SOCIALISM AND THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY IN FRANCE, 1880-1914

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
JAMES L. WOJCIUCH
1967

SOCIALISM
AND THE
AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY
IN FRANCE,
1880-1914

BY

JAMES L. WOJCIUCH

Submitted to the Department of History, College of Arts and Letters, Michigan State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts Degree

August, 1967

PREFACE

In writing this thesis my aim has been to investigate the development of French Socialism in relation to that country's agricultural community between 1880 and 1914. Three basic questions are considered. First, what were the agricultural policies of the Socialists and why were such policies adopted? Second, given the Socialist commitment to the working class and to collectivization, how was the SFIO able to become the second-largest political party in 1914 when the country was dominated by a conservative, agrarian electorate favoring the principle of private property? Third, recognizing the differences in character and of values between the Socialists and the peasantry, how did these two groups interact in practice? The answers to these questions suggest other problems which are considered in the course of the paper.

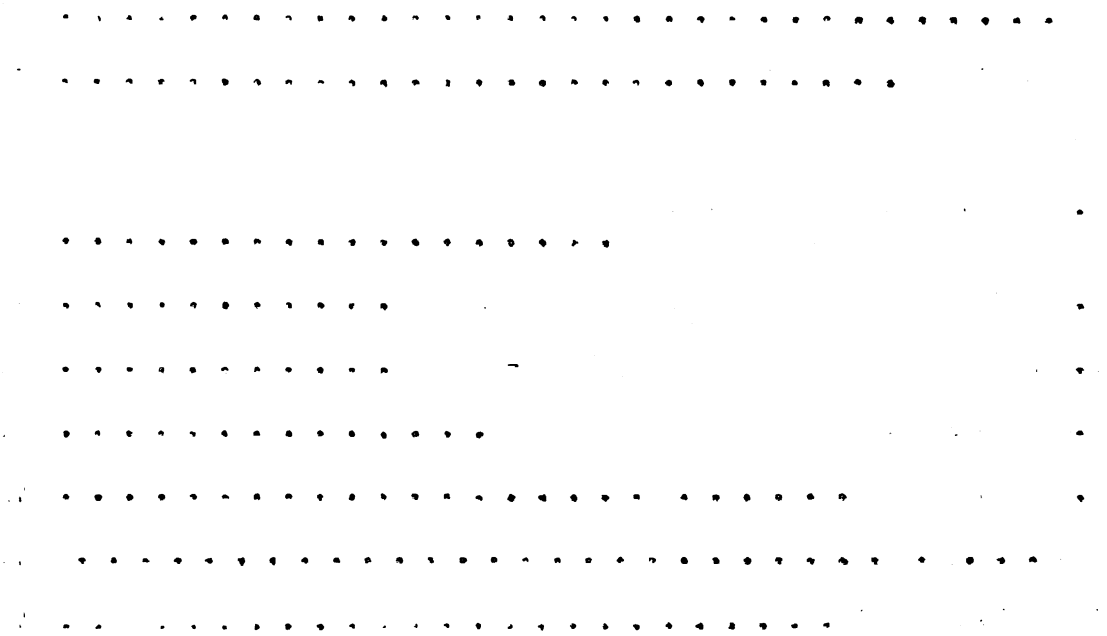
Socialist policies related to the peasants in two ways. First, there were programs and adjustments directly related to agriculture. Included in these were the Socialist notions concerning private property and the place of agriculture in the productive process, ranging down in specificity to proposed reforms to meet agricultural calamities, the needs of small owners, of agricultural laborers, and the like. Second, there were Socialist policies and attitudes that either drew or repelled the peasantry in ways having little to do with agriculture directly. These included the Socialists' position in relation to authority, pacifism, clericalism and

protectionism. The Socialists' stand on these matters related them to the character and values of the peasantry.

The period, 1870-1914, is significant in two respects. First, during this time span the peasantry was especially powerful as a voting community. The peasants enjoyed this influential polition because of the universal suffrage prescribed by the Constitution of the Third Republic. Second, the Socialist movement defined itself and united in the form of a single party (1905) during the course of this period.

I would like to acknowledge the direction and aid given to me during the course of writing this thesis by Dr. Donald Baker, Michigan State University. He has directed my attention to numerous sources that were of valuable assistance to me, and he has made various suggestions which have improved the final formulation of the paper.

TABLE OF CONTENTS



CHAPTER I

THE CHARACTER AND SOCIAL BASIS OF THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY UNDER THE THIRD REPUBLIC

Topographically, France's physical environment is suited for agriculture.[1] Within the country's boundaries there is a wide diversity of climate and structure, from the northern lowlands to the French Alps and Pyrénées in the south. While the Mediterranean coastal area is favorable to a great variety of crops, the area around Burgundy and the southwestern regions specialize in viniculture. The Acquitaine basin in the southwestern corner and parts of Brittany have rich soil, and wheat is a major crop of western France. The Loire and Seine Valleys and the Nord are important agricultural areas. Largeholdings were more prevalent in the Seine basin and in the west, while smallholdings were numerous in the south and central regions. The richness of French soil has thus been an important factor in holding a large proportion of the French population to agricultural vocations, although the percentage has been decreasing during the last century.[2]

---

[1] For a description of France's agricultural geography see Neil Hunter, Peasantry and Crisis in France (London: Gollancz, 1938), Chapter I, pp. 18-33.

[2] Gordon Wright, Rural Revolution in France: The Peasantry in the Twentieth Century (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1964), p. 13. In 1870 the percentage of Frenchmen engaged in agriculture was approximately 52% compared to approximately 44% in 1914, 35% in 1930 and 30% thereafter. Thirty percent is relatively high when compared to the United States. The

Within the context of this physical environment the social, economic, religious and political aspects of life are most important. These four strands intertwine with each other to form a basic cord of character and a system of values representative of the peasantry.

The social character of the French nation of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was already visible a century earlier, and it reflected the influence of the life of the provinces as wellas the geographical characteristics that marked the rural areas.[3] The social structure was chiefly composed of peasants, artisans, and bourgeoisie; and an understanding of French social values and psychology, particularly as exemplified by these groups, is necessary for a comprehension of French politics. Socially, there is a strong belief in the value of private property and private ownership that reflects the basic peasant and bourgeois background of the nation. There is also an idealism which pervades the French character that is noticeable through its demand for intellectual independence and autonomy in private life. Because of its individualism and family-centered operations, France long resisted the introduction of modern machines and collective efforts on a large scale.

The element of this French society that this paper is concerned with is the peasantry, one of the major groups under the Third Republic.

United States reached the present French percentage (30%) in 1920, and by 1964 only 6.8% of its population was engaged in agriculture. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1965 (86 Edition), p. 614.

[3]For a discussion of this see André Siegfried, France, A Study in Nationality (London: Oxford University Press, 1930), pp. 2-18; also see his article, "Approaches to an Understanding of Modern France," in Edward Meade Earle, (ed.), Modern France, Problems of the Third and Fourth Republics (New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), pp. 3-9.

As rural France is physically diverse, so also is its social community variegated that few generalizations can be made about it as a whole. Structurally, the agricultural community is composed of large landowners, absentee landlords, seigneuries (feudal landlords), small independent farmers, métayers (tenant farmers), fermiers (sharecroppers), landless farm laborers, journaliers (day-laborers), roturiers (non-noble landowners), and manoeuvriers (peasants who supplemented their agricultural labors by working in the rural textile industries). The use of the word peasantry in this paper will include all farmers and agricultural laborers who worked with their hands, whether they owned land or not.

One of the characteristics of this agricultural community was small ownership, which can be traced back to the Middle Ages and was still widespread by the time of the French Revolution, especially in the southern and central regions.[4] There were two reasons for the practice of this small-scale ownership. First, the peasant desire for property urged him to save his money for the purchase of land. However, his savings were meager and allowed him to buy only small parcels at a time. Second, the written law of the central and southern regions and, later, the Code Napoléon required the division on inherited lands among the deceased's survivors according to the principle of equality.

Throughout the nineteenth century the French peasantry resisted the introduction of modernization and new economic trends. Their resistance was

---

[4]Wright, Rural Revolution, p. 3; Paul A Gagnon, France Since 1789 (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1964), p. 285. Gagnon also discusses the demographic crisis, as well as the Code Napoléon, in relation to the increase in small holdings. He believes that the Code forced individual families to restrict their reproduction as an economic necessity so that they could make a subsistence living on their small farms.

directed not so much against the survival of the old feudal order as it was against the coming of a newer capitalistic one based upon mass collective rather than individual efforts. Peasant proprietors, rentiers, large landowners and absentee landlords successfully resisted these new trends.[5] Alfred Cobban writes: "It was the better-off peasant farmers whose stubborn defense maintained the common rights, and whose inherent conservatism and power consolidated by the revolution, set the pattern of French agriculture and village life for the next century ans a half."[6] Gordon Wright also notes that the tendencies which characterized the peasantry offered an insulation against economic and social change.[7] One can see the intertwining of social and economic factors at this point. The economic mode of production in French agriculture influenced the social classes to form along the structural lines that they did. It also placed emphasis on individual effort, thrift and private property. The smallholdings of economic production favored the development of a conservative social life among the peasantry.

Between 1814 and 1870 the agricultural community changed less than any other segment of society.[8] There was an increasing number of smallholdings, and the peasants joined the large landowners and the businessmen

---

[5]Alfred Cobban, The Social Interpretation of the French Revolution (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1965), pp. 46, 167, 170-172.

[6]Ibid., p. 119.

[7]Wright, Rural Revolution, p. 2.

[8]Gordon Wright, France in Modern Times, 1760 to the Present (Chicago: Rand Mc Nally and Company, 1960), pp. 122, 222.

in the advocacy of high tariffs. A law of 1819 protected the domestic wheat market from Russian competition, and even the winegrowers called for a high duty on imported tea.[9] The protective system was meant to provide security of the domestic market for indigenous French businessmen and farmers. The small-scale type of production system that existed in France could not stand against foreign competition. This inability of the French to compete against foreign producers increased as other countries adopted modern production methods during the course of the next century and a half. The protective tariff system allowed French prices to remain relatively high; but, at the same time it failed to encourage the modernization of French industry and agriculture.

Besides the social conservatism and economic laxity of the French nation, and of the rural community in particular, there was a political lag that was more pronounced than either the social or economic lags. By 1848 small peasant proprietors and rural laborers found themselves without any political life because of income and property qualifications. The major aspects of life which occupied the attention of the peasantry, then, were the social, economic and religious spheres of activity. At this time there were 6,248,000 rural proprietors divided into three classes. There were 5,580,000 small proprietors holding 14,800,000 hectares (one hectare equals two and a half acres) of land for an average holding of 2.65 hectares. There were 633,000 middle-class proprietors owning 21,200,000 hectares for an average holding of thirty-three hectares each. And there were 34,700

---

[9] Ibid., p. 198.

grand proprietors owning 9,455,000 hectares for an average holding of 273 hectares.[10] The average holdings of the small proprietor testify to his meager condition. The large proprietors could withstand high living costs and low market prices for their produce better than could the small ones.

The peasant uprisings in the summer of 1848 stemmed from basically economic factors and was directed against usurers, large landowners and the emergency surtax.[11] The peasants wanted easier credit (as high as fifteen percent interest was being paid by many peasants),[12] concessions on pasture and land rights, the abolition of enclosures, and the abolishment of the forty-five centimes surtax.[13] Peasant bands won skirmishes with the National Guard in Guéret in the department of Creuse and in Gourdon in the department of Lot, and there were also serious disturbances in the department of Gers. Walter contends that the peasants' actions during this time influenced the course of French history for the first time.[14] This is a somewhat controversial assertion because it appears that the peasant uprisings in August, 1789, had an influence on French history; but, in any event, the peasants had to be recognized as a political influence since they comprised about sixty percent of the population and gained suffrage rights under the Second Republic and the Second Empire.[15] Yet, its po-

---

[10]Gérard Walter, Histoire des paysans de France (Paris: Flammarion, 1963), p. 405.

[11]Wright, Rural Revolution, p. 3.

[12]Walter, Histoire, p. 406.

[13]Ibid., pp. 407-408.

[14]Ibid., p. 415.

[15]Ibid., pp. 415-416.

litical influence did not become particularly effective until the Third Republic.

Between 1848 and 1870 many new programs affecting the peasantry were announced by the government.[16] Agricultural banks and credit unions were established, and a program to lower interest rates on land and capital goods was announced: but these did not develop enough to have a major effect upon the peasantry. There were changes in the laws which benefited the propertied. A program of agricultural education, which saw the slow spread of literacy among the rural elements, was initiated. Loius Blanc's Luxembourg Commission did some communal agricultural experiments. In 1881 a Chamber of Agriculture was created which functioned more as an investigating body and an information agency for an interest group than as functional governmental organization. The use of the ballot was inaugurated in the rural areas. Secondary railroad lines were built after 1880, and some work was done in the area of land reclamation. But the changing conditions of rural life did not solve the agrarian problem. The use of railroads, the introduction of hydraulic mills, the development of drainage and irrigation works, and the employment of fertilizer only more clearly marked economic class distinctions. Conditions in France remained relatively the same among the majority of the peasants in 1882 as they did in 1872 and in 1862.[17]

---

[16]Ibid., Wright, Rural Revolution, pp. 8-11.

[17]Walter, Histoire, pp. 418-419.

In 1870 rural France was preparing to transform itself into an organic part of the nation; the years from 1870 to 1939 can be described in some ways as the era of the French peasantry, in view of the peasants' newfound political importance in those seven decades. The other important element of the social structure was the bourgeoisie; and the Third Republic basically reflected the interests of the peasantry and the bourgeoisie as a working compromise between the forces of republicanism and anti-republicanism, conservatism and liberalism, democracy and government, and the centralization and decentralization of authority. Since the French Parliament rather than the executive controlled the policies of the government, the Republic can be described as a system of parliamentary sovereignty checked by popular election. The Constitution of the Republic was heavily weighted in favor of the countryside. Universal suffrage gave the peasants the deciding voice in determining the character of the Chamber of Deputies, which became the political center of gravity after 1877; and the system of electoral colleges used for Senate elections also gave the determining influence to the rural constituencies.[18] The communes, which were the bases of the parishes and were elected bodies, helped to somewhat develop the political participation of the peasantry.[19] The peasants, whose social and economic values coincided with the bourgeoisie, were inclined to support the latter

---

[18]Hunter, Peasantry and Crisis, p. 232; David Thomson, Democracy in France, The Third and Fourth Republics (3rd ed.; London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 92. During the duration of the Republic the Senate tended to be more conservative than did the Chamber.

[19]Hunter, Peasantry and Crisis, p. 88.

at the polls. This support of the bourgeoisie was logical since the peasantry had failed to produce its own grass roots leaders.[20] Politics, therefore, fell into the hands of the bourgeoisie, even though the peasantry remained an outright majority in over half of the departments.[21]

By 1876 most peasants had lost their fears that republicanism would be radical and had identified it with universal suffrage. They had developed a belief in a democratic republic and overwhelmingly voted for Gambetta, who decided to campaign for the peasants' vote rather than the vote of the proletariats.[22] There were ten million eligible voters in France in 1876. Of these, 5,383,000 lived by agriculture, 3,552,000 owning the land that they worked.[23] Gambetta became the link between revolutionary ideas and the powerful class of peasant proprietors and small property owners of the Republic. Politically, he was associated with the radical vein; but, socially, he was conservative in that he did not want to drastically change the status quo of the social structure. In essence, the Third Republic was a rural, conservative democracy, even though it was administratively dominated by the bourgeoisie, because it was politically dependent upon the peasantry; and these two classes shared

---

[20] Wright, Rural Revolution, pp. 14-15; André Siegfried, Tableau des partis en France (Paris: Bernard Gasset, 1930), p. 51.

[21] Wright, France in Modern Times, pp. 13, 343,360. In 1870 the agricultural community comprised 52% of the total population; in 1914 it comprised 44% of the total. Also see Robert Wohl, French Communism in the Making, 1914-1924 (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1966), p. 21. Wohl notes little increase in the size of the proletariat between 1906 and 1913, but he notices an increase in the size of the bourgeoisie, which he attributes to an influx from the ranks of the peasantry.

[22] Thomson, Democracy, pp. 39-40, 42; Stanley Hoffmann et al., In Search of France (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 15.

[23] Thomson, Democracy, pp. 39-40.

many of the same social and economic values. The Republic maintained conditions that small and medium agricultural proprietors supported; it maintained the middle classes of the towns and villages.

