

The London School of Economics and Political Science

*The New Industrial Order: Vichy, Steel, and the Origins of
the Monnet Plan, 1940-1946*

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Declaration

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Abstract

Following the Fall of France in 1940, the nation's industry was fundamentally reorganised under the Vichy regime. This thesis traces the history of the keystones of this New Industrial Order, the Organisation Committees, by focusing on the organisation of the French steel industry between the end of the Third Republic in 1940 and the establishment of the Fourth Republic in 1946. It challenges traditional views by showing that the Committees were created largely to facilitate economic collaboration with Nazi Germany. It also demonstrates that these institutions were run by a new group of technocratic managers from French industry and that they willingly oversaw production for the Third Reich insofar as it remained advantageous to French steel firms. By extending the period of study beyond the end of the Vichy regime, this thesis casts light on why the leaders of the Resistance decided to maintain these problematic institutions and provides the first detailed account of how the bodies were reformed following the Liberation of France. Finally, it reveals that although the Organisation Committees were formally abolished in 1946, Jean Monnet created parallel bodies, named Modernisation Commissions, which took over the functions and carried on the work of Vichy's Committees under the auspices of the Monnet Plan. By demonstrating the continuities of institutions and individuals in French industrial organisation from 1940 to 1946, or *l'entre-deux-républiques*, this thesis contributes to the history of Vichy and post-war France and re-evaluates the origins of the Monnet Plan and of the European Coal and Steel Community, the forerunner to today's European Union.

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Abbreviations

AN	Archives nationales, Paris/Pierrefitte-sur-Seine
ANMT	Archives nationales du monde du travail, Roubaix
BA-MA	Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg im Breisgau
BNS	Bureau de normalisation de la sidérurgie
CAEF	Centre des archives économiques et financières, Savigny-le-Temple
CFLN	Comité français de Libération nationale
CFTC	Confédération française des travailleurs chrétiens
CGP	Commissariat général du Plan
CGPF	Confédération générale du patronat français
CGT	Confédération générale du travail
CGTU	Confédération générale du travail unitaire
CNPF	Conseil national du patronat français
CNR	Conseil national de la Résistance
CO	Comité d'organisation
COA	Comité d'organisation de l'automobile et du cycle
COH	Comité d'organisation de l'industrie des combustibles minéraux solides (houillères)
CORSID	Comité d'organisation de la sidérurgie
CPS	Comptoir des produits sidérurgiques
CSSF	Chambre syndicale de la sidérurgie française
DGEN	Délégation générale à l'Équipement national
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
FJME	Fondation Jean Monnet pour l'Europe, Lausanne
GPRF	Gouvernement provisoire de la République française
IHS	Institut d'histoire sociale, Nanterre
IHTP	Institut d'histoire du temps présent, Paris
MAE	Ministre d'affaires étrangères, La Courneuve
MBF	Militärbefehlshaber in Frankreich
MRP	Mouvement républicain populaire

NA	National Archives, Kew Gardens, London
OCRPI	Office central de répartition des produits industriels
OP	Office professionnel
OPSID	Office professionnel de la sidérurgie
PCF	Parti communiste français
SFIO	Section française de l'internationale ouvrière
SME	Small- and medium-sized enterprises
STO	Service du travail obligatoire

Introduction

The Fall of France was a crucial turning point for the organisation of French industry. Amidst the military collapse and the decampment of the government from Paris to Bordeaux and ultimately to Vichy, the liberal economic order of the Third Republic crumbled. Over the summer of 1940, the Ministry for Industrial Production put in place the institutions of a New Industrial Order,¹ the keystones of which were the Organisation Committees, formally created by the law of 16 August 1940. An Organisation Committee was created for each vital branch of industry and was given sweeping powers to coordinate production across the country. The New Industrial Order was completed on 10 September 1940 with the creation of the Central Bureau for the Distribution of Industrial Products (OCRPI), which allocated raw materials to each industry, which were then sub-allocated by the Committees. These institutions remained in place after the Liberation of France in 1944 and were finally dissolved in 1946.

This thesis studies the organisation of the French steel industry during this period and the timeframe of 1940-1946 is determined by the lifespan of the Organisation Committees. They were formally created with the law of 16 August 1940, although in practice these were preceded by Liaison Offices which were first created in July 1940.² The Committees were ultimately dissolved with a legislative motion on 23 April 1946, albeit allowing for a transition period of six months, bringing the formal end date to 23 October 1946. The existence of the Committees therefore corresponds almost exactly with the period between the end of the Third Republic on 10 July 1940 and the establishment of the Fourth Republic on 27 October 1946,³ or *l'entre-deux-républiques*. Virtually all studies of the Organisation Committees focus on the Vichy period, ending their analysis in 1944. In extending the scope of the study to cover the entire lifespan of the Committees, this thesis employs a new approach. Given how the steel industry was organised during this period, this thesis focuses

¹ The term “New Industrial Order” is derived from the similar phrases “*nouvel ordre européen*” and “*nouvel ordre économique*”; the French term would therefore be “*nouvel ordre industriel*”. A similar phrase was used by Richard Vinen as a chapter title, “An industrial new order?”, in *The Politics of French Business, 1936-1945* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), 151-162.

² This is discussed in Chapter One.

³ These are the generally accepted dates for the end of the Third Republic, with the vote of the National Assembly granting Pétain full powers, and the adoption of the constitution of the Fourth Republic, which came into force on 27 October 1946 after being supported in a referendum on 13 October.

on the history of the Organisation Committee for Steel (CORSID), looking at the institution, the individuals who ran it, and the broader context in which it operated.

There are four chief reasons for concentrating on the organisation of the French steel industry. First, the establishment of the New Industrial Order focused particularly on the organisation of the steel and coal industries, singling out these industries' employers' associations for dissolution. Moreover, these two industries were among the first to have their Committees established, on 9 November 1940. From the very beginning, steel was at the centre of Vichy's reforms, and a study of CORSID can therefore further our understanding of Vichy's broader policies. Second, steel was identified by Jean Monnet in 1946 as the central industry on which France's post-war fortunes depended, describing the industry's production programme as "unconditional, which will be executed regardless of the overall state of the economy. It is ultimately steel that determines all other French production [and] it is therefore indispensable that the steel industry enjoy all the resources it needs with an absolute priority".⁴ Not only was steel central to France's economic recovery, but Monnet framed this recovery as the prerequisite for France to regain its rightful *grandeur*, lest it be "reduced to the rank of a second-rate power".⁵ In this case, the organisation of this vital industry from 1940-1946 is crucial for our understanding of the maintenance of France as an important economic and political actor.⁶

Thirdly, the importance of steel in the history of post-war Europe is most clearly exemplified by the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the forerunner to the European Union. Understanding how the industry was organised from 1940-1946, how its leaders acted under Vichy and following the Liberation, and how Jean Monnet's thoughts were informed by these bodies in the years preceding the Schuman Declaration, contribute to the study of the history of European integration. Finally, following the imposition of the British blockade in 1940, it became apparent that the French steel industry was dependent on Germany, and the Ruhr in particular, for coal. This dependence encouraged French heavy industry to collaborate with Germany during the war, as it was the only way to receive vital shipments of coking coal from the Ruhr. After the Liberation, Monnet recognised that the success of the French economy and ultimately of France's place

⁴ "Présentation des programmes de base", note de Jean Monnet, 5 September 1946, AMF 5 9, FJME.

⁵ "Memorandum sur le Plan de Modernisation et d'Équipement", 13 December 1945, 80AJ 1, AN.

⁶ The importance of the Monnet Plan for France's weight as an international actor is discussed by William Hitchcock in *France Restored. Cold War Diplomacy and the Quest for Leadership in Europe, 1944-1954* (Chapel Hill: UNCP, 1998), 29-40.

in the world were dependent on receiving sufficient quantities of coal from the Ruhr. This consideration guided French foreign policy, particularly with regard to the German question, in the early post-war period. With the creation of the Bizone in 1947 and the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949 in the context of the Cold War in Europe, it became clear that Ruhr coal could only be attained for the French steel industry through Franco-German cooperation. Central to the purposes of the 1950 Schuman Plan and the establishment of the ECSC was an effort to ensure both cross-Rhine cooperation and French access to the resources of the Ruhr. By focusing on the French steel industry during *l'entre-deux-républiques*, this thesis thus contributes to historiographies ranging from wartime collaboration to the history of European integration.

One crucial observation that applies to these four reasons is the centrality of state policy in the French steel industry. The creation of the Organisation Committees was decided by the government, the text of the law having been drafted by the Minister for Industrial Production and a small handful of associates. Later, the fate of the Committees in post-war France was determined by the *Gouvernement provisoire de la République française* (GPRF) and their ultimate dissolution in 1946 was the result of a vote in the National Assembly. The creation of the Monnet Plan, with all its implications for the French economy and the steel industry in particular, was realised by de Gaulle as President of the Republic in January 1946. In none of these cases were industrialists consulted until after the ink on the legislation was already dry. Given the importance of government policy in the organisation of the French steel industry, this thesis focuses on the role of the State in the industry, ranging from broad governmental policies to the projects of the Ministry for Industrial Production to the workings of the Organisation Committee for Steel. While this approach does not extend to transnational networks of industrialists or supporters of economic planning, the role of individuals and the functioning of the relevant institutions at the national level, where the key decisions were made, are considered throughout.

Historiography

The Organisation Committees have rarely been the subject of thorough study. For many years the key text on the Organisation Committees to which historians of Vichy referred was a 1976 Master's thesis by Henry Rousso, "Les Comités d'organisation, aspects

structurels et économiques (1940-44)”.⁷ This was reworked into an article three years later, which remains one of the standard references in the literature on Vichy’s economy.⁸ Rousso’s work is useful for its succinct overview of the institutions created by Vichy to organise the French economy, but his article and its conclusions are hindered by the uneven availability of archival documents then available.

Thanks to extensive work on business history under Vichy over the past 25 years, there are many useful studies on economic collaboration⁹ and Aryanisation¹⁰ under Vichy, as well as studies of Nazi Germany’s policies in occupied Europe.¹¹ In general, however, issues of industrial organisation and of Organisation Committees in particular are treated only in a peripheral way. The only book-length study of the Organisation Committees since their dissolution is an edited volume by Hervé Joly.¹² This varied collection includes a number of

⁷ Henry Rousso, “Les Comités d’organisation, aspects structurels et économiques (1940-44)”, Master’s thesis, Université de Paris I-Panthéon-Sorbonne, 1976.

⁸ Henry Rousso, “L’organisation industrielle de Vichy: perspectives de recherche”, RHDGM, October 1979. The article was reprinted as “L’organisation industrielle de Vichy” in *Vichy. L’événement, la mémoire, l’histoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), a collection of Rousso’s writings.

⁹ The key works in this field include Richard Vinen, op.cit.; Alain Beltran, Robert Frank and Henry Rousso (eds.), *La vie des entreprises sous l’Occupation* (Paris: Belin, 1994); Renaud de Rochebrune and Jean-Claude Hazera, *Les patrons sous l’Occupation* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 1995); Annie Lacroix-Riz, *Industriels et banquiers sous l’Occupation. La collaboration économique avec le Reich et Vichy* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1999); Olivier Dard, Jean-Claude Daumas and François Marcot, *L’Occupation, l’Etat français et les entreprises* (Paris: ADHE, 2000). One of the most important works on collaboration in general is Philippe Burrin, *La France à l’heure allemande, 1940-1944* (Paris: Seuil, 1995). For a recent overview of the state of the literature on collaboration under Vichy, including economic collaboration, see Fabian Lemmes, “Collaboration in wartime France, 1940-1944” in *European Review of History: Revue européenne d’histoire*, 15:2, 2008, 157-177.

¹⁰ Philippe Verheyde, *Les mauvais comptes de Vichy. L’aryanisation des entreprises juives* (Paris: Perrin, 1999); Claire Andrieu (ed.), *La spoliation financière. Mission d’étude sur la spoliation des Juifs de France* (Paris: Documentation française, 2000); Jean-Marc Dreyfus, *Pillages sur ordonnances: aryanisation et restitution en banques en France, 1940-1953* (Paris: Fayard, 2003); Tal Bruttman (ed.), *Persécutions et spoliations des Juifs pendant la seconde guerre mondiale* (Grenoble: Presses universitaires de Grenoble, 2004).

¹¹ For an overview of Nazi policies in Europe, see Yves Durand, *Le nouvel ordre européen nazi, 1938-1945* (Paris: Editions Complexe, 1990) and Mark Mazower, *Hitler’s Empire. How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin, 2008); the classic French study on Nazi plans for a New Economic Order is Jean Freymond, *Le IIIe Reich et la réorganisation économique de l’Europe, 1940-1942* (Geneva: Université de Genève, 1974); two recent economic histories of Europe during the war are Christophe Buchheim and Marcel Boldorf, *Europäische Volkswirtschaften unter deutscher Hegemonie 1938-1945* (Munich: Oldenbourg Akademie Verlag, 2012) and Hein Klemann and Sergei Kudryashov, *Occupied Economies. An Economic History of Nazi-Occupied Europe, 1939-1945* (London: Berg, 2012); for Nazi Germany’s domestic economic policies, with some discussion of economic policies pursued by the Nazis in France, see Götz Aly, *Hitlers Volksstaat: Raub, Rassenkrieg und nationaler Sozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlage, 2005) and Adam Tooze, *Wages of Destruction. The Making & Breaking of the Nazi Economy* (London: Penguin, 2007).

¹² Hervé Joly (ed.), *Les Comités d’organisation et l’économie dirigée du régime de Vichy* (Caen: CRHQ, 2004). This was part of a CNRS-funded research project on “Les entreprises françaises sous l’occupation”, which ran from 2002 until 2009 and yielded a number of other collected volumes on various aspects of Vichy’s business history. The only other book-length study of the Organisation Committees is a thesis in law published in

valuable chapters, ranging from studies of particular Organisation Committees¹³ to more general accounts of how the Committees were first created.¹⁴ The most pertinent for this thesis is Philippe Mioche's piece on the Organisation Committee for Steel,¹⁵ which remains one of the very few publications to consider the body. The quality of the contributions in the collection varies, however, and the distinct themes addressed in each made it difficult to arrive at meaningful conclusions about the Committees, aside from how disparate they could be.¹⁶

Joly's edited volume also displays one of the most widespread tendencies in studies of the Organisation Committees: it focuses exclusively on the Vichy period, despite the fact that the bodies continued to exist until 1946. This shortcoming in the historiography was highlighted by Claire Andrieu in 1990,¹⁷ yet it persists in the literature and to date no monograph on the Committees from 1940 to 1946 has been published. The most important work to look at some of these issues for the period 1940-1946 is Andrew Shennan's excellent *Rethinking France*,¹⁸ which emphasises the importance of the theme of renewal throughout these six years. Despite having chapters on "Dissolving Class Conflict" and "The New Economy", however, Shennan's work pays rather little attention to the Organisation Committees and even less to the steel industry. Aside from Shennan's monograph, the most notable study to consider this period is Richard Kuisel's article on the origins of *planisme* in France, focusing on the abortive plans drawn up by the *Délégation générale d'équipement national* (DGEN) under Vichy.¹⁹ Although a fascinating and influential article, it addresses

occupied France in 1943. See Jean-Guy Mérigot, *Les comités d'organisation* (Bordeaux: Université de Bordeaux, 1943).

¹³ The studies range from Committees for key sectors such as construction and steel to less central industries such as hairdressing and entertainment.

¹⁴ Annie Lacroix-Riz, "Les comités d'organisation et l'Allemagne: tentative d'évaluation" and Arne Radtke-Delacor, "La position des comités d'organisation face aux autorités d'occupation: la pomme de discorde des commandes allemandes en 1940-1941" in *ibid.*

¹⁵ Philippe Mioche, "Le comité d'organisation de la sidérurgie: un lieu d'affrontement entre modernisateurs de la sidérurgie et gardiens de la profession?" in Joly, *op.cit.*

¹⁶ Hervé Joly, "Les comités d'organisation: un ensemble vaste et disparate" in *ibid.* There are also a number of glaring factual errors in some of the contributions; in the Introduction, for instance, Dominique Barjot states that OCRPI (created in September 1940) was created before the Organisation Committees (created in August 1940), which is incorrect and is contradicted by many of the other contributions. See Dominique Barjot, "Introduction" in *ibid.*, 8.

¹⁷ Claire Andrieu, *La Banque sous l'Occupation. Paradoxes de l'histoire d'une profession* (Paris: FNSP, 1990), 128.

¹⁸ Andrew Shennan, *Rethinking France: Plans for Renewal 1940-1946* (Oxford: OUP, 1989).

¹⁹ Richard Kuisel, "Vichy et les origines de la planification économique, 1940-1946" in *Mouvement social*, 98, January-March 1977, 77-101. Kuisel's approach is discussed further below in the discussion of the historiography on the Monnet Plan.

the Organisation Committees only in passing. The remaining important works on the period 1940-1946 are memoirs, most notably Charles de Gaulle's three-volume work, but also the memoirs of Louis Joxe, the Secretary General of the *Comité français de Libération nationale* (CFLN) and then the GPRF.²⁰ Yet these autobiographical writings are defined by more personal start and end dates – the first 50 pages of de Gaulle's memoirs are in fact about the interwar years and in both cases the narrative ends with de Gaulle's resignation as President of the Republic in January 1946, rather than the establishment of the Fourth Republic in October that year. Finally, a small number of unrelated works of French history have appeared in recent years taking 1940-1946 as their period of study, dealing with subjects ranging from Britain's Special Operations Executive (SOE)²¹ to the black market²² and French policy in the Levant,²³ but none addresses either the Organisation Committees or the French steel industry.

Despite the limited number of studies of *l'entre-deux-républiques*, several important works have applied a *longue* or *moyenne durée* approach to the study of the French economy that includes these years. Chief amongst these are Richard Kuisel's *Capitalism and the State in Modern France* and Michel Margairaz's monumental *L'Etat, les finances et l'économie*, both of which trace the origins of the political economy that had emerged by the early 1950s responsible for France's *Trente glorieuses*.²⁴ Kuisel's study focuses largely on various proposals for economic planning developed from the start of the twentieth century, including schemes developed in the interwar period and during the Second World War, both under Vichy and within the Resistance, with the core of the study being the post-war years when the institutions for state planning were erected. Margairaz meanwhile focuses on the "conversion" of France's policy-makers from the liberal orthodoxy of the 1930s to the more dynamic, interventionist policies responsible for France's post-war prosperity. Margairaz's

²⁰ Charles de Gaulle, *Mémoires de guerre* (3 vol.) (Paris: Plon, 1954) and Louis Joxe, *Victoires sur la nuit* (Paris: Flammarion, 1981). De Gaulle's collected speeches from these years are also collected as *Discours et messages, 1940-1946* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1946), although this was published in 1946.

²¹ The classic study on the SOE is M.R.D. Foot, *SOE. An outline history of the Special Operations Executive 1940-46* (London: BBC, 1966), and a more recent volume has maintained these start and end dates. See Neville Wylie (ed.), *The Politics and Strategy of Clandestine War: SOE, 1940-1946* (London: Routledge 2007).

²² Paul Sanders, *Histoire du marché noir, 1940-1946* (Paris: Perrin, 2001); for an excellent recent study that extends the narrative until 1949, see Fabrice Grenard, *La France du marché noir (1940-1949)* (Paris: Payot & Rivages, 2008).

