraine, the author was not advocating for the restoration of the French honour, but rather for the restoration of the proletarian honour.

⁸¹ Lafargue, Paul. "Nationalisme et socialisme", *Le Socialiste*, No 91, 27 mai 1900, p1. "Le nationalisme qui n'a ni la surface ni l'intensité du boulangisme, ne fera pas de vieux os : nombreux sont ceux qu'il entraîne, qui après avoir constaté son impuissance réformatrice se retourneront vers le socialisme ; ce n'est donc pas à nous à les insulter et à les traiter de sauvages et à leur prôner la coopération comme suprême moyen d'action, nous devons au contraire redoubler d'ardeur et d'enthousiasme pour propager dans tous les milieux les théories émancipatrices du socialisme révolutionnaire. A l'oeuvre, camarades! Le nationalisme est un des phénomènes avant-coureurs du triomphe du socialisme."

Factual positioning of the left-wing press

Although it was not the case for most articles from the socialist press, some articles were reluctant to take an open stance on the nationalist question. Those articles were usually unsigned, and quite descriptive. The best example of this type of positioning is the article in *Le Parti ouvrier*, in the "universal chronicle" section. This anonymous article explained the repercussions of the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine on the people of the region. According to the authors "Germanisation"⁸² in the cities was almost complete, and in the countryside the populations were not concerned of the national question. All that matters to them was the amount of tax they would pay. Even though it was not mentioned clearly, the lack of a clear positioning showed an opposition to nationalist ideologies. Indeed, by stating that there was no real change among the population in Alsace-Lorraine, for example the germanisation in the cities was not depicted in a positive or negative light, the author demonstrated that the change of nationality was not a serious matter. The argument, although not clearly stated, was that the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine was a trivial act because it did not lead to change. This meant that for the author, the French population was not inherently nationalist, since the annexation did not result in a major change in the French population's life. The author even added that the only people who fought against the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine were those who did not live this reality.⁸³ Hence those who lived the annexation did not protest in favour of French nationalist ideals. What was highlighted in this article is the absence of a nationalist sentiment, which was opposed to what was demonstrated in the article of *La Solution sociale*.

An unclear posture toward nationalism: what the newspaper's positions reveals

One thing that immediately came to mind after analysing and dividing the types of articles into three categories was that there was a complete lack of consensus on what to think of nationalism and how to express it. Indeed, in the articles studied above, there was no clear opinion on nationalism representing the majority of newspapers. Even though it seemed that anti-nationalism was the prevailing opinion, Lafargue being the best example of it, the reasons for this rejection of patriotism and nationalism were numerous. For some, nationalism was not something inherently wrong, it was the use of the nationalist discourse by the capitalist society that was misleading and dangerous. For instance, in *Le Parti ouvrier*, in 1896, the author defended its own vision of

⁸² "Universal chronicles", *Le Parti ouvrier*, No 1154, 27 August 1895, p2.

⁸³ "Universal chronicles", *Le Parti ouvrier*, p2.

patriotism while criticising the capitalistic system that used national resources for its own profit. In the article, the author opposed two different visions of nationalism, one that was in line with the socialist and Marxist principles, for the good of the proletariat, and one that was evil and benefited only the powerful.

I would go on and on if I had to list all the cases where this patriotism, which we boast about and pride ourselves on practising, gives way when it clashes with personal interest, whether well understood or misunderstood. Well, we do not want that kind of patriotism, where self-interest is the goal, the strength, the means.⁸⁴

It is out of patriotism that we are fighting for the establishment of a new social state where the well-being of all, and against the present organisation which makes wealth of a minority out of the misery of the mass.⁸⁵

As stated above, not all socialist authors were against nationalism. Those who were against nationalism, did not necessarily considered it to be contrary to the Marxist doctrine, but rather to cause the proletariat to turn away from class struggle. This is well shown by *Le Radical*, in 1898, in an article about a workers' congress on antisemitism. It clearly stated that nationalist movements wanted to oppose patriotism to workers' internationalism, which was a "double political and economic manoeuvre"⁸⁶ to divide and to set workers against each other, "whose emancipation depends on their international union".⁸⁷ Part of the French left saw nationalism as a rival of socialism, not because it was contrary to Marxism, but because it distracted workers from the class struggle. Nationalism wasted worker's energy on issues that did not concern them, such as the Dreyfus Affair. As mentioned earlier, Pierre Miquel used the terms "family quarrel"⁸⁸ to describe the way in which the socialists referred to the affair in the political press. This vision of the left-wing press was quite accurate and representative of the arguments against nationalism. Paul

⁸⁴ B. "Patriotisme", *Le Parti ouvrier*, No 1274, 30 July 1896, p1. " Je n'en finirais pas, s'il me fallait énumérer tous les cas où ce patriotisme, dont on se vante et qu'on s'honore de pratiquer cède le pas lorsqu'il est en opposition avec l'intérêt personnel bien ou mal compris. Eh bien, de ce patriotisme-là, où l'intérêt est le but, la force, le moyen, nous n'en voulons pas."