Politics for the peasantry reflected the individualism and localism of their social and economic life. In local affairs the consensus on the allocation of values within the subcultural group was more dominating than the consensus of similar allocations on a national level, where there was much attitudinal dissonance and fragmentation. This fragmentation was due, in part, to the individualism of the various local communities. This higher degree of local consensus is reflected in a comparison of local and national elections.[24] On the national level, Deputies are more responsible to their constituencies than to their parties; they feel independent of every one except the voters. Political groups have developed rather than political parties. Siegfried sums up the situation very acutely: "Thus the political systems rest on a local foundation, in fact on a polyarchy of constituencies, where the deputy is absolutely at his best if he happens to be personally a local man, in which casw he becomes the plenipotentiary of the district to Paris."[25]

The fourth strand in the peasant character is religion. The peasantry, as well as almost all of France, was distinguished by its Catholicism,

---

[24]For a discussion of local consensus in French politics and a differentiation of the national consensus see Mark Kesselman, "French Local Politics: A Statistical Examination of Grass Roots Consensus," American Political Science Review, LX(4, Dec., 1966), pp. 963-973.

[25]Siegfried, A Study in Nationality, p. 104.

a religion of authority, which has caused a division among Frenchmen because of a value conflict.[26] The revolutionary ideas of liberty and democracy came into a conflict with the traditional hierarchical system of authority and obedience. The peasants' individualism, their system of small-scale units in their economic organization of production, and their desire for autonomy in private life conflicted with the ideas espoused by the Church that called for collectivism within the religious community, a large organizational operating structure and total dependence of the individual upon the Church for salvation. The rise of positivism during the nineteenth century also tended to advance secularism in France.

Prior to 1914 the political workings of the Third Republic did produce some legislation that had an effect on the development of the four intertwined strands of the cord of the peasant character. In the 1880's the Ferry school laws and the law requiring the registration of religious organizations tended to promote secularism and increased the scope of state intervention in the lives of the private citizen. The law of 21 March 1884, allowing the legal formation of agricultural and industrial syndicates, was important in the development of the modern peasant.[27] The formation of these syndicates aided agricultural laborers to obtain wage demands throgh collective efforts. They were composed mainly of day-laborers and small proprietors; and, as a rule, they were inclined to consist of small groups than

---

[26] Ibid., pp. 2-18; Earle, Modern France, pp. 5-8; Hoffmann et al., In Search of France, pp. 1-117.

[27] Walter, Histoire, p. 421.

large unions. The syndicates forced a number of concessions from employers such as obtained by the woodcutters around Uzay-le-Vernon (in the department of Cher) in 1892 and in Limousin in 1899, the vineyard laborers around Languedoc in 1901, and the laborers at Peyriac-de-Mer in 1903 and at Béziers in 1904 (both in the department of Aude).[28]

Other major agricultural endeavors of the Republic were the Méline Tariff of 1892, the provision of subsidies for developing cooperatives and mutual insurance societies, and the provision for old-age pensions for agricultural laborers.[29] The Méline Tariff deserves special attention because it is reflective of the dominant peasant-bourgeois consensus in French society. It boosted tariff rates to protect French agriculture from foreign competition, especially from the major wheat-producing countries of Russia, Canada and the United States.[30] It preserved the domestic market and the basic family firm of French life to the disadvantage of modernization, competition, and mass and collective organizational methods of production on a large scale; this disadvantage was to remain in French economics until after the Second World War.

What was the condition of the French peasantry between 1880 and 1914?

---

[28] Ibid., pp. 422-427.

[29] Wright, Rural Revolution, p. 16.

[30] Ibid., pp. 17-18. Foreign competition in the produce market had also increased since the introduction of refrigeration in transportation. The tariff was later increased in 1910 to the extent that French tariffs became the fourth highest in the world. See Gordon Wright, The Reshaping of French Democracy (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1950), p. 346. The bourgeoisie also supported and promoted the Méline Tariff because the inroads of foreign competition were mass-producing consumer goods that sold for a lower price than similar French-produced goods coming from small-scale units of production.

Its condition can best be described as marginal. Wright notes several reasons for this condition: population pressure; the decay of the rural textile industry and its replacement by the urban textile industry; the sporadic continuation of the eighteenth century enclosure movement, which challenged peasents' ancient rights; and the tendency of the urban bourgeoisie to buy rural property, which had the effect of raising land values at a time when the peasants' desire for land was intense.[31] Yet, the French agricultural community's harmony with the basic value structure of the Third Republic remained, as did its alliance with the bourgeoisie, which, most often, possessed peasant backgrounds. There was little social mobility, and economic disparities remained in spite of the progress made by the development of rural unionism. In 1901 the departments with the highest percentage of men engaged in agriculture were found in the middle and southwestern parts of France; Lot had seventy-four of every one hundred men engaged in agriculture, Gers seventy-one, Corrèze seventy-one, the Haute-Alpes seventy; the lowest percentages were found in the Seine with two, the Nord with seventeen, the Rhône with twenty-one, and Pas-de-Calais with thirty-one.[32] Of every one hundred men in agriculture at this time, twenty-nine were fermiers, with the highest averages existing in northwestern France, and nine were métayers, with the highest averages being in southwestern France.[33] As for the agricultural area around Paris, one historian has

---

[31] Wright, Rural Revolution, p. 8.

[32] Album graphique de la statistique générale de la France (Paris: Imprimierie, nationale, 1907), p. 77.

[33] Ibid., pp. 78-79.

provided an acute description:

> In the region around Paris, the social problems of agriculture were not those of the métayers but of the labourers. This fertile region . . . was in the hands of small proprietors working their own land and of great capitalist farmers holding on long lease, in some cases working the same farm for generations. The socially and politically disturbing body here was the farm laborer working for the capitalist farmer. He had many grievances. He was often so badly lodged that he openly admitted that he was better off in the army; his food, when it was supplied, was monotonous, and he wanted and did not always get what he thought was his due, a ration of wine or cider with each meal. He also wanted a rise in wages or, still more, a regular wage, for more and more he was employed on piece-work, paid a good deal at the most busy times, and little or nothing in the slack season. He was assimilated in many ways to the town worker and reacted in much the same way. The great strikes that broke out in 1906 and subsequent years were, in some regions, directed against piece-work which the rural labourer was coming to regard with the same dislike as the factory worker. The militant trade-unionists of the Paris region saw a chance to spread their syndicalist doctrines, and there were riots, attacks on farmhouses, mass intimidation of blacklegs, all the warlike apparatus of an industrial strike. Taken by surprise, the farmers yielded, and there followed on this success a sudden spread of trade-unionism among the farm workers. But all agricultural unions were shallowly rooted; they never enrolled more than a small minority of the farm workers and these chiefly among the specialists, the forest-workers of the Centre, the market-gardeners of the Paris district. By 1914, rural unionism was little more than it had been before 1906.[34]

It is into this rural democracy with its particular character, values and conditions that the Socialists introduced their programs of reform and collectivization. In relation to the national characteristics of France and the individualism of her local community developments, one is not surprised to notice the political advance of the left in only particular localities.[35] The national consensus among Frenchmen between 1880 and 1914 did

---

[34]D.W. Brogan, France Under the Republic, The Development of Modern France (1870-1939) (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1940), p. 406.

[34]Siegfried, A Study in Nationality, pp. 80, 84-85. Siegfried states "that the left is a tendency rather than a party, a permanent tendency that

not favor any change in the "stalemate society" they had produced; and, therefore, there was much, but not total, indifference to the Socialists' programs.[36] The paradox of the situation is that many of the peasants found themselves attracted to the left. Thus, it becomes necessary to turn one's attention to the development and the agricultural policies of Socialism in France in order to obtain an understanding of this paradox.

---

always dominates the same regions: the south (excluding the Gironde, the Basque country, and the Cevennes); the central plateau of the southwest, which formerly was the territory of the Bonapartists; the Parisian basin, but not Paris itself or the department of Seine-et-Oise; the east, except Lorraine; the Brittany of the Bretons . . . " Ibid., pp. 84-85. Socialism, as a tendency of the left, has developed within these areas, notably in the northeast, east, south and central regions of France.

[36] Ibid., p. 37.

CHAPTER II

SOCIALIST AGRICULTURAL POLICIES TO 1905

French Socialism, as it developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, had its genesis in the traditions of Proudhon's federalism and French Jacobinism, which held a belief in a strong omnicompetent state. Empirical examples of this Jacobin belief were manifested in such measures as the levée en masse, the law of the maximum générale which was used by the state to set maximum prices on goods and wages, and the confiscation of royal and ecclesiastical property. Robespierre, conscious of Rousseau's distinction between the possession of property as a natural right and as a right given by society, considered property to fall into the latter category.[1] From this supposition it is but a short step to the Socialist idea that property should be owned by the whole of society and that it should be held collectively under the proprietorship of the state; or, on the other hand, that public ownership of property should be organized on the communal level or in guild units. Both of these positions, the centralized and the decentralized, find adherents in the development of French Socialism.

Many different currents of Socialism developed in France during the nineteenth century. Babeuf, who based his beliefs on the class struggle and

---

[1] Leo A. Loubère, "The Intellectual Origins of French Jacobin Socialism," International Review of Social History (IRSH), IV (Part 3, 1959), pp. 417-431.

a plea for greater social equality, became a link between the étatiste strand of Jacobinism and French Socialism. His emphasis on equalith rather than liberty and his belief that this equality should be imposed by the intervention of the state is a precursor to the ideas of later Socialists which stressed equality in the spheres of production and distribution. Saint-Simon and Fourier deviated from the idea of class struggle and placed their hopes in fraternal and voluntary cooperation between classes, which would see the yielding of economic privilege by the "haves." Although reformists concerned with social and economic conditions, they did not seek the nationalization of wealth.[2]

Louis Blanc was another statist Socialist. He advocated the takeover of the state to implement socialism, and many of his ideas advanced toward Marxism. He advocated a type of producers' cooperative which would be run by the workers and financially aided in its formation by state contributions. This cooperative would be the basic structural economic unit of production.[3] Later, Socialists and trade unionists promoted cooperatives as a basic unit of economic organization; but they put more emphasis on and were more successful with consumers' rather than producers' cooperatives.

Pierre Leroux, in the 1830's, supported a scheme for the collectivization of industrial property and capital; but he offered a different

---

[2]Thomson, Democracy, pp. 20ff.

[3]Wright, France in Modern Times, pp. 235-238.

plan of "generalization" for agricultural property.[4] "Generalization" meant that the farmer could be a quasi-proprietor of the land, or at least a portion of it, as a sort of trustee for the state which was the actual owner. This idea was later to be modified by those Socialists who called for the collectivization of all property but allowed for the existence of small holdings of privately owned "peasant property." In both plans the Socialists appear to recognize the importance of land proprietorship among the peasantry. The latter program was less directed towards state ownership of limited agricultural lands because of the increasing number of small holdings during the course of the nineteenth century and because of the increased political importance of the peasantry. In both instances the Socialists' program was intended to lesson the hostility of the peasantry towards the idea of collectivization.

Constantin Pecqueur, a firm believer that the state should be the sole owner and organizer of all property, supported a form of "Christian collectivism" in which the state would own the means of production and operate them in a democratic and humanitarian spirit.[5] The state would act administratively, like a benevolent despot. Pecqueur seems to have had some difficulty in explaining the practical application of its democratic aspect in this sphere, except for the fact that he associates equality with democracy.

Auguste Blanqui is referred to as the Socialist of the barricades. He advocated direct revolutionary action, and he was an anarchist of the

---

[4]Loubère, IRSH, IV, p. 427.

[5]Ibid., pp. 428-429; Wright, France in Modern Times, p. 237.

anti-parliamentarian vein.[6] "In the secret societies of the extreme left, the Society of Families (1834) and the Society of Seasons (1837), Blanqui combined the tactics of Hebertism and a vague collectivism based in part on Babouvism, thus laying out a different revolutionary movement, that of Jacobin Communism."[7]

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon represented the anarchist, voluntarist current of the revolutionary tradition. He was opposed to an all-powerful state, and he believed that the workers would have to depend upon themselves to improve their condition. He had little faith in politics, but he believed that economic change would improve the laborers' condition. He was a fore-runner of the syndicalists and believed that the solution to the possession of power was federalism.[8] This federal and apolitical position had much influence among the peasants and posed many problems to the Socialists in later years. They had to struggle for cooperation with the syndicalists, who were working through cooperatives; they had to spread counter-propaganda in favor of centralization and collectivization in rural, as well as urban, areas. They had to persuade the peasants and workers that the apolitical doctrines of the syndicalist position was inimical to their best interests. In the end, the Socialists found themselves almost completely divorced from the trade-union movement, and they adopted a policy that supported the idea of cooperatives in an effort to gain rural support.

---

[6]Loubère, IRSH, IV, p. 424; Wright, France in Modern Times, p. 237.

[7]Loubère, IRSH, IV, p.424.

[8]Wright, France in Modern Times, p. 238; Thomson, Democracy, p. 23.

Conflicting forces in France, spurred on by empirical social and economic disparity, reached a crisis in 1871 with the emergence of the Commune. The Commune did not represent Marxism but the national interactions of the left; it meant something different for each group and marked the end of the old tradition.[9] However, it was important for Marxism because its failure helped to somewhat discredit the older currents of French Socialism that were revolutionary in nature.[10] These currents were regarded as too radical and revolutionary by the conservative majority of the existing society. The problem Socialists were faced with was that of reconciling their violent tradition with the peace-desiring community. The repression of the Commune also forestalled the growth of the development of Socialism because most of its victims, those killed and exiled, were non-Marxists. This led to the emergence and the expansion of the Marxist strand of Socialism in France, which came to be directed by Jules Guesde in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.[11] The fall of the Commune also caused a loss of morale among the Socialists, who did not regain their strength for another two decades and could not match strength with the Marxists until after 1905.

The Communards of 1871 urged the peasants to support them and offered them a specific appeal.[12] They set forth a general program of land

---

[9]Thomson, Democracy, pp. 24-26. The new political tradition which emerged during the Third Republic is best described in the contest of the "stalemate society." See Hoffman et al., In Search of France, pp. 1-117.

[10]Roy Pierce, Contemporary French Political Thought (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 17-18.

[11]Wright, France in Modern Times, p. 318.

[12]Porter, Peasantry in Crisis, Appendix B, pp. 282-285.

for the peasants and an end to economic discrimination and disparity between the rich and the poor. Their slogan was: "The Land for the Peasant, the Tool to the Worker, Work for All!"[13]

By 1880 French Socialists found themselves facing a number of problems with which they had to concern themselves; some were ideological, some political, some pragmatic. Ideologically, the idea of Socialism is to replace nationality and race consciousness with class consciousness. A front of united peasants and workers could provide the basis for this class consciousness, but the idea of class was subservient to the conservative and individualistic French national character. It was ideologically difficult, if not impossible, to include the land-owning peasantry in this front unless the philosophy of Socialism, which rested upon the laboring classes, was modified. It is also difficult to move the French into any kind of association that is directed towards the establishment of a positive program; French consensus is basically negative and conservative in nature. And the most conservative element of French society is the peasantry.

It was because the peasantry presented obstacles to the progress of Socialism — or, perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the peasantry could make Socialism progress faster if the two could get together-- and because it was not recognized as a revolutionary class that the Socialists found themselves in so much difficulty with the agrarian problem. Those Socialists who wanted the peasantry to join the ranks of the Socialist movement faced this dilemma: ideologically, they had to reconcile collectivism

---

[13]Ibid., p. 285.

with a long tradition of private ownership -- they were the proponents of the collectivization of property, but the peasants were anti-collectivists. Chaeacterized by individualism and acclimated to family values, the peasants advocated the ownership of private property. The Socialists were forced to recognize a special interest in the agricultural population simply because of their numbers and their voting influence under the Republic.[14] They needto find a plank on the question of property with which they could appeal to the peasantry without losing the support of the proletariat.[15] The plank turned out to be the idea of "peasant property", and it helped to provide some cohesion between the values of the Socialists and the peasants because it allowed for small rural holdings of private property; and the peasantry was characterized by their small holdings of private property.

But, there was no uniform agreement on a peasant policy among Socialists between 1880 and 1914; in fact, there was a general division on the methodological approach that should be employed towards the peasantry which was not fully resolved even after the formation of the Unified Socialist Party in 1905. After the Congress of Paris in 1880 there emerged five general divisions in the ranks of the Socialists. There were the Independents, the Blanquists, the Allemanists, the Broussists and the Guesdists. After a brief

---

[14]Encyclopédie socialiste, Syndicate et coopérative de l'Internationale ouviere, Aristide Quillet, (ed.), (XIV; Paris, Aristide Quillet, 1912), II, pp. 246-247. The Socialists also recognized that the charge of violence attached to themselves had to be reconciled with the pacifism of the peasantry. Ibid., pp. 254-255.