²³ Anne-Lucie Cahigne-Oudin, *La France dans les jeux d'influences en Syrie et au Liban* (Paris: Harmattan, 2009). The end date for this study is determined by the withdrawal of French troops from both countries in 1946.

²⁴ Michel Margairaz, *L'Etat, les finances et l'économie. Histoire d'une conversion, 1932-1952* (Paris: CHEFF, 1991); Richard Kuisel, *Capitalism and the State in Modern France: Renovation and Economic Management in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: CUP, 1981).

approach is considerably broader, with much of the emphasis on financial as well as economic policy, and the degree of detail provided for each section reveals an encyclopaedic knowledge of the French archives. Both discuss the Organisation Committees in some detail, although given the impressive breadth of both studies, it is hardly surprising that the specificities of the steel industry are barely covered.

A number of industry-specific studies have shed light on various aspects of the French economy under Vichy.²⁵ The study of the French steel industry in the mid-twentieth century has been dominated by Philippe Mioche. His *Doctorat d'Etat* is a wide-ranging account of the industry from the 1940s to the 1960s and he has published widely on various aspects of the industry, including some works of the steel industry under Vichy.²⁶ He has argued that hardly any innovations in the organisation of the industry took place under Vichy, however, and his work tends to treat these years as a parenthesis. In addition to Mioche's work, Françoise Berger's unpublished PhD thesis on the relations between French and German steel industrialists from 1932 until 1952 is a valuable addition to the field, although her focus is on cross-Rhine relations among industrialists.²⁷ Publications on the steel industry under Vichy by scholars other than Mioche and Berger are surprisingly rare.

The most notable recent work on the subject by a scholar other than Mioche and Berger is Christophe Capuano's case study of Schneider's factory in Creusot during the war.²⁸ This paper fits into a larger debate within the history of economic collaboration under Vichy related to deliberate underproduction (*freinage*). The nub of this argument is that

²⁵ The automotive industry has been a particularly popular subject for such studies. See, for example, François Marcot, "La direction de Peugeot sous l'Occupation: pétainisme, réticence, opposition et résistance", *Mouvement social*, no. 189, 1999, 27-46; Jean-Louis Loubet, "Le travail dans quelques entreprises automobiles françaises sous l'Occupation" in Christian Chevandier and Jean-Claude Daumas (eds.), *Travailler dans les entreprises sous l'Occupation* (Besançon: Presses universitaires de Franche-Comté, 2007); Talbot Imlay and Martin Horn, *The Politics of Industrial Collaboration during World War II: Ford France, Vichy and Nazi Germany* (Cambridge: CUP, 2014).

²⁶ Philippe Mioche, *La sidérurgie et l'Etat en France des années quarante aux années soixante*, Doctorat d'Etat, Université de Paris IV, 1992. Among his most important publications on the steel industry under Vichy are "Les entreprises sidérurgiques sous l'Occupation" in *Histoire, économie et société*, (11:3), 1992, 397-414; and "Le comité d'organisation de la sidérurgie: un lieu d'affrontement entre modernisateurs de la sidérurgie et gardiens de la profession?" in Joly, *Les Comités d'organisation*, op.cit.

²⁷ Françoise Berger, *La France, l'Allemagne et l'acier (1932-1952): de la stratégie des cartels à l'élaboration de la CECA*, Thèse de doctorat, Université de Paris I, 2000. See also Berger, "Die Beziehung zwischen der französischen und der deutschen Eisen- und Stahlindustrie" in *Zeitschrift für Unternehmensgeschichte*, no.2, 2005.

²⁸ Christophe Capuano, "Travailler chez Schneider sous l'Occupation. Le cas des usines du Creusot" in Christian Chevandier and Jean-Claude Daumas (eds.), *Le travail dans les entreprises sous l'Occupation* (Besançon: Presses universitaires de Franche-Comté, 2007), an edited volume which also contains a contribution from Berger.

some industrialists deliberately slowed production in order to hinder the German war economy for which French industry was producing. First advanced by François Marcot with the case of Peugeot, it has more recently been applied to other industries as well, with Capuano arguing that Schneider deliberately underproduced as an act of resistance.²⁹ A recent examination of this argument by Talbot Imlay has argued that underproduction did indeed occur, at least in the case of Ford France, but that this did not amount to resistance of any kind.³⁰ Aside from Imlay's work, no study on the question of underproduction has considered the role of the relevant Organisation Committee, and CORSID's attitudes towards such strategies have never been studied.

One of the key texts on French industry under Vichy that touches on the debate regarding economic collaboration is Richard Vinen's *The politics of French business, 1936-1945*.³¹ Adopting a broader time frame, Vinen challenges the notion that Vichy marked the revenge of the *patronat* on the Popular Front government by demonstrating that French industrialists enjoyed the support of the government by 1938 and that Vichy hardly served the interests of the much-derided "trusts". Vinen argues that while industrialists collaborated by producing for the German war economy, they were not enthusiastic supporters of the regime's policy of collaboration. This excellent study is based largely on French heavy industry, and while many of the conclusions are pertinent to the steel industry, its broader focus results in the steel industry being treated in less depth. Also, while providing a thorough account of French industry from the election of the Popular Front to the Liberation, the debates within the Resistance concerning the fate of the Organisation Committees as well as the post-war reforms of the bodies are not dealt with. Similarly, the best synthesis on Vichy, Julian Jackson's exceptional *France: The Dark Years, 1940-1944*, does not deal with the post-war reforms of Vichy's industrial order.³²

A number of other works have studied the continuities between the late Third Republic and Vichy, with a particular emphasis on intellectual history. Gérard Noiriel's *Les origines républicaines de Vichy* traces the origins of many of Vichy's policies, including the

²⁹ François Marcot, "La direction de Peugeot sous l'Occupation: pétainsime, réticence, opposition et résistance" in *Mouvement social*, no. 189, October-December 1999, 27-46.

³⁰ Talbot Imlay and Martin Horn, op.cit.

³¹ Richard Vinen, op.cit.

³² Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940-1944* (Oxford: OUP, 1944). Jackson does include a chapter on *l'épuration*, although given the scope of the study, the Organisation Committees are not discussed.

central tenets of the National Revolution, to the interwar period.³³ More pertinent to the question of industrial organisation is Jackie Clarke's *France in the Age of Organization*, which examines the scientific organisation movement of the interwar years to show the beginnings of *planisme*, technocracy, and the rationalisation of the factory and of the French household.³⁴ Adopting a cultural historical approach, Clarke shows how organisation was seen by an array of intellectuals and technicians as a means to resolve the social problems confronting interwar France, and how a number of these individuals put these ideas into practice under Vichy, with Jean Bichelonne being a particularly useful example. Another recent work that explores similar themes is Philip Nord's *France's New Deal*, which traces the intellectual origins of France's post-war welfare state from the 1930s, particularly in terms of economic organisation, administration, and cultural policy.³⁵ While all three works contribute to our understanding of the importance of the 1930s in terms of intellectual history and the influence of these ideas on both Vichy and post-war France, none deal with the Organisation Committees extensively, and Noiriél makes no mention of them whatsoever. Moreover, all three works focus on the history of ideas rather than institutional history.³⁶

Given that this thesis studies the organisation of the steel industry in the six years preceding the Monnet Plan, it is well worth considering the historiography on the origins of Jean Monnet's initiative. The key work on this topic remains Philippe Mioche's first monograph, *Le Plan Monnet*, which considers the economic planning completed under Vichy.³⁷ Mioche's study, however, remains focused on the history of *planisme* rather than providing an institutional history of the antecedents of the General Commissariat for the Plan created by Monnet. As such, his analysis of the Vichy period is limited to two abortive plans drawn up in 1942 and 1944, respectively, which leads him to conclude that no significant continuities from Vichy to the Monnet Plan exist. Richard Kuisel, who first explored the

³³ Gérard Noiriél, *Les origines républicaines de Vichy* (Paris: Fayard, 1999). David Lees' research builds on some of the themes discussed by Noiriél to argue that the National Revolution was a synthesis of republican and new, Vichy-era symbols. See David Lees, "Vichy and the Republic: ideological compromise and symbolic adaptation in the France of the Occupation" (PhD thesis, University of Warwick, forthcoming).

³⁴ Jackie Clarke, *France in the Age of Organization. Factory, Home and Nation from the 1920s to Vichy* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2011).

³⁵ Philip Nord, *France's New Deal. From the Thirties to the Postwar Era* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2010).

³⁶ The study of the intellectual origins of Vichy generally focuses on the nonconformist movement in the 1930s and their journals, most notably *Les Nouveaux Cahiers*. The classic work on this remains Jean-Louis Loubet del Bayle, *Les non-conformistes des années 30. Une tentative de renouvellement de la pensée politique française* (Paris: Seuil, 1969).

³⁷ Philippe Mioche, *Le Plan Monnet. Genèse et élaboration, 1941-1947* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1987). Mioche's consideration of the entire Vichy period, which remains focused on the DGEN's abortive plans, is limited to fewer than twenty pages.

continuities between Vichy's plans and Monnet's, remains similarly focused on the DGEN's wartime exercises in *planisme*.³⁸ This focus has allowed some scholars to reject the idea of continuities in economic planning in France altogether, labelling the DGEN's plans as "the exception that proves the rule".³⁹ The predominant view in the historiography today seems to be that the DGEN's plans did not influence the Monnet Plan decisively, and the institutional antecedents of Monnet's Modernisation Commissions have not been explored in any detail.

The literature on the history of European integration, and especially the origins of the Schuman Plan, recognise the central role played by the Monnet Plan in bringing about the European Coal and Steel Community.⁴⁰ In her excellent macroeconomic study of France in the 1940s and 1950s, Frances Lynch shows how the Monnet Plan established investment in the French steel industry as a national priority, and that "the Schuman Plan aimed to make the French steel industry compete in western Europe". The centrality of the development of the French steel industry in bringing about the Schuman Declaration in 1950 is similarly recognised in much of the literature on the history of European integration.⁴¹ While Lynch's study of France's post-war economy is thorough and insightful, her treatment of the Vichy period is comparatively brief, with barely ten pages devoted to the period 1940-1944, with much of this spent discussing the Resistance's plans for the post-war era. As a result, there is only one passing reference to the existence of the Organisation Committees. Furthermore, Lynch's macroeconomic approach does not focus on the institutional aspects of the Monnet Plan, and the Modernisation Commissions are consequently never mentioned.

In light of this brief overview of the state of the historiography on the subject, a number of gaps become apparent. First, the Organisation Committees remain understudied and have yet to be made the subject of a single historical monograph. Second, existing

³⁸ Richard Kuisel, "Vichy et les origines de la planification économique, 1940-1946", op.cit. The core of his argument is reiterated in his monograph, *Capitalism and the State in Modern France*, op.cit.

³⁹ Adrian Jones, "Illusions of sovereignty: business and the organization of Committees of Vichy France", *Social History*, January 1986, 1-31.

⁴⁰ The best study on the creation and functioning of the ECSC is Dirk Spierenburg and Raymond Poidevin, *The History of the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1994). For Franco-German relations in a *longue durée* perspective, see Raymond Poidevin and Jacques Bariéty, *Les relations franco-allemandes, 1815-1975* (Paris: A. Colin, 1977).

⁴¹ On the Monnet Plan's role in bringing about the Schuman Plan and the ECSC, see Alan Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1945-51* (London: Routledge, 1984); Gérard Bossuat, *L'Europe des Français, 1943-1959. La IVe République aux sources de l'Europe communautaire* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1996); Matthias Kipping, *Zwischen Kartellen und Konkurrenz. Der Schuman-Plan und die Ursprünge der europäischen Einigung 1944-1952* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1996); and Michael Sutton, *France and the Construction of Europe, 1944-2007. The Geopolitical Imperative* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2007).

studies of the Committees almost always end their analyses in 1944 with the end of the Vichy regime, rather than following the narrative until the dissolution of the Committees in 1946. Third, studies of the origins of the Monnet Plan ignore the Organisation Committees, which were in many ways the antecedents of the Modernisation Commissions created by Monnet in 1946. This thesis fills all of these gaps, thereby contributing to the historiography on business history under Vichy, on early post-war France, and on the Monnet Plan.

Methodology

In looking at the steel industry, it is essential to examine not only CORSID, but also the broader industrial organisation pursued at the State level. Much of this thesis is therefore a study of the key governmental decisions related to industrial organisation, which determined the framework in which the steel industry would operate. It therefore studies the creation of the Organisation Committees at the ministerial level, before looking at how CORSID in particular was assembled. While this study draws on economic history, it does not provide a detailed analysis of steel production or other technical data; these issues are considered, but only in so far as they impact broader questions of industrial organisation. Although it engages with economic issues, this thesis remains more a work of political history than of economic history.

This thesis is largely an institutional history, following the creation, development, and abolition of the Organisation Committees, particularly CORSID. Accordingly, it does not delve into the intellectual history of labour relations or economic planning. While the intellectual background of those who established the Organisation Committees did influence the shape of the institutions, the focus of the study remains on the institutions themselves rather than the development of different conceptions of industrial organisation in the history of ideas.⁴² Similarly, while the creation of the Monnet Plan is discussed in the final chapter of my thesis, a detailed study of the exercises in economic planning completed by the DGEN under Vichy is not provided.⁴³ Rather, the discussion of the Monnet Plan focuses on the

⁴² Several historians have argued for the importance of interwar discussions of industrial organisation, particularly the writings of the so-called nonconformists, and how these ideas marked a precedent for Vichy's policies. For two recent examples, see Philip Nord, *France's New Deal* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2010) and Jackie Clark, *France in the Age of Organization* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2011). The question of continuities from these ideas to the creation of the Organisation Committees is discussed in Chapter One.

⁴³ The key studies on this question are by Richard Kuisel and Philippe Mioche, as discussed above.

Modernisation Commissions, which Monnet described as the “keystones” of his Plan, precisely because of the institutional continuities between the Organisation Committees and the Modernisation Commissions. In other words, the Monnet Plan was not taken as the starting point followed by a study of Vichy for its antecedents, as was the case with Kuisel and Mioche, but this thesis has rather examined the Organisation Committees during their six years of existence, which revealed some unexpected continuities with the Monnet Plan.

The question of collaboration has long fascinated historians, and the issues of economic and industrial collaboration have received particular interest since the 1990s, as discussed above. This thesis is not primarily concerned with the nature of collaboration in the French steel industry, however. There is a consensus in the historiography that the French steel industry produced massively for the Reich during the war; historians are left to debate the exact tonnage shipped across the Rhine and the motivations of the industrialists who carried out the orders.⁴⁴ While these issues are dealt with in the thesis, the focus remains on the Organisation Committee for Steel itself, rather than the actions of particular industrialists or the relationships developed over the war between French industrialists and their German counterparts. In concentrating on the institutional history of the Organisation Committees, my thesis thus contributes to the subfield of the history of economic collaboration by considering the role of Franco-German collaboration in the establishment of the Committees. Similarly, while this work looks at the role of individuals, the emphasis remains on those who ran CORSID and the political leaders responsible for French industrial policy. The actions of individual employers and workers from particular firms are therefore not the focus of this thesis.

Archival sources relating to the Organisation Committees have long been an issue for anyone studying French industry under Vichy. For the most part, the archives of the Committees themselves seem to have been lost or destroyed by the late 1970s, before which they were not available for public consultation.⁴⁵ In the case of the steel industry, the *Chambre syndicale de la sidérurgie française* (CSSF) did make some of its archives available in the late 1980s, although the papers of CORSID do not feature among the declassified

⁴⁴ For a useful overview of the recent debates in the historiography, see Fabian Lemmes, “Collaboration in wartime France, 1940-1944” in *European Review of History: Revue européenne d’histoire* (15:2), 2008, 157-177.

⁴⁵ See Henry Rouso, “L’organisation industrielle de Vichy” in *Vichy. L’événement, la mémoire, l’histoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), 81.

documents.⁴⁶ One of the most helpful series of documents discovered during the research for this project was a collection of circulars, decrees, and surveys issued by CORSID, as well as minutes from some meetings, which were gathered in the archives of Marine et Homécourt, one of France's principal steel firms. This collection allows the historian to follow the actions of CORSID fairly closely and to see precisely what was sent from the Organisation Committee to a typical steel firm. The chief limitation of this series, however, is that the responses of Marine et Homécourt are not recorded; we can see the template of a census form sent to the firm by CORSID, for instance, but not the details filled in by the firm. While this one-way dialogue has its limitations, the documents nevertheless give valuable insight into the activities of CORSID during the war. Even more useful are the minutes from meetings of CORSID's regional grouping for Centre-Ouest, roughly corresponding to the Occupied Zone of France. These hitherto unexploited documents provide some of the most illuminating information on CORSID's actions under Vichy.

Given the lack of formal archives of CORSID, and taking account of the broader context in which the organisation of the steel industry took place, a range of archival sources has been consulted. Much of the research was completed at the *Archives nationales* in Paris, which moved to Pierrefitte-sur-Seine halfway through this project. Among the most important series were the archives of the Ministry for Industrial Production (F 12), the General Commissariat for the Plan (80 AJ), the General Delegation for Franco-German Economic Relations (F 37), and the German Military Administration in France (AJ 40). The *Archives diplomatiques* in La Courneuve also proved vital, particularly for the archives of the CFLN-GPRF. The *Archives nationales du monde du travail* in Roubaix were especially useful for the archives of the CNPF and of individual steel firms, including some from Marine et Homécourt.⁴⁷ The archives of René Belin, housed at the *Institut d'Histoire Sociale* in Nanterre, and of Jean Monnet, at the *Fondation Jean Monnet pour l'Europe* in Lausanne, proved invaluable. The collections of the *Centre des archives économiques et financières* in Savigny-le-Temple and the *Institut d'histoire du temps présent* in Paris were also helpful. The archives of the German Military Administration in France, kept at the *Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv* in Freiburg im Breisgau were also valuable. Finally, the National Archives in

⁴⁶ The implications of these archives are discussed in Philippe Mioche, "Les « maîtres de forges » en quête de transparence. Archives de la sidérurgie et histoire économique" in *Vingtième siècle. Revue d'histoire*, no. 20, 1988, 103-112.

⁴⁷ The archives of Marine et Homécourt, AQ 139, are split between the ANMT in Roubaix and the Archives nationales in Paris.

London yielded some useful documentation, particularly regarding the situation of French industry in 1940. In addition to this multi-archival approach, the memoirs of many of the key figures discussed throughout the period, from René Belin and François Lehideux to Charles de Gaulle and Jean Monnet, have been consulted. Given the highly subjective accounts offered in some of these memoirs, however, claims made in these publications are corroborated whenever possible with archival sources, and on a number of occasions narratives advanced in post-war memoirs are challenged in light of evidence from the archives.⁴⁸

One question related to sources that confronts many historians working on Vichy is the weight to give to German archives. Many of the classic works on Vichy from the late 1960s and early 1970s relied heavily on the German archives, in large part because many of the key French archives from the Second World War were not yet open.⁴⁹ As the French archives became accessible, a wave of historiography appeared, including many of the key works on the French economy under Vichy, based primarily or even exclusively on French sources.⁵⁰ There seems to be a trend in the most recent literature on the French economy during the Second World War to bring the German authorities back into the narrative in reaction to what some have called an overly “Franco-French” frame of analysis.⁵¹ In this thesis, German archives, particularly those of the German Military Administration in France, have been used to supplement the French archives, which constitute the core of the source. The German archives have been particularly useful when discussing the establishment of the Organisation Committees, as there is some debate in the literature over the role of the German authorities in bringing about their creation.⁵² Given that this study focuses on the organisation of French industry by means of the Organisation Committees,

⁴⁸ A full list of archival sources and memoirs used in this thesis is included in the Bibliography.