⁸⁵ B. "Patriotisme", *Le Parti ouvrier*, p1. "C'est par patriotisme que nous luttons pour l'instauration d'un nouvel état social où le bien-être de tous sera la conséquence des efforts de tous, et contre l'organisation actuelle qui fait l'aisance d'une minorité, de la misère de la masse."

⁸⁶ "Bulletin social", *Le Radical*, No 264, 21 September 1898, p3.

⁸⁷ "Bulletin social", *Le Radical*, p3. "un moyen de diviser et d'armer les uns contre les autres les travailleurs, les travailleurs dont l'affranchissement est subordonné à leur union internationale."

⁸⁸ Miquel, Pierre. "Introduction", *L'Affaire Dreyfus*, Paris : Presses universitaires de France, 1973, p13. "Les autres dénonçaient le côté querelle de famille d'une affaire exclusivement bourgeoise."

Lafargue's article represented this conception of nationalism as a matter of secondary importance. According to him, "bourgeois liberals and socialist intellectuals"⁸⁹ pushed their nationalist agenda on the workers during the Dreyfus Affair. The proletariat, thus, thought that there would be positive repercussions, that once the case was settled, inequalities would disappear. Hence, for Lafargue, the proletariat was duped by French elites, leading them to engage in a struggle that was not their own.

It is fairly difficult to draw conclusions on the meaning of the different positions of newspapers, based on the analysis made above. As stated earlier, opinions were numerous and the way they were expressed was also diverse. One problem that can be raised in analysing the position of the left-wing press was the fact that newspapers were de facto politicised. The authors writing in these newspapers were also politicised figures, sometimes even members of the government. Thus, it is challenging to make the difference between the editorial line of the newspapers, and the ideological and political positions of members of the government, sometimes amounting to political propaganda, particularly shortly after political elections. For instance, the article from Charles Rappoport in *Le Socialiste*, a few days only after the elections of 1906, represented this political propaganda. In the articles, Rappoport explained to the readers that socialism represented the future and that it must form a coalition with the bourgeoisie, which represented the present, to defeat nationalism, which represented the past.⁹⁰ This article was the illustration of the author's approach to respecting the principles of socialism. In other words, Charles Rappoport, a communist activist, and later a politician with the SFIO, explained and justified the coalition, while asking the readers to support their leaders in this decision.

Conclusion of the chapter

In this chapter, the analysis focused on the French press, what it represented and the different means used by authors of articles to get their idea across. The three categories developed in this chapter helped to structure the different modes of expression, and thus to have a deeper analysis of the expression of nationalism. Despite the fact that an ideological and a political position could be quite similar, the main difference was that the political stance was inherently linked to French politics, and therefore linked to the Socialist victory over the rest of the French political parties. Because of that, in the political positioning there was a conception of fight, which was absent in the ideological

⁸⁹ Lafargue, Paul. "Nationalisme et socialisme", *Le Socialiste*, No 91, 27 mai 1900, p1. "Les libéraux de la bourgeoisie et les intellectuels du socialisme."

⁹⁰ Rappoport, Ch. "Le vrai vainqueur du 6 mai", *Le Socialiste*, No 57, 2 June 1906, pp. 1-2.

position. This meant that at the end, the result could only be the victory of socialist ideas. However, some notions developed in articles, in *La Solution sociale* for example, could be perceived as contrary to the common socialist positioning. In *La Solution sociale*, the author was promoting war in order to regain Alsace-Lorraine. To make their claim more aligned with the socialist line of the newspapers, the author proceeded to explain how this war would make possible to regain the honour of the Alsatian and Lorrain proletariat, and not to regain the French honour lost because of the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, used by the capitalist system for its own profit.

It seemed clear that some events or phenomenon provoked numerous reactions, with more or less intensity, and a more or less pronounced stance from the French press. As a matter of fact, some important events, like the elections of 1906, had an influence on the authors' political thinking, which was later expressed in the press. In general terms, the authors' positions were rather nuanced. Yet, for the question of Alsace-Lorraine, the majority of the articles were advocating for a return of the region to France and were criticising of the German attitude. Overall, what often emerged from the press from 1886 to 1906 was that nationalism was not seen as a dangerous concept in itself, and was even sometimes relatively showcased in a good light, as Alexander Zévaès did in *Le Socialiste*. But the context in which it was used and for what purpose had a strong impact on the left's perception of nationalism.