[15]Baron Pierre de Coubertin, The Evolution of France Under the Third Republic, trans. by Isabel F. Hapgood, (New York and Boston: Crowell and Company, 1897), pp. 407-408.

flirtation with the Opportunists, Jean Jaurès became the Leader of the Independents, and Édouard Vaillant was one of the leading spokesmen for the Blanquists.[16] Jean Allemane, who distrusted politics and favored strikes, became the leader of the Workingman's Socialist Revolutionary Party. Paul Brousse led the Federation of the Socialist Laborers of France.[17] The Marxist orientated Jules Guesde formed the French Workingman's Party[18] at Roanne in 1882 shortly after abandoning the Socialists at the Congress of Saint-Étienne (25 September 1882) where his minority group questioned the adoption of a motion which allowed Socialists to hold governmental offices.[19] The POF adhered to the Havre program of 1880, which set up a minimum Marxist program;[20] and, thus, completed the split with the Broussists, whom Guesde labelled the "Possibilists" because they supported a collectivist reform program which did not coincide with Marxist doctrine, believing Socialism was possible gradually and through non-revolutionary means.

This division of Socialists is important to the peasantry in two respects. The first was concerned with policy. The Guesdists, recognizing the misery and poor economic condition of the peasantry, placed the

---

[16]The Blanquist organization was the Central Revolutionary Committee. They later organized into the Socialist Revolutionary Party, Parti socialiste révolutionaire.

[17]The Party's subtitle was Parti ouvrier socialiste révolutionaire (POSR).

[18]This was the Parti ouvrier francais (POF).

[19]Daniel Ligou, Histoire du socialisme en France (1871-1961) (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1962), pp. 69-70; Claude Willard, Le Mouvement socialiste en France, Les Guesdistes, (1893-1905) (Paris: Éditions sociales, 1965), p. 23.

[20]Ligou, Histoire, pp. 43-45.

blame for these conditions upon finance capital and discriminatory taxation.[21] Their program called for the collectivization of agricultural property as quickly as possible.[22] At this point the Guesdists would not support the existence of private property for the farmers in Socialism; this formal policy, however, was changed at the Congress of Marseilles in 1892. The Possiblists looked toward collectivization as possible, but not in the immediate future. The Guesdists' rigid and doctrinaire policy on collectivization did not aid them politically among the peasants during the 1880's.

The second respect in which division among the Socialists was important to their relationship with the peasantry concerned methodology. The Guesdists believed that a revolutionary overthrow of the government was necessary for the establishment of Socialism.[23] The Allemanists favored direct action, such as strikes, to obtain their demands; and they distrusted the political arena as a means to their ends, which were essentially reforms and a transformation of the state. They were in the Proudhonist tradition and were kin to the agricultural syndicalists, who also began to develop during the 1880's. The Possibilists, on the other

---

[21]G.D.H. Cole, A History of Socialist Thought (V; 3rd ed.; London: MacMillan and Company Ltd., 1963 first published in 1956), III, p. 325.

[22]This was adopted at Havre in 1880 and became an integral part of their early program. Aaron Noland, The Founding of the French Socialist Party (1893-1905) (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 7; Harvey Goldberg, "Jaurès and the Formulation of a Socialist Peasant Policy, 1885-1898," IRSH, II (Part II, 1957), p. 380. The call for the immediate collectivization of agricultural property was impractical in 1882.

[23]Ligou, Histoire, pp. 54-56

hand, believed that Socialism could conquer the state by an evolutionary transformation, using the means of the existing democratic machinery.[24] With these different methodological approaches towards the establishment of Socialism, the Guesdists found themselves in an untenable position if they wanted to obtain the support of the rural conservative community -- but it was not until the 1890's that they began to look for rural support. How could they obtain peasant support when they could not gain the trust of the pacific peasantry? How could they reconcile their philosophy of Socialism with the values of the agrarian community? These problems, which became recognized in the 1880's, were attacked in the 1890's, not only by the Guesdist but by other Socialists as well.

One of these other Socialists was Jean Jaurès. When he was first elected in 1885, he sat as an Opportunist, not advocating the collectivization of property or revolutionary Socialism. During his first term in the Chamber Jaurès voted for two church budgets, against an income tax, and against a bill that proposed the direct election of Senators.[25] He believed in an evolutionary Socialism. He thought "that as the Republic had grown out of the Revolution so Socialism would grow out of the Republic."[26] His belief in this continuity of history led him to support the Republic as a structure of the Revolution. Socialism would be the end re-

---

[24]Ibid., pp. 67-68.

[25]Harvey Goldberg, The Life of Jean Jaurès (Madison, Wis.: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1962), pp. 38, 41.

[26]Margaret Pease, Jean Jaurès, Socialist and Humanitarian (New York: B.W. Huebsch, 1917), pp. 54-55.

sult of Republicanism.

One of the major problems that the Socialists faced in relation to the agricultural community was that of reconciling the peasants' tradition of private property with their proposals calling for the collectivization of property; and it was in the late 1880's and the decade of the 1890's that Jaurès formulated a program to resolve this difficulty. He said that it was an error to believe that Socialism would destroy all private property. Collective and individual property are not diametrically opposed to each other. Under Socialism property would be assured to those who worked and produced, not to those who exploited the laborers.[27] Individual property would be extended and universal.[28] And it is here that Jaurès brings in the idea of "peasant property," the property of the small landholders which would be able to coexist side by side with the collectivized property of Socialism. He noted that modernization was different in industry than in agriculture; and that in the case of the latter, machines had the effect of keeping a high percentage of small proprietors in existence.[29] There was, in fact, little modernization among the small farmers. Jaurès recognized that the small farmer could not be forced into the ranks of collectivism. Peasant property could exist in the Socialist movement -- as indeed an appeal for peasant support would have to admit under the ex-

---

[27] Oeuvres de Jean Jaurès, Max Bonnafous, (ed.), (IX; Paris: Les Éditions Rieder, 1932), III, pp. 165-168. The article cited here first appeared in La Dépêche de Toulouse, 3 October 1893.

[28] Ibid., p. 167.

[29] Ibid., p. 277.

isting conditions of the French peasantry -- because it is the small farmers' proper life to have property.[30] It is evident that Jaurès had a well-founded and proper understanding of the peasant character at this time.

Jaurès noted that the problems facing the peasantry in the 1890's were both structural and substantive in nature.[31] Among those falling into the first category were the inequality of land ownership (28,000 of the large proprietors owned as much land as 6,000,000 small proprietors), the fragmentation of land holdings, and the undermechanization of French farms. In the category of the substantive difficulties Jaurès included high taxes, indebtedness, the inroads of foreign competition, the sharp decline of agricultural prices on the market, and natural disasters such as the phylloxera plague in the Midi. To alleviate rural difficulties, Jaurès proposed the lowering of rents for tenant farmers, the raising of wages for laborers, the lowering of the cost of freight transportation to facilitate marketing for the small farmers, an equalization of the tax system and the facilitation of easier credit.[32]

Yet, in spite of favoring these reforms, Jaurès believed that the final solution did not rest on reforms but that it would only be resolved by Socialism. He proposed an organizational plan for the agricultural com-

---

[30] Ibid., p. 284. For other statements by Jaurès on property in the rural community see Ibid., pp. 161-286.

[31] Goldberg, Jaurès, pp. 190-192; Goldberg, IRSH, II, p. 375. Jaurès believed that the immediate solutions to these problems could best be attacked by working for reforms through legislative action.

[32] Goldberg, IRSH, II, pp. 376-378. His call for a tax equalization took the form of support for a progressive income tax, a major change from his early days in the Chamber when he voted against an income tax (1887).

munity which included collective farms and small, private family firms.[33] There were three levels of organization in his scheme: paysans des petits domaines, paysans des groupes agricoles cultivant les grands domaines, and ouvriers communaux.[34] The first level allowed for private property to be cultivated on a small scale; the second reflected the collective ownership of large tracts of land by the state; the third allowed for communal ownership.[35] In some sense of the word, all farmers would be proprietors. The plan contained elements that could appeal to small farmers (small holdings could be privately owned) and to the farm laborers who felt that their meager condition resulted from the exploitation by the large, capitalist landowners. It was intended to be a working compromise between Socialism and the politically dominant elements of the rural community.

The Guesdists also concerned themselves with a solution to the property question in the 1890's. At the Congress of Marseilles (24-27 September 1892) and at the Congress of Nantes (14-16 September 1894) they adopted an eighteen-point agricultural program that advocated such things as minimum wages, the improved facilitation of agricultural health services, and the extension of agricultural cooperatives.[36] The main deviation from their former policy, however, was the acceptance of the idea that allowed

---

[33]Goldberg, Jaurès, p. 184; Cole, A History of Socialist Thought, III, p. 378.

[34]Oeuvres, III, pp. 180-184.

[35]Goldberg, Jaurès, p. 41. Jaures advocated municipal ownership of natural monopolies for the urban communities. It appears that the idea of ouvriers communaux was its agricultural counter-part.

[36] Encyclopédie socialiste, II, pp. 20-22. The text of this program is reproduced in the appendix of this paper; see below, pp. 77-78.

the retention of small holdings of private property by the agricultural community under Socialism. This policy modification was made due to the recognition of the differences between urban and rural conditions,[37] the need to attract rural political support, and the realization that Socialist Deputies were able to enact some social reforms in the Chamber.[38] This program was attacked by the International and the German Socialists; Kautsky and Engels both denounced it.[39] This policy modification by the Guesdist can be interpreted as both a defensive and an offensive maneuver. Defensively, it represented a reaction to the basic peasant (and bourgeois) value which appreciated the priority of private ownership. Offensively, it represented a propaganda effort directed to appeal to a new element of society (the peasantry) previously unclaimed under the auspices of Socialism. It represented the embarcation of a new Socialist policy, signifying an "erosion" of French Marxism.

The issue of conflict between collective and private property was debated in the Chamber of Deputies. Jaurès campaigned in the Chamber during the summer of 1897 for an agricultural program and, with it, the recognition of the value of collective property. He noted the problems of the agricultural laborers and the exclusion of many farmers from the ownership

---

[37]Ligou, Histoire, p. 63.

[38]Carl Landauer, "The Guesdists and the Small Farmer: Early Erosion of French Marxism," International Review of Social History (IRSH), VI, (Part 2, 1961), pp. 213-214. Landauer maintains that the change of policy by the Guesdists in relation to the small farmer signified the beginning of an erosion of Marxist doctrine by French Socialists.

[39]Ibid., pp. 215, 222.

of land.[40] He stated his views on the smallholder and on centralization; and he urged the reduction of financial burdens on the small peasants, and he called for government aid to help them secure capital for land improvements.[41] His motion proposing national control over the means of production to prevent individual usurpation of property was defeated in favor of a motion by Deschanel which mildly acclaimed the integrity and superiority of individual property.[42] Deschanel also sponsored another resolution declaring the superiority of private property over collectivism in November.[43] Thus, by the end of the nineteenth century the Third Republic officially commended private over collective property.

With the stands taken by the Jaurèssians and the Guesdists on the property question, the French Socialists became renegades within the international Socialist movement. They had been attacked by Kautsky and Engels. The property question plagued the Socialists of the International, and Goldberg notes this situation at the International Socialist Workers and Trade Union Congress held in 1896: "Devoted to collectivism, they balked at defending property, even small peasant property. Tied to a deterministic theory of history, they were convinced of the futility of trying to stay the

---

[40] Journal officiel de la République francaise, Chambre des Députiés, Débats parlementaires, 19 June 1897, pp. 1579-1591, 1593.

[41] Ibid., 26 June 1897, pp. 1688-1694.

[42] Ibid., 3 July, 1897, pp. 1806-1807.

[43] Ibid., 21 November 1897, p. 2531. The resolution passed by a vote of 348 to 152. It should be noted here that the speeches by Jaurès in the Chamber do not deviate from his other writings. His appeal and the program that he advocated are the same in the Chamber as they are out.

inevitable disappearance of peasant holdings."[44]

Another major problem tackled by the Socialists in the 1890's was that of gaining political support from the peasantry. Jaurès received the support of two rural cantons in the election of 1893; and Goldberg views this as "the penetration of socialism into an essentially rural area of the Midi and the emergence of a leader closely associated with the life of peasant France."[45] He also believes that Jaurès possessed the qualities which attracted the peasantry; the physical stature of a man of the Midi, the fact that he was not confined to the tight doctrines of Marxism, his attachment of a "moral fervor" to Socialism, and the ability to analyze agricultural problems into their various parts and offer solutions that appealed to the different elements of the rural society.[46] Jaurès attempted to address the peasants on their practical level rather than on the level of Marxist pragmatism. He favored a progressive income tax, proposed a reduction in taxes for small landholders and advanced a system of social security for agricultural laborers. He did not believe that protectivism was beneficial for the rural masses, reflecting his humanitarian spirit for the poor; and he attacked the Méline Tariff as an instrument of bourgeois capitalism.[47]

The Nantes program of the Guesdists also found an appeal among the

---

[44]Goldberg, IRSH, II, p. 383.

[45]Ibid., p. 372.

[46]Ibid., pp. 390-391.

[47]Ibid., p. 182; Wright, Rural Revolution, p. 23. The Méline Tariff was supported by most Socialists, however. Opposition to the Tariff came mainly from the ranks of the Independents among the Socialists.

peasantry. It was successfully presented to the journaliers, the métayers, and the small proprietors. Theorectically, it had a tendency to preserve small-scale agriculture; and, practically, the election gains of 1896 were recognized, at least in part, as being the result of the Nantes program.[48] It was, therefore, politically expedient for the Guesdists to modify their former policy on property and to direct an appeal to the peasantry. Robert Wohl notes that by 1897 "the Guesdists had given up their anti-militarism, had modified their attitude toward private property in an attempt to win over the peasants and the petty bourgeoisie, and had begun to refer to themselves as the 'party of order and social peace.' " [49] The Guesdists, it can be said, had to consider the values of the dominating elementsof French society; and, in so considering, they had to adapt their program to the desires of those elements if they wanted to increase their political strength from those sectors.

By the turn of the century the Socialist agricultural reform program became a defense of the small farmer and the agricultural laborer. It included the demand for minimum salaries, health and security laws, the regulation of labor, the extension of social legislation, the extension of agricultural cooperatives, the abolition of direct taxes and the substitution of a direct income tax.[50] If one considers the advocacy of the expropiation

---

[48]Landauer, IRSH, VI, pp. 214-215, 223; Ligou, Histoire, p. 63. This result was recognized by the German, Bonnier, but the majority of the other German Socialists depreciated the value of the agricultural program in relation to election gains. The Nantes program conflicted with Kautsky's.

[49]Wohl, French Communism, p. 15.

[50]Encyclopédie socialiste, II, pp. 257-259.

of the large propertyholders, the Socialists can be assumed to have had two different agricultural policies for France's two different types of agriculture. These two policies can simply be defined as the "Reform Policy", which supported the peasantry, and the "Collective Policy", which attacked the class of large, exploiting agricultural capitalists. Both policies, it can be noticed, were directed at lessening the hostility of the politically dominent sectors of the rural community to Socialism. As one historian has aptly written: "It is worth noting that ever since the 1890's the agrarian program of the French Socialists had become a mere defense and illustration of small property — thus clearly sacrificing the 'productive' thrust of original Marxism to a concern for justice-in-distribution characteristic of the stalemate society . . . ."[51] French Socialism had shifted its emphasis from equality in the sphere of production to equality in the sphere of distribution.

Two developments in France during the nineteenth century became interwoven with Socialism: positivism and anti-clericalism. The positivist movement towards materialism and scientism sought progress at the expense of theology and metaphysics, and positivism's militant appendage was Freemasonry.[52] A struggle developed between Catholicism and positivism; and as the latter made gains during the century, the Socialists, who were allied with positivism in the Jacobin tradition, also advanced. So far as Socialism is concerned, the struggle did not possess so much of an irreligious

---

[51] Hoffmann et al., In Search of France, p. 409, note 12.