⁴⁹ Eberhard Jäckel, *Frankreich in Hitlers Europa: die deutsche Frankreichpolitik im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1966); Hans Umbreit, *Der Militärbefehlshaber in Frankreich 1940-1944* (Boppard am Rhein: Harald Boldt Verlag, 1968); Alan Milward, *The New order and the French Economy* (Oxford: OUP, 1970); Robert Paxton, *Vichy France, Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944* (New York: Knopf, 1972).

⁵⁰ Richard Kuisel, *Capitalism and the State in Modern France*, op.cit.; Philippe Mioche, *Le Plan Monnet*, op.cit.; Claire Andrieu, *La Banque sous l'Occupation*, op.cit.; Michel Margairaz, *L'Etat, les finances et l'économie*, op.cit.; Richard Vinen, *The Politics of French Business*, op.cit.

⁵¹ Arne Radtke-Delacor, “Produire pour le Reich: les commandes allemandes à l’industrie française” in *Vingtième siècle. Revue d’histoire*, no. 70 (April-June 2001), 99-115; Hervé Joly (ed.), *L’Economie de la zone non occupée 1940-1942* (Paris: CTHS, 2007); Hein Klemann and Sergei Kudryashov, *Occupied Economies: An Economic History of Nazi-Occupied Europe, 1939-1945* (London: Berg, 2012); Talbot Imlay and Martin Horn, *The Politics of Industrial Collaboration during World War II* (Cambridge: CUP, 2014).

⁵² Arne Radtke-Delacor, “La position des comités d’organisation face aux autorités d’occupation”, op.cit.

however, it has been far more useful to consult the archives of different French actors, from the Head of State, to various ministries, to steel firms.

More importantly, the narrative of this thesis, tracing the organisation of the French steel industry between the Third and Fourth Republics, is essentially a French one. Because this study considers this period as a whole, rather than on the Vichy period exclusively, the German archives do not figure whatsoever in the second half of my thesis, since they would not be relevant to debates within the French Resistance in Algiers or to the policies carried out by the Provisional Government following the Liberation of France. Given the timeframe studied in this project, it makes far more sense to maintain the focus on France throughout the period, supplementing this with German sources when relevant, than to emphasise the Franco-German dimension in the first half of the thesis and revert to a “Franco-French” narrative in the second. German and indeed British archives have thus been used to supplement the French archives.

Outline

This thesis is organised chronologically, from the creation to the dissolution of the Organisation Committees. This approach has the advantage of focusing on the evolution of the Committees and highlighting continuities throughout the period. This organisation nevertheless allows for a thematic organisation of the chapters, in that contemporaneous developments in Vichy and within the Resistance are treated in separate chapters. Given that this study focuses on institutional change within the organisation of the French steel industry, periods of significant change are accorded more weight. Consequently, the timeframe considered in each chapter varies, ranging from a few months, as in Chapter One, to several years, as in Chapter Three, in order to provide as comprehensive a study as possible of the organisation of the French steel industry throughout *l'entre-deux-républiques*.

The first chapter considers the context of French industry immediately following the Fall of France and initial attempts to deal with a range of pressing issues in the summer of 1940. It reveals that, despite the pride of place given to the law of 16 August 1940 in the literature on the topic, virtually all of the elements of the law had in fact been agreed upon with the German authorities in the month preceding the law. By demonstrating German support for these measures, the chapter calls into question the standard narrative that the

creation of the Organisation Committees surprised and angered the German authorities.⁵³ The context in which these measures were taken, particularly the backdrop of German Minister for the Economy's much-publicised plans to create a "new European economic order", is also discussed.

The second chapter looks at the implementation of the law of 16 August 1940, particularly the creation of the Organisation Committee for Steel on 9 November 1940 and the issue of choosing the members of the Committee. The chapter shows why, despite the law foreseeing the representation of workers as well as employers and the state within the Committees, this tripartism was never put into practice. The dominance of employers in the Committee for Steel has led some historians to argue that CORSID was simply a continuation of the interwar *Comité des forges* by another name, a conclusion that is challenged in this chapter.⁵⁴

Having analysed how CORSID was created over the summer and autumn of 1940, the third chapter deals with how the Committee responded to the industrial policies of the Vichy regime. The first section of the chapter focuses on the National Revolution and the Labour Charter, before moving on to the far more contentious issue of forced labour deportations to Germany. The issue of economic collaboration is discussed, particularly the question of whether CORSID engaged in deliberate underproduction as a form of resistance. The chapter concludes that CORSID consistently acted in accordance with its overriding objective of keeping its factories running.

With Chapter Four, the narrative moves to the *Comité français de Libération nationale* (CFLN) based in Algiers. With the outcome of the war becoming clearer, the Resistance was forced to consider the question of whether to maintain the Committees created by Vichy for their pragmatic value or to dissolve them due to their association with the regime. This debate, which began in earnest in 1943, was decisively settled by de Gaulle in March 1944, just in time to secure the support of the Communists for the CNR Programme for post-war France. The uneasy consensus within the *Gouvernement provisoire de la*

⁵³ Arne Radtke-Delacor, "La position des comités d'organisation face aux autorités d'occupation: la pomme de discorde des commandes allemandes en 1940-1941", in Hervé Joly (ed.), op.cit.

⁵⁴ Philippe Mioche, "Le comité d'organisation de la sidérurgie: un lieu d'affrontement entre modernisateurs de la sidérurgie et gardiens de la profession?" in Hervé Joly (ed.), op.cit.

République française (GPRF) by D-Day was that the Organisation Committees should be maintained, but subjected to purges and reforms.

Having seen how the GPRF opted to preserve Vichy's Committees, Chapter Five concentrates on how the bodies were actually reformed from August 1944 until 1945. Although the leadership of CORSID was removed, its members were moved into equally influential positions within the steel industry and none were subjected to *l'épuration*. The most significant reforms were those which increased labour representation within the Committees, thereby realising the promise of the law of 16 August 1940 to include workers. In this sense, the GPRF was more successful at implementing the clauses of the Vichy law than the Vichy government had been.

The final chapter is devoted to the dissolution of the Organisation Committees, which was decided upon in the National Assembly on 23 April 1946. In order to understand how this decision received unanimous support in the Assembly, the chapter examines the contemporaneous development of the Monnet Plan and considers continuities from the Organisation Committees to the Modernisation Commissions, as well as the roles played by the Vichy-era members of CORSID. It concludes that the organisation of the French steel industry from 1940 until 1946 had lasting effects on the Monnet Plan.

Chapter One:

France's New Industrial Order: Reorganising Industrial Production after France's Capitulation, Summer 1940

The Armistice signed by France and Germany on 22 June 1940 initiated a ceasefire between the two countries and established the context in which cross-Rhine relations would unfold until the liberation of France four years later. While the crucial matter of French industrial production was not directly addressed in the document, by the end of the summer the French Government had fundamentally reorganised the nation's industry. The keystone of this New Industrial Order was the law of 16 August 1940, put forward by Minister for Industrial Production René Belin. The existing literature on French industry in 1940 naturally focuses on this law, but in so doing fails to adequately explain why the New Industrial Order took the shape it did. In order to answer this question, it is necessary to study the actions of the French authorities in Paris over the month of July, rather than the law written in Vichy in August. Such an analysis reveals not only that the reorganisation of French industry occurred weeks earlier than it is generally held, but more importantly that the entire undertaking occurred under German auspices and in the context of broader Franco-German collaboration. Far from being an assertion of French sovereignty in the face of German exigency, the New Industrial Order created the foundations of durable industrial collaboration in an integrated Europe under German hegemony.

In many ways the single most important stipulation in the Armistice was that, to safeguard German interests, the greater part of metropolitan France would be partitioned into two zones. The first zone covered the northern half of France, stretching from Lorraine to Brittany, including Paris, as well as the entire Atlantic coast, from Belgium to Spain. This area, known as the Occupied Zone, was occupied directly by the Germans, ostensibly to guard the Continent against any invasion of British troops. Germany stated that it would reduce its presence in this zone "following the cessation of hostilities with England".⁵⁵ The text also included the vague provision that "in the occupied regions of France, the German

⁵⁵ "Convention d'Armistice" franco-allemande, 22 June 1940, Chauvel 62, MAE. All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

Reich enjoys the rights of the occupying power”.⁵⁶ This sentence, left open to interpretation, would be used to legitimate a gamut of German actions during its occupation of France.⁵⁷

The southern, unoccupied zone remained free of German control and under the full authority of the French Government, led by Maréchal Philippe Pétain.⁵⁸ This division of France was not merely administrative; crossing from one zone into the other was strictly controlled by the German military, and written permission had to be obtained. This applied to all French citizens, including members of the government, which exacerbated the problem of the absence of the Government from Paris, where the civil service remained.

The German occupation of northern and western France, and the imposition of the strictly-enforced demarcation line, were features of a broader German policy that eroded France’s sovereignty. In addition to the Occupied and Non-Occupied Zones defined in the Armistice, France was partitioned into a further three zones. The eastern provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, which had been part of Germany from 1870 until 1918 under the Second Reich, were “restored” to Germany.⁵⁹ The two northernmost departments of France, Nord and Pas-de-Calais, were detached from the Occupied Zone by Germany and appended to Belgium, where they were administered by the German Military Administration in Brussels. Lastly, a strip of French territory along the Italian border, from Switzerland to the Mediterranean, was occupied by Italy, following that country’s belated entry into the war.⁶⁰ While the French Government at least formally governed the Occupied Zone, in these three zones it had no powers.

Concerning industrial production, this redrawing of the map of France was significant because it placed the two most heavily industrialised areas entirely beyond the control of the

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ France interpreted this line along the lines of the Hague Convention of 1907, which clearly delineated what these powers could reasonable include. The German authorities, however, had a Thrasymachean attitude to this clause, and subsequently argued that even the most unjustified requisitions were legitimated by this article.

⁵⁸ This zone is variously referred to as the Non-Occupied Zone or the Unoccupied Zone, or simply as Vichy France. For administrative purposes within French industry, it was often referred to as Centre-Midi. During the war it was often called the Free Zone, but this term has fallen out of favour, largely to distinguish between the de Gaulle-led “Free France” and the authoritarian regime led by Pétain.

⁵⁹ The three departments of Haut-Rhin, Bas-Rhin (Alsace), and Moselle (half of Lorraine), together referred to as Reichsland, were never formally annexed by Germany, but became *de facto* territories of the Reich. Alsace was added to the Gau, or province, of Baden, while Lorraine was fused with Saarland, forming Westmark Gau. For a thorough contemporary analysis of the incorporation of Alsace-Lorraine into the Reich by the British Foreign Office, see “The Problem of Alsace-Lorraine”, revised 22 May 1944, FO 371 41988, NA.

⁶⁰ “Convention d’Armistice” franco-italienne, Papiers Rochat 49, P 4325, MAE.

French Government in Vichy. Most important were Nord and Pas-de-Calais, which together constituted the heartland of French manufacturing and were home to its largest coal deposits, responsible for two-thirds of prewar domestic production. Nearly as devastating was the loss of the coal and steel industries of Lorraine, the site of France's most modern coal mines and the source of one-eighth of French coal in the 1930s.⁶¹ Most harmful to French industry, however, was the demarcation line that bisected the country. Raw materials from one zone were not allowed to be transported to a factory in the other without prior authorisation. The Germans also used the demarcation line as a political tool, knowing full well that the Non-Occupied Zone depended on the more industrialised but also more agriculturally productive northern regions of the country.⁶²

The cessation of hostilities between France and Germany had an acute effect on French industry. Following the Munich Accord, French industry had been increasingly geared towards the production of war *matériel*. From 3 September 1939, when France declared war on Germany, virtually all domestic production was redirected for the purposes of war. The termination of Franco-German fighting, however, engendered the immediate cessation of such production.⁶³ French factories thus stopped all orders for military purposes, but had no others to replace them. In the uncertain period following the Armistice, French industry ground to a halt.

The paralysis of French industry was exacerbated by another condition imposed by the German authorities. Given that Germany remained at war with Great Britain, the former insisted that all trade between France and Great Britain cease. This extended to the French and British empires, despite vehement objections that this would effectively asphyxiate certain French possessions that were entirely dependent on goods from the British Empire.⁶⁴ Of more direct consequence for metropolitan France was the loss of imports from Great Britain. Throughout the interwar period, France was the world's largest importer of coal, and this was the single most heavily imported commodity from Great Britain, accounting for a

⁶¹ "The Coal Economy of France under German Occupation", WO 219/3752, NA.

⁶² Eric Alary, *La Ligne de démarcation* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1995).

⁶³ "Rapport sur l'activité du ministère de la production industrielle et du travail du 15 juillet au 15 novembre 1940", 17 November 1940, F 12 10157, AN.

⁶⁴ Among these were the French possessions in India (most notably Pondicherry) and the islands of Saint-Pierre et Miquelon, off the coast of Newfoundland. See "Séance de la Sous-Commission Finances et Banque du 23 juillet", 23 July 1940 and "Relations financières et économiques avec la Grande-Bretagne", 11 November 1940, AJ 41 170, AN.

full third of France's domestic consumption.⁶⁵ From September 1939, coal imports from across the Channel had steadily increased, fuelling France's armaments production.⁶⁶ From the end of June 1940, however, Great Britain began diverting coal shipments initially bound for France to neutral or other allied countries.⁶⁷ From this date, with the loss of imports from Britain, France would have to make do with a maximum of two-thirds of its total 1939 supply of coal. In addition to the loss of coal, which remained the fuel for virtually all heavy industry, the suspension of trade with the British Empire paralysed entire industries that were dependent on imports of particular primary goods from British colonies.⁶⁸

The need to find new sources of coal quickly became an *idée fixe* of French industrial policy. Not only was British coal inaccessible, but the two largest coalfields in France, in Nord-Pas-de-Calais and Lorraine, had been integrated into Belgium and Germany, respectively. This left only the meagre coal mines in the Loire, which were thoroughly exploited.⁶⁹ Much of the coal extracted from this site was of inferior quality, however, and the small, otherwise unusable pieces could only be used when joined together with pitch to make briquettes, which were functional as fuel for French ships. Even this imperfect option was complicated by the fact that the pitch required had been imported from Great Britain, and was thus no longer readily available.⁷⁰

The shortage of primary materials, compounded by the lack of orders for French factories, was aggravated by a scarcity of labour. From the day of Germany's incursion into France on 10 May, increasingly significant areas of the country had been evacuated, which meant that factories in the most heavily industrialised areas in France, particularly in Nord-Pas-de-Calais and Alsace-Lorraine, but also across the northern Occupied Zone, were in practice inoperable. As a result of this exodus of labour and the general disruption of the

⁶⁵ "Note du 31 juillet", 31 July 1940, AJ 41 170, AN.

⁶⁶ In March 1940 British monthly coal exports to France exceeded 1,000,000 tons for the first time, and by 3 June provisions were made to raise monthly shipments to 2,250,000 million tons per month. See "Letter from Sanderson to Tolerton", 11 April 1940 and "Letter from L.G. Lowry to R.H. Tolerton", 3 June 1940, MT 63 51, NA.

⁶⁷ "Letter from T.G. Jenkins to C.W. Dixon", 17 July 1940, MT 59 148, NA.

⁶⁸ Textile industries, for example, were deprived of jute and cotton. In this context, it was impossible for them to approach even 30% of 1938 production levels. See "Lettre de Bessonneau", 4 November 1940, F 60 1539, AN.

⁶⁹ Coal production in the Non-Occupied Zone actually exceeded pre-war levels, reaching 135% of 1938 production in 1941 and 150% in 1942. "The Coal Economy of France under German Occupation", WO 219 3752, NA.

⁷⁰ "Achat de brai en Grande-Bretagne", 19 December 1940, AJ41 102 and "Note du Ministère des affaires étrangères", 11 December 1940, AJ41 170, AN.

economy caused by the German invasion, overall French coal production had decreased from 4.6 million tonnes in April 1940 to a mere 1.2 million tonnes in June.⁷¹

Aside from these direct difficulties imposed on French industry, the restrictions placed on the French Government had serious implications for industrial production as well. The Government had fled Paris on 10 June as the Wehrmacht closed in on the capital, relocating first to Tours, then further southwest to Bordeaux. When the Armistice decreed that Bordeaux would fall within the Occupied Zone, the Government relocated yet again to Clermont-Ferrand, before settling on the provincial spa town of Vichy on 1 July. The town had little to recommend it, aside from the absence of any serious political opposition and the surplus of hotels, which were quickly transformed into government offices.⁷² The centuries-old tendency towards centralisation in France meant that virtually all administrative services were concentrated in the capital; the Government's absence from Paris amounted to decapitation. The Armistice included a provision that the government "is free to choose any seat in the Non-Occupied Zone, or even, if it wishes, to establish itself in Paris. In the latter case, the German Government commits to ensure all necessary facilities to the French Government and to its central administrative services, so that it will be able to govern the occupied and non-occupied territories from Paris".⁷³ On 8 July, the German administration offered to allow the French Government to establish itself in Versailles, with free access to central Paris, which would remain occupied.⁷⁴ On this presumption, and in the hopes of reviving French industry, the civil service of the so-called technical ministries, most importantly the Ministry for Industrial Production, returned to their offices in Paris, anticipating the imminent return of the Government to the capital. Instead, however, the German administration suspended its approval of the Government's return, claiming that "technical reasons oppose it", but that the Government would ultimately return to Paris.⁷⁵ As it was, the French Government would remain in Vichy until August 1944, when a very

⁷¹ "Compte rendu d'un entretien avec M. Fanton d'Anton", May 1941, AJ 41 168, AN.

⁷² Lyon, the largest city in the region and the obvious candidate for provisional capital, was ruled out because of its Radical mayor, former president Edouard Herriot. See Paul Baudouin, *The Private Diaries of Paul Baudouin* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1948), 153.

⁷³ "Convention d'Armistice" franco-allemande, Chauvel 62, MAE.

⁷⁴ "Allemagne et Italie", undated note, Papiers Baudouin, MAE. In his diary, Foreign Minister Paul Baudouin records that on 9 July, the Cabinet replied to the German offer, demanding that the ministerial quarter of Paris also be free of occupation troops and that transportation between this quarter and Versailles be guaranteed. He adds: "We must get back to the capital as soon as possible, and we hope to be there before the end of the month." See Baudouin, op. cit., 153-154, 163.

⁷⁵ Baudouin, op. cit., 195.

different French government, led by Charles de Gaulle, established itself in a Paris liberated from the Nazis.