Third Chapter: Analysis of the impact of the French context on nationalism

The beginning of the Third Republic was shaped by many national and international phenomena, that impacted the political and social life of the country. In this chapter, three main events will be analysed to better understand the, sometimes, unstable context in which the political press developed from 1886 to 1906. The London Congress, the Dreyfus Affair and the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine represented important events in the complex political, social and geopolitical context of France at that time. The order of these sections was made in order to study the events from the shortest to the longest. The London Congress lasted only a few days in 1896, the Dreyfus Affair took place over several years, from 1894 to 1906, and the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine was an ongoing trauma that lasted until its return to France in 1919. This allows to progressively shed a light on key elements of these three turning points. The London Congress of 1896 and the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine placed France in an international context that strongly impacted the public opinion, especially on the question of nationalism. In this chapter the main hypothesis that will be developed is that the context was a more important component in the French left views than Marxist ideology. As said previously, the political press was, at that time, the representation of the political landscape of the country. This chapter will try to build connections between the theoretical framework analysed in the first chapter, and the case study of the French press, analysed in the second chapter. The context will then be a new element to explain the differences and similarities between the two chapters. The last sub question will be answered by the end of this chapter, which will conclude this thesis. To what extent the French left had detached itself from Marxism on the question of nationalism?

The London Congress in 1896 and Polish independence

The Workers' International held in 1896, called the London Congress, marked a turning point in the international socialist movement. France experienced at that time a series of anarchist attacks, leading to the murder of the French president, Sadi Carnot, in 1894, by an Italian anarchist.⁹¹ As a result, the anarchist movement was frowned upon by the political class, including Marxist parties such as the POF. During the Congress, within the French delegation, socialists and anarchists were opposed on most topics. According to the anarchist movement, French socialists were "dominated

⁹¹ Goldberg, Harvey. "French Socialism and the Congress of London of 1896", *The Historian*, Vol 19, No 4, 1957, p405.

by the impressive German delegation"⁹², which they distrusted, perceiving the "danger of German leadership".⁹³ Hence the French delegation was far from being united during the Congress. It was also the last time the anarchist movement would participate in the Workers' International, as it was definitively excluded at the end of the Congress.

It is rather challenging to find press articles about the London Congress in the left-wing press, especially on the question of Polish independence. One of the only newspapers to publish on the Polish delegation's request for independence was *Le Parti ouvrier*, in 1897. The author, Charles Kautsky, questioned whether the Congress was legitimate in taking a position on the question of a country's independence.⁹⁴ It is difficult to explain this silence from the press. This could be due to a difference of opinion between the French delegation and the press. In any case, this silence raises some questions, as the Congress was a turning point in the history of the Socialist International.

As mentioned earlier, the PPS took the opportunity in 1896 to put forward a motion in support of the Polish independence, thanks to the initiative of Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz.⁹⁵ According to Feliks Tych, most of the socialist leaders who attended the Congress were in favour of Polish independence⁹⁶, except for Rosa Luxemburg who was very vocal on the issue. However, the entire French delegation, Jules Guesde and Paul Lafargue in particular, were firmly opposed to it. It was one of the only points where socialists and anarchists were on the same wavelength. One of the elements often used by the defenders of Polish independence was that an independent Poland could harm Russia that was considered as the "citadel of reaction"⁹⁷ by many socialists. In other words, Russia was the enemy of the proletariat and all means were considered justified to destroy the tsarist empire. Luxemburg's stance was analysed earlier, according to her, a large market would lead

⁹² Goldberg. "French Socialism and the Congress of London of 1896", *The Historian*, Vol 19, No 4, 1957, p414.

⁹³ Goldberg. "French Socialism", p414.

⁹⁴ Kautsky, Charles. "L'indépendance de la Pologne", *Le Parti ouvrier*, No 1330, 22 January 1897, p1.

⁹⁵ Snyder, Timothy. "Un socialiste polonais à Paris ou pourquoi le socialisme marxiste a-t-il méconnu l'importance du phénomène national? À la lumière des enseignements que l'on peut tirer du congrès de Londres (1896) de la IIe Internationale", *Revue des études slaves*, Vol 71, No 2, 1999, p244.

⁹⁶ Tych, Feliks. *The Polish question at the International socialist congress in London 1896, A contribution to the history of the second international*, Acta Poloniae Historica, 1982, pp. 115-115.

⁹⁷ Cliff, Tony. Chapter 3 "Lénine et la question nationale", *Lénine*, Pluto Press, 1975, p41. "Citadelle de la réaction".

to a better chance to destroy Russia. Hence granting the Polish request for independence would not lead to the destruction of the Tsarist Empire, according to Luxemburg.