[52] Wright, France in Modern Times, pp. 298-299.

character as it did an anti-clerical disposition.[53] When the Émile Combes cabinet was in power (1902-1905), Jaurès became most influential in the Délégation des gauches which supported the ministry.[54] A vigorous anti-clerical program was initiated, and it culminated with the separation of church and state in 1905. This separation served as a catalyst in the process of dechristianization and appears to have had a marked effect upon those segments of the peasantry that had observed Catholic ceremonies as a custom rather than as a genuine faith. In the Limoges area, for example, nonbaptized children increased from two percent to forty percent and civil marriages from fourteen to sixty percent between 1899 and 1914.[55] However, at Chanzeaux, a village in Anjou in the west of France, a different pattern emerged. When there was a high degree of conflict between the church and the state, the village voted almost entirely for the right. Thus, in 1902 and 1906 seventy percent or more of the village voted for the right. In years when the conflict was not intense, the left obtained as much as thirty to forty percent of the vote.[56] The interaction between the Socialists and the peasantry is indirect on this issue and varies from area to area, depending upon the tendencies of

---

[53] Ibid.; Loubère, IRSH, IV, p. 426.

[54] Wright, France in Modern Times, pp. 333-334; Goldberg, Jaurès, pp. 297-298.

[55] Wright, France in Modern Times, pp. 330-332. Wright notes that a revival of Catholicism occurred in France after the First World War and that it gained momentum in the 1930's. Also see Hoffmann et al., In Search of France, p. 280.

[56] Laurence Wylie, (ed.) Chanzeaux, A Village in Anjou (cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966), pp. 62-63. It must be remembered that Chanzaux was in the east, an area in which Socialism did not advance to any degree at this time.

each area. Anti-clericalism was associated with the left; and, depending upon the values of each locality, Socialists gained or lost seats in elections through their association with anti-clericalism. It became a value that could either associate or disassociate the Socialists with the peasantry.

The Jaurèssians withdrew their support of the Combes government to achieve formal Socialist unity. They accepted the idea behind the resolution of the Congress of Japy of 3 December 1899, which forbade any Socialist to participate in a bourgeois government.[57] Disagreement on this issue had widened the distance between the two major Socialist parties, the Jaurèssian Parti socialiste francais and the Guesdist Parti socialiste de France, at the Congress of Lyons in 1901 (26-28 May).[58] The reconciliation of these differences began to emerge in a spirit of unity for collaboration at the Amsterdam Congress in August, 1904. The Rheims-Dresden resolution passed as a compromise between the motions sponsored by the Guesdists and the Jaurèssians. The adopted resolution proposed that no Socialists could participate in the ministry of a capitalist government, but that parliamentary groups were permissible and could be used for the advancement of reform legislation towards the final endsof Socialism.[59]

---

[57] Encyclopédie socialiste, II, pp. 51ff. The resolution passed by a vote of 818 to 634. Also see the discussion between Guesde and Jaurès on the question at the conference at Lille in October, 1900; Oeuvres, III, pp. 189-218.

[58] Encyclopédie socialiste, II, pp. 56-60; Georges Lefranc, Le Mouvement socialiste sous La Troisième République (1875-1940) (Paris: Payot, 1963), pp. 99-133.

[59] Encyclopédie socialiste, II, pp. 67ff.

The Guesdists took the lead in the move toward final unity and passed a resolution on 5 October 1904 to discuss the question; the French Socialist Party passed a similar resolution of 12 December. On 23 April 1905 the Socialists merged to found the Parti socialiste, Section française de l'Internationale cuvrière (SFIO) as a class party dedicated to the goal of changing the present capitalistic society into one of collectivism in which the state would possess the ownership of the means of production and exchange.[60]

The unification of the Guesdists and the Jaurèssians strengthened the Socialist movement in France. Daniel Ligou states that the Guesdists gave the Party its essential doctrine, stable elements of organization, a philosophy and a liturgy of Socialism.[61] The Jaurèssians were to provide leadership, in the person of Jaurès himself, and an humanitarian element. Although the basic reform programs of both Party factions were essentially the same, there remained a general disagreement as to the final form of organization that the rural means of production should possess and as to the methodology that should be employed to insure the victory of Socialism.[62] It should be noted that the consensus for unity among the Socialists was fundamentally negative. They united on conditions of no participation in a bourgeois government, anti-clericalism, anti-expansionism and anti-capitalism; and they united under the threat of not being recognized in the International unless

---

[60] Ibid., pp. 67-68, 97 ff. For a description of the movement for unity see Willard, Le Mouvement, pp. 572-590 and Noland, The Founding of the French Socialist Party, pp. 162-174.

[61] Ligou, Histoire, p. 66.

[62] These disagreements will be discussed in the next chapter; they involve such things as the organization of cooperatives and support of the general strike.

they took steps toward unity.

During the same time that the Socialists were developing as a political force (1880-1905), another group of social and economic reformers emerged which caused the Socialists many problems in rural as well as industrial areas. These reformers were the syndicalists.

In relation to the French countryside syndicalism had more of a heuristic than a lasting functional value as far as politics is concerned. By this is meant that it did not act as a functional pressure group insisting on any type of reform legislation, but that it could be useful as a means of support and pressure for other groups which were political. As Gordon Wright states: "If agricultural syndicalism was useful to the peasants and politicians, it did not do anything to help the peasants influence political decision-making, develop a sense of solidarity, or solve the fundamental economic or social problems of rural France."[63] The basic doctrine of syndicalism was the apolitization or complete separation of labor movement activity from politics or political connections. In time it grew to a near rejection of the theory and principal techniques of democracy.[64] The opportunity for the development of syndicalism came when the law of 21 March 1884 legalized the organization of workers' unions. Although the idea behind the law was practically discussed in 1876, the final legislation came as the result of the 1883 proposal of M. Tanviray, a professor associated with the

---

[63]Wright, Rural Revolution, p. 21.

[64]E. Drexel Godfrey, Jr., The Fate of the French Non-Communist Left (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1955), pp. 14-18. It represented the voluntarist and anarchist strand of the Republican tradition.

department of agriculture,[65] whose object was to provide a defense for the economic interests of the peasant, the proletariat and the small businessman. One of the compelling forces moving Tanviray to attempt to put his plan into operation was the prevalence of frauds on the market.

Numerically, agricultural syndicalism increased from approximately six hundred organizations affiliated with various locals with a little over 200,000 members in 1884 to around 7,000 groups with over 1,000,000 members in 1914.[66] Although syndicalism did not advance among the rural workers to the extent that it did among the industrial workers, many agricultural syndicates were found. Among them were the Société des Agriculteurs de France, the Société Nationale d'Encouragement a l'Agriculture (these two and one other federated in 1909 into the Fédération Nationale des Syndicats Agricoles and had for their objective the amalgamation of rural France), the Confédération Générale des Vignerons du Midi, and the Confédération des Vignerons du Sud-Est.[67] Syndicalism grew in rural France so that by 1912 there were six hundred and twenty-eight agricultural syndicates;[68] but the size of the locals was small, and the social composition tended to favor the propertied

---

[65]Louis Prugnaud, Les Étapes du syndicalisme agricole en France (Paris: Éditions de l'épi, 1963), pp. 17-20.

[66]Ibid., pp. 29-30. There is a discrepancy in the figures. The union figures show 6,667 organizations with 1,029,727 members, but the government figures show 7,501 groups with 1,180,737 members.

[67]Ibid., pp. 22-26, 40-43. It should be noted that the strongest syndicate to emerge before World War One was the industrial-based Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT), which was led by Victor Griffuelhes. This was the syndicate that caused much disagreement among Socialists between 1894 and 1914.

[68]Encyclopédie socialiste, VIII, p. 274.

interests. For example, in 1900 in the Union Centrale sixty percent of its members were proprietors, but only fifteen percent were fermiers and five percent laborers.[69] Rural syndicalism became more prevalent in some areas than in others. By 1914 the greatest number of organizations were found in the Midi, in the valleys of the Rhone, the Saône and the Loire, and in the Catholic departments of the west.[70] The departments with the highest number included the Haute-Saône, Isère, Marne, Indre-et-Loire, Doubs, Aube, Yonne and the Basses-Pyrénées.[71]

The reasons for the growth of syndicalism in the agricultural community were that its ideas and programs were well-suited to the peasant value structure and that its economic inclination served a useful function in the promotion of the well-being of the peasants' condition. Its anti-military and apolitical goals coincided with the rural character. In 1906 the Fédération des Travailleurs de la Terre advanced a program which included suppression of the colony tax which was imposed annually upon the métayers by agricultural proprietors and general farmers, the intervention of health officials to oblige proprietors to maintain proper health standards, the abolition of the license requirement for general farmers, and the creation of a prud'hommes agricoles.[72] This last-item called for was a special court

---

[69] Prugnaud, Les Étapes, p. 97.

[70] Ibid., p. 33.

[71] Ibid., p. 34. It should be noted that some of the areas of major syndicalist penetration were identical with the areas of Socialist penetration such as in the south and in the Midi.

[72] Ibid., note on p. 39

for the settlement of claims between agricultural workers and their employers. It was the call for an agricultural counterpart to the conseils de Prud'hommes which already existed in the industrial sphere, but which was mainly composed of employers and controlled by them. In 1908, the Fédérades Caisses Régionales de Crédit Agricole Mutuel was founded. It was a regional federation of banks and agricultural mutual credit associations, and its function was to provide easier credit for capital goods for the farmers. Agricultural mutual security societies, allowed under a law passed in 1900, grew from three hundred and forty-two in 1900 to over eleven hundred by 1906.[73] In 1907 prefects were given authorization to accept agents designated by the syndicates for the inspection of fraud on the market.[74] Support of private property, agricultural pensions, the extension of credit, and the call for higher prices for produce placed the syndicalists in good standing with the rural community. Besides this, the syndicalists held the peasants' interest by forming cooperatives for seeds, fertilizers and other capital necessities; and it was in the realm of consumer rather than producer cooperatives that these organizations were of value to the peasantry. They adjust-their emphasis and their program to promote "justice-in-distribution" rather than justice-in-production equality, reflecting the desires of the existing society. Managerial functions of the syndicates were handled by the town-dwellers, the local crusaders from the landed aristocracy and the bourgeoi-

---

[73] Ibid., p. 75.

[74] Ibid., p. 80. Market fraud was one of the original motives which prompted Tanviray to promote the law of 1884. The syndicalists encountered some difficulty in this same year (1907) with the government. A plan was proposed by the government to maintain distinctions between commercial and professional associations. See Ibid., pp. 51, 59-75.

sie.[75] Although the Socialists came to support and promote the extension of agricultural cooperatives, they recognized that the early cooperative programs were essentially the work of the syndicates.[76]

Although the Socialists and the syndicalists agreed on such matters as anti-militarism, pacifism and the need for reform, there were many differences in the approach to the peasantry that each group employed. Where the syndicalists tried to emphasize the idea of solidarity in a single peasant class, the Socialists pointed out the diversities within the peasantry.[77] While the former preached an apolitical doctrine, the latter tried to entangle the peasants with politics. When the syndicalists organized on the local level and federated, the Socialists did nothing to improve their organizational links with rural areas and tried to remain a centralized structure. Where the syndicalists supported private property and tried to develop each locality in reference to its own peculiar circumstances, the Socialists talked of collectivization of property and tried to apply their theories and policies in a similar manner to all localities. In the final analysis, the syndicalists provided much opposition to the doctrines and practices of the Socialists among the peasantry.

Initially, the POF (the Guesdists) enjoyed the support of the syndicalists, who were somewhat influenced in the direction of POF policy un-

---

[75]Wright, Rural Revolution, pp. 19-20.

[76]Encyclopédie socialiste, VIII, p. 274. Compère-Morel was the chief supporter of cooperatives among the Socialists before the War. He felt that the extension of cooperatives would provide a solution to the agrarian problem of the Socialists. His views are discussed further in Chapter III, see below, pp. 51-56.

[77]Wright, Rural Revolution, p. 24.

till 1894 when relations between the two groups were ruptured over the issue of the general strike, which the syndicalists supported and the Guesdists opposed.[78] The disagreement was also concerned with syndicalist involvement in politics. The syndicalists declared against direct participation in politics at Nantes in 1895 and at Amiens in 1906.[79] At Amiens the CGT adopted its apolitical position by the near-unanimous vote of 830 to 8.[80] Guesde, however, stil desired SFIO control over the CGT so that the Party could increase its influence and its militant strength.[81] During this period, the Guesdists also had to struggle against the Broussist faction, which was also trying to gain influence over the syndicates.[82] Even though the Blanquists added strength to the Guesdists when they joined the latter faction in 1901, they did not support the Guesdist policy toward syndicalism, opposing them and supporting Jaurès on the issue of the general strike.[83]

Thus, by 1905 the French Socialists had become a formally united and important political force; but their relationship to the agricultural community was structurally and substantially weak. The peasantry presented prob-

---

[78]Ligou, Histoire, pp. 56-58.

[79]Ibid., pp. 59-60.

[80]Encyclopédie socialiste, VIII, p. 71

[81]Goldberg, Jaurès, pp. 390-393.

[82]Carl Landauer, European Socialism, A History of Ideas and Movements from the Industrial Revolution to Hitler's Seizure of Power (II; Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1959), I, p. 340. Landauer notes that by the early 1900's there were more Broussists and Allemanists in syndicalist positions than there were Guesdists.

[83]Ibid., pp. 329,493, Vaillant, a Blanquist originally, was to support the general strike at Copenhagen in 1910.

lems which had to be overcome if the Socialists were to advance politically under the existing conditions of the Third Republic. They had attacked the problems, but they had not completely resolved them. By this time, however, the Socialists were more closely -- but not completely -- associated with the value structure and ideals of the rural community than they had been in 1880. Their agricultural problems were further complicated by the doctrines and practices of the syndicalists. If the Socialists would have taken over the syndicalist movement in the early 1900's, they would have greatly advanced their organizational links with the countryside and broadened the active base of their political strength. But most of the agricultural problems that confronted the Socialists in 1905 remained unsolved a decade later.

CHAPTER III

S F I O AGRICULTURAL POLICIES, 1905-1914

In the decade preceding World War I the main attention of the Socialists and, in fact, most of France was directed toward the international situation and toward a concern over labor conditions and industrial organization. A direct concern with the agrarian problem was relegated to secondary considerations; and this problem remained generally unsolved at the outbreak of war in 1914, and specifically unsolved among the Socialists. Indirectly, however, the Socialists' policies pertaining to international circumstances and labor organization did affect their relations with the peasantry.

The first decade and a half of the twentieth century was a period of economic growth for France. Between 1901 and 1913 her per capita industrial production rose at a higher rate than the general rise in Europe.[1] The rural sectors of the economy benefited from tariff protections, improved technology, rising prices for farm produce, and a general increase in European trade.[2] Yet, Gordon Wright notes that the stalemate society continued to exist:

> The survival of the static sector was even clearer in agriculture, where the excessively slow drift to the cities (amounting to about one percent of the rural population per year) left far too many marginal farms operating, and where most peasants had no easy access to capital for improvements. French agriculture increasingly became a museum with exhibits ranging from the medieval to the ultra modern.[3]

---

[1]Goldberg, Jaurès, p. 361.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Wright, France in Modern Times, p. 348.

The inconsistency between the economic growth and the remaining marginal condition of much of the peasantry is explained by two reasons. First, economic advances were made in agriculture, but they were made by the better-off farmers who could obtain credit for capital investment.[4] Second, much of the expansion at this time came from the industrial sphere.[5]

During this period of economic expansion the Dreyfus Affair emerged and discredited the army, causing a surge of anti-militarism and anti-patriotism on the left.[6] This surge expanded with the increasing tensions of the Franco-German conflict over Morocco, incidents such as occurred at Casablanca, Rabar and Agadir acting as catalysts. The issue of war or peace came ot occupy most of the attention of the Socialists; and, indirectly, the issue had an important relationship with the peasantry. The reserve of manpower for the army in case of war would come from the ranks of the peasantry: and as Gordon Wright notes, the peasants "disliked military service and retained an old prejudice against the officer class."[7] The left in the rural districts, led particularly by the Radicals who had a foothold in these areas, began to denounce the army and to support a reduction in the term of military service. A reduc-

---

[4] Ibid., p. 344. Wright also notes that improved conditions in agricultural areas were aided by a falling birth-rate and the urban migration, which reduced pressure on farm land. The rise in the increase of small holdings reached a peak in the early 1890's and started to decline thereafter. Within the classifications of the peasantry, the day-laborer who owned some of his land was declining the fastest, moving to the city in an attempt to improve his condition. Brogan, France, p. 406.