The absence of the French Government from Paris engendered increasing anxieties concerning French sovereignty. By early July, German industrialists were placing demands for war *matériel* with French factories in the Occupied Zone.⁷⁶ French industrialists were faced with an ultimatum by the German military authorities: they could either fulfil the orders, or be replaced by German industrialists and workers who would complete the orders themselves. A flurry of letters from industrialists flowed to Vichy begging for direction from the Government.⁷⁷ The Government's initial attempts at intervention were of little use, although they were unsure whether this was due to German maliciousness or simply disorganisation – the French Government's representative in Paris was unable to discern who was responsible for economic questions among the Germans in Paris.⁷⁸ On 30 June, German workers occupied the Renault and Citroën factories in Paris to produce goods intended to contribute to the imminent German offensive against Great Britain.⁷⁹ Germany's swelling control of French industry justified fears that, left unchecked, this would lead to direct control of French production by the Reich. Indeed, in Belgium the German Authorities set up *Wirtschaftsgruppen*, economic offices to oversee branches of industry, like the ones that existed in the Reich.⁸⁰

The increasing command exerted by Germany over French industry was perhaps most shockingly displayed by Germany's attempts to negotiate a trade agreement between France and Yugoslavia – without even informing the French Government. The French ambassador in Belgrade learned of the negotiations and was able to warn the government in Vichy, whose objections were sufficient to derail the talks.⁸¹ The incident nevertheless highlighted the extent to which French sovereignty was threatened by Germany's actions, both on and beyond French soil.

⁷⁶ "Note", 13 July 1940, AJ 41 529, AN.

⁷⁷ "Lettre à Monsieur le Gouverneur Militaire de la Région de Paris", 5 August 1940, AN.

⁷⁸ "Rapport Barnaud", 10 July 1940, Guerre de 1939-1945 Vichy, 581, "Economie française interne", MAE.

⁷⁹ "Commandes allemandes de guerre en France, 25 juin 1940-23 mai 1941", AJ41 529, AN.

⁸⁰ "Kriegstagebuch der Rüstungs-Inspektion Belgien", 31 May 1940, RW 25 1a, BA-MA. For Belgium under the Occupation, see Etienne Dejonghe (ed.), *L'Occupation en France et en Belgique, 1940-1944* (Lille: Revue du Nord, 1987).

⁸¹ "Note pour le Secrétariat général du Conseil supérieur de la défense nationale", 7 July 1940, in "Notes de principe et convention d'armistice, février-août 1940", Guerre de 1939-1945 Vichy, 609, MAE.

The law of 16 August 1940

In the weeks following the Armistice, French industry had stalled and the Government, isolated in a provincial holiday town 300 km from Paris, appeared disorganised and powerless. Meanwhile, German control of the Occupied Zone seemed to be extending to industrial production. Fearing that its jurisdiction could become permanently reduced to the rump Non-Occupied Zone, the French Government realised that the status quo was unsustainable. The Government responded decisively by passing the law of 16 August 1940, “concerning the provisional organisation of industrial production”.⁸² With this single page of legislation, the French Government fundamentally reorganised French industry and established the New Industrial Order that would endure in France for the next six years.

The law of 16 August 1940 was intended to “reorganise the economy in light of the current situation, and to draw maximum profit from the means of production, from the labour reserves, and from the primary materials at our disposal”. The reorganisation was sweeping indeed. National confederations of trade unions and of employers’ associations, deemed too political and inefficient, were dissolved.⁸³ The same fate was expressly reserved for any organisation that was judged to threaten the state’s plans for efficiency, whether by articulating overt opposition or simply by being “incompatible with the discipline and speed of the decision necessary”.⁸⁴ To replace the organisations that had been among the mainstays of the economy of the Third Republic, the French Government created so-called Organisation Committees.⁸⁵ These Committees formed the central pillar of the New Industrial Order established in the summer of 1940. Instead of representing either workers or employers, these Committees were organised according to particular branches of industry. For example, while steel workers might have belonged to the CGT before 1940 and the owners of those steel firms had gathered in the *Comité des forges*, both groups would henceforth be represented in a single Organisation Committee for Steel. Analogous arrangements were made for most industries; while initially limited to 25 vital industries, by 1944 there were

⁸² *Journal officiel*, 18 August 1940.

⁸³ The law banned trade union confederations and employers’ confederations operating at the national level. With a decree on 9 November 1940, the Government explicitly dissolved the CGPF and two specific employers’ associations, namely those for coal (*Comité central des houillères de France*) and steel (*Comité des forges*), as well as the principal trade union confederations, the CGT and the CFTC. This decree was published in the *Journal officiel* on 12 November 1940.

⁸⁴ *Journal officiel*, 18 August 1940.

⁸⁵ The historiography on the Organisation Committees is discussed in the Introduction of this thesis.

over 300 Committees, representing industries as disparate as hairdressers and the entertainment industry.⁸⁶

In keeping with the notion of organising production according to branches of industry rather than by class, the law foresaw the inclusion of representation from employers and workers, although this was to be added at a later date.⁸⁷ Moreover, the text of the law specified that “there can be no question of leaving full freedom to the interested parties. The Minister for Industrial Production will determine the composition of each Committee [...] and will exert constant control”.⁸⁸ The reorganisation was thus meant to be fundamentally statist, allowing the Government to exert unprecedented control over virtually every aspect of industrial production. In place of the liberal order that had “allowed private, uncontrolled organisms to appropriate for their own profit”, the law articulated that “today, all initiatives and decisions must be taken by the Government”, and that “all interests and all activities must be subordinate to the urgency of the revival of the country”.⁸⁹

The Committees were responsible for conducting a thorough inventory of primary materials available to each industry. Based on this information, the Committee would organise which orders would be carried out in which factories, and how primary materials were to be provisioned accordingly.⁹⁰ The principal shortcoming of this arrangement, however, was that the Committees only had control over the primary materials that were already in the stocks of various industries. To address this limitation, the Government passed a supplementary law on 10 September, establishing the Central Bureau for the Distribution of Industrial Products (OCRPI).⁹¹ This Central Bureau was divided into Sections corresponding to branches of industry, similar to how the Committees were organised. Each Section had sweeping powers, and controlled the acquisition, distribution, storage, and consumption of particular products. These powers even included the authority to force producers to sell specific amounts of particular products to chosen buyers, and vice-versa. While the Committees controlled industrial production, the Central Bureau managed supply of the

⁸⁶ For discussions of these marginal Committees, see Agnès Callu, “Le comité d’organisation des entreprises de spectacle: l’économique et le social”, and Steve Zdatny, “Le comité d’organisation de la coiffure et la réorganisation de la profession, 1940-1945” in Hervé Joly (ed.), *Les Comités d’organisation et l’économie dirigée du régime de Vichy* (Caen: Centre de recherche d’histoire quantitative, 2004).

⁸⁷ The composition of the Organisation Committees, and particularly the Committee for Steel, is discussed in Chapter Two.

⁸⁸ *Journal officiel*, 18 August 1940.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *L’Office central de répartition des produits industriels (OCRPI)*.

primary materials on which industry relied. At least one member of each Committee was also a member of the analogous Section of the Central Bureau, and the Government had a representative present at every meeting.⁹² With this law, the construction of France's New Industrial Order was complete.

Understanding the law of 16 August 1940

The paralysis of French industry, coupled with the increasing pressure exerted by Germany on French industrialists, compelled the French Government to adopt more direct control over the economy. The economic situation in the summer of 1940 does not, however, explain why the reorganisation of the French economy took the particular form it did. Similar conditions of penury and disorder existed in France in 1944 in the wake of the Liberation. Then, however, the Provisional Government opted to nationalise strategic industries outright (beginning with the coal mines of northern France in December 1944), an option that was never entertained by French authorities in 1940.⁹³ Indeed, a number of different economic models had been implemented since the First World War, from Soviet central planning to Roosevelt's New Deal to the Nazi model based on rearmament.⁹⁴ The path chosen by the French Government was not the only, or even the most obvious one. The reasons for the architecture of the New Industrial Order merit closer attention.

In the existing literature on Vichy France, there are five discernable explanations of why French industry assumed its peculiar form. First, an important stream of scholarship has tended to highlight the continuities between the 1930s and the Vichy era, particularly in the field of intellectual history. This approach draws on the many so-called nonconformist journals published in France over the decade preceding the war that gave voice to critics of the Third Republic and of economic liberalism more generally.⁹⁵ Ideas such as economic planning were entertained and advocated, particularly after Henri de Man introduced

⁹² *Journal officiel*, 12 September 1940.

⁹³ The Provisional Government's decision to maintain the Organisation Committees is discussed in Chapter Four.

⁹⁴ The best recent study of the Nazi economic model is Adam Tooze, *Wages of Destruction* (London: Penguin, 2007)

⁹⁵ Early studies that explored this issue are Michael Marrus, "Vichy avant Vichy", *Histoire*, no. 3, November 1979, 72-92; and Loubet del Bayle, *Les non-conformistes des années 30* (Paris: Seuil, 1969).

planning in Belgium in 1933.⁹⁶ Interestingly, a number of individuals who would gain prominent positions in the French Government in Vichy published articles in the 1930s advocating economic reforms that would be echoed in policies passed in Vichy. Given these continuities, some scholars have concluded that these men implemented a long-fermenting programme developed over the 1930s when they rose to positions of power in Vichy.

In his wide-ranging study, Philip Nord traces continuities in a number of fields through the “transwar” period from the 1930s to the 1950s. On the economic side, Nord focuses on mid- and long-term economic planning, advocated by some nonconformist writers in the 1930s and later developed under Vichy. It must be noted, however, that such forward-looking planning emerged in Vichy only in 1941 (with the first plan appearing in 1942), well after the New Industrial Order had been established.⁹⁷ Moreover, these plans were intended for the post-war period and were therefore never implemented by Vichy. More importantly, Nord considers the 1930s writings and actions of future members of the Ministry of Industrial Production, including Jean Bichelonne, Pierre Laroque, and François Lehideux, and concludes that the way they shaped French industry was informed by their convictions that can be traced back to the 1930s, but he overlooks central figures such as René Belin and Jacques Barnaud.⁹⁸ Similarly, Jackie Clarke argues that the creation of the Organisation Committees “reflected the demand for an organized economy that had grown among a section of France’s elite in the interwar years”, observing that a speech given by Jean Bichelonne in 1943 “echoed the language that had already been used at *Redressement français* in the late 1920s”.⁹⁹ Claire Andrieu also argues that ideas set out in interwar nonconformist publications, particularly those of Pierre Laroque, decisively shaped the law of 16 August 1940. For Andrieu, “the ideal of a constantly negotiated social peace” as described by Laroque in 1938 “was at the doctrinal foundation of the Organisation

⁹⁶ Jean-François Biard, *Le Socialisme devant ses choix: La naissance de l'idée de plan* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1985). For a more recent argument on the influence of de Man’s innovations beyond Belgium see Tommaso Milani, *'Les Belles Années du Plan': Mixed Economy and Supranational Integration in European Socialism, 1930-1945*, PhD thesis, (LSE, London, forthcoming)

⁹⁷ See Philippe Mioche, *Le Plan Monnet* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1987) and Richard Kuisel, *Capitalism and the State in Modern France* (Cambridge: CUP, 1981).

⁹⁸ Philip Nord, *France’s New Deal* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 92-5. The decisive roles of Belin and Barnaud in the creation of the Organisation Committees are discussed below.

⁹⁹ Jackie Clarke, *France in the Age of Organization* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2011), 133. Jean Bichelonne was Minister for Industrial Production by this time. *Redressement français* was a think tank made up of industrialists that advocated economic rationalisation in the interwar period.

Committees”.¹⁰⁰ This explanation of the origins of the Committees rests on the history of ideas, arguing that interwar debates determined the decisions made in Vichy in 1940.

Interestingly, in his memoirs, René Belin comments on the nonconformist writings of the 1930s. Despite having found them intriguing – and indeed, having written some himself¹⁰¹ – he lamented that the usefulness of these articles was tremendously limited: “beyond vague principles, nothing concrete, no method, not a shadow of a technique... Nothing of what had been said or written in France on the matter was useable in the situation in which France found itself [in the summer of 1940]”.¹⁰² Moreover, the preamble of the law of 16 August 1940 explicitly dismisses “the formulae of ‘industrial democracy’ often advocated in recent years. [To adopt such ideas] would be to misunderstand the particularly imperious necessities of the moment”.¹⁰³ This suggests that the economic ideas developed by French intellectuals in the 1930s were not themselves determinative of the reforms made to French industry in 1940. It would seem that the conditions of the summer of 1940 demanded not the application of idealistic plans from the 1930s, but instead pragmatic action based on the circumstances at hand.

The truth of the matter lies somewhere between the tidy continuities observed by Nord and Clarke and the lack of any influence of these ideas claimed by Belin. It is undeniable that the particular context of the summer of 1940 determined the shape of the Organisation Committees to a significant degree. Yet it is also difficult to claim that the views held by the architects of this New Industrial Order were immaterial. Indeed, Belin and his collaborators, Barnaud, Bichelonne, and Laroque, had all contributed to nonconformist journals in the 1930s and shared a common if woolly notion of how to reform the French economy and society. While these provided them with a general notion of how the economy might be organised, the fact remains that these interwar intellectual exercises were hardly a practical blueprint for constructing new institutions in urgent conditions.

¹⁰⁰ Claire Andrieu, *La Banque sous l'occupation. Paradoxes de l'histoire d'une profession* (Paris: FNSP, 1990), 135. Laroque sets out this ideal in *Les rapports entre patrons et ouvriers* (Paris: Aubier, 1938).

¹⁰¹ See, for example, “La compréhension ouvrière sera acquise aux nécessités de l'Exposition” in *Syndicats*, 25 February 1937, and reprinted in *Nouveaux cahiers*, 15 March 1937. A large number of Belin's pre-war writings on industrial relations can also be consulted at the Fonds Belin, IHS.

¹⁰² René Belin, *Du Secrétariat du C.G.T. au Gouvernement de Vichy (Mémoires 1933-1942)* (Paris : Albatros, 1978), 146.

¹⁰³ *Journal officiel*, 18 August 1940.

A second explanation of the New Industrial Order's origins attributes the economic decisions to the logic of the National Revolution articulated by Pétain.¹⁰⁴ The official ideology of the Vichy regime, the National Revolution held that France had grown decadent and weak under the Third Republic and had therefore been unable to defend itself against the Nazi threat. France needed a spiritual rejuvenation, a return to the fundamental values on which French greatness had always been based. The Republican motto of *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité* was accordingly replaced by that of the National Revolution: *Travail, Famille, Patrie*.¹⁰⁵

As part of this vision to renew France, Pétain outlined the characteristics of the economic policy that should guide the nation: "Faced with the failure of economic liberalism, nearly all peoples have embarked on the path of a new economy. We must engage in this and, through our energy and our faith, make up for lost time." France's renewal depended on the national economy being organised and controlled by the State, thereby quashing the selfishness inherent in liberalism by subordinating all economic activity to national interests.¹⁰⁶ It is not difficult to recognise this anti-capitalist and statist spirit in the law of 16 August 1940, in which the State did indeed seize control of the economy and reorganise national industry. But it would be a mistake to argue that ideology preceded economics in the summer of 1940. The quotation above is from Pétain's speech of 10 October 1940, and it is on this occasion that the notion of the National Revolution was first introduced to the French public – two months after the law of 16 August established the Organisation Committees. It was only after the law of 10 September, establishing the Central Bureau and completing the new bureaucratic structures of French industry, was already in place that Pétain made any remarks about the organisation of the French economy in any of his speeches.¹⁰⁷ Barely a month after Pétain had received full powers as Head of State, any

¹⁰⁴ See, for example, Henry Rousso, "L'organisation industrielle de Vichy" in *Vichy. L'événement, la mémoire, l'histoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), 79-109; Henry Michel, *Vichy Année 40* (Paris: Robert Lafont, 1966), 118-137; Jacques Chapsal, *La vie politique en France de 1940 à 1958* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1984), 65-66.

¹⁰⁵ On the National Revolution, see Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years* (Oxford: OUP, 2001), Chapter 7; Robert Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944* (New York: Knopf, 1972), Chapter 2; Limore Yagil, *'L'Homme nouveau' et la Révolution nationale de Vichy, 1940-1944* (Paris: Septentrion, 1997). The impact of the National Revolution on the organisation of French industry is discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis.

¹⁰⁶ Philippe Pétain, "Discours du 10 octobre 1940" in *Discours aux Français* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1989), 92-93.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

ideas on economic policy remained ill-defined.¹⁰⁸ In August 1941, Pétain would call for the reform of the Organisation Committees to bring them in line with the National Revolution, which hardly would have been necessary had they been moulded by the ideology in the first place.¹⁰⁹ While the National Revolution may have influenced later economic policy, and indeed played a decisive role in projects such as the Labour Charter, there is no evidence to suggest that it influenced the measures taken over the summer of 1940.

The confusion surrounding Vichy's industrial policy and the National Revolution has been exacerbated by retrospection that can be found even in government documents in Vichy. In his summary report for Pétain prepared three months after the law of 16 August – and one month after the first public articulation of the National Revolution by Pétain – René Belin applies a veneer of National Revolution rhetoric to his account of the creation of the New Industrial Order:

In your speech, you definitively condemned an economic system in which, because of the game played by trusts, not-necessarily-French interests created and stifled work. It was therefore impossible to allow such a regime, which perpetuated a situation so injurious to the material and moral interests of the nation, to be restored. It was necessary to organise production, to frame it in legal and moral discipline, in which the dignity of France and French workers experience the eminent reverence that they deserve. Such was the purpose of the law of 16 August...¹¹⁰

In this report, Belin implies that the creation of the Organisation Committees was in reaction to the address of Pétain on the National Revolution, which in fact took place two months later.¹¹¹ This deceptive retrospection, which took place even in confidential documents mere weeks after these events occurred, may explain at least in part why some historians continue to view the laws of the summer of 1940 through the lens of the National Revolution first outlined that autumn.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ It is telling that the most extensive study of the National Revolution attributes the creation of the Organisation Committees to immediate pragmatic considerations and not to the regime's nebulous ideology. See Yagil, *op.cit.*, 213-4.

¹⁰⁹ Pétain's intervention on 12 August 1941 to try to bring the Organisation Committees in line with the National Revolution is discussed in Chapter Three.

¹¹⁰ "Rapport sur l'activité du Ministère de la Production Industrielle et du Travail du 15 juillet au 15 novembre 1940", 17 November 1940, F 12 10157, AN.

¹¹¹ Belin's statement regarding trusts is a clear reference to Pétain's speech of 10 October: "The day when coalitions and trusts broke this essential mechanism [free competition], production and prices were left defenceless before the spirit of profit and speculation... The coordination of private activities by the State must destroy the strength of trusts and their power of corruption." See Pétain, "Discours du 10 octobre 1940" in *Discours aux Français*, *op.cit.*, 92.

¹¹² Henry Rousso cites a speech from 1942 that claimed that "the Organisation Committees form an integral part of this [National] Revolution" as proof of this argument, but the speech he quotes is similarly affected by

This conclusion is confirmed by Belin in his memoirs, in which he bluntly dismisses the National Revolution as “nothing more than a formula, a slogan, maybe a myth... an invention of a quadron of intellectuals who haunted Vichy’s corridors”.¹¹³ It should be noted that he makes no mention of having framed reports for Pétain in the ideological context of this “invention”, but his assertion that Pétain’s programme did not influence Vichy’s industrial policy is nevertheless consistent with the narrative that emerges upon close examination of the available archival documents.