Yet, nothing explains the firm position of the French delegation. According to Timothy Snyder, the French-Russian alliance, signed in 1892, was the explanation for the French refusal to take part in the debates on Polish national legitimacy.⁹⁸ This alliance was rather well received by the population and the French socialists did not want to betray it, especially as they were perceived as anti-patriotic.⁹⁹ The alliance was signed to guarantee France a strong ally, particularly after the loss of part of its territory, which traumatised the population. Taking decisions contrary to this alliance would then mean rejecting national sovereignty and offending the French population. Yet, as mentioned earlier in the first chapter, Guesde used the terms "Holy Alliance"¹⁰⁰ to scare off the other socialists in the Congress, in order to prevent the motion of the PPS. One question remains, if France already signed an alliance with Russia in 1892, why would Guesde use the argument of a potential alliance between the Russian Empire, the Austrian Empire and the Prussian Empire? As a matter of fact, the alliance between France and Russia remained an international secret until 1897, when the French president Felix Faure revealed it.¹⁰¹ Hence, the other socialists present during the London Congress in 1896 were unaware that such an alliance existed, and Guesde was therefore able to use the argument presented above. French socialists did know about this alliance, before 1896, indeed Tony Révillon mentioned the alliance in an article published in 1893.¹⁰²

However, there are several criticisms of this alliance in the French left-wing press. Some authors did not see this alliance as a guarantee for peace. For instance, in *Le Radical*, Tony Révillon raised his concerns. For him, English interests were opposed to Russian interests in the middle East, and Germany had colonial ambitions in this region as well. This means that Germany and Russia were

⁹⁸ Snyder, Timothy. "Un socialiste polonais à Paris ou pourquoi le socialisme marxiste a-t-il méconnu l'importance du phénomène national? À la lumière des enseignements que l'on peut tirer du congrès de Londres (1896) de la IIe Internationale", *Revue des études slaves*, Vol 71, No 2, 1999, p247.

⁹⁹ Snyder. "Un socialiste polonais à Paris", p254.

¹⁰⁰ Feliks Tych, *The Polish question at the International socialist congress in London 1896, A contribution to the history of the second international*, Acta Poloniae Historica, 1982, p115.

¹⁰¹ De Boisdeffre, Pierre. "Le général de Boisdeffre et l'Alliance franco-russe (1890-1892)", *Hommes et mondes*, no 99, 1954, p328.

¹⁰² Révillon, Tony. "Les lois d'exil", *Le Radical*, No 309, 5 November 1893, p1.

"born allies"¹⁰³ against England. Hence, for Tony Révillon, France, which also had poor relations with Great Britain, and was allied with Russia, could be led into a war alongside Germany because of this game of alliances and interests. The defeat in Sedan and the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine was still a vivid memory for the population, and the idea of going to war alongside Germany was enough to despise this alliance. This proved to be partially true, since France was drawn into the First World War as a result of the alliances established by the Franco-Russian alliance of 1892, although France was against Germany in the conflict. Thus, public opinion of this alliance was fairly mixed. This ties in with the explanation given earlier about the silence of the press on Polish independence and the positions of the POF leaders.

The London Congress of 1896 showed complicated relations between French socialists and other international socialists, and even between the socialist representatives at the Congress and the socialist press. The geopolitical context, the game of alliances in particular, made it more complex to achieve harmony within the Workers' International and challenged the ambition to work towards the same goal. Contrary to what Guesde advocated, the socialist movement did not form an international unit against the capitalist system and the European bourgeoisie. This was particularly clear in the French left-wing press, which was unable to agree on a common line of action. The plurality of geopolitical, socio-economic and cultural contexts in the international socialist movement blinded the leaders to the interests of others.

The Dreyfus Affair, "a family quarrel" or an embarrassing case for the French left?

The case of General Dreyfus was initially a military affair, which then became affairs of state, and ended up being the basis of a split in French society, opposing the Dreyfusards and the anti-Dreyfusards. The political press had an important role in the spread of the affair to all levels of society, and created the "Dreyfus myth".¹⁰⁴ Yet, the socialist press was reluctant to adopt a clear position, whether it be on the side of the Dreyfusards or the anti-Dreyfusards. In 1894, only few left-wing newspapers devoted space to the Dreyfus Affair, which occupied the front pages of the rest of the press. It was all the more curious, given the fact that in December 1894 an initial

¹⁰³ Révillon, Tony. "L'Alliance", *Le Radical*, No 241, 29 August 1897, p1. "La Russie et l'Allemagne sont des alliées nées, pour ainsi dire, contre l'Angleterre."