[5] Goldberg, Jaurès, p. 361 Per capita industrial production rose 57% in France between 1901 and 1913.

[6] Jaurès became a Dreyfussard, but Guesde refused to associate with the Dreyfussards because he considered them bourgeois.

[7] Wright, France in Modern Times, p. 339.

tion in the term of service from three to two years, which was to be counteracted in 1913, was an early result of this anti-militarism.[8] The Socialists supported Rouvier, one of the leading proponents of this legislation, and the bill was enacted in April, 1905.[9] It is not surprising to See Socialist-Radical cooperation on this issue because the Radicals had their seats in the pacific countryside at stake and because one of the cohesive factors of unity among Socialist factions in 1905 was an abhorence of war, which they feared could break out on an international level.[10] The pacifism of the Socialists was one element that associated them with the value system of the peasantry; and this value association partly explains the increased support given the Socialists by the peasantry between 1906 and 1914.

The leading Socialist spokesman for the pacific policy of the SFIO was Jean Jaurès. He remained an advocate of peace until he was assassinated by Ludwig Frank on July 31, 1914. He proposed a plan which would reorganize the French army, changing it from a permanent body to a citizens' army.[11] This plan was described in a book, L'Armée nouvelle (The New Army), that Jaurès published in 1910. The idea behind this popular army was that it would be able to guarantee the defense of the nation, if attacked, until more effective units could be mobilized; and it would deter the bourgeois government

---

[8]Goldberg, Jaurès, p. 335.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid. This fear was related to the Russo-Japanese War then in progress.

[11]Ibid., pp. 329-330; Pease, Jaurès, pp. 110-119; L. Levy-Bruhl, Jean Jaurès, Essai biographique (Paris: F. Rieder et Cie, éditeurs, 1924), pp. 121-122. The complete text of the plan as presented to the Chamber in November, 1910 can be found in Oeuvres, IV, pp. 454-460.

from engaging in any offensive wars.[12] Thus, it would tend to secure peace. Offensive war was anathema, but defensive war allowed for the patriotic element of the French character. As D.W. Brogan notes: ". . . Jaurès allowed for the deep-rooted patriotism of the average French man, and he understood that to affront it was not to make of the peasant or the worker a nationless member of the international proletariat, but to drive him into the hands of the Nationalists . . . ."[13] Milorad M. Drachkovitch states that Jaurès' reorganizational pland the general question of war support acted as a polemic within the SFIO.[14] Supported by Jaurès and those Socialists who maintained a belief in the moral righteousness of defensive wars, the plan was attacked by Hervé and other Socialists who were opposed to any type of war whether it was defensive or offensive.[15] These differences among the Socialists on the war issue were voiced at the Congress of Limoges in November, 1906. Hervé urged opposition to every war; Guesde presented a resolution "which subordinated the specific struggle against war to the larger effort against capitalism itself,"[16] and Jaurès spoke in favor of support for defensive wars. A compromise motion was presented by Vaillant and accepted by the delegates. It called for the defense of the nation against unprovoked attacks, but it com-

---

[12] Goldberg, Jaurès, pp. 385-388.

[13] Brogan, France, p. 430.

[14] Milorad M. Drachkovitch, Les Socialismes français et allemand et le problème de la guerre, 1870-1914 (Genève: Librairie E. Droz, 1953), pp. 114-121.

[15] Goldberg, Jaurès, p. 379.

[16] Ibid.

mitted the Socialists to "'parliamentary action, public agitation, popular protest meetings, even the general strike and insurrection' in order to prevent wars of aggression."[17] When war broke out in 1914, all Socialists, even Herve, supported the government and the war in defense of the French nation. Guesde even became a minister without portfolio in the war cabinet. Underlying his belief in peace, Jaurès was convinced that it could only be attained by the growth of understanding and trust on an international level. What was needed was a free federation of sovereign nations which would give up the exercise of military force and submit itself to arbitration and the rational operation of the rules of law.[18]

The issue of war or peace intensified between 1910 and 1914, and the efforts of the SFIO were directed toward the maintenance of peace. In 1913 Barthou proposed a three-year military service law which was denounced by the Socialists, who resolved at Brest (March, 1913) to fight the proposed law.[19] The debate in the Chamber began in June and lasted for seven weeks. The bill finally passed in the middle of July.[20] One of the reasons for the length and intensity of this debate was the political lag of the rural community. The nationalist revival of 1911-1914, which resulted because of the behavior of Germany, did not affect the Radicals as quickly because most of their districts were in rural areas, which changed their attitude more slowly.[21] There

---

[17] Ibid.

[18] Pease, Jaurès, pp. 133, 143.

[19] Goldberg, Jaurès, p. 441.

[20] Ibid., p. 442.

[21] Wright, France in Modern Times, p. 339.

was collaboration between Radicals and Socialists on this issue. Thus, this "rural leg was reflected in the last prewar elections (April-May, 1914),when the country chose a Chamber whose majority was committed to a reduction in military service and a pacific foreign policy."[22]

Anti-expansionism was also involved in the program of the anti-militarists. In reality, they feared that French expansionist efforts could easily lead to an outbreak of hostilities. They were, therefore, much concerned with the intentions of the French government in Africa and condemned any actions that could lead to an estrangement with Germany.

The other major concern that confronted Socialists between 1905 and 1914, i.e. labor conditions and industrial organization, became stifled for a time because of the disagreement between the SFIO and the CGT as to what their relationship should be. When the CGT reiterated its apolitical position at Amiens in 1906, the Socialists were divided along three courses as to what the proper relation should be. Hervé wanted them to be completely separate; Guesde wanted to incorporate the CGT into the SFIC; and Jaurès, acting in the spirit of compromise in the quest for unity, wanted a cooperative alliance between the two groups. Jaurès' position was officially adopted in November, 1906 at the Congress of Limoges,[23] but there continued to be a mild friction within the Party on this issue. By 1909 there existed a tacit working agreement between the CGT and the SFIO, which tended to broaden and to strengthen the working-class movement. Both appeared to be heading in the same

---

[22] Ibid.

[23] Goldberg, Jaurès, pp. 390-393. Although the Guesdist were the more powerful faction when the Socialists unified in 1905, the Jauressians had become the majority and controlling faction by November, 1906.

direction; the CGT economically, the SFIO politically. The working relationship is important in reference to the peasantry because many of the syndicates were agricultural units. Syndicalist support for the Socialists entailed, at least in part, some political support from the rural areas, as well as industrial support from urban areas. The rural support came chiefly from the ranks of the day-laborers and the small proprietors. It is interesting to note that there is a corresponding rise of both the CGT and the SFIO in the decade prior to 1914.

The elections of 1906 resulted in gains for the United Socialists, but the middle coalition of Radicals, Radical-Socialists, Left-Republicans and Independent Socialists gained the most.[24] Clemenceau became Premier in November and announced a reform program, which did not materialize during his administration (1906-1909). This period was characterized by social unrest and waves of strikes, stemming essentially from economic rather than political considerations.[25] In 1907 the revolt of the winegrowers of the Midi was suppressed by the government by means of force. The crisis was caused by an attack of phylexera, foreign competition, and the tendency of a large area of the Midi to engage in monoculture which made it become "more susceptible to the fluctuations of the market."[26] Demonstrations occurred at Montpellier in June; and when Clemenceau sent troops to arrect the leaders and to disperse the demonstraters, violence erupted and there was a mutiny of the peas-

---

[24] Ibid., p. 353; Brogan, France, p. 423.

[25] Wright, France in Modern Times, p. 338; Goldberg, Jaurès, p. 364; Brogan, France, p. 423.

[26] Wright, Rural Revolution, p. 27

ant soldiers.[27] The leader of the revolt, Marcellin Albert, led a march on Paris but dispersed his followers after receiving some money from the Premier.[28] Gagnon writes of this incident that "Clemenceau's abrupt treatment of the southern winegrowers was an exception to the generally favorable policy of the Republic toward the farmer; agricultural schools, testing stations, and touring experts were offered and, above all, a comfortably high tariff."[29] One positive aspect that was an outgrowth of the 1907 uprising was the formation of the Confédération Générale des Vignerons du Midi, which soon gained over 70,000 members. It became a pilot organization that was soon imitated by other growers. In 1913 these organizations of winegrowers joined together to found the Fédération des Associations Viticoles (FAV). This was the first of the "specialized associations" to emerge; and there was a rapid expansion of these associations during the interwar period.[30]

The formulation of a direct agricultural program was one of the most difficult problems that confronted the SFIO between 1905 and 1914, and a formal solution to the agrarian question was still wanting at the outbreak of the War. At the Congress of Limoges in 1906 the Socialists set up an investigating committee under the direction of Compère-Morel to study the rural situation and to make recommendations for a unified agricultural program.[31]

---

[27] Ibid.; Gagnon, France Since 1789, p. 275.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Gagnon, France Since 1789, p. 281.

[30] Wright, Rural Revolution, p. 28.

[31] Alexander Zévaès, Le Parti socialiste de 1904 à 1923 (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1923), p. 42; Encyclopédie socialiste, III, pp. 253-254; Lefranc, Le Mouvement, pp. 168-169.

A questionnaire inquiring into eleven different areas was prepared and sent out to survey the working conditions of rural laborers, the conditions of rural "exploitation," and the ownership of the means of production.[32] The commission's report was accepted at Nancy in 1907. It noted that the conditions of rural laborers were the same as those of the urban workers and that the small peasant proprietors were being exploited by the agricultural capitalists.[33] It called for a program of immediate legislative reforms that would promote a tendency toward equality in the distributive sphere, noted the importance of the syndicalists' cooperative program, and advocated the extension of agricultural cooperatives.[34] The work of the commission was noted, and Compère-Morel was designated to continue to direct it in the formulation of a Socialist agricultural program. Compère-Morel's position as chairman of this commission led him to become the chief figure among Socialists in the formulation of an agrarian program from this time until after the War.[35]

Discussion of the agricultural question was put off to the Congress of Toulouse (October, 1908), but nothing was resolved there either. Compère-Morel believed that the proper way to prepare for the collectivization of rural France was to promote a system of cooperatives. He stated that he believed cooperatives would lead to voluntary collectivization among the farm-

---

[32]Lefranc, Le Mouvement, p. 169.

[33]Ibid.; Encyclopédie socialiste, III, pp. 255-257.

[34]Lefranc, Le Mouvement, pp. 165, 168-169.

[35]Wohl, French Communism, p. 410. Wohl goes so far as to state that outside of Compere-Morel's efforts the SFIO had no agricultural program before the War. Also see Lefranc, Le Mouvement, p. 170.

ers, but in some aspects it appears that he believed in cooperatives as an end in themselves rather than as a means under which Socialism could evolve in the agricultural community, i.e., cooperative rather than collective organization would be the final form of ownership of the means of production.[36] He saw an advantage in the cooperative system which he believed could improve the inferior condition of French agriculture.[37] He felt that the period for individual initiative had passed and that modern machines were necessary to overcome inferior conditions.[38] The best way for the poorer farmers to mechanize would be to form cooperatives for the purchase of machinery, as well as for the purchase of other capital necessities. But his efforts at Toulouse were fruitless, and discussion of the question was again postponed.[39]

The Congress of Saint-Étienne in April, 1909 dealt primarily upon two considerations: the elections of 1910 and the agricultural question.[40] It was acknowledged that the Socialists would have to intensify their campaign in the rural areas if they were to be politically successful in the coming elections. A prolonged discussion ensued concerning the agricultural problem, i.e., the official program that the Socialists would adopt. The discussion was directed along two different viewpoints: the Jaurèssians supported the necessity of reforms and a special program for the agricultural community as long as Socialism was the final goal; the Guesdists did

---

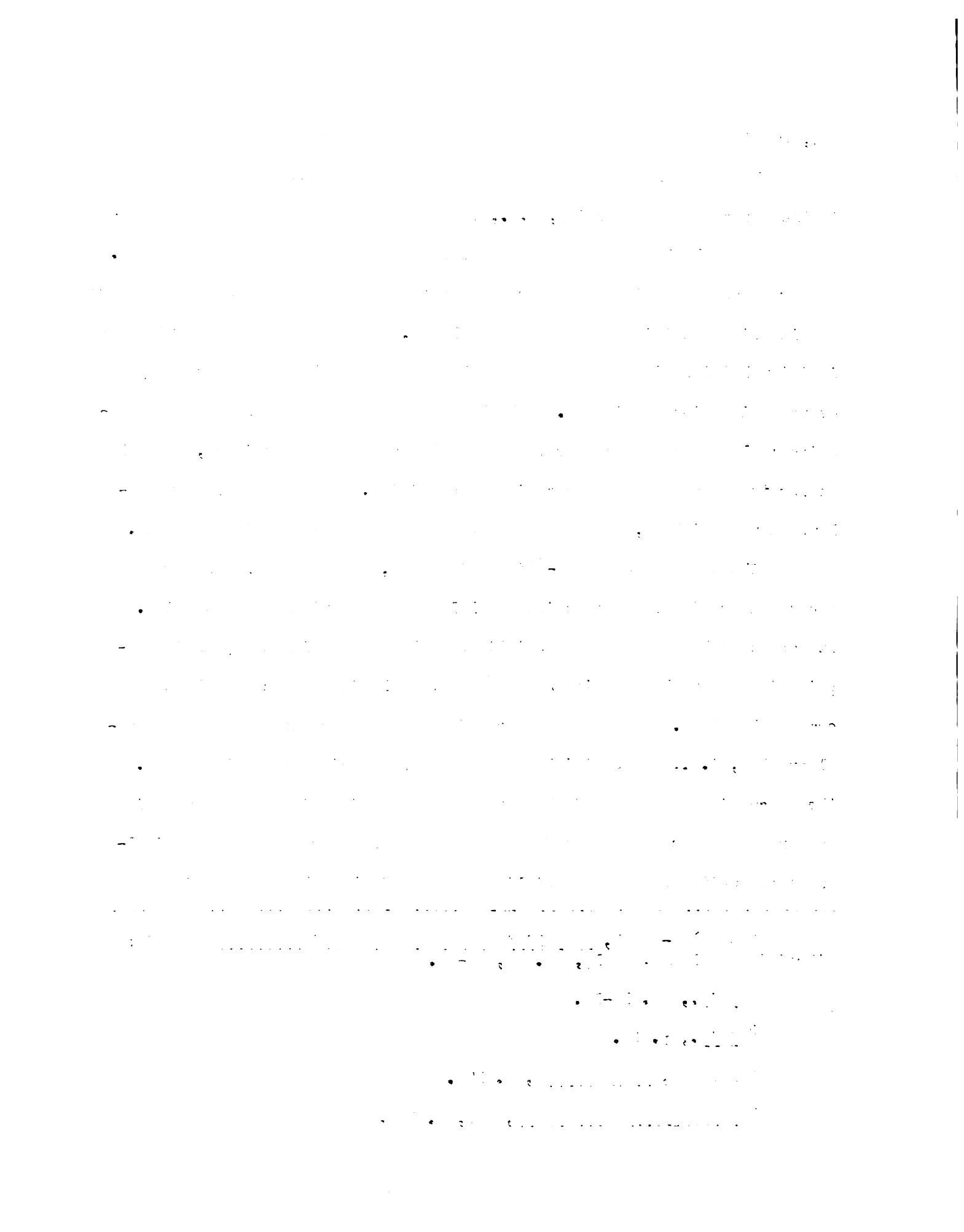
[36]Compère-Morel, La Politique agraire du Parti socialiste (Paris: Librairie populaire, 1921), pp. 24, 29-32.

[37]Ibid., pp. 14-15.

[38]Ibid., p. 35.

[39]Lefranc, Le Mouvement, p. 170.

[40]Encyclopédie socialiste, III, p. 184.



not see a need for a special program and though that Socialism should be applied in the same way in the countryside as in the cities.[41] Vaillant felt that the language of the agricultural program was becoming less and less socialistic, compromising Socialism with the values of the bourgeois society.[42] A total of twenty-six speakers addressed the delegates on this matter,[43] but it lay unresolved at the end of the Congress.[44] The question was also put off later in 1909 at the Congress of Saint-Quentin.[45] It was never resolved before 1914.

There was also disagreement among the Socialists upon reform legislation. Early in 1910 a pension bill was introduced into the Chamber. At the Congress of Nîmes in February, 1910 a controversy arose in the Socialist ranks over support of this bill. It was supported by Jaurès who spoke of democracy as the key to Socialist influence of the capitalist state.[46] Hervé attacked the bill and Jaurès. Paul Lafargue, a Guesdist and Marx's son-in-law, attacked the bill as it would permit the capitalists to steal from the workers.[47] Guesde was against the bill and tried to persuade the delegates to adopt an official resolution comdemning it.[48] The final rese-

---

[41] Ibid., pp. 186-188.