The third explanation is that the model for organising French industry was little more than the German model, transposed to France. Indeed, upon the Liberation of France the Provisional Government denounced Vichy’s industrial order as having been “imported on the backs of invading tanks”.¹¹⁴ Françoise Berger has argued that Vichy “establish[ed] a structure consistent with the German system”, which she specifies “cannot have been a coincidence”.¹¹⁵ This view was also advanced by François Lehideux, who admitted that the French Committees’ “technical methods were the same” as those of the German *Wirtschaftsgruppen*, and that the French model was modelled on the Reich’s, “without any great imagination”.¹¹⁶ Recent comparative studies of the French and German economic and industrial systems have shown this to be an oversimplification, however, as the French version was much more statist, allowing more direct control over industrial production by the Government than was the case in Germany.¹¹⁷ It is worth noting that the model was not imposed on France by the German authorities, and that the Reich’s model was not reproduced identically in France. Nevertheless, these studies do not contradict the underlying notion that German industrial organisation served as a model for the French Government.

At the opposite pole is a fourth explanation, or the “patriotic narrative”, which emphasises the distinctions between the French and German model by contending that the New Industrial Order was created by the French Government in Vichy in reaction to German

the retrospection that is clear in Belin’s writings from December 1940. See Henry Rousso, “L’organisation industrielle de Vichy”, op.cit., 80.

¹¹³ René Belin, op.cit., 184.

¹¹⁴ *Journal officiel*, October 1944. By this time the official publication of the French Government was issued by the Provisional Government.

¹¹⁵ Françoise Berger, *La France, l’Allemagne et l’acier (1932-1952). De la stratégie des cartels à l’élaboration de la CECA* (Paris : Université de Paris I, 2000), 447.

¹¹⁶ Qtd. in Yagil, op.cit., 221.

¹¹⁷ Johannes Bähr and Ralf Banken, “L’organisation de l’économie allemande sous le national-socialisme 1933-1945. Synthèse et bilan critique des recherches” in Hervé Joly (ed.), op.cit., 21-38.

actions and against the wishes of the German authorities. This “patriotic narrative” is clearly favoured by the actors who created the Organisation Committees, given the obvious appeal of distancing the creation of the Committees from the collaboration in which they participated during the war.¹¹⁸ Pierre Laroque’s variation on this theme has been particularly popular among historians. Claire Andrieu notes that “the patriotic inspiration of the Organisation Committees is hard to contest if we refer to Pierre Laroque’s testimony”.¹¹⁹ Michel Margairaz similarly refers to Laroque’s account, noting “the antinomy between the two laws” of 16 August and 10 September, identifying the former as a means of defending French industry from German exigencies.¹²⁰ This is consistent with Lambert Blum-Picard’s understanding of the New Industrial Order in 1944. Discussing the Committees within the Resistance in Algiers, Blum-Picard argued that “the Organisation Committees as they were originally conceived would have been too independent of the Germans. That is why [the Germans] pushed for the adoption of a new, more centralised system for allocation”, namely OCRPI.¹²¹ This distinction between “French” Organisation Committees and a “German” OCRPI has remained a part of the historiography on the Committees and figures in recent works as well.¹²²

The fifth and final narrative argues that Vichy constructed the new system motivated chiefly by pragmatism, to deal with the pressing challenges confronting French industry.¹²³ This is also confirmed in the memoirs of the relevant Ministers, who argued that there was a sharp divide between politics and economics, and that the latter remained apolitical.¹²⁴ While the pragmatic narrative is largely correct, it ultimately fails to provide a satisfactory

¹¹⁸ In his memoirs, René Belin claims that the creation of the Organisation Committees protected French industry and infuriated the German authorities. See Belin, *op.cit.*, 150.

¹¹⁹ Claire Andrieu, *La Banque sous l’occupation*, (Paris: FNSP, 1990), 131.

¹²⁰ Michel Margairaz, *L’Etat, les finances et l’économie*, (Paris: Comité pour l’histoire économique et financière de la France, 1991), 513-4.

¹²¹ “Sous-Commission d’étude des organes directeurs de répartition. Séance du 14 avril 1944”, 14 April 1944, CFLN 686, MAE. This narrative was favoured by Blum-Picard as he was explaining why France ought to maintain the Organisation Committees after the Liberation in 1944.

¹²² Arne Radtke-Delacor, “La position des comités d’organisation face aux autorités d’occupation: la pomme de discorde des commandes allemandes en 1940-1941” in Hervé Joly (ed.), *op. cit.*, 63-72 .

¹²³ See, for example, Andrew Shennen, *Rethinking France : Plans for Renewal, 1940-1946* (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1989), 234-5 ; Richard Vinen, *The politics of French business, 1936-1945* (Cambridge : CUP, 1991), 103-4; L. Yagil, *op.cit.*, 213-4 ; Julian Jackson, *op.cit.*, 161-165.

¹²⁴ Yves Bouthillier, Minister for Finance and the Economy, wrote that “the Armistice was dictated by necessity. Things being as they were, governing France in the best interests of the French was an imperious task. Accepting the presence of German troops on French soil by no means implied our embrace of the Nazi order.” See Bouthillier, *Le Drame de Vichy*, volume 2 (Paris: Plon, 1951), 4. René Belin’s memoirs similarly argue that he acted out of pragmatism. See Belin, *op.cit.*

explanation of why this solution was adopted rather than other, equally pragmatic alternatives. The establishment of a complex system of Organisation Committees and Sections of the Central Bureau was hardly the simplest, most obvious course of action, especially if it is held that the German model was not consciously emulated by Vichy. This limitation must qualify the value of this narrative and demands a fuller explanation.

Of course, there is some merit to all of these explanations, and they are by no means mutually exclusive. Indeed, it is entirely possible that Belin and his associates were concurrently motivated by their pre-war beliefs, patriotism, and pragmatism. What all five narratives of the establishment of the New Industrial Order have in common is that they take 16 August 1940 as the starting point. Formally, of course, this is faultless – it was indeed this law that established the Organisation Committees. The law, by all accounts, was drafted hurriedly and was largely improvised. Moreover, it is agreed that René Belin, as Minister for Industrial Production, was the author of the law and the originator of its content. This is in no small part confirmed by Belin himself, who later wrote that “the *ligne générale* of the law of the 16th of August was mine and mine alone”.¹²⁵ Consequently, historians have tended to focus on the Ministry for Industrial Production, on Belin, and on the law of 16 August as the source of the Organisation Committees and the consequent reordering of French industry. A thorough analysis of the archival documents available, however, reveals a somewhat different narrative. The first proposal for organising French industry according to branch into committees was made on 15 July, the day after Belin was appointed to Vichy’s Cabinet, and a full month before the passing of the law that he claimed was entirely his own idea. Considering these facts, a new narrative emerges that challenges the five existing explanations and reveals why the reforms to French industry took the shape they did.

The prehistory of the Organisation Committees, June-August 1940

As we have seen, by June the German occupation authorities were approaching French factories individually and forcing them to produce materials for the German military, lest they be evicted from their factories. In an attempt to overcome this dilemma, a proposal was made by General Huntziger, the head of the French delegation at the Armistice

¹²⁵ Belin, op.cit., 149.

Commission.¹²⁶ In a letter to Pétain dated 15 July, he suggested the creation of an intermediary body attached to the French Government. “This organism would receive the German government’s orders and distribute them among the French manufacturers, making no distinction between the Occupied and Non-Occupied Zones”.¹²⁷ Huntziger foresaw that this body would have jurisdiction over all armaments production, whether destined for the Wehrmacht, the Luftwaffe, or the Kriegsmarine. Already we can identify the *ligne générale* of the Organisation Committees: the creation of a state-controlled organism that would be placed between the German occupation authorities and French industrialists, distributing orders from the former to the latter. It is also crucial to recognise that Huntziger foresaw that the system would apply equally to both zones. Until this point, the German authorities had not attempted to have factories in the Non-Occupied Zone complete orders for the Reich. Combining both zones for the purposes of industrial production would prove to be a double-edged sword: while it gave the French Government in Vichy control over industry in the Occupied Zone and improved industrial production by relaxing the demarcation line, it also allowed the German authorities to exert far more influence over the southern zone than had previously been the case.

On the very day that General Huntziger was authoring the text that would be so influential on French industry for the next six years, the French Government announced that it had named a new Minister for Industrial Production: René Belin.¹²⁸ While Belin was settling into his first days of political office, exchanges between the French authorities and their German counterparts continued. On 21 July, six days after Huntziger’s proposal, Léon Noël, Vichy’s ambassador and head of the French Delegation in Paris, sent a letter to Dr Elmar Michel, head of the Economic Section of the German Military Administration of France, noting that both German and French governments had agreed that their objective was to revive France’s economy and to “ensure good use of production capacities in France”. To this end, Noël stated that “each industry will form an office that will have contact with the German Economic Delegation” in Paris.¹²⁹ This marks the first mention of industry-specific offices created to deal directly with the German authorities of behalf of French industrialists, a defining feature of the Organisation Committees. The next day, the French Delegation in

¹²⁶ The Armistice Commission, based in Wiesbaden, was established to oversee the application of the Franco-German Armistice and to resolve any disputes over the interpretation and application of the text.

¹²⁷ “Lettre de Huntziger”, 15 July 1940, F 60 1539, AN.

¹²⁸ Belin was made Minister for Industrial Production and for Labour on 14 July, and the appointment was announced the following day. See Belin, op.cit., 125.

¹²⁹ “Lettre à Dr Michel”, 21 July 1940, F 60 1539, AN.

Paris articulated this design in more detail, outlining a proposal for the creation of a “Liaison Office” that would represent the French chemical industry to the German authorities. The document specifies that this office “should be in touch with Liaison Offices of other industries, thereby forming the base of a collective organisation that would permit the eventual creation of a sort of central exchange commission that would ensure financing and facilitate Franco-German compensation”.¹³⁰ By 22 July, then, a network of inter-related offices representing different branches of French industry before the German authorities had been delineated by the French authorities in Paris.

This plan was directly incorporated into the report prepared by Jacques Barnaud, René Belin’s Chief of Staff, and presented to the Cabinet in Vichy on 24 July.¹³¹ Since the ministries’ civil service was based in Paris, while ministers remained in Vichy, Barnaud shuttled back and forth between the two cities. Assigned to compile a report on the status of French industry in the Occupied Zone, Barnaud painted a bleak picture emphasising the many attempts of the German authorities to seize control over French industry. While his report provided a succinct synthesis of the situation in the Occupied Zone, the most significant section of the report was its recommendation:

A single solution to this agonising situation seems to present itself. In the face of German organisation, we must set up strong [French] organisation. This cannot exist without the grouping together of different economic activities in obligatory and disciplined professional organisations. These organisations must designate responsible representatives for each branch of activity whose duty it will be to negotiate alone with the German economic authorities. Nevertheless, these representatives will take direction from qualified French authorities beforehand and will remain in contact with them...¹³²

This constitutes the first recorded mention of such organisation in Vichy. Although he does not identify the origins of the proposal, we do know that Barnaud had met with Céliér, Noël’s deputy, at the French Delegation in Paris on 22 July and left that meeting with a copy of the Delegation’s plans for industrial reorganisation.¹³³ It is therefore probable that with his report, Barnaud presented to the Cabinet of the French Government the distillation of what French authorities in Paris and Wiesbaden had been steadily developing over the previous nine days. Nevertheless, it would take three more weeks for Belin to present to the Cabinet

¹³⁰ “Proposition de bureau de contact pour les industries chimiques”, 23 July 1940, F 60 1539, AN.

¹³¹ Jacques Barnaud was Belin’s *directeur de cabinet* as Minister for Labour, but Barnaud worked extensively on projects under the Ministry for Industrial Production, as Belin held both portfolios until February 1941.

¹³² “Rapport de M. Barnaud”, 24 July 1940, Papiers 1940, Papiers Baudouin, MAE.

¹³³ “Lettre à M. Barnaud”, 23 July 1940, F 60 1539, AN.

the draft of the law that would create the Organisation Committees.¹³⁴ In the meantime, the actions taken in Paris would continue to outpace those of the Ministry for Industrial Production in Vichy.

On 26 July, the French Delegation wrote a letter to Dr Michel, informing him that the plans to organise the French chemical industry were now a *fait accompli*. They asked that the German authorities cease to deal directly with individual French industrialists, and instead deal only with the “Professional Office” created for the chemical industry.¹³⁵ That same day, letters were written to French industrialists instructing them to reply to any German orders by explaining that the German authorities must instead address themselves to the relevant Professional Offices.¹³⁶ The implementation of effective bodies that would coordinate German orders within different branches of industry had begun.

By the end of July, the French authorities in Paris had succeeded in reorganising French industry in the Occupied Zone. Certainly, the system that existed at the end of July and the one that would exist a month later, after the law of 16 August, had a number of important differences. Most obviously, the Liaison Offices existed only in the Occupied Zone, despite having been initially envisaged for both zones by General Huntziger. Institutionally, the Liaison Offices existed within the employers’ associations of industrialists, which allowed them to be set up in such a short period of time. The law of 16 August, however, moved the Offices outside of these employers’ associations, thereby ensuring closer state control. From the text of the law, the Organisation Committees would be firmly under state control, would ultimately include labour representation, and would be less dominated by industrial interests. In practice, however, the Organisation Committees would be stacked with representatives of large firms and labour representation was minimal.¹³⁷ The Committees were also to be more statist than the Liaison Offices, which received direction from, without being controlled by, the Government. But despite these

¹³⁴ According to Baudouin, Belin presented the text of the law to the Cabinet on 14 August, two days before it was signed into law by Pétain. Baudouin, *op.cit.*, 202.

¹³⁵ “Note à Michel”, 26 July 1940, F 60 1539, AN. It is worth noting that at this stage the terms Liaison Office and Professional Office were used interchangeably (sometimes within the same document) to refer to the new offices. Curiously, the Organisation Committees would formally revert to the name Professional Offices in 1945, which will be discussed in Chapter Five.

¹³⁶ Lettre de Charles Celier, 26 July 1940, F 60 1539, AN.

¹³⁷ “Observations sur le Rapport Belin”, 1 December 1940, F 12 10157, AN. The issue of selecting members of the new Organisation Committees, and particularly of CORSID, is discussed in Chapter Two.

differences, it is clear that the Liaison Offices are the forerunners of the Organisation Committees and thereby constitute the foundation of the New Industrial Order.

Meanwhile back in Vichy

Having examined the evolution towards Organisation Committees that was taking place in the Occupied Zone, it is worthwhile to compare this with the actions of the Ministry for Industrial Production in Vichy in early August. While industry in the Occupied Zone had already been reorganised by this time, René Belin's concerns seem to have been strikingly different. In a report he prepared for Pétain dated 7 August, the Minister reveals himself to be perceptibly out of step with the developments made in the Occupied Zone. Much of Belin's report is simply a repackaging of the descriptions of industry in the northern zone provided by Barnaud in his report two weeks earlier, along with a lengthy section on social conditions in the Occupied Zone – perhaps not surprising given that Belin had spent his career as a trade unionist. His assessment of the Occupied Zone suggests that he was not aware of the system that had already been put in place nearly a fortnight earlier. He notes that German authorities had entered into contact with French industrialists in an effort to “control the economy of the Occupied Zone”, but he never mentions any of the measures already taken by the French Delegation in Paris. Moreover, his recommendations for Pétain are of strikingly little substance: “It is indispensable that the Government return to Paris and reach political and economic agreements with the occupying power. These two objectives are undoubtedly demanded by the current conditions [in the Occupied Zone]”. To this he adds a short paean to Pétain, whom he urges to “examine these problems and take the decisions without which the moral and political unity of France will be broken for the foreseeable future”.¹³⁸ These words are not only vague but also unoriginal: the French Government had been trying to return to Paris since the beginning of July, and was waiting for the German authorities to authorise the relocation. Meanwhile, his suggestion that the Government reach “political and economic agreements”, without specifying what these might contain, is similarly ineffective. It is remarkable that only one week before Belin presented the text of the law that would reorganise French industry, the Minister seemed to be ill-informed and without vision.

¹³⁸ “Lettre à Pétain”, 7 August 1940, *Guerre 1939-1945, Economie française interne*, MAE.

Clearly, something decisive must have happened in that critical week that resulted in Belin presenting such an ambitious plan as the law of 16 August. The turning point was undoubtedly the two-day meeting convened by Belin to discuss the situation of French industry. On 9 and 10 August, Belin was joined by Jacques Barnaud, Yves Bouthillier, the Minister for Finance and the Economy, and a small handful of other members of Belin's ministry, including Jean Bichelonne, to produce a solution to the problems being faced in the Occupied Zone.¹³⁹ While no records from that meeting exist, we can surmise what took place. Given Barnaud's recommendation to the Cabinet for the creation of Liaison Offices more than two weeks earlier, it is most likely that the idea to establish Organisation Committees was his, derived from his experience in the Occupied Zone. He had been in close contact with the French authorities in Paris since the signature of the Armistice and was keenly aware of the situation in the Occupied Zone and what measures had been implemented. Considering the weaknesses of the report completed by Belin only two days before this meeting, and the conspicuous absence of any plausible solutions to the situation in that report, it is indeed improbable that the idea to create Organisation Committees was, as he later claimed, his and his alone. Rather, more plausible is that Belin, who had been the last minister named to the Cabinet and had never held political office, was still learning the ropes less than a month after his arrival. In this context, it is logical that the new minister allowed himself to be influenced by his Chief of Staff, Jacques Barnaud.

While Belin may not have been the originator of the idea, he certainly influenced the final shape of the Organisation Committees. Although his report from 7 August may have revealed the absence of any kind of meaningful industrial reorganisation on his part, it also demonstrated the degree to which social conditions mattered to him. Having spent his career working in trade unions, and simultaneously holding the Labour portfolio in Vichy's government, Belin clearly gave more consideration to the plight of working people than did any other member of the Cabinet. This preoccupation is clearly detectable in the text of the law of 16 August, particularly when juxtaposed with the descriptions of the system of Liaison Offices. While the latter focused exclusively on creating a buffer between the German authorities and French employers, the law of 16 August sought to involve workers as well, essentially merging employers' associations with trade unions and arranging them according to branches of industry. These elements are absent from both the system established in the Occupied Zone and the recommendations made by Barnaud to the Cabinet in Vichy on 24

¹³⁹ Belin, *op.cit.*, 149.

July, in which the Liaison Offices were simply attached to the relevant employers' associations. While Barnaud may have initiated the reorganisation of French industry, it was almost certainly the Minister for Industrial Production who sought to involve labour in the new structure.

A Franco-German Europe?

The law of 16 August did not spring forward fully formed from René Belin's forehead, but was rather the culmination of a series of measures taken to resist German pressures in the Occupied Zone virtually as soon as the ink on the Armistice was dry. Given how the law of 16 August would appear to derail Nazi plans to occupy or intimidate individual firms, it seems remarkable that they did not simply overrule the law by one means or another. Belin later wrote that the law "provoked rage among the Germans, undoubtedly since it pulled the rug out from under their feet".¹⁴⁰ This narrative is maintained by Arne Radtke-Delacor, who claims that the move "led to a vehement reaction" from the "furious" German authorities: they imposed a new requirement that all legislation affecting the Occupied Zone be submitted in draft form for German approval beforehand. This, he argues, was in direct response to the law of 16 August, which "came at a very high cost".¹⁴¹ It must be noted, however, that Radtke-Delacor does not provide any archival evidence to prove that any German officials were angered by the law, other than the fact that they put the new requirement in place.¹⁴² To the extent that the German Military Administration was upset at all, it was principally because from its perspective, the French Government had not followed protocol, namely by failing to submit the draft of the law to Dr Michel for approval prior to its promulgation. Indeed, the requirement that Vichy submit all draft legislation affecting the economy of the Occupied Zone, formally imposed by the Germans after 16 August, was merely a refinement of an earlier German order from 20 July, which stipulated that "all economic decisions made by the Delegation or its collaborators be submitted to [Dr Michel] for approval".¹⁴³ The supposedly angry reprisal of the German authorities after having been

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 150

¹⁴¹ Arne Radtke-Delacor, "La position des comités d'organisation face aux autorités d'occupation: La pomme de discorde des commandes allemandes en 1940-1941", in Hervé Joly (ed.), *op.cit.*, 65-66. These new restrictions came into force on 20 September 1940.