¹⁰⁴ Miquel, Pierre. "Introduction", *L'Affaire Dreyfus*, Paris : Presses universitaires de France, 1973, p7. "C'est elle qui fait du cas de Dreyfus l'Affaire, puis le mythe Dreyfus."

judgement was handed down, condemning the General Dreyfus guilty of spying against the French army.

However, the newspaper *L'Intransigeant*, a newspaper of the extreme left, published several articles throughout the whole affair. This could be explained because its director, Henri Rochefort, was a fervent anti-Dreyfusard. *L'Intransigeant* was one of the few, if not the only left-wing newspaper, to regularly publish articles with a clear political stance from the start of the affair. In an article published in November 1894, Rochefort firmly accused Dreyfus of being a traitor, and said that "Dreyfus was simply a German who had joined our army to disorganise it, and the Ministry of War, to spy for Wilhelm II, his emperor."¹⁰⁵ In the article, Rochefort distanced himself from Dreyfus. He was a traitor, but above all, he was a German. Dreyfus represented the otherness, he represented the German enemy. This vision of otherness as the enemy was fundamental in the nationalist vision. Although he never mentioned any patriotic intent, Rochefort's article reflected a strong nationalist position. Another thing that is worth noticing is the title of Rochefort's article. Despite the fact that the newspaper seemed to be very involved in the case, Rochefort titled his article "Sans Importance", which means "Unimportant". This was a way of following the left-wing trend to not engage in the affair in the early years.

The year 1898 was a turning point for the affair, as Emile Zola, famous French writer, published the notorious article "J'accuse...!" in the newspaper *L'Aurore*, a newspaper of the liberal left. It was a letter addressed for the French president, Felix Faure, about the Dreyfus Affair, that he considered to be "the most indelible stain".¹⁰⁶ Zola accused the government of being complicit in the conviction of an innocent man. From this point onwards, the Marxist left-wing press took a turn and engaged in the debate. Nonetheless, the main position among the socialists was not to accuse or defend Dreyfus, but rather to criticise the importance of the case in the public space. According to some, the case did not concern the proletariat, which was mostly afraid of a new war with Germany. The working class was, at that time, opposed to the government Waldeck-Rousseau. This government was a coalition government, bringing together the left-wing parties, in reaction to a nationalist movement caused by the Dreyfus Affair. The working class, who did not have faith in

¹⁰⁵ Rochefort, Henri. "Sans Importance", *L'Intransigeant*, No 5227, 5 November 1894, p1. "Ce Dreyfus serait simplement un Allemand entré dans notre armée pour la désorganiser, et au ministère de la guerre pour y pratiquer l'espionnage au profit de Guillaume II, son empereur."

¹⁰⁶ Zola, Émile. "J'accuse...! Lettre au Président de la République", *L'Aurore*, No 87, 13 January 1898, pp. 1-2.

the government, then turned in favour of the nationalist parties and the extreme-right.¹⁰⁷ Hence, for some socialists, the proletariat was paying the price of the Dreyfus Affair, since they took a position in favour of a party that did not support them, namely the extreme-right. In this sense, although the socialist press took a clearer position from 1898 onwards, it remained highly critical of the affair, even accusing it of corrupting the proletariat.

The Annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, a scar in the French history

The events from 1870 and the armistice signed with Germany led to one of the most painful memories in the French History of the 19th century. The annexation of Alsace-Lorraine represented a trauma for the French society, especially since Germany has been considered an enemy of France since the French Revolution. This led to the hate of Germany, its citizens, and more generally everything that was considered slightly German by the public opinion. This was well shown in the Dreyfus Affair, as one of the proofs often given to justify the General's guilt was his German nationality. The newspaper *L'Intransigeant* was particularly critical of the Germans. For instance, in an article named "German provocations", published in 1895, about a military parade that happened at the Franco-German border, on the French side, the author said about Germans:

The Germanophile newspapers persist in trying to convince us that Germany is "preparing the peace". What a strange way to prepare for peace by arousing the resentment of the vanquished by incessant provocations!¹⁰⁸

As stated in this quote, some of the authors in the left-wing press shared with the rest of the French population a poor opinion about Germans. Here, Germans were provoking the French population in Alsace-Lorraine, and that instead of advocating for peace, Germany stirred up French resentment, which was still strong, a few decades after the annexation.

The hatred of Germany among French population led to the General Boulanger's accession to power. The French working class and French socialists, which until 1889 had maintained an internationalist stance, turned to Boulanger, who had strong patriotic views. For the first time, a

¹⁰⁷ "Les causes du Nationalisme", *Le Travailleur*, No 3, 28 July 1900, p1.