[42] Zévaès, Parti socialiste, p. 43.

[43] Encyclopédie socialiste, III, pp. 186-188.

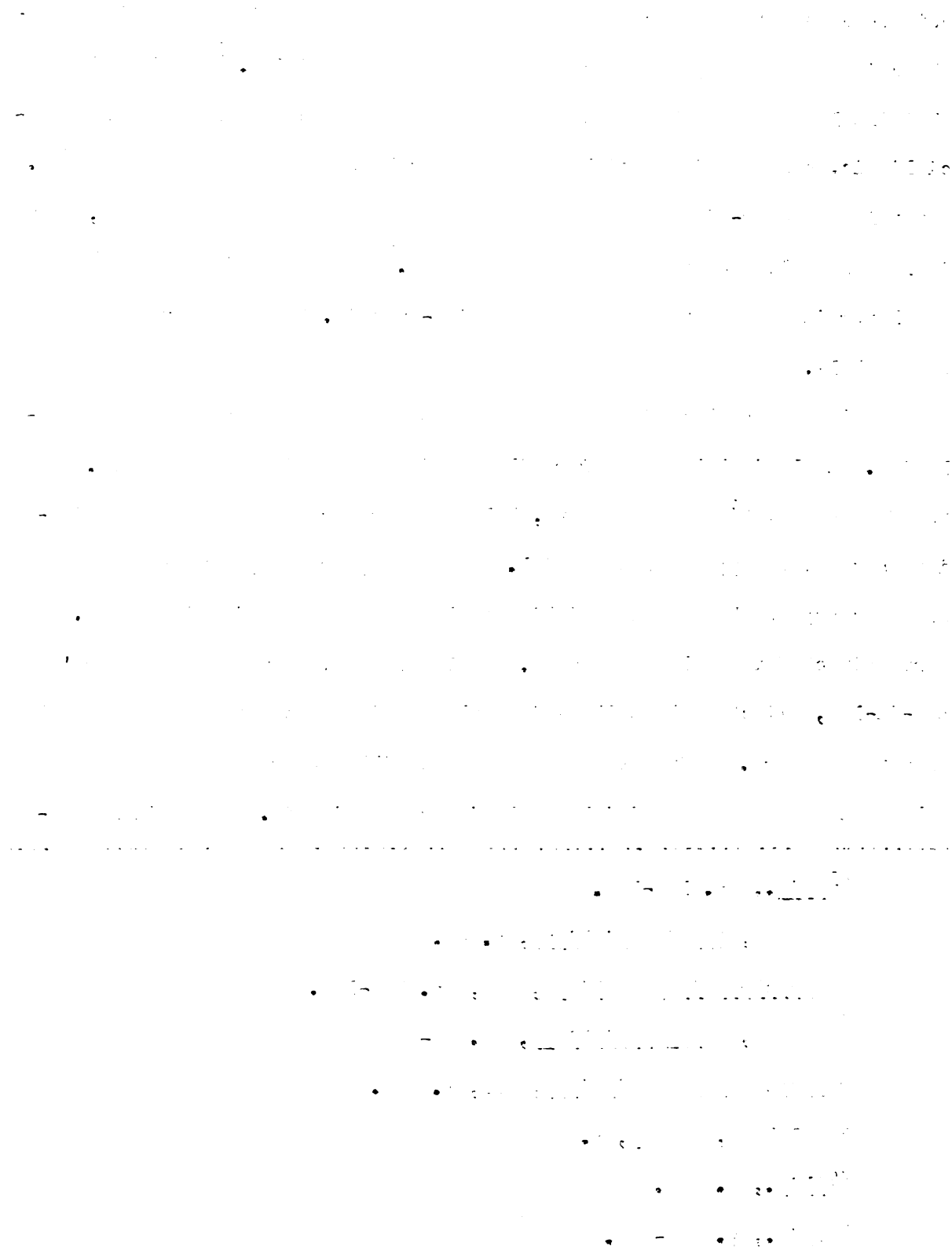
[44] Zévaès, Parti socialiste, pp. 42-46

[45] Encyclopédie socialiste, III, p. 260.

[46] Goldberg, Jaurès, p. 406

[47] Ibid., p. 405.

[48] Ibid., p. 405-406.



lution, as adopted by the Congress, supported the bill, Jaurès having the support of the majority of the delegates. Guesde spoke against the bill in the Chamber, Jaurès for it; it passed the Chamber in April, 1910.[49] As the pension bill covered agricultural workers, there is a relationship between the various Socialists positions and the agricultural community. Given that the legislation would be beneficial to the workers, the position taken by Guesde and his followers appears to be hostile to the best immediate interests of the workers; but it is consistent with their doctrine of non-collaboration with the bourgeoisie. The Jaurèssian position is more humanitarian and is directed to improve the workers' immediate condition, even at the expense of collaboration with the bourgeoisie. The less doctrinaire approach of Jaurès was more flexible and could be adjusted to meet the opportunities for social and economic reform as they occurred. Thus, in relation to the final end -- Socialism through evolutionary and democratic means for Jaurès, Socialism through doctrinal and Marxian means for Guesde -- each was consistant in an extended perspective. But, as both proclaimed to work for immediate reforms, the Jaurèssian current was more consistant in the short run perspective. The Guesdists' emphasis on the priority of a political takeover sometimes provided them with a justified reason, or at least a rationalization, to oppose specific proposals of economic and social reform.

Thus, during this period there was internal disagreement in the SFIO on the adoption of a particular agricultural program and on the methodological approach that should be used to establish Socialism. Most of the efforts toward a consolidated program came from Compère-Morel. He was able

---

[49] Ibid., p. 407

somewhat to coordinate the party's reform program, which was eclectic in nature, including many of the Guesdist and Jaurèssian reform policies developed in the 1890's. These reforms included the reduction of transportation costs, the regulation of labor, minimum wages, the extension of cooperatives, health laws, and, in general, an extension of social and economic legislation.[50] But he did not arrange an agreement on the question of the method of ownership of the means of production in the rural community under Socialism. In fact, he tended to complicate the problem with his emphasis on cooperatives, which he personally thought represented the solution to the problem. In his orientation, he was a Guesdist rather than a Jaurèssian; and this presented a practical problem in itself: a Guesdist was the chairman of the party's agricultural commission, but the majority of the party was Jaurèssian. He is accused by Lefranc of being responsible for the party factions not getting together on a unified agrarian program before the War.[51] His position as the chairman of the commission could well be used in playing politics toward this disjunctive and, especially if he felt that he did not have enough support to put through his own program. Yet, the party was able to come to an agreement on one thing: it concurred that an intensified approach to the peasantry was necessary in order to strengthen its political position. With its organizational links with the countryside being relatively weak, campaign approaches were carried on by the individual candidates in each locality in the traditional French fashion. The intensified electoral propaganda -- not to be confused with an intensified agricultural program -- paid off so that "by 1914

---

[50] Encyclopédie socialiste, II, pp. 257ff.

[51] Lefranc, Le Mouvement, pp. 169-171.

Socialist propaganda had begun to penetrate the peasantry"[52] and had encroached upon the territory of the Radicals.

By 1914 the SFIO could not be considered a purely proletarian party committed to a revolutionary takeover of the state. It directed its appeal to many different elements of society in an effort to gain political support. The majority of its members had accepted class collaboration toward reform and had abandoned the doctrinaire approach of Marxism. The party had committed itself to a peaceful, evolutionary transformation of the state to Socialism. The left wing of the party had been forced to yield to the more numerous reform faction headed by Jaurès. In relation to the peasantry, the party had abandoned the doctrine of complete collectivization of property and had conceded allowances for the existence of small holdings of private property for the small, independent farmers, although there was some disagreement on this matter within the party ranks. It recognized its need of political support from the rural areas and started to intensify its propaganda efforts there. In reality, however, the agricultural program and the agrarian community were given secondary consideration in view of the two major considerations of the times: international peace and labor problems and organization. Even though it theorectically proclaimed to be the party of the proletariat,[53] it found itself somewhat divorced from direct involvement with the labor movement because of its differences and difficulties with the syndicalists. More and more, it had become the party of the petty bourgeoisie, including many civil servants, journalists, white-collar workers,

---

[52] Wohl, French Communism, p. 19.

[53] Encyclopédie socialiste, II, p. 259

teachers, and professionals in its ranks. Its greatest associational values with the stalemate society were pacifism and anti-militarism. And even though there was an association of some values with the peasantry, the Socialists found that in 1914 they still remained in a situation of unresolved conflict with the agricultural community on the issues of property and socio-economic change.

CHAPTER IV

ELECTIONS, IDEOLOGY AND PROPAGANDA

The outcome of elections in France was dependent upon the peasantry because of its influential position under the Constitution of the Third Republic, and the countryside maintained its electoral advantage until proportional representation was adopted in 1945. It failed, however, to provide sufficient leadership from within its own ranks so that in practice its alliance with bourgeoisie sent members of this latter class to Parliament. In reference to this, one historian has written:

> For a long time, the organizations representing agricultural interests have been divided by their political allegiances. Some (in the Rue d'Athenes and Rue Scribe) were dominated by the representatives of the landed aristocracy. Others (in the Boulevard St. Germain) were dominated by middle-class representatives who belonged to the Radical Party. The traditional leaders of agriculture -- whether right or left -- came mostly from the rich regions of specialized agriculture. Most of them, noble or middle class, did not really belong to the peasant group.[1]

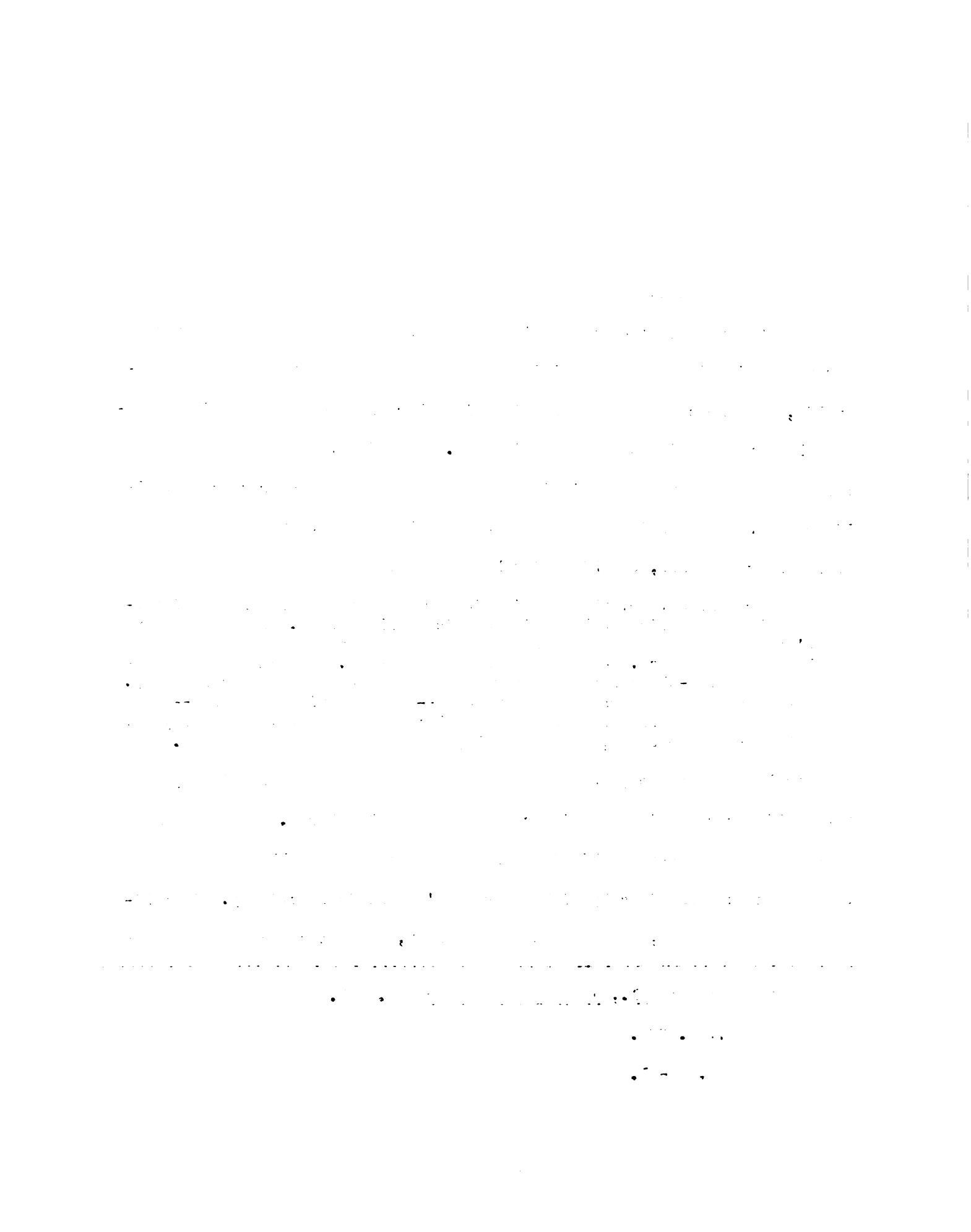
Political life for the peasant did not seem to intertwine sufficiently with the realistic conditions in his economic or social spheres.[2] The peasant found little else besides his intermittent treks to the polls on election day to connect him directly with the nation's political activity. His political demonstrations, such as occurred in 1907,[3] had economic origins and did

---

[1] Hoffmann et al., In Search of France, p. 381.

[2] Ibid., p. 393.

[3] See pp. 50-51.



not pressure the government into adopting any significant program changes. The main political concern of the peasantry was directed toward maintaining its economic welfare; and it appears that it was satisfied with its role in the operation of the government, allowing the bourgeoisie to control the operation of administrative matters. One sociologist has written: "What orients change in a society, however, seems to be what its people want out of life, and this is determined by their values."[4] The peasant, his value system coinciding with that of the bourgeoisie, wanted to maintain the status quo of the political operation of the stalemate society.

There was no political party that specifically represented or sought to represent the peasantry as distinct from other social classes; "and any group which in substance stood for a special agrarian interest was usually careful to disguise the fact."[5] France's problem, in this respect, was the failure of the development of her political groups into well-defined, well-disciplined and well-organized parties. While a mass electorate was emerging, there was no similar emergence of political parties with mass appeal, which was necessary for a healthy political environment. The development of the SFIO was unlike that of its British counterpart, the Labour Party.

The Socialists' first supporters from the agricultural community were the farm laborers of the northeast and "scattered clusters of marginal smallowners and tenants in the center and southwest."[6] Goguel cites the following departments as having developed a leftist orientation by 1885: Ardennes,

---

[4]Hoffmann et al., In Search of France, p. 302

[5]Thomson, Democracy, p. 51

[6]Wright, Rural Revolution, p. 23; Francois Goguel, Géographie des elections françaises de 1870 à 1951 (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1951), p. 105.

Aisne, Nièvre, Cher, Allier, Cruese, Haute-Vienne, Corrèze, Dordogne, Drôme, Basses-Alpes, Var, Isère, Ardèche, Vaucluse, Gard, Bouches-du-Rhône, Hérault, Aube, Pyrénées Orientale, Ariège, Haute-Garonne and the Seine.[7] Between 1902 and 1914 the departments of Gers and Landes turned to the left, as did the departments of Pas-de-Calais, Somme, Oise, Seine-et-Oise and Charente after the War.[8] All of these departments cluster in four areas: the south, the southwest, the center and the northeast. They are not heavily industrialized and are rather characterized by the diversity of their economic occupations. Of these areas, the most industrialized was the northeast, but it also had many small farms. Light industrialization, mining and small-scale agriculture characterized the center; the southern and southwestern areas were predominantly populated by farmers and winegrowers, and the textile industries employed almost all of the rest of the population.

Although there were only six Socialists elected to the Chamber in 1885, their strength grew until they found themselves, i.e., the SFIO, the second-largest party in France in 1914. The elections of 1893 gave the Socialists their first sizable parliamentary group. They polled 8.6% of the total popular vote and held thirty-one seats in the Chamber.[9] Their number of seats increased to fifty-five in 1898, and in the 1902 elections they obtained over fifty seats with the Jaurèssian Parti socialiste français having triple the number of seats as the Guesdist Parti socialiste de France.[10] One reason for

---

[7]Goguel, Géographie, p. 105.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Peter Campbell, French Electoral Systems and Elections since 1789 (2nd ed.; Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1965), p. 82.