¹⁴² Based on my own research in the archives of the German Military Administration at the Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, I was unable to find any negative reaction to the creation of the Organisation Committees.

¹⁴³ "Résumé des indications données par le Major Burandt", 20 July 1940, F 60 1539, AN.

outdone by the audacious law of 16 August was in fact merely a clarification that the French Government in Vichy should be counted among the collaborators of the French Delegation, at least when passing legislation affecting the economy of the Occupied Zone, and therefore subject to the order of 20 July. The German authorities, after all, had been fully informed of the establishment of the Liaison Offices, and cooperated with this new regime. The reason for their willingness to work with such a system is explained by the fact that they had their eyes on a far more ambitious plan than the mere occupation of isolated factories in northern France.

At a meeting at the French Delegation in Paris on 20 July, Major Burandt of the German Military Administration explained to his French interlocutors that, with Germany still at war against Great Britain, industrial production in Germany and in Occupied France alike had to be mobilised to this end. He stated his vision of comprehensive industrial planning in the Occupied Zone, including the distribution of raw materials in France by Germany.¹⁴⁴ To this end, French industry should be rationally organised. By the first week of August, Céliér wrote to Dr Michel to follow up on the letter sent on 26 July stating that the Liaison Office had been established for the French chemical industry: “I can confirm that the French Government desires that relations between French industry and the German authorities be centralised, for each industry, by a Liaison Office... This will facilitate the establishment of a common plan to make full use of French and German means of production and to distribute raw materials.”¹⁴⁵ This shows that, for the French Delegation, the reorganisation of French industry was done not simply to protect factories from German takeovers, but crucially to facilitate Franco-German collaboration. From the very beginning, the Liaison Offices were meant to support collaboration.

This reasoning was certainly known to Barnaud. At a meeting on 3 August, Dr Michel stated that he wished “to establish a Franco-German economic collaboration, notably through the establishment of a common plan for production and distribution corresponding to the needs of both countries and by a certain pooling of raw materials.”¹⁴⁶ At a meeting of representatives from the French and German textile industries, at which Barnaud was present, the Germans put forth the question of “conducting a census of the entirety of stocks and

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. This dimension anticipates OCRPI, which would be *de facto* controlled by the Germans and would be responsible for the allocation of raw materials to French industry.

¹⁴⁵ Lettre de Céliér, 5 August 1940, F 60 1539, AN.

¹⁴⁶ “Questions économiques”, 3 August 1940, F 60 1539, AN.

means of production existing in both zones, in order to establish a Franco-German production programme and, eventually, a distribution of raw materials that would permit German and French factories to work at the same rhythm.”¹⁴⁷ At the meeting, it was also recognised that the organisation of French industrialists into Professional Offices had already been a success, and that both sides were dealing with the Offices increasingly.¹⁴⁸ August began with French and German governments and their officials in agreement to construct a harmonised Franco-German production system, founded largely on the Professional Offices that preceded the Organisation Committees.

On 8 August, the day before the meeting at which the law of 16 August was developed in Vichy, another meeting between the French and German economic delegations confirmed the willingness of both sides to embrace collaboration. The German authorities “accept[ed] in principle collaboration between the French administration authorities, the responsible organisms and their own services for the preparation of an organisational plan applicable to the diverse branches of the French economy.” They also confirmed that as soon as this plan was established, the practice of requisitions would cease. Most importantly, it was agreed that “the Professional Offices will study under the authority of the Ministry for Industrial Production the stocks and production capacity of firms as well as the needs of the French economy”.¹⁴⁹ This organisation essentially constitutes the mission statement of the Organisation Committees, a week before their creation. While not all of the elements discussed had been implemented yet, French and German authorities in Paris had agreed to virtually all the elements of the creation of Organisation Committees, right down to the role of Belin’s ministry. It is almost certain that Barnaud was in attendance at this meeting, before returning to Vichy to develop the text of the law of 16 August with Belin over the following two days. This meeting shows that the German authorities saw the organisation of French industry according to branch not as a threat to German interests, but rather as a constructive path towards a German-led European economy. The French authorities were relieved that the practice of requisitions in the Occupied Zone would end with the institution of this new system. The reasoning behind the Organisation Committees was therefore guided in large part by plans for collaboration.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ “Note sur la situation économique du 7 au 11 août”, 12 August 1940, F 60 1539, AN.

This vision of an integrated European economic order was publicly outlined by Walther Funk, the German Minister for the Economy, in a speech made on 26 July. He declared that, once German victory had been achieved, the Reich would “apply the economic methods that ha[d] brought it such great economic and military success” to France and the rest of Continental Europe. He claimed that “National Socialist economic policy has never allowed itself to be governed by rigid dogma in its methods. We have always used whatever methods seemed most expedient at the time... In the same way the New Economic Order in Europe will grow out of the existing circumstances.”¹⁵⁰ Applied to the French case, this would mean that whatever provisional arrangements were enacted would serve as a foundation for the post-war order. Of course, this was not the European integration promoted by Briand and Laval a decade earlier.¹⁵¹ Funk made it perfectly clear that the purpose of this New Economic Order would be to serve German interests, and that countries such as France would serve as export outlets for German goods.¹⁵² Nevertheless, it did offer an insight into what was in store for French industry. German victory was not a distant prospect, but was understood to be imminent. The day after Funk’s speech, a report was circulated in the French Foreign Ministry noting that Germany had already offered the terms of a negotiated peace to the British government, and were still awaiting a reply.¹⁵³ These terms demarcated clear German and British spheres of influence: Germany would control the European continent, Britain would maintain its Empire.¹⁵⁴ If the British were to reject the offer, Germany was ready to attack England “as soon as weather permits”. The Nazis estimated that they would take control of Britain within thirty days of the initial attack.¹⁵⁵ While these estimates were utterly naïve in retrospect, the French had every reason to believe them. On 10 May, the first day of the German attack, France believed that it was protected from Germany by the impenetrable Maginot Line; by 10 June, thirty days later, the French

¹⁵⁰ Walther Funk, “The economic reorganization of Europe” in Walter Lippens, *Documents on the history of European integration. Volume 1: Continental plans for European union, 1939-1945*, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1984), 65-70, here 66.

¹⁵¹ On Germany’s economic plans for Europe during the war, the classic study remains Jacques Freymond, *Le IIIe Reich et la réorganisation économique de l’Europe, 1940-1942* (Paris: Leiden, 1974). For the “European” ideology of the Nazis, see Julien Prévotaux, *Un européisme nazi. Le Groupe Collaboration et l’idéologie européenne dans la Seconde Guerre mondiale* (Paris: François-Xavier de Guibert, 2010) and, for French perceptions of German plans for European integration, Bernard Bruneteau, *“L’Europe Nouvelle” de Hitler, une illusion des intellectuels de Vichy* (Monaco, Du Rocher, 2003).

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ “Presse allemande du 26 juillet”, 26 July 1940, Papiers 1940, Papiers Baudouin, MAE.

¹⁵⁴ “Copie d’un télégramme du 27 juillet de Havas New-York à Havas Clermont”, 27 July 1940, Papiers 1940, Papiers Baudouin, MAE.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

Government declared Paris an open city, and the capital fell four days later. After such a decisive victory over France, Germany was seen as an invincible force; the choice for Britain seemed to be between negotiated peace and certain defeat. In either event, German victory was understood as imminent, and German plans for a post-war European economic order were therefore of pressing concern. Subsequent events would ensure that Funk's plans never progressed beyond their theoretical stages, but in the summer of 1940, they were taken very seriously by the French authorities.

The French authorities in Paris and the French Government in Vichy were both very much aware of Funk's speech, and summaries of the speech were distributed to French officials.¹⁵⁶ Five days after Funk's speech, the French Delegation wrote to Dr Michel that "the French Government is ready to collaborate with the German Government to organise a planned economy for Continental Europe".¹⁵⁷ Shortly after the law of 16 August had been issued, Jacques Barnaud wrote to industrialists to explain that until the Organisation Committees were inaugurated, the Liaison Offices would continue to serve as the point of contact between French industry and the German authorities. He further specified that "the negotiations taken by these Liaison Offices must fit into the framework of a Franco-German economy".¹⁵⁸ This receptiveness of the French to Nazi plans for a united European economy led German authorities to abandon the capricious requisitioning that had characterised the first weeks of German presence in France, refocusing their energies on restoring the French economy so that it could better serve German interests.¹⁵⁹ General Huntziger, who had been the first to propose creating an entity to coordinate German orders made to French industry, argued that producing war *matériel* for the Reich was inevitable given German dominance, and that the Government should at least negotiate concessions in exchange for supplying the German military.¹⁶⁰ While the Germans themselves had originally foreseen the production of component parts of war *matériel* rather than finished armaments in France, they clearly expected France to produce for the German war effort.¹⁶¹ France's integration into a German-dominated Europe stretching from the English Channel to the Soviet border would

¹⁵⁶ "Discours de FUNCH" (sic), Papiers 1940, Papiers Baudouin, MAE.

¹⁵⁷ "Note au sujet des relations financières et commerciales entre la France et ses colonies, d'une part, l'empire britannique, l'Egypte, les Colonies néerlandaises et belges, d'autre part", 31 July 1940, AJ 41 170, AN. The note was likely from either Noël or his deputy, Célier.

¹⁵⁸ "Note sur l'organisation industrielle", 30 August 1940, AS 40 20, ANMT.

¹⁵⁹ See Michel Margairaz, *op.cit.*, 528-529.

¹⁶⁰ "Note sur les commandes allemandes de matériel de guerre", 5 August 1940, AJ 41 529, AN.

¹⁶¹ "Tätigkeitsbericht", 10 August 1940, RW 24/15, BA-MA.

deepen over the following years and its contributions to the German economy and war effort would be increasingly important. When the Wehrmacht invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, it did so with a number of new, French-made tanks.¹⁶²

The German motivation for accepting the reorganisation of French industry along the lines of the law of 16 August was thus tied to Germany's desire to establish a European economy that could be mobilised towards German interests, including the war against Britain. German occupations of factories ceased and engagement with the Organisation Committees became standard procedure. A French Government report noted that German "intentions to control economic and industrial activity in France is obvious. It appears, however, that whenever the Germans find themselves in the presence of efficient civil servants or industrialists, the Germans quite willingly respect their authority".¹⁶³ As long as French industry served German interests, the German authorities were perfectly willing to allow the French to run their own factories. In other words, there was no need to set up *Wirtschaftsgruppen* in France, as Germany had done in Belgium.¹⁶⁴ The desire that French industry be coordinated and mobilised to German ends explains the latter's acquiescence to the law of 16 August, despite the French transgression of not submitting the text of the law to German authorities before promulgating it. Indeed, the Germans might also have objected to the decidedly statist character of the Organisation Committees, which distinguished these organisms from the Liaison Offices approved by the Germans a week earlier. While those offices were based in employers' associations, the law of 16 August allowed the Minister for Industrial Production to designate the composition of each Committee and gave the Ministry not only a representative on each committee, but also a veto on virtually all decisions. Yet this "assertion of sovereignty"¹⁶⁵ on the part of the French Government was hollow, since it constituted part of a broader policy of increasing integration into the Continental European economy under German hegemony. While the law was intended in part to safeguard French factories from being taken over directly by Germans, the law itself was entirely compatible with Germany's broader interests.

¹⁶² "Commandes allemandes de guerre en France. 25 juin 1940 – 23 mai 1941", AJ 41 529, AN.

¹⁶³ "Note sur l'activité de la délégation économique", 12 July 1940, F 60 1539, AN. Underlined in the original document.

¹⁶⁴ "Tätigkeitsbericht", 10 August 1940, RW 24/15, BA-MA. For Germany's economic strategy in the countries it had conquered in Europe, see Götz Aly, *Hitlers Volksstaat: Raub, Rassenkrieg und nationaler Sozialismus* (Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 2005); Adam Tooze, *Wages of Destruction* (London: Penguin, 2007); and Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin, 2008).

¹⁶⁵ Radtke-Delacor, "La pomme de discorde...", op.cit., 65-66.

The reorganisation of French industry was completed with the law of 10 September. While the Organisation Committees dealt with industrial production, it was quickly realised that an initial distribution of raw materials to the various branches of industry had to be carried out, before these allocations could in turn be redistributed by the relevant Organisation Committees. This would be the responsibility of the Central Bureau for the Distribution of Industrial Products (OCRPI), created by the law of 10 September. In his memoirs, Belin confesses that, in the haste in which the law of 16 August was written, he had not foreseen the shortcoming of the Organisation Committees and the need for the Central Bureau. “For the sake of truth I must say that it was the services of Dr Michel, with their long experience with economic planning, that first indicated this flaw to me. The law of 10 September... completed our purview of the planned economy”.¹⁶⁶ This attribution to Dr Michel is confirmed by the head of the economic section of German Military Administration himself in a report written at war’s end. He claims that “the French Government quickly recognised the reasonableness of German demands and, on 10 September, the law for the regulation of raw materials was promulgated.” Michel adds that “the Military Administration could provide the French Government with practical lessons accumulated over several years in Germany.”¹⁶⁷ During the war, Michel had described the role of the Military Administration as the “management of economic planning” being done by the French; while the Germans provided the French with “guidance”, he insisted that “control of the French economy remains in the hands of the French State”.¹⁶⁸ Michel’s statements belie the degree of influence the German authorities exerted over Vichy.

Coming from the German authorities, the recommendation to create the Central Bureau was certainly not intended to buttress French assertions of sovereignty. Rather, having established that their approval was needed on all legislation affecting the Occupied Zone, the German authorities succeeded in appropriating the statist powers that Vichy had slipped into the law of 16 August. In each of the Sections of OCRPI, a representative of the German authorities would be present. While the French Government had secured tight control over the Organisation Committees, they themselves were dependent on the initial distribution of raw materials by the German-controlled Central Bureau. This German

¹⁶⁶ Belin, *op.cit.*, 151.

¹⁶⁷ “Rapport final du Dr MICHEL sur l’Administration Militaire en France, 1940-1944”, undated (1944), AJ 72 262, AN.

¹⁶⁸ “Economie dirigée en France”, *Berliner Börsen Zeitung*, 10 April 1942, AJ 72 262, AN. Translated from German into French on 16 April 1942.

influence would ensure that the European economy in which France was increasingly implicated would be firmly steered by Germany.

Conclusion

The paralysis of French industry in the summer of 1940 had necessitated state action. While the existing historiography focuses on the law of 16 August and the actions of the French Government in Vichy as the starting point of the reorganisation of French industry, this approach fails to fully explain why France's New Industrial Order took the shape it did. An analysis of the archival evidence from before 16 August reveals that by far the greater portion of the new architecture of French industry was sketched over the month of July in the Occupied Zone, rather than in Vichy in mid-August as it is generally held. Given Barnaud's insistence that "in the face of German organisation, we must set up strong [French] organisation", it is likely that the Organisation Committees were modelled on Germany's analogous bodies, which would also have been eminently pragmatic in the context of a defeated France in a German-led Europe. Moreover, practically every step of the construction of this New Industrial Order was approved by the German authorities before 16 August. Far from being an audacious stroke that reasserted French sovereignty in the face of German economic plans, the establishment of the Organisation Committees occurred in the context of a German-led Europe. Plans for Franco-German collaboration were eagerly taken up by the French Government as it sought to secure France a favourable place in the post-war European order. The provisions for close state control included in the law of 16 August were in turn appropriated by the Germans for the law of 10 September, which ensured that the distribution of raw materials on which French industry depended remained firmly in German hands. By the end of the summer of 1940, the groundwork had been laid for the collaboration that would characterise the remainder of the war. Having set out the legal framework of the New Industrial Order, the individual Organisation Committees would have to be created, staffed, and contribute to Vichy's plans for Franco-German collaboration.

Chapter Two:

'Twixt the cup and the lip: Building the New Industrial Order, 1940-1941

By the end of the eventful summer of 1940, the judicial foundations of the New Industrial Order had been laid. The law of 16 August, based on the evolutions made in the Occupied Zone during the seven weeks following the Armistice, called for the creation of Organisation Committees that would take inventory of existing stocks and rationally organise production within each industry. The law also denoted that these new bodies would be tripartite, drawing their representatives from amongst employers, workers, and government officials. The law of 10 September, pushed by the German authorities, created complementary bodies in the Central Bureau for the Distribution of Industrial Products (OCRPI) that would allocate primary materials to the Organisation Committees. These two laws had clearly set out the shape that French industry would take in a German-led Europe.

Despite the straightforward clauses contained in these laws, however, constructing these new institutions proved more difficult than it had been to describe them. Indeed, the law of 16 August built upon the existing Liaison Offices (or Professional Offices) that had developed immediately following the German presence in France. The greatest innovation of the text itself was the addition of labour and the State to a realm that had been the reserve of employers.¹⁶⁹ The text of the law, which had been hammered out over a mere weekend in Vichy, took nearly three months to be applied to the steel industry. In the meantime, Jacques Barnaud, the Chief of Staff of Minister for Industrial Production René Belin,¹⁷⁰ instructed industrialists to continue using the provisional Liaison Offices until the newly constituted Organisation Committees were complete.¹⁷¹

On 9 November 1940, the Organisation Committee for Steel was inaugurated. Given the tripartite spirit of the law of 16 August, introduced under former trade unionist Belin, the most shocking aspect of the new organisations was the utter lack of labour representation.

¹⁶⁹ *Journal officiel*, 18 August 1940.

¹⁷⁰ Jacques Barnaud was Belin's *directeur de cabinet* in the Ministry of Labour, but as Belin held both portfolios, Barnaud worked extensively on issues related to industrial production. His decisive role in the creation of Organisation Committees is discussed in Chapter One.

¹⁷¹ "Note sur l'organisation industrielle", 30 August 1940, AS 40 20, ANMT.

The Organisation Committee for Steel (CORSID) consisted of four industrialists, with the addition of a representative from the Ministry of Industrial Production. In this chapter, we will explore how the implementation of the law of 16 August 1940 compromised the tripartism present in the text of the law, and consider the continuities between the pre-war era and the Vichy period. We will begin by considering the role of the Vichy government in putting the Organisation Committee for Steel in place, before turning to the first actions taken by CORSID. Lastly, we will examine the role of the German authorities in the implementation of this New Industrial Order that sought to integrate French and German heavy industry.

Industrial organisation under Vichy: “*acte révolutionnaire*” or “*pure façade*”?