¹⁰⁸ "Provocations allemandes", *L'Intransigeant*, No 5514, 19 August 1895, p1. "Les journaux germanophiles persistent à vouloir nous convaincre que l'Allemagne "prépare la paix". Singulière façon de la préparer que d'exciter par d'incessantes provocations le ressentiment des vaincus!"

nationalist party, that was not a right-wing party, won the General elections in 1889. Zeev Sternhell explained the Boulangist crisis in these words:

Of course, the feeling of humiliation, the resulting patriotic surge, the atmosphere of diplomatic tension with Germany and the myth of capitulation to Bismarck greatly favoured the Boulangist upsurge, but did not give rise to it. ¹⁰⁹

If the trauma caused by the loss of Alsace-Lorraine did not create the Boulangist crisis, it played a major part in his victory in 1889. Boulanger was a "catalyst"¹¹⁰ for radicalism. He represented a new era in the political landscape of the beginning of the Third Republic. He conciliated patriotism, that rose up among all classes of the population since 1870, as well as socialist views. Hence, Boulanger used the hatred for Germany and its people to his own profit.

Overall, the working class tended to view Germany as the clear opponent, this was what made Boulanger so successful. However, the socialist intelligentsia had a more nuanced point of view. Alsace-Lorraine was indeed the sole topic where left and right-wing, the bourgeoisie and the working class, agreed. France has been robbed of part of its territory, and Alsace-Lorraine would come back to the French fold. This feeling was for instance echoed in *La Solution sociale*'s article, analysed in the second chapter. Two approaches on the question of Alsace-Lorraine can be analysed. The first approach was a strong feeling of hate for Germany in its entirety, as demonstrated earlier in this chapter.

The other approach would be the one of Jules Guesde and Paul Lafargue, and more generally the one of the leaders of the left-wing parties. According to Guesde, Germany had a double face, there was "on the one hand imperial Germany, and on the other socialist Germany"¹¹¹, of which the

¹⁰⁹ Sternhell, Zeev. "Barrès et la gauche : du boulangisme à la cocarde, 1889-1895", *Le Mouvement social*, No 75, 1971, p77. "Bien sur le sentiment d'humiliation, le sursaut patriotique qui en provient, l'atmosphère de tension diplomatique avec l'Allemagne et le mythe de la capitulation devant Bismarck favorisent grandement la poussée boulangiste, mais ne l'engendrent pas."

¹¹⁰ Mollenhauer, Daniel. "A la Recherche de la vraie République : quelques jalons pour une histoire du radicalisme des débuts de la Troisième République", *Revue Historique*, July/Septembre 1998, p612.

¹¹¹ Seidel, Jutta. "Le mouvement ouvrier allemand et les événements de 1870-1871", *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, No 2, 1972, p286. "D'une part l'Allemagne impériale, d'autre part l'Allemagne socialiste."

French socialists were proud to be closely united¹¹². On the one side, there was a capitalist state, that only favoured the interests of its leaders. And on the other side, there was a country that believed in socialists views, with a large working class, and a strong social-democrat party that followed the Marxist doctrine. At that time, there was a strong collaboration between the German and French socialist groups.¹¹³ As mentioned earlier in the first chapter, there was a fraternal understanding between the two socialist groups.¹¹⁴ Ultimately, this difference in the way of seeing Germany impacted how nationalism was expressed, especially on the question of Alsace-Lorraine. The impact of the annexation was beyond important in the beginning of the Third Republic. The signing of the armistice in 1870 and the loss of Alsace-Lorraine shaped the Third Republic. This was especially the case since those who rebelled against the signature, by taking part in the Paris Commune, were those who later became part of the French socialist and Marxist elite. Hence, the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine shaped how nationalism was viewed and expressed among French socialists, and so how it was expressed in the socialist press.

Conclusion of the chapter

Generally speaking, the position of the French political press was relatively versatile from 1886 to 1906. The newspapers' stances were changing depending on the situation, the event in question, and who was writing the article. Some events were so traumatic, like the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, that the majority of the socialist press agreed on the same patriotic position. They agreed on the fact that the region was French and that it would come back to France, one way or another. The difference lied in their vision of Germany as the enemy in its entirety, or just its leaders and government. Those who had a deeper connections with the German socialists were more inclined to blame the leaders of a bourgeois system, rather than the country as a whole. These connections could be via the Workers' International, communication with other leading figures of the SPD, or through mutual collaborations, especially in the political press. Hence, what determined the exact position of the French political press was rather the connections that the person writing the article might have at the time, instead of Marx's words.

¹¹² Seidel, Jutta. "Le mouvement ouvrier allemand et les événements de 1870-1871", *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, No 2, 1972, p286.

¹¹³ Seidel. "Le mouvement ouvrier allemand", p282.

¹¹⁴ Georgen, Marie Louise. "La place de l'Allemagne dans les biographies des militants français (1871-1914)", *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps*, No 34, 1994, p19.