[10]Ibid., pp. 82-83; Cole, History of Socialist Thought, III, p. 351.

the greater success of the first party was its electoral tactic of forming coalitions with bourgeois parties.[11] This election came at a time when the issue of collaboration with the bourgeoisie was causing much debate among the ranks of the Socialists. In view of their position on the Dreyfus Affair[12] and the Millerand controversy,[13] it is not difficult to understand the Guesdists' position in opposing coalitions with the bourgeoisie. The Jaurèssians emerged more powerful in Parliament than the Guesdists at a time when their membership was dropping and the number of Guesdists was increasing. The key to the political success of the Socialists was to collaborate with the bourgeois groups, which they tended to do (particularly with the Radicals) on an increasing scale over the next decade. Examples of this collaboration between Socialists and Radicals can be seen in reference to the military service bills of 1905 and 1913.

Greater gains were made by the Socialists after they united in 1905. In 1906 seventy-one Socialists were elected to Parliament; fifty-three of them were members of the SFIO, the rest were Independents.[14] The discussions at the Congress of Saint-Étienne in 1909 produced a campaign program in 1910 that revolved around the eight-hour day, a progressive income tax, proportional representation, the maintenance of peace and other planks declaring for social

---

[11]Gole, History of Social Thought, III, p. 351.

[12]See below, note 6, p. 45.

[13]Millerand was a Socialist who accepted a ministerial post under the Waldeck-Rousseau cabinet. He was condemned for this act by the Guesdists, but not by the Jaurèssians. When the Socialists unified in 1905 Jaurès had to accept the Guesdist position of non-participation in bourgeois governments.

[14]Campbell, French Electoral Systems, p. 84. Wohl identifies fifty-four with the SFIO; Wohl, French Communism, p. 17. Zévaès puts the number at fifty-one; Zévaès, Parti socialiste, p. 19.

and economic welfare legislation.[15] Seventy-six SFIO representatives were elected that year, along with two dozen Independent Socialists.[16] The character of the SFIO members of the Chamber in 1910 was basically bourgeois. The SFIO Deputies included eight university professors, seven small farmers, seven journalists, seven lawyers, six doctors and pharmacists, five manufacturers and shopkeepers, one engineer, one chemist and the rest were white-collar workers and manual laborers.[17] The majority of the SFIO members of Parliament to the 1914 Chamber were also bourgeois in character.[18] In 1914 there were only five proletarians among the top twenty-seven militant leaders of the party.[19] The majority of the party membersnow came from the departments of the Nord, Gard, Haute-Vienne, Aube, Vaucluse, Ardennes, Pyrénées-Orientales, and the Seine.[20] These departments represented the traditionally strong areas of the Socialists: the Nord, Ardennes and Aube in the north; Haute-Vienne in the center; Pyrénées-Orientales in the south; Gard and Vaucluse in the southwest; and the Seine represented the Socialists in the Paris district. Socialist support in these areas came from diversified socio-economic classes. For example: industrial laborers and civil servants supported the Socialists in the Seine; in Aube, vineyard laborers, woodcutters, farmers, farm laborers, and the industrial workers of

---

[15] Encyclopédie socialiste, III, p. 15.

[16] Ibid., p. 84; Wohl, French Communism, p. 20; Campbell, French Electoral Systems, p. 84.

[17] Wohl, French Communism, p.20.

[18] Lefranc, Le Mouvement, p. 188.

[19] Wohl, French Communism, p. 20.

[20] Ibid., p. 17.

Troyes and Romilly voted for the Socialists;[21] and in the Nord, there was support from miners, textile workers, small farmers, peasants, and workers from many diverse industries.[22] With this varied support, the SFIO could not be considered as an exclusively proletariat party; this is evident not only from the ranks of its supporters, but from the party members and Deputies also. As a party, it represented many varied and diverse occupational groups, some of which were bourgeois.

In the election of 1914, the SFIO increased its campaign efforts in the rural areas. In central and southern France, it took away some of the Radicals traditional strongholds.[23] The number of seats it held in the Chamber increased to one-hundred and three, and the percentage of votes that it polled rose to 16.9% of the total as it tallied some 1,400,000 votes.[24] Thus, in 1914 the SFIO became the second-largest party in the Chamber, possessing about one-sixty of the total seats. Between 1885 and 1914 the Socialists and, generally speaking, the entire French left increased the number of departments in which they held majorities, while the number controlled by the conservatives and moderates tended to decrease, except in 1910;[25] the gains of the left were most striking in central and southern France.

The SFIO also made gains in France's local elections, i.e., elections

---

[21] Encyclopédie socialiste, IX, p. 126.

[22] Ibid., pp. 392-393.

[23] Goldberg, Jaurès, p. 447.

[24] Ibid., p. 453; Campbell, French Electoral Systems, p. 85. Wohl identifies only 101 Socialists as belonging to the SFIO. Wohl, French Communism, p. 17. The total votes polled by the SFIO in the first elections after unity (1906) was 878,000. Thus, by 1914 they gained a half of a million votes.

[25] Goguel, Géographie, pp. 30-41, 52-63.

of mayors, deputy mayors and town councilors. Between 1908 and 1912 the number of Socialists elected in these contests increased from one-hundred and ninety-six to two-hundred and eighty-two, and there were many coalitions with the Radicals in these elections.[26] In 1910 the Socialists campaigned locally on a social and economic reform platform,[27] and by 1912 they had generally included the extension of agricultural cooperatives as part of this platform.[28]

What explains the political growth of Socialism during this period? The first factor lies in the person of Jean Jaurès. He worked diligently at keeping the party unified and in guiding it in a reformist direction instead of a revolutionary one which would have been opposed to the social values of the dominating conservative forces of French society. Related to this is the second factor of Party unity. The SFIO tended to act more as a unit even though there existed some disagreement within its ranks on method and on the question of property. Increased support from the rural areas is a third factor. By 1914 the SFIO had only started to make inroads into the countryside, and these intensified efforts of propaganda were proving to bear political rewards. Indeed, their campaign here could well adapt itself to a -- then unused -- slogan of "Peace, Land and Bread;" peace for the major supply of army recruits, land for the small propertyholder, and bread, i.e., a regular income, for the farm laborers who were often subject to employment fluctuations, depending upon seasonal work for the most part. It is in ref-

---

[26] Encyclopédie socialiste, IX, pp. 436-453; III, pp. 19-30, 92-84.

[27] Ibid., III, p. 15.

[28] Ibid., p. 18. This reflects the influence of Compère-Morel, who pushed the extension of cooperatives in the rural areas.

erence and in response to such pacific and economic appeals -- made not only by the Socialists -- that the peasantry gave increased support to the French left. The fourth, and perhaps the most important, factor was the adaptation of the SFIO to the bourgeois values of the stalemate society. The Socialists conceded on the question of total collectivization of property and allowed for the existence of private property on the level of the small landholder. This idea found itself in accordance with the character of the atomized society of the Third Republic. Only the property of the large, exploiting landholders would be collectivized by the state under Socialism. The evolution of Socialism and the peaceful security of the individual and of the nation was socially more appealing to the countryside and the petty bourgeoisie than the call for revolution and the overthrow of the existing order. By shifting the emphasis of their program to economic matters in the case of the peasantry and to social matters in the case of the proletariat,[29] the Socialists were able to hedge upon the forces of the existing society and stay within the scope of its equilibrium, i.e., they hedged upon the petty bourgeois and peasant elements of society, and they presented a political platform that could be tolerated within the value limits of society.

Yet there were many areas of weaknesses within the party; and these weaknesses prevented its operation as a well-organized and disciplined party capable of successfully presenting its program to the mass electotorate. A successful presentation, in this sense, is meant that the party could appeal to a larger number of its existing supporters and that it could appeal to those groups not presently supporting the Socialist, such as most of the manufac-

---

[29] Ibid., II, pp. 169-170, 234-236. The Socialists were often accused by their opponents of having two political programs, one for the peasantry and petty bourgeois and the other for the workers, and of being opportunists.

turers, and the farmers of the west and northwest. In theory, the main thrust of the party's program was directed toward the proletariat, but the proletariat in France was not yet numerous enough to give the Socialists the degree of support that they wanted and needed. The SFIO also failed to "command the financial and organizational help of the working classes."[30] This was caused, for the most part, by the dissociation of the syndicalist movement with the Socialist movement. The breakup of the SFIO after the War and the founding of the French Communist Party affected Socialist strength and unity, and this split siphoned off some Socialist support.

In relation to the agricultural community, the SFIO failed to present a cohesive agricultural program supported by the entire party; it failed to develop its organizational links with the countryside; and it failed to direct and command the peasantry as a revolutionary group within the framework of its political tradition. Moreover, there was an ideological gap between the peasantry and the Socialists which had not been bridged. This gap was the difference between the collectivist philosophy of the latter and the individualism of the former. The individual in Socialism becomes part of the organic body of the state; he is an individual in the corporate sense. He is an owner in the state corporation much as the stockholder is an owner of a business corporation. Although social and economic inequalities would be remedied by state intervention, family property would be suppressed.[31] Solidarity replaces individualism.

---

[30]Gagnon, France Since 1789, p. 278.

[31]Gustave Le Bon, The Psychology of Socialism (Wells, Vermont: The Fraser Publishing Company, [1965 first published in New York: The MacMillan Company, 1899]), p. 31.

The French agricultural community of this period doesnot fit into the formal structure of Socialist ideology. It values individualism over solidarity, and private ownership over collective ownership. It supports the family ideal over the corporate. It tends to adapt itself more slowly to the exegencies of the modern world and to the use of modern agricultural machinery. By 1914, there was little modernization in French agriculture; in fact, there was relatively little modernization as late as the post World War II period. This rural slowness of change was also reflected in its election of a pacific and anti-militaristic Chamber majority in the election of 1914. The peasants, at this time, were not ready for any changes; nor did they want any, except those that would promote their economic welfare. Particularly, they resisted any change in social areas for they were inordinately conservative in this sphere and had "not developed much of a social conscience."[32] "Atomism" was a characteristic of the French peasantry because of the relative isolation of agriculture and its slowness to modernize.[33] There were no large associations or solid group structure. Fragmentation thus resulted among the agrarians; and the corollary of fragmentation was individualism.[34] Individualism is in essence opposed to solidarity and the collective ideas of Socialism.

The family unit was entrenched among the values of the rural community. It is difficult for this type of structure to allow a corporate structure to abide alongside of it, or to replace it altogether. This value of

---

[32]Wright, France in Modern Times, p. 363.

[33]Hofmann et al., In Search of France, p. 11

[34]Ibid.

the family had its corollary in the economic sphere as most French businesses in 1914 were organized on a small-scale basis, accentuating the value of micro-associationalism (association in small-membership groups rather than in large-membership ones) and the problem of fragmentation. Thrift and inheritance were valued by the peasants, as was private property. The peasants' way of life, their character, and their values would not allow them to accent the ideology of Socialism in its unabridged form.

Where, then, did the concessions come from which associated the differences of these two value systems? They came mainly from the Socialists, who adapted Socialist doctrines to the agricultural community along non-Marxist lines. The main concession was given on the property question when they allowed for the existence of holdings of small-scale private property under Socialism. This tended to lessen the alienation of the smallholders toward Socialism. The Socialist emphasis on economic improvement rather than social change to the rural constituencies was a propaganda device which tended to allay conservative fears of social change. The adoption of evolutionary rather than revolutionary Socialism was also more appealing to the peasant value structure. The Socialists' acceptance of working through parliamentary and democratic means to attain their goals tended to alleviate the fears of the petty bourgeoisie that the Socialists would employ radical methods to implement Socialism. By 1914 the SFIO could be trusted as a "'party of order and social peace.'" This idea was reinforced by the Socialists' policies of pacifism and anti-militarism.

Yet, because of differences on the agricultural question within the SFIO, there remained a problem with relation to the rural community that was not entirely resolved among the Socialist factions. There was a tendency to

avoid a direct face to face confrontation with the problem in its totality; this can be noticed by the postponement of discussion on the question from congress to congress between 1905 and 1914, except at the Congress of Saint-Étienne in 1909 which did not resolve the matter. The crux of the problem was the official determination of the final organization of the means of production in the agrarian community under Socialism. The Guesdists wanted collectivization in the end, using the ideas of private property and cooperatives simply as a means to the end and as a propaganda device to obtain political support. The Jaurèssians would, theoretically, allow the existence of small units of private property under Socialism in its final form. The disagreements among the factions of the SFIO crystallized in the postwar period; and the left-wing faction, which thought SFIO programs were becoming too bourgecis, broke off and founded the French Communist Party in 1920.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Between 1880 and 1914 French Socialism developed into a strong political force, receiving much of its support from the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry. The Socialists' agricultural program was eclectic in nature, reflecting the factional divisions among Socialists of the time. By 1914, the program officially emerged along quasi-Marxist linesin an effort to obtain electoral support from France's rural community. Even though the program had incorporated its major characteristics by the mid-1890's, there was no intensified efforts directed at the peasantry by the parties until after the Congress of Saint-Étienne in 1909. Noticing their increasing strength in the agricultural districts, they came to realize that they needed support from other elements besides the proletariat if they were to continue to be politically successful under the parliamentary system. The percentage of the proletariat remained approximately the same between 1905 and 1914; but the bourgeois elements of society increased their numbers by about one-sixth, obtaining a great many of these new recruits from the peasant classes which were migrating to the cities. The Socialists increasingly directed their attention and modified their program toward the petty bourgeoisie, the small propertyholders and the rural laborers.

The Socialist agrarian program consisted of two elements: social and economic reform, and a stand on property under Socialism. While the reform

program was directed to the laborers, the property plank was intended to gain the support and trust of the small landholders. Socialism modified its doctrine calling for collectivization of all property to allow for the survival of private property, but only small units of private property. This was the major ideological value concession made to agriculture by the Socialists during this period. Also important was the modification of its ideology from the revolutionary Marxist tradition to an acceptable reformist endeavor.

In reality, the Socialists gave secondary consideration to their agricultural program. Theorectically, they placed their hopes in the industrial, proletarian masses. Indeed, the entire philosophy and psychology of Socialism was better-suited for the type of person composing the urban working force. The proletariat was poor, propertyless and more accustomed to the group efforts of the factory. However, it was not numerous enough in France to be effective before the War. Moreover, the apolitical position adopted by the syndicalists tended to hamper Socialists' political efforts among the trade unions. The Socialists needed the political support of the peasantry to supplement and increase their strength in the Chamber. Thus, agrarians were secondary in Socialist theory, but they were an indispensable element in the practical aspect of electoral support. The Socialists' concern over the international situation also drew their attention away from a primary consideration of agriculture.

Moreover, there existed a fundamental conflict between the values and ideas of the Socialists and the values and character of the peasantry. To bridge these differences, the Socialists had to accede to the values of the countryside. In doing so, they tended to become the defenders of the

petty bourgeoisie, the small propertyholders, and the labor classes. Also, there was a coincidence of values between the Socialists and the peasantry which included such advocations as anti-militarism and a desire for peace. By 1914 the Socialists had become, in method if not in essence (depending on whether one was a Guesdist or a Jauressian), social democrats emphasizing a reform program.

Thus, Socialist concessions to agriculture in return for political support does not wholly explain the change in Socialist policies in relation to the question of peasant property. There was also a partial change in substantive values; and this change was chiefly accomplished by Jaurès and his followers. Private property was allowable under Socialism. The membership of the SFIO was basically bourgeois rather than proletarian as can be seen by its composition in the 1910 and 1914 Chambers. The bourgeoisie would control the state if and when Socialism triumphed. It seems quite impossible that they would be able to control the peasants' desire for more land through their scheme of nationization of all large tracts of land -- or, as Guesde desired, the eventual collectivization of all land. It would be more plausible that the peasantry would demand that the confiscated land be divided up and offered for sale. Prior confiscation and sale of land did not lessen the peasant desire for property between 1789 and 1830. But, if such a division and sale of land were offered, who would gain from such a sale? The peasants would not be able to afford it unless the parcels were small. Those who would profit would be the bourgeois Socialists who were in control at the time. Such a situation, if uncontrolled, could reactivate the reactionary and revolutionary character of the peasantry as it did in the summers of 1789 and 1848. What the Socialists would have to provide in

this instance would be a means to supply cheap and easy credit extension to the peasants.