The existing historiography on the early stages of industrial reorganisation in Vichy France fails to provide a satisfactory explanation for the rapid fading of tripartism after 16 August 1940. This is linked to the debate over the degree to which 1940 marked a true turning point for French industry, or whether there was instead considerable continuity from the interwar period. Earlier accounts of Vichy, such as those by Robert Paxton and Alan Milward, tended to emphasise the rupture between the Third Republic and Vichy.¹⁷² This was in no small part nourished by documents that had flowed from the French and German authorities during the war, eager to distance the new regime from the liberal republic dominated by “trusts”, to use Vichy’s favoured term. Moreover, these historians did not have access to the French archives, which were opened only in the late 1970s, and the German archives on which their analyses were based tended to emphasise the Fall of France as a breach in French industrial organisation. The dissolution of the *Comité des forges*, the employers’ association for steel, was singled out in the German press as an “*acte révolutionnaire*”, since the *Comité* “had become a State within the State”. Instead, “new personalities have entered the scene, and the French [steel] industry is henceforth represented not by politicians, but by technicians”.¹⁷³ Pétain similarly trumpeted the “universal failure of

¹⁷² See, for example, Robert Paxton, *Vichy France, Old Guard and New Order* (New York: Barrie and Jenkins, 1972) and Alan Milward, *The New Order and the French Economy* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1970).

¹⁷³ “Décret de fondation du Corsid”, F 12 22340, AN.

the liberal economy” and the need for France to “embark upon the path of a new economy”,¹⁷⁴ which was to be achieved through Vichy’s National Revolution.

The *Comité des forges* and the *Comité central des houillères de France*, the analogous grouping for the coal industry, were singled out for dissolution. Both dating from the mid-nineteenth century, these were the only two employers’ associations that were explicitly disbanded by a decree on 9 November 1940.¹⁷⁵ Moreover, their respective leaders were excluded from the newly assembled Organisation Committees, a state of affairs that elicited bitterness towards the regime from the erstwhile leaders.¹⁷⁶ This purposeful targeting of these associations for dissolution, and the exclusion of their leaders from the successor bodies, would indeed suggest discontinuity from the Third Republic. The radical nature of the law of 16 August, the suppression of trade union confederations and employers’ associations, and the introduction of a *de jure* tripartite industrial order would all suggest that the changes made in the summer of 1940 did indeed constitute a decisive break from the pre-war era. Yet Philippe Mioche, the most prolific historian of the French steel industry during the mid-twentieth century, argues that “CORSID falls within the history of professional organisation” through 1940, and that “the men, the debates, and the actions of CORSID continue those of the *Comité des forges*”.¹⁷⁷ He concludes that the institutional changes introduced in 1940 were merely superficial. Annie Lacroix-Riz agrees, arguing that the decree of 9 November amounted to a “*dissolution de pure façade*”.¹⁷⁸

While the German propagandist lauding of the dissolution of the *Comité des forges* as a revolutionary act should be viewed with scepticism, it seems overly simplistic to therefore embrace the opposite conclusion, namely that the *Comité des forges* underwent nothing more

¹⁷⁴ Philippe Pétain, “Discours du 10 octobre 1940” in *Discours aux Français* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1989), 92.

¹⁷⁵ *Journal officiel*, 12 November 1940. The Organisation Committees for Coal and for Steel were created on the same day, but the law announcing their creation was published one day earlier.

¹⁷⁶ Richard Vinen, *The politics of French business, 1936-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991), 104-5. Both the President, François de Wendel, and the Delegate General, Lambert Ribot, of the *Comité des forges* were excluded from CORSID upon its creation.

¹⁷⁷ Philippe Mioche, “Le comité d’organisation de la sidérurgie: un lieu d’affrontement entre modernisateurs de la sidérurgie et gardiens de la profession?” in Hervé Joly (ed.), *Les Comités d’organisation et l’économie dirigée du régime de Vichy* (Caen: Centre de recherche d’histoire quantitative, 2004), 95-108, here 95.

¹⁷⁸ Annie Lacroix-Riz, “Les comités d’organisation et l’Allemagne : tentative d’évaluation” in Joly, *Les Comités d’organisation*, op.cit., 60.

than a change of name in 1940. Given the decidedly radical content of the laws of 16 August and 10 September 1940, discussed in the previous chapter, had these been implemented as originally articulated, the question of continuity could be answered rather easily. As we shall see, however, there was a significant evolution between the proclamation of the laws of industrial organisation and the formation of the bodies foreseen in those laws, over the winter of 1940-1941. These developments, and the influences that caused them, reveal a more nuanced explanation.

The creation of CORSID: stillborn tripartism?

The law of 9 November 1940 formally created the Organisation Committee for Steel (CORSID), along the lines of the law of 16 August. Four members were named, all of them industrialists: Jules Aubrun, who was proclaimed president of the body, Léon Daum, Jean Dupuis and Eugène Roy. This short decree, signed by Pétain and Belin, established one of the first of the Organisation Committees.¹⁷⁹ The law retained the strong statist element of the August law, specifying that the decision of which firms would come under the jurisdiction of CORSID would be made by the Minister for Industrial Production. It was therefore possible for firms only marginally involved in steel production to be subject to the Committee's decisions. The new body would organise output for all firms involved in the production of all iron-based metals, not strictly limited to steel. The law gave CORSID legal personality and stipulated that the secrets of the profession must by all means be maintained by the Committee¹⁸⁰.

The same day, two employers' associations, the *Comité central des houillères de France* and the *Comité des forges*, were abolished. Trade union confederations, particularly the CGT and the CFTC, were also explicitly dissolved.¹⁸¹ Given that these bodies were to be superseded by Organisation Committees meant to represent both industrialists and labour, the list of members of CORSID raised both eyebrows and objections. Within days, members of the defunct CGT and CFTC released their famous *Manifeste des douze*, which openly

¹⁷⁹ The first Organisation Committee created was the Committee for Automobiles, on 9 September 1940, with François Lehideux as President. Lehideux later served as Minister for Industrial Production in 1941-42.

¹⁸⁰ *Journal officiel*, 11 November 1940.

¹⁸¹ *Journal officiel*, 12 November 1940. The *Confédération générale du patronat français* (CGPF), France's principal employers' confederation, was also dissolved on 9 November.

criticised the Vichy government and the legislation passed by Belin and Pétain.¹⁸² Others within the labour movement continued to support Belin, hoping that having “one of our own, our friend René Belin” at the helm of what were ultimately rather statist bodies would ensure that workers’ concerns were properly addressed.¹⁸³ Hopes that Vichy could be a golden age for workers were soon dashed, however, particularly as the National Revolution, with its emphasis on artisans and farmers over industrial workers, began to exert an increasing influence on policy.

Meanwhile, the composition of the Organisation Committees was subjected to criticism from the right. Within weeks of the creation of CORSID, an anonymous report was submitted to Pétain accusing Belin of syndicalism.¹⁸⁴ In the context of Vichy and the emergent National Revolution, partisans of corporatism found the structure of the Organisation Committees deeply unsatisfactory. Belin’s desire to resolve class struggle through collaboration between the classes and greater consideration for labour issues was labelled as syndicalist. This approach was opposed by doctrinaire corporatists who sought to transcend the notion of class altogether in favour of guild-like, industry-specific groupings.¹⁸⁵ Clearly both groups felt that the Organisation Committees could be the vehicle through which they could realise their contradictory projects. In the months that followed, corporatists accused Belin of promoting the CGT’s interests within the Vichy Government,¹⁸⁶ of being part of a supposed “Mouvement Synarchique d’Empire”,¹⁸⁷ and of being a freemason.¹⁸⁸ One letter to Pétain attacked the New Industrial Order whose creation Belin had overseen as “the triumphant realisation of the policies of the Popular Front”.¹⁸⁹ Another report to the

¹⁸² The text, published on 15 November 1940 as “*Manifeste du syndicalisme français*”, was written by CGT members Robert Lacoste and Christian Pineau. Both later joined de Gaulle and went on to become government ministers after the war. Robert Lacoste held the portfolio for Industrial Production for most of the period between 1944 and 1950 and is discussed in Chapters Four, Five, and Six.

¹⁸³ “Bonne chance, René Belin”, in *Au travail* (a workers’ weekly), 30 November 1940. A copy is kept in the Belin Archives, 98J 7, IHS.

¹⁸⁴ “Observations sur le Rapport Belin”, 1 December 1940, F 12 10157, AN.

¹⁸⁵ The best overview of corporatism under Vichy is Jean-Pierre Le Crom, *Syndicats nous voilà!* (Paris: Editions de l’Atelier, 1995).

¹⁸⁶ “Observations sur le Rapport Belin”, 1 December 1940, F 12 10157, AN.

¹⁸⁷ “Rapport sur la société secrète”, (undated) 1941, 98J 10, IHS. Synarchy was a myth propagated under Vichy that alleged that a group of industrialists and bankers, many of whom held key posts in Vichy, had long plotted to seize power in France. The classic treatment of the question is by Richard Kuisel, “The Legend of the Vichy Synarchy”, in *French Historical Studies* (6:3), 1970. For a more recent study see Olivier Dard, *La synarchie, le mythe du complot permanent* (Paris: Perrin, 1998) and, for a revisionist interpretation, Annie Lacroix-Riz, *Industriels et banquiers sous l’Occupation* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1999).

¹⁸⁸ “Note sur la francmaçonnerie”, 15 December 1941, 98J 10, IHS.

¹⁸⁹ Lettre de Jules Verger et Léonce Raynès à Pétain, 14 December 1940, AG 2 611, AN.

Maréchal in December 1940 accused Belin of appointing exclusively members of “trusts” to the Organisation Committees, ensuring that “the management of different branches of industry are in the hands of capitalists and not of professionals”.¹⁹⁰ After levelling these accusations of Belin handing over far too much power to the *grand patronat*, the authors conclude that their report “sheds light on the attitude of M. Belin, which shows that he remained in direct contact with syndicalist militants (with CGT leanings) since his appointment as Minister”.¹⁹¹ Belin was thus denounced for being at once too accommodating to the industrialists, while simultaneously being too close to organised labour. Such accusations continued even after the embattled Minister surrendered the portfolio for Industrial Production in February 1941.

The membership of the new Organisation Committees also excluded small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In the case of some industries this omission made sense; the steel industry for instance was dominated by a rather small number of large companies. The omission of SMEs nevertheless led to increasing criticisms, ultimately leading Pétain himself to call for SMEs and artisans to be better represented within the Committees.¹⁹² Yet despite such calls from the head of the authoritarian state, most Organisation Committees, including CORSID, remained exclusively in the hands of representatives of large firms.¹⁹³

Why did the tripartism expounded in August fade by November, leaving only the industrial elite in positions of power? In his memoirs, René Belin, himself the former Deputy Secretary General of the CGT throughout the 1930s, justified his staffing of the Committees against claims that he had handed over control of the French economy to “trusts” and to the Germans: “The hundreds of men I needed immediately – I emphasise this word – to take inventory and, provisionally, to manage France’s industries, where was I to find them?”¹⁹⁴ He writes that neither civil servants, nor politicians, nor trade unions – “I knew this better than anyone” – had the necessary expertise to fill the roles. “We had at our disposal, aside from extremely rare exceptions which were generally unknown to us at the time, only a single

¹⁹⁰ “Observations sur le Rapport Belin”, 1 December 1940, F 12 10157, AN.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² “Etude sur les CO”, 10 September 1941; “Discours de Pétain” 21 November 1941, F 37 20, AN. Pétain made similar calls during his speech on 12 August 1941, which is discussed in Chapter Three. See “Discours du 12 août 1941” in Pétain, *Discours aux Français*, op.cit.

¹⁹³ An additional member from a smaller steel firm was ultimately added to CORSID in September 1941. This is discussed in Chapter Three.

¹⁹⁴ René Belin, *Du secrétariat de la CGT au gouvernement de Vichy* (Paris : Albatros, 1978), 152.

source: the men who already had the knowledge of and the experience within their branch of industry.”¹⁹⁵ For the sake of expedience and effectiveness, then, the *grand patronat* was the only viable choice. As for criticisms levelled at Belin that he had excluded SMEs from the Committees, he responded: “small- and medium-sized enterprises figured in all the Committees. And they played the role commensurate with their size [...] That being said, to lead the Organisation Committee for Coal, was I supposed to ask the corner coalman (*le bournat du coin*)?”¹⁹⁶ The first sentence of this statement is demonstrably false, since SMEs were clearly not represented in the Committee for Steel. In light of this, the role of SMEs “commensurate with their size” seems to have been nil. His choice of representatives from large firms over the *bournat du coin* reinforces his explanation that individuals were chosen based on their abilities to administer vast industries.

Belin’s claim that the need for experience and expertise left only a very small pool of viable candidates, all issued from the *patronat*, is plausible. After all, the exclusion of labour is perhaps less surprising than it may first appear. The appointment of René Belin as Minister for Industrial Production in July 1940 was unexpected, as Pierre Laval had already told Belin that Léon Daum, director general of the Marine and Homécourt steelworks, was to be appointed to the Cabinet. The sudden appointment of the former trade unionist, rather than the conservative industrialist, to direct French industry was a surprise for Belin as well as the public.¹⁹⁷ From the time of his appointment, however, Belin was subjected to strong criticisms, as we have seen.

Meanwhile, the industrialists themselves were by no means eager to welcome trade unionists into their innermost circle, especially after the experience of the Popular Front government elected in 1936. The industrialists initially had little enthusiasm for the Organisation Committees which had after all been created without their consultation. Indeed, many industrialists simply wanted a continuation of the system that had served them so well under the Third Republic. François de Wendel, who had been President of the *Comité des forges* from 1918 until its dissolution, expressed his disapproval of the reorganisation of French industry: “at a moment when everything is disorganised and when when we’re lacking all materials, it is clear that only routine and resourcefulness (*le système D*) can allow

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 153.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 128.

firms to survive. But what do[es the Vichy government] do ? [It] prevents routine from being carried out by publishing a new law or decree every day, and we are prevented from fending for ourselves (*le système D*) by the creation of the Organisation Committees”.¹⁹⁸ This preference for routine over industrial experiments, coupled with the failure of Belin to consult industrialists before issuing the law of 16 August 1940 – not to mention the dissolution of the *Comité des forges* – ensured an unenthusiastic attitude of the *patronat* towards the new Organisation Committees. Needless to say, the projected inclusion of organised labour in the *Comité*'s successor was similarly unwelcome.

It would seem, then, that the annunciation of the tripartite ideals in the law of 16 August was not followed by the birth of a genuinely tripartite industrial order, but instead led to greater power for the small group of industrialists named to CORSID, even if the *grand patronat* was initially unenthusiastic about these changes. Amid vitriolic and contradictory accusations that he had, on the one hand, empowered “trusts” with the new organisations and that, on the other, he was pursuing the interests of the CGT and the Popular Front, Belin stepped down as Minister of Industrial Production in February 1941. He would nevertheless remain Minister of Labour until 1942, during which time he managed to promulgate the Labour Charter.¹⁹⁹

Before turning to the individual members of CORSID, it is worth remembering the third party that was to be included in this supposedly tripartite structure: the government itself. In practice, however, this was limited to a single Director, who belonged to the Ministry for Industrial Production, and by extension the government, and who served as a liaison officer between the Minister and a given Committee. Technically, the government had the power to veto any decision made by any Organisation Committee, although in the case of the Steel Committee, there was not a single instance of a decision made by the industrialists being vetoed by the representative of the government. The first Director named to follow CORSID's meeting was Henri Coqueugnot, who had a long career as a steel industrialist himself, having worked as an engineer at both Longwy and Schneider before becoming Director General of the *Société Métallurgique des Terres-Rouges* in Luxemburg. From 1933 until his appointment to the Ministry for Industrial Production in 1940, he was

¹⁹⁸ Qtd. in Jean Noël Jeanneney, *François de Wendel en République* (Paris: Seuil, 1976), 595. The letter D refers here to *débrouillardise*, which can be translated as resourcefulness or problem-solving. *Le système D* accordingly means to make do or to improvise in order to solve a problem – a strategy de Wendel claims was undermined by the creation of the Organisation Committees.

¹⁹⁹ The Labour Charter is discussed in Chapter Three.

Director General of the *Union des Consommateurs de Produits métallurgiques et industriels* (UCPMI). Given that the only person at CORSID's meetings not representing industrialists was in fact an industrialist himself, it is striking how homogeneous the would-be tripartite bodies turned out to be.

With the complete absence of labour representation, and the passive role of the government within the Committees, the industrialists controlled the Organisation Committees. Moreover, given Belin's preference for choosing men of experience who had already held great responsibilities over the *bougnat du coin*, the industries were run by representatives of some of the largest firms. The tripartism that had informed the text of the law of 16 August 1940 had quickly subsided, as the pre-war industrial elite maintained and even strengthened its control of French heavy industry. To the extent that the steel industry remained in the hands of industrialists, it would seem that there was continuity through 1940.

“Action, dynamism, authority”: the new men for the New Industrial Order

Despite power remaining in the hands of industrialists, however, the creation of CORSID appointed new leaders from among this group. Only four members were named to CORSID, all issued from large steel firms, but none had been a dominant figure in the industry before 1940. Having considered the justifications for why industrialists were chosen, it is worth considering these four particular individuals who were appointed to the new Committee.

The Ministry for Industrial Production released a communiqué one month before CORSID was created, and this text offers some insight into how the members would be selected:

The [Organisation] Committees [...] are neither deliberative assemblies nor associations representing professional interests, but rather a mechanism for economic action, called upon to make decisions, to decree rules, to impose discipline. These Committees will only be comprised of a few members. They could even consist of only a single member. These members are not chosen with the worry of ensuring an exact representation of the interests of the profession, but rather based on their

qualities of action, dynamism, and authority ; in a word, based on their ability to decide and to act.²⁰⁰

This text drips with the exultation of firmness, strength, and action. These values, which would be enshrined as part of the National Revolution, make clear the sort of people Belin and his colleagues were seeking. Above all else, they wanted men of action, who knew the industry thoroughly and could be trusted to make sound decisions quickly and firmly. As the war dragged into the autumn, and the prospect of an imminent victory over Britain receded, these qualities took precedence over the goal of assuring a more equitable tripartite distribution of power in the new committees. It is also worth noting the presence of the *Führerprinzip* in this passage, reinforced by the suggestion that the supposedly tripartite bodies could in fact be comprised of a single individual, provided he was a man of action. The suggestion that the Committee could be made up of a single person, and the dismissal of the need for accurate representation within the Committee, are early indications that the tripartite spirit of August 1940 was rather quickly waning.

In his post-war memoirs, Minister for the Economy and for Finance Yves Bouthillier describes the men chosen to lead the newly created organisms as “strong personalities who, by their previous jobs, by the regular exertion of command, by their capacity to rapidly create new services” showed themselves to be efficient men of action.²⁰¹ This is consistent with the statements issued by Vichy at the time, and indeed with the profiles of the individuals selected. It should also be noted that the German authorities insisted on approving the members chosen for the Organisation Committees, which suggests that any individuals who had been openly critical of Nazi Germany could be excluded *a priori*.²⁰² In the case of CORSID, no objections were raised over the candidates. If these were indeed the criteria in the selection of Committee members, then we may conclude that the four members of CORSID were compatible with the ideals of the Vichy regime. It should also be remembered that the Organisation Committees were created with a view to further Franco-German economic collaboration. On 30 October 1940, following Pétain’s meeting with Hitler at Montoire, the Maréchal proclaimed that France was “entering the path of collaboration”.²⁰³ This policy led to the resignations of the Minister and Secretary General for Foreign Affairs,

²⁰⁰ Communiqué du ministre secrétaire d’Etat à la production et au travail, *Le Temps*, 6 October 1940.