During the Dreyfus Affair, the left-wing press was reluctant to take a clear position, whether it be in favour or against General Dreyfus, especially at the beginning of the affair, in 1894. Usually, the nationalist positions in the press were from anti-Dreyfusards newspapers, which held antisemitic, xenophobic, and hateful views towards the Germans. By its silence, the socialist press refused to participate in such positions, as it was contrary to their Marxist beliefs. However, when the socialist press took a stance in the case, like *L'Intransigeant* did, the nationalist position did not include other elements such as antisemitism, contrary to the right-wing press. It was often reduced to Dreyfus's German nationality, since Germany was France's enemy. Nonetheless, the main position was that the Dreyfus Affair was turning the working class away from the proletarian struggle. This kind of position was shared by many of the Marxist figures, like Rosa Luxemburg.¹¹⁵

The question of the Polish independence during the London Congress was an interesting topic to study, as it allowed to compare the French socialists' positions to socialist groups in other countries. The fact that eminent figures of Marxism, such as Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg, also discussed the issue in their work, explains why the London Congress was a major event in the Marxist history. Their positions help understand the French positions towards nationalism. This chapter highlighted the fact that French socialists, and the left-wing press, were not in favour of Polish independence. This position was not shared by many other international socialist groups. The French position could also be considered contrary to Lenin's views, who clearly expressed his position in favour of Polish independence.¹¹⁶ To a certain extent, it could also be considered as contrary to Marx and Engels' position, although they did not specify their position on Poland's national question. The alliance with Russia, therefore France's political context, explained this opposition to the main opinion within Marxism. This could be seen as a form of nationalism, France defended its interest, by signed an alliance with Russia, in spite of another nation's rights to independence.

¹¹⁵ Zuzowski, Robert. "Nationalism and Marxism in Eastern Europe", *Politikon*, 2006, p73.

¹¹⁶ Rodinson Maxime. "Le marxisme et la nation", *L'Homme et la société*, N. 7, 1968. numéro spécial 150^e anniversaire de la mort de Karl Marx, p136.

Conclusion

This thesis had the ambition to put in perspective Marx and Engels' vision of nationalism, by studying the case of the French socialist press from 1886 to 1906. The main assumption of this thesis was that the social and political context of France from 1886 to 1906 had a more important impact on the perception of nationalism by the socialists, than the Marxist theory of nationalism. Following this line of reasoning, the research question was then: to what extent did the French social and political context played a role in the framing of nationalism by the left-wing during the Third Republic?

As demonstrated throughout this thesis, nationalism was an evolving concept, its meaning varied depending on its use, and purpose. In Marx and Engels' theory, the concept of nationalism was different than the concept theorised by Benedict Anderson. For them, a community had a legitimate claim to independence only when it met certain specific criteria. They considered that the community should have large enough country to constitute an efficient market economy, a common language, and an industrial revolution already underway.¹¹⁷ However, this definition was not shared by all. Even within the Marxist movement, different definitions occurred, that gave nationalism more or less importance. The definition of Otto Bauer, "the leading Austrian theorist on the national question"¹¹⁸, established that nationalism was not in competition with the class struggle, and even contributed to the emancipation of the worker, no matter the context of the community. Bauer's vision was in complete opposition with Rosa Luxemburg's way of thinking on the topic of nationalism. The context in which Luxemburg evolved explained her radical opposition to Polish independence, and more generally to any kind of national claim. Pilsudski, leader of the PPS, tried to rally nationalist voices from the right-wing to gain more influence within the party, which for Luxemburg was totally contrary to her Marxist ideas. In order for Poland to achieve independence, Marxist ideology had to be corrupted, and collaboration with the right-wing had to be accepted. Thus, in her view, the class struggle was put on the back burner, behind the fight for independence.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Nimni, Ephraim. "Marx, Engels and the National Question", *Science & Society*, Vol 53, No 3, Fall 1989, p305.

¹¹⁸ Cliff, Tony. "Lénine et la question nationale", *Lénine*, 1975, p39. "Le principal théoricien autrichien sur la question nationale était Otto Bauer."

¹¹⁹ Cliff, Tony. "Lénine et la question nationale", *Lénine*, 1975, p41.

Hence, the lack of a common vision of nationalism, as well as different situations for each socialist from the Marxist movement, made it difficult to take collective decisions. The case of Polish independence showed the lack of consensus among the Marxist thinkers. This provoked a major debate among the socialists, at the Congress of the Workers' International, in 1896. This particular debate showed the importance of the context on the positions of each socialist groups participating. More generally, it revealed the importance of the environment on the positions of the great figures of Marxism.