The results obtained by the Socialists' campaign and propaganda efforts can perhaps best be described as the "benevolent neutrality" of the peasantry. There were electoral gains made in rural districts, but not in all of the departments. One of the major propaganda accomplishments was to lessen the direct hostility of the peasantry toward Socialism. This description fits well the interaction between the SFIO and the peasantry within the context of the equilibrium of the stalemate society. Fear of the far left was dissipating; it could now be trusted more than it could in its violent past.[1]

The period from 1890 to 1930 is referred to by H. Stuart Hughes as a time of crisis in liberal values.[2] Robert Wohl identifies the SFIO as a social democratic party and states that by 1914 it had failed to solve this liberal crisis.[3] He believes that this failure caused the emergence and founding of the French Communist Party after the War.

Such an analytical interpretation is only partially valid, at least in relation to the agricultural problem. Hughes identifies the liberal crisis as the "recognized disparity between external reality and the internal appreciation of that reality."[4] The reaction to this crisis is character-

---

[1]This last statement is made in reference to the Jacobin tradition of the far left. After the War the Communists would emerge from a faction within the SFIO and move farther left than the Socialists.

[2]H. Stuart Hughes, Consciousness and Society, The Reorientation of European Social Thought, 1890-1930 (New York: Random House, Vintage Books Edition, 1958), Chapter I, pp. 3-32.

[3]Wohl, French Communism, pp. 447-454.

[4]Hughes, Consciousness, p. 16.

ized by a revolt against positivism and a criticism of the doctrines of the Enlightenment, especially that of the self-conscious, rational man.[5] Wohl believes that the crisis was the failure of liberal ideas and practices to solve the social, political and economic problems brought about by modernization. In this sense, there was a liberal crisis in the political sphere, characterized by the immobility of the Third Republic. France's liberal form of government failed to solve that country's problems. The fact is, that in the political area, France had adopted liberal ideas. Socially and economically, however, France remained essentially conservative in relation to incorporating new ideas; it had not adopted liberal ideas in these spheres. A partial exception to this is the idea of equality; but, here too, the emphasis was on political equality, i.e., universal suffrage, rather than on economic and social equality. In reality, most liberal ideas had not been adopted in practice. If they are not adopted, they do not exist; and, if they do not exist, they cannot be accused of failure.

The social and economic patterns of life in rural France were conservative, dating back to the Middle Ages. It was these conservative values in the economic and the social spheres that were not solving the problems of modernization. Agricultural machinery, a modern phenomenon associated with the liberal development, was not found on French farms to any significant degree. The traditional pattern of organization of French businesses, the small production unit, was a conservative phenomenon.

In reality, Socialists and other leftist groups were calling for the adoption of liberal ideas and practices to solve the problems that conser-

---

[5] Ibid., pp. 4-5, 15-17.

vative practices could not. These liberal advocations included a progressive income tax, the introduction of modern machinery in agricultural areas, proportional representation, the formation and extension of cooperatives, the collective ownership of the means of production, easier and cheaper credit for the little man, and higher wages for the workers. These programs called for the establishment of the liberal value of equality in the social and economic spheres of life, especially emphasizing the need for equality in the area of distribution.

In so far as these advocations depended upon political implementation, there was a social and economic liberal crisis. But, in as much as the problems themselves stemmed from the inability of conservative practices to solve them, the crisis can be seen as a conservative one. The liberal crisis, for the most part, was that liberalism could not successfully overcome the traditionally entrenched values of conservatism in the French society. It was not a question of the failure of liberal values to solve the problems; it was a question of liberalism's failure to have its practices adopted and implemented to meet the problems. Thus, it would be more appropriate to say that the SFIO did not fail to solve the liberal crisis (in the meaning of Wohl's interpretation), but that it failed to have its liberal ideas and practices implemented -- and the responsibility for this failure lies more with the French society than the SFIO -- to combat the problems of modernization in the conservative crisis.

APPENDIX

THE NANTES AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM[1]

Adopted by the Congress of Marseilles (24-27 September, 1892) and by the Congress of Nantes (14-16 September, 1894).

1. Minimum wages fixed by agricultural workers' syndicates and the town councils, so much paid to the workers hired by the day as would be equivalent to that paid workers hired by the year (herdsmen, farm hands, farm maids, etc.);
2. Creation of an agricultural claims court;
3. Prohibition of the communes to transfer their communal lands; a tax reduction by the State on communcal land domains, maritime and others presently lying fallow; the employment of communal budget credits to be applied to the improvement of communal property;
4. Allocations, by the communes, of lands ceded by the State, obtained or bought from it, to the propertyless families, the homeless and the naturally deprived, with the banishment of the employer of the salaries, and the obligation to pay a property tax to benefit the budget to be used for communal assistance;
5. Agricultural pension funds for the disabled and the old, provided by a special tax on the incomes of the large estates;
6. Organization, by district, of free medical service and pharmacy service at cost price;
7. An indemnity, during periods of military call, to the families of reservists, at the expense of the State, of the department and of the commune;
8. Purchase, by each commune, in concurrence of the State, of agricultural machines placed where they are at the free disposal of the small farmers; the creation of associations of agricultural workers for the purchase of fertilizer, grains, seeds, and plant slips;
9. Reduction of the transfer rates for properties under 5,000 francs;
10. Abolition of all indirect taxes and the transformation of all direct taxes into one progressive income tax on incomes over 3,000 francs; meanwhile, a reduction of the property tax for all proprietors cultivating their own land and a reduction of this tax for those farmers whose land is mortgaged to the bank;

---

[1] Encyclopédia socialiste, II, pp. 20-22. This is the Guesdist program. Translated by author.

11. Reduction of the legal and conventional rates of interest charged on cash loans;
12. A reduction of transportation tariffs for fertilizer, machines, and agricultural products;
13. Reduction by the arbitration commission, as in Ireland, of the rates of tenant farming and sharecropping, and payment to departing farmers and sharecroppers at the highest value given to the land;
14. The abolition of Article 2102 of the Civil Code giving the proprietors a privilege over the harvest profits; . . . the establishment for the cultivators of a large reserve including irrigation machinery, surplus quantities of crops, manure and a number of cattle, which are indispensable for the exercise of their profession;
15. A review of the land surveys and, while awaiting the realization of this general measure, a review of the land surveys by the communes;
16. The immediate implementation of a program of public works, having for its object the improvement of the soil and the development of agricultural production;
17. The liberty to hunt and to fish, without further limitations of measure necessary for the conservation of game and fish, and the right to keep the profit of one's efforts; the abolition of reserved hunts and of game wardens;
18. Free courses of agricultural study and the establishment of agricultural experiment stations.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

Two documents that provide good statistical information on France for the period 1880-1914 are Résultats statistiques du recensement générale de la population (III; Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1906, 1911, and 1913) and Statistique générale de la France (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1907). A visual conception of the different agricultural vocations as found in the various regions of France can be found in Album de statistique agricole (Nancy: Imprimerie administrative, Berger-Levrault et Cie, 1887) and in Album grahique de la statistique générale de la France (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1907). The first work provides a visual description of the French countryside in 1882, while the second gives a description of France in 1901. The Journal officiel de la Réprublic française, Chambre des Députés, Débats parlementaires provides official statements of the Deputies on agricultural and other matters. Of use in comparing statistics of the United States with those of France was the Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1965 (86th ed.; Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1965).

PRIMARY SOURCES

Two most useful primary sources have been the Oeuvres de Jean Jaurès, Max Bonnafous, (ed.) (IX; Paris: Les Éditions Rieder, 1932) and

the Encyclopédie socialiste, Syndicale et coopérative de l'International ouvriere, Aristide Quillet, (ed.) (XIV; Paris: Aristide Quillet, 1912). The former work is a collection of the writings of Jaurès as formulated by him from 1885 to 1914. The latter series of volumes is a descriptive history of the development of Socialism in France as seen by the Socialists. Compère-Morel's La Politique agraire du parti socialiste (Paris: Librairie Populaire, 1921) provides an insight to the development of his agricultural policies during the first part of the twentieth century.

For an ideological discussion of Socialism and its workings in a capitalist society, see Gustave Le Bon, The Psychology of Socialism (Wells, Vt.; Fraser Publishing Co., 1965 [first published in New York: The MacMillan Co., 1899]). For a later discussion of Socialist tactics and propaganda, refer to Léon Blum, Notre tactique electorale (2nd ed.; Paris: Librairie Populaire, 1932) and the pamphlets Parti social français: Le Paysan sauvera la France avec le P.S.F. (Paris: Siège social, n.d.). Blum notes that the Socialists used a different type of electoral propaganda for the peasants and for the workers. This was already evident bythe first decade of the twentieth century and shows a continuity of electoral tactics employed by the Socialists from 1900 through the 1930's. The last pamphlets contains an attack on the capitalist state, blaming it for the evils of the conditions of France and calling for electoral support from the peasants for the party.

SECONDARY SOURCES

For background material of nineteenth century France, read Albert L. Guérard, French Civilization in the 19 Century: A Historical Introduction

(New York: Contury Cc., 1918) and F.C. Green, The Ancient Regime: A Manual of French Institutions and Social Classes (Edinburgh, England: Edinburgh University Press, 1958). Andre Siegfried presents a character study of France in his France, A Study in Nationality (London: Oxford University Press, 1930). An insight to the development of the revolutionary strands of Socialism is found in Alfred Cobban, The Social Interpretation of the French Revolution (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1965) and Gerard Walter, Histoire des jacobins (Paris: Aimery Somogy, editeurs, 1946). Also see Jean Pautard, Les Disparites regionales dans la croissance de l'agriculture francaise (Paris: Gauthier*Villars, editeurs, 1965) and Pierre Brunet, Structure agraire et economie rurale des plateaux terriares entre la Seine et l' Oise (Caen: Societe d'Impressions Caron et Cie, 1960) for information on the agricultural conditions in France. Only parts of these books are relevant to this paper, as they are mainly concerned with conditions in mid-twentieth century France. However, there are some interesting comparisons made with nineteenth and early twentieth century France; and Brunet discusses changes in the agricultural population and in landholdings during the early 1900's.

Two of the best general works are Gordon Wright, France in Modern Times, 1700 to the Present (Chicago: Rand Mc Nally and Co., 1960) and David Thomson, Democracy in France, The Third and Fourth Republics (3rd ed.; London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1958). Wright's work is excellent in relation to agricultural matters, and Thomson's analysis puts the year 1905 as an important division mark in French history. Other general works include Paul A Gagnon, France Since 1789 (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1964), D.W. Brogan, France under the Republic, The Development of Modern France (1870-1939) (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1940), and Ed-

ward Meade Earle, (ed.) Modern France, Problems of the Third and Fourth Republics (New York: Russel and Russell, 1946). For a book written from the conservative viewpoint, see Baron Pierre de Coubertin, The Evolution of France under the Third Republic, trans. by Isabel F. Hapgood (New York and Boston: Thomas Y. Crowell and Co., 1897). The introductory chapters of Gordon Wright's The Reshaping of French Democracy (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1950) are of some value, but the book is chiefly concerned with the constitutional formation of the Fourth Republic. For an introduction to some of the major personalities of the early twentieth century in France, see Charles Dawbarn, Makers of New France (New York: James Pott and Co., 1915).

One of the best biographies of Jean Jaurès is Harvey Goldberg's The Life of Jean Jaurès (Madison, Wis.: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1962). Two other biographiesof Jaurès are Margaret Pease, Jean Jaurès, Socialist and Humanitarian (New York: B.W. Huebsch, 1917) and L. Lévy-Bruhl, Jean Jaurès, Essai biographique (Paris: F. Rieder at Cie, Éditeurs, 1964). Of the two, the latter is the better.

For a discussion of the French national character, see Stanley Hoffmann et al., In Search of France (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963). Two case studies on the character of rural France are Laurence Wylie, Village in the Vaucluse (2nd ed.; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964) and Laurence Wylie, (ed.) Chanzeaux, A Village in Anjou (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966).

Two of the best studies on the French peasantry are Joel Manner, Peasantry and Crisis in France (London: Victor Gollanez, Ltd., 1938) and Gordon

Wright, Rural Revolution in France: The Peasantry in the Twentieth Century (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1964). Also, see Gérard Walter, Histoire des paysans de France (Paris: Flammarion, 1963) and Serge Mallet, Les Paysans contre le passé (Paris: Éditions du seuil, 1963). Walter's book is a good study; however, only the first two chapters of Mallet's work have significance for this paper as it chiefly deals with the agricultural community since 1945. For a discussion of the syndicates' influence in French agriculture, see Louis Prugnaud, Les Étapes du syndicalisme agricole en France (Paris: Éditions de l'épi, 1963).

Three of the best works on the development of French Socialism are Georges Lefranc, Le Mouvement socialiste sous la Troisième république (1875-1940) (Paris: Payot, 1963), Claude Willard, Le Mouvement socialiste en France (1893-1905), Les Guesdistes (Paris: Éditions sociales, 1965), and Aaron Noland, The Founding of the French Socialist Party (1893-1905) (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956). While Willard puts more of his attention on the Guesdists, the other two authors tend generally not to emphasize one faction over another in their presentations. Daniel Ligou's Histoire du socialisme en France (1871-1961) (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1962) is also a good history of the development of French Socialism. The first two and the last chapters of Robert Wohl's French Communism in the Making, 1914-1924 (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1966) are relevant to this paper. Also see Milorad M. Drachkovitch, Les Socialismes français et allemand et le problème de la guerre, 1870-1914 (Genève: Librairie E. Droz, 1953) and Alexandre Zévaès, Le Parti socialiste de 1904 à 1923 (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1923).

Peter Campbell's French Electoral Systems and Elections since 1789 (2nd ed.; Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1965) and Francois Goguel's Géographic

des élections françaises de 1870 à 1951 (Paris: Librairie Armond Colin, 1951) are two valuable sources for an analysis of French elections. Also, see André Siegfried, Tableau des partis en France (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1930) and François Goguel, La Politique des partis sous la IIIe république (3e édition; Paris: Éditions du seuil, 1958). For an understanding of the operation of the French governmental system, see Brian Chapman, Introduction to French Local Government (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1953).

For a discussion of the development of the political Right in France, see René Remond, The Right Wing in France; From 1815 to de Gaulle, trans. by James M. Laux (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1966). Also, see E. Drexel Godfrey, Jr., The Fate of the French Non-Communist Left (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1955) for a discussion of left-wing movements, that of the Socialists as well as these of the Radicals and Radical-Socialists.

One of the best works on intellectual thought of the period is H. Stuart Hughes, Consciousness and Society, The reorientation of European Social Thought, 1890-1930 (New York: Random House, Vintage Books Edition, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1958). Also, on intellectual thought, see Roger Henry Soltau, French Political Thought in the 19th Century (New York: Russell and Russell, 1959), Irving Louis Horowitz, Radicalism and the Revolt against Reason (New York: The Humanities Press, 1961), and Roy Pierce, Contemporary French Political Thought (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1966). Two excellent works on Socialist thougnt are G.D.H. Cole, A History of Socialist Thought (V; 3rd ed.; London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1963 [first published in 1956]) and Carl Landauer, European Socialism, A History of Ideas and Movements from the Industrial

Revolution to Hitler's Seizure of Power (II; Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1959). The third volume of Cole's work and the first of Landauer's are most relevant to the period under study.

ARTICLES AND PERIODICALS

Two of the most useful articles for this paper were Harvey Goldberg, "Jaurès and the Founding of a Socialist Peasant Policy, 1885-1898," International Review of Social History (IRSH), II (Part II, 1957) and Carl Landauer, "The Guesdists and the Small Farmer: Early Erosion French Marxism" IRSH, VI (Part 2, 1961). Goldberg's article is an accurate analysis of Jaurès' agricultural program, and Landauer's claims that the Guesdists abandoned Marxism in the 1890's in order to obtain the vote of the small farmer in France. Two articles that were helpful toward an understanding of left-wing Socialism as it developed in France were Leo A. Loubère, "The Intellectual Origins of French Jacobin Socialism," IRSH, IV (Part 3, 1959) and Leo A. Loubère, "The French Left-Wing Radicals," IRSH, VII (Part 2, 1962). Also, see J.E.S. Hayward, "The Official Social Philosophy of the French Third Republic: Léon Bourgeois and Solidarism," IRSH, VI (Part 1, 1961) for a discussion of the Socialists' intellectual philosophy of the period. An article that was of value in relation to the elections and to French national characteristics was Mark Kesselman, "French Local Politics: A Statistical Examination of Grass Roots Consensus," American Political Science Review, LX (4, 1966).