²⁰¹ Yves Bouthillier, *Le drame de Vichy* (Paris: Plon, 1951), vol. 2, 275.

²⁰² Richard Kuisel, *Capitalism and the State in Modern France* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981).

²⁰³ See Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940-1944* (Oxford: OUP, 2001), 172-174.

but it did not deter the nominees for the emerging Organisation Committees from accepting their new positions.²⁰⁴ Given Vichy's public commitment to collaboration and, more importantly, the fact that the Committees were created in part to deepen Franco-German cooperation, it is clear that the members appointed to the new bodies were conscious of and willing to work within this framework.

In describing the selection process for Committee members, Belin claimed that he sought to “move aside the old bigwigs (*vieux bonzes*) of the employers' group, to find relatively young men ready to make themselves available to serve the public interest, men with no or very limited commitments to political parties or employers' associations.”²⁰⁵ This search for relatively young men, untainted by the partisanship of the late Third Republic, who embodied “action, dynamism, authority” yielded four individuals for the steel industry, who were given control of one of France's most crucial industries.

Jules Aubrun, then 59 years old, was named President of CORSID. He had risen to become Director General of Schneider, France's second-largest steel firm, from 1921 until 1929. In 1932 he became Arbitrator for the *Comptoir Sidérurgique des forges*, a position he left in 1935 to become Consulting Engineer for the Lazard Bank in Paris.²⁰⁶ While his position at a bank made him a curious choice for CORSID, his experience as an Arbitrator made him a strong candidate for president of a Committee whose decisions would have to be accepted by all in the steel industry. He was joined by three high-level members of some of France's most important steel firms. Eugène Roy, 56, had been Director General of the Longwy steelworks since 1931, while Jean Dupuis, 54, was Deputy Director of Chatillon-Commentry et Neuves-Maisons. Both companies ranked among the largest in France at the end of the 1930s.

Léon Daum is perhaps the most interesting of the four members. The son of a renowned Nancy glassmaker, Daum married the niece of then president Raymond Poincaré in 1913. Daum pursued a successful career in the steelworks of Marine and Homécourt, rising to the post of Deputy Director General, and he was groomed as the successor of President-Director General Théodore Laurent. He was placed in charge of the mines in Saarland after

²⁰⁴ Paul Baudouin, Minister, and François Charles-Roux, Secretary General, resigned in reaction to Montoire. See Jackson, *ibid.*, and Baudouin, *The Private Diaries of Paul Baudouin* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1948).

²⁰⁵ Belin, *op.cit.*, 153.

²⁰⁶ “Jules Antoine Marie AUBRUN” in *Dossiers individuels d'ingénieurs des mines*, F 14 20693, AN.

the First World War, and during the French occupation of the Ruhr in 1923, he was called upon by then Prime Minister Poincaré's government to put German heavy industry to work for the French economy.²⁰⁷ In July 1940, at the age of 53, he had been chosen to be Vichy's first Minister for Industrial Production, and was personally championed by Pierre Laval. At the eleventh hour, Pétain instead entrusted the portfolio to René Belin, who had only just been offered the position of Minister for Labour. Belin would later recall that Laval had ultimately chosen Belin's inclusion in the Cabinet as a trade unionist to balance out the very right-leaning government, a political tendency that the presence of a *Poincariste* like Daum would only have exacerbated.²⁰⁸ Despite narrowly missing an appointment to Vichy's Cabinet, Daum nevertheless thrived under Vichy and participated energetically in the activities of the new regime, taking part in the activities of the *Conseil national*²⁰⁹, a consultative assembly created in January 1941 as a simulacrum for the defunct parliament. He purportedly also held significant political sway in Vichy, haunting the corridors of power and having the ears of ministers.²¹⁰

This brief overview of the members chosen for the Organisation Committee for Steel reveals several points of interest. First of all, none of the three largest steel firms in France was represented on the Committee.²¹¹ While Belin had been criticised for neglecting SMEs and labour, he also excluded the principal heavyweights of the industry. Moreover, none of the members were the presidents or owners of their respective firms; rather, they were high-level employees and potential successors to the current leaders. In one of the most-cited articles on Vichy's industrial organisation, Henry Rousso claims that the president chosen for

²⁰⁷ Mauve Carbonell, *Les Hommes à l'origine de l'Europe*, (Aix-en-Provence: Publications de l'Université de Provence, 2008), 211-2.

²⁰⁸ Belin, *op.cit.*, 127-8.

²⁰⁹ "Groupement du Centre et de l'Ouest. Séance du 29 Janvier 1941", 21 January 1941, AQ 139 82, AN.

Daum's participation is also mentioned in Michèle Cointet, *Le Conseil national de Vichy*, (Paris: Aux amateurs de livres, 1989), 194-5.

²¹⁰ Le Crom, *op.cit.*, 108. Le Crom also refers to Daum as "an industrialist known more for his dubious practices than for the economic success of his business", but I have found no mention of this elsewhere, and Le Crom does not provide a reference for his statement.

²¹¹ In 1938, these were de Wendel, Schneider and Nord. Although Aubrun had worked with Schneider over a decade earlier, this link is too far removed for Aubrun to be seen as a representative of that firm in 1940, although he is sometimes presented as such in the historiography.

any given Organisation Committee was “almost always [...] the head of the largest firm in the sector”.²¹² Indeed, Rousso misidentifies Aubrun as “the former President of Schneider” and uses this to support his argument that the President of an Organisation Committee was usually the sitting president of the industry’s largest firm.²¹³ Yet this was demonstrably not the case with CORSID, given that Aubrun arrived to CORSID from the Lazard Bank, more than a decade after he had left Schneider. Furthermore, CORSID’s members were high-, but not the highest-, ranking figures from three large, but not the largest, steel companies, with its president drawn from a financial institution. Indeed, the “head of the largest firm in the sector” would have been François de Wendel, who was sacked from his position and replaced by a Consulting Engineer from an American-owned bank; in the steel industry, we can observe the very opposite of the process described by Rousso. It would also seem that Belin had abided by his communiqué from 6 October: “these members are not chosen with the worry of ensuring an exact representation of the interests of the profession, but rather based on their qualities of action, dynamism, and authority; in a word, based on their ability to decide and to act”.²¹⁴ Belin had thus succeeded in excluding the uppermost echelon of the steel industry, the *vieux bonzes* of who dominated the *Comité des forges*. And as for his aim to supplant them with “relatively young men”? All born between 1881 and 1887, CORSID’s members were decidedly middle-aged, and sometimes hardly younger than those excluded. François de Wendel, for instance, was only seven years Aubrun’s senior, although Théodore Laurent, head of Daum’s firm, was 77. In this last goal of generational change, Belin, only 42 years old himself, succeeded only “relatively”.

Yet the lack of youth among those appointed to CORSID must not be understood as simply the continuation of the old guard. The highest strata of the industry had been excluded – none chosen was president of a firm, and the largest firms were left out. Early intimations of this selection may be detected in the interwar writings of Jacques Barnaud, René Belin’s Chief of Staff and the father of the Organisation Committees. In an article published in 1937, he decried the industrialists who were at once the owners and the managers of their factories as “*le patron du droit divin*”. He observed that:

²¹² Henry Rousso, “L’organisation industrielle de Vichy” in *Vichy. L’événement, la mémoire, l’histoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), 79-109, here 83.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 107. Aubrun had been Director General of Schneider, not President, and left the firm more than a decade before joining CORSID.

²¹⁴ Communiqué du ministre, *Le Temps*, 6 October 1940.

Among the employers, those who naturally understand best are the leaders of the public limited companies (*Sociétés anonymes*) who, most of the time, are not shareholders in their companies or, if they do hold shares, they only amount to a miniscule amount of the capital. These, veritable civil servants for the company, cannot have the same reaction to the occupation of their factories as a company head who is at once manager and owner.²¹⁵

This preference for civil servant-like managers over those who had inherited vast family-run empires came to fruition with the selection of individuals for CORSID. Gone were the dominant personalities of François de Wendel and the other *patrons du droit divin*; in their stead was placed a group of managerial *fonctionnaires* who could be expected to deal with industrial decisions impartially.²¹⁶ The four individuals appointed to run the steel industry had risen towards the top of their field based on their abilities, rather than their lineage. It is interesting to note that Jules Aubrun and Léon Daum, the only two who attended the Ecole des Mines, graduated first and second in their class, respectively. This can be contrasted with Théodore Laurent, for example, who was assured the leadership of Marine et Homécourt as a birthright, despite his finishing dead last in his graduating class.²¹⁷ It would seem that, more important than passing the direction of the steel industry to a slightly younger generation, Vichy opted for a veritably meritocratic leadership to replace the *vieux bonzes* who had inherited rather than earned positions of power. This change would endure beyond the end of the war, both in general and particular matters: not only would the Fourth and Fifth Republics trumpet themselves as explicitly meritocratic, but those who achieved seats at the Organisation Committee for Steel in 1940 would retain some of the very highest positions in that industry.²¹⁸

The tripartite spirit of August 1940, which foresaw the cooperation of organised labour, civil servants, and industrialists within the Organisation Committee, quickly gave way to the dominance of the industry by only one of these groups. Yet despite the direction of the steel industry remaining firmly in the hands of the *patronat*, the choice of members for CORSID nonetheless marks an important change. The pre-war stars of the steel industry

²¹⁵ Jacques Barnaud, "L'industriel" in *Nouveaux cahiers*, no. 2, 1 April 1937, 12.

²¹⁶ The members of CORSID can thus be considered technocrats in the private rather than public sector. For the rise of technocracy in France, and the importance of the Vichy years in this process, see Gérard Brun, *Techniciens et technocratie en France* (Paris: Albatros, 1985) and Olivier Dard, "Les technocrates: archéologie d'un concept, généalogie d'un groupe social" in Olivier Dard, Jean-Claude Daumas and François Marcot (eds.), *L'Occupation, l'Etat français et les entreprises* (Paris: Association pour le développement de l'histoire économique, 2000), 213-228.

²¹⁷ "Bulletins de notes d'élèves-ingénieurs du corps des mines. Promotions entrées à l'Ecole de 1853 à 1960", annales.org/archives/images/n1, last accessed 26 July 2014.

²¹⁸ The post-war careers of Aubrun, Roy, and Daum are discussed in Chapters Five and Six.

were explicitly sidelined by Vichy, handing the leadership of the industry to lower-ranking individuals from smaller (but still large) firms. While CORSID and the pre-war *Comité des forges* were dominated by the same class of people, the leadership of the industry had changed hands within this class, as meritocracy outweighed tradition and privilege. The new leadership would not wait long before exercising its powers.

First actions of CORSID

To effectively administer the country's steel industry, CORSID decided to carve up the map of France and assign each area to one of its members. The very first decision taken by CORSID was to exercise control over the Centre-Midi grouping of the steel industry and to place it under Daum's control.²¹⁹ He was given responsibility for steel production in Centre-Midi, which corresponded to the Non-Occupied Zone of France, in which Vichy itself was situated.²²⁰ Daum was later given responsibility for Centre-Ouest as well, which was roughly equivalent to the Occupied Zone, effectively making Daum responsible for all French steel production outside of Alsace and Lorraine.²²¹

Early on, CORSID set out to enshrine for itself the powers normally held by the *Comité des forges*. CORSID's second declaration announced the creation of the *Comptoir français des produits sidérurgiques* (CPS), effective from 1 December. Among other responsibilities, this body was assigned responsibility for resource allocation. This deliberately assigned the duties of OCRPI, still in the process of being established under German tutelage, to the self-appointed CPS, comprised of steel industrialists.²²² The *Comptoir* was supplemented with a *Commissaire technique* in December, then a body of commercial experts in January.²²³ Further repartition duties were assigned to the *Commission des Charbons et des Cokes* (CCC), a CORSID-controlled body established in December

²¹⁹ "Déclaration No. 1 du Corsid", 25 November 1940, AQ 139 80, AN.

²²⁰ With the obvious exception of the area occupied by Italy, as well as France's colonies, which at this stage remained under French control.

²²¹ The minutes of CORSID's meeting for Centre-Ouest, led by Daum, are conserved in the archives of Marine et Homécourt, AQ 139 82, AN. Steel production in the industrialised Meurthe-et-Moselle, the half of Lorraine not annexed by Germany as Reichsland, was overseen by Roy and Dupuis who were responsible for Longwy and Nancy, respectively.

²²² "Déclaration No. 2 du Corsid", 3 December, AQ 139 80, AN. The CPS replaced the *Comptoir sidérurgique des forges*, where Aubrun had worked as an Arbitrator in the early 1930s.

²²³ "Déclaration No. 4 du Corsid" and "Déclaration No. 10 du Corsid", AQ 139 80, AN.

1940.²²⁴ In early 1941, the Ministry for Industrial Production had to issue a series of documents to clarify what the role of OCRPI was indeed to be, and to what extent the powers of the Organisation Committees were to be curbed accordingly. The need for such declarations reflected attempts by Organisation Committees to seize more powers than Vichy was willing to grant them. As OCRPI became fully operational over the first half of 1941, the CPS's powers were progressively diminished.²²⁵

Perhaps more significant than these encroachments on OCRPI's responsibilities was the establishment of a consultative commission, named the *Commission générale*, in February 1941. Unlike the CPS, the *Commission générale's* powers were not defined, aside from the provision that the body could convoke *Commissions d'Etude* to investigate issues identified by the *Commission générale*. Meetings of the Commission would be called and chaired by the President of CORSID, Jules Aubrun, and the members of CORSID could attend these meetings. The rather woolly articulation of the Commission's duties in CORSID's declaration was juxtaposed with a comprehensive list of the members of this new body. This list included most of the giants of the French steel industry, who had consciously been excluded from CORSID by Vichy, from François and Humbert de Wendel to Théodore Laurent.²²⁶ Curiously, Léon Daum's name appeared on the first published list, to be corrected a week later.²²⁷ There were nevertheless two striking absences from this *Who's Who* of French steel. Schneider, France's second-largest steel firm, was not represented. It is extremely unlikely that this could have been mere oversight, especially given that CORSID's president, Jules Aubrun, had worked for Schneider in the 1920s. The second notable absence is Alfred Lambert Ribot, who had served as Secretary General of the *Comité des forges* until its dissolution. His exclusion could be due to criticisms he had levelled against Vichy after July 1940,²²⁸ and was likely also done to distance the new Commission from the *Comité des forges*. Neither explanation is wholly satisfying, however, given that other industrialists had also criticised the regime, and that most of the members of the Commission had also belonged to the *Comité des forges*. François de Wendel, for instance, had clearly criticised Vichy and had been President of the *Comité des forges*. Despite these two absences,

²²⁴ "Déclaration No. 6 du Corsid", AQ 139 80, AN.

²²⁵ "Compte-rendu de la première plénière des répartiteurs", 19 April 1941, F 12 10134, AN.

²²⁶ "Déclaration No. 15", 5 February 1941, AQ 139 80, AN.

²²⁷ "Erratum", 12 February, AQ 139 80, AN.

²²⁸ Mioche suggests this, and Vinen provides an account of his criticism of Vichy. See Vinen, *op.cit.*, 104.

however, the creation of the *Commission générale* brought back into the fold most of the prominent members of the pre-war *Comité des forges*. In this sense, there was a certain continuity in the administration of French steel.

These continuities have led some historians to declare that the “dissolution of the *Comité des forges* is a fabrication”.²²⁹ While correct in identifying the significant continuities in the steel industry, such statements are overly simplistic. While a body strikingly similar to the defunct *Comité des forges* did emerge, there was nevertheless a rupture from the first body’s dissolution in November 1940 to its resurrection in February 1941. It must be remembered that the *Commission générale* remained a consultative body with no formal powers conferred on it by the government. The leadership of the industry had passed to the four “men of action” appointed to CORSID. Moreover, these new bodies operated within a fundamentally different system of organisation, as discussed in Chapter One. The desire of some industrialists to restore a certain routine to the steel industry was outweighed by the realities of the New Industrial Order and, increasingly, of the German war economy. CORSID indeed sought to expand its powers by creating parallel bodies that would, it was hoped, supersede other bodies created by Vichy that would be beyond their direct control, such as CPS taking on the role of OCRPI. This was typical of institutions and individuals alike in Vichy France, as newly-created yet ill-defined bodies and positions competed for power. In February 1941, Vichy sent a series of scolding announcements to CORSID, which then passed them along to all French steel firms. A number of firms had been approached by their German counterparts, who had proposed various joint projects that would likely be highly profitable for the industrialists on both sides. The French authorities underlined that no such transfers could occur without Vichy’s approval.²³⁰

While CORSID’s attempts to claim more power for itself than the Vichy government had originally allotted to it inevitably resulted in tension between the two, this must not be interpreted as any form of resistance on the part of CORSID. Resistance, especially in 1940-1941, was virtually unthinkable to industrialists, and would have amounted to self-mutilation. Moreover, only in 1942, with the Wehrmacht encountering difficulties on the Eastern Front and following the entry of the United States into the conflict, did it become a reasonable possibility that the New Order might not endure after all. The *patronat*’s initial aversion to

²²⁹ Mioche, “Les comités d’organisation de la sidérurgie”, op.cit., 98-99.

²³⁰ “Circulaire du Corsid”, 18 February 1941 and “Circulaire du Corsid”, 24 February 1941, AQ 139 79, AN.

the tripartite scheme proposed in the law of 16 August was not so much resistance as self-interest – they had no desire to hand over any control of the industry they dominated to either workers or the State, especially after the experiences of the Popular Front, in which the *grand patronat* had been at odds with both.²³¹ Most importantly, it must be remembered that CORSID generally only disagreed with Vichy when its interests were being threatened, or when powers were to be allocated away from CORSID to another body. This opposition to the government's actions was thus tied to the autonomy and profitability of the steel industry, and not based on any principled resistance. Indeed, the steel industry would prove willing to embrace cross-Rhine “economic collaboration” when it suited its interests.

Vichy and the steel industrialists were by no means always at odds. When their motivations – the quest for *contreparties* and the desire to keep factories running, respectively – aligned, they could agree on a common project. As early as 13 August 1940, when the Liaison Offices cobbled together following the Fall of France had not yet been replaced by Organisation Committees, Jean Bichelonne urged French industrialists to engage in economic collaboration with the Germans: “we also ask that French industrialists agree to supply the Germans with certain [raw] materials of which there are shortages in Germany”.²³² The steel industrialists followed these instructions obediently, agreeing to the first of many deliveries to Germany. That same month, the Liaison Office that preceded CORSID signed a contract to send 100,000 tonnes of iron to Germany.²³³ In this case, Vichy was eager to appear cooperative, while the industrialists were happy to keep their factories open and to be promised payment for a large order to be sent to Germany.

We have seen the actions and motivations of the Vichy government and of CORSID in the months following the law of 16 August 1940. Vichy's choice of members for CORSID marked both an abandonment of the tripartite ideals articulated in August and a deliberate change of leadership within the steel industry. CORSID's preoccupations, meanwhile, were to maintain the independence and prosperity of the steel industry, and to this end it recalled many of the members from the *Comité des forges* to sit on its consultative commission. This circuitous