Such analysis was made possible by studying the socialist political press from 1886 to 1906. Nationalism was a complex topic among Marxists, it was also a controversial topic in the French left-wing press. Three main types of positions were taken by the authors of press articles, a factual positioning, an ideological positioning and a political positioning. The factual positioning was usually held in anonymous articles, and was solely describing a situation that was often mentioned in nationalist discourse. The article from *Le Parti ouvrier*, published in 1895 about the situation in Alsace-Lorraine was an example of such positioning.¹²⁰ In theory, these types of articles were meant to remain neutral regarding difficult debate, like the one about whether Alsace-Lorraine should come back to France or not. However, in practice, it was possible to grasp the author's opinion, which was usually a-nationalist in this kind of positioning. The political and ideological posture were two, almost, similar stances. The main difference was that in the political positioning, there was a concept of fight for the victory of socialism, over the other parties and ideologies in France at the time. The ideological articles were usually written in a mocking tone to dismiss the opponent arguments, whether the opponent was from the same socialist group or not. More generally, the ideological posture was more individual, and was targeting a specific person or argument. The political posture was aimed at parties or ideologies in general.

The annexation of Alsace-Lorraine was the only topic where most socialists agreed on the same position. Most socialists agreed on the fact that the region should come back to the French fold, one way or another. The main difference, in part expressed in the press, was the way of perceiving the German enemy. For Guesde and Lafargue for instance, Germans were not the enemy, but it was their bourgeois regime that led to the war, and so to the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine. Others, like

¹²⁰ « Universal chronicles », *Le Parti ouvrier*, No 1154, 27 August 1895, p2.

Henri Rochefort, perceived Germany and its population as a whole hostile to France. In both cases, the loss of parts of the territory has had a profound impact on the perception of nationalism on all sides of the political spectrum, including the French socialists.

Although not self-explanatory, the nationalist question from 1886 to 1906 was fundamentally linked to the roots of the First World War. Indeed, the First World War broke out after the assassination of the heir to the Austrian Empire, Franz Ferdinand, in Sarajevo by a Serbian nationalist in June 1914. What led this conflict into a world war was the game of alliances, that began in 1892 with the alliance between France and Russia. Several other treaties were signed soon after with other European countries, leading to the outbreak of a global conflict. The First World War was a war of nationalism. The context in France, as well as other European countries, led to the rise of nationalist ideology, and the resentment of other European powers. The annexation of Alsace-Lorraine played a major role in the rise of French nationalism, yet, it was not the only phenomenon that has triggered nationalist fervour. The French press, as "power of opinion"¹²¹, mobilised the public opinion around the nationalist question. The socialist press, despite its Marxist leanings, and so its internationalist tendencies, also played an important role in the rise of the nationalist interest.

Ultimately, the analysis of this thesis leads to the conclusion that the context had an important role in the perception and expression of nationalism. The concept of nationalism is deeply rooted in its environment. Hence, nationalism was inevitably linked to the context of the country in which it operated. It was a response to an external element, so the international context played a role in how nationalism was conceived. The different stances in the socialist press were the result of the national context and its impact on the expression of nationalism. In this framework, Marxist doctrine was more of an influence than a hard guideline. This meant that Marx and Engels' positions had an impact on the perception of nationalism and internationalism, and so they had an impact on the expression of nationalism in the socialist press. However, their positions did not erase the context, which remained an essential factor in the socialist press of the Third Republic.

What can be drawn from this thesis is that Marxism was an ideology that was too broad to properly define and identify nationalism. Nationalism depended on the national situation of the country it was related to, which partly explained its versatile nature. Indeed, each nationalism was specific to

¹²¹ Miquel, Pierre. "Introduction", *L'Affaire Dreyfus*, Paris : Presses universitaires de France, 1973, p9 "Presse comme puissance d'opinion".

the nation to which it was linked. Hence the different members of Marxism, which was an international movement, had different understandings of nationalism, as was demonstrated in the first chapter. Nationalism was also not an unimportant topic that could be put aside, although some press articles have done so, especially regarding the Dreyfus Affair. Henri Rochefort by naming his article about the Dreyfus Affair "Unimportant"¹²², had the ambition to put the case on the back burner, although he used a violent vocabulary to describe Dreyfus' nationality. As a result, politicians, and leading figures of the socialist parties in France could not turn a blind eye on nationalism. This could be perceived as contradictory to the internationalist vision of Marxism. Thus, nationalism was an element that Marxism could not correctly theorise. There was no universal truth that was corresponding to the situations of all the nations that were parts of the Socialist International. Marxism, therefore, had relatively little legitimacy in its theorisation of nationalism.

¹²² Henri Rochefort, "Sans Importance", *L'Intransigeant*, No 5227, 5 November 1894, p1.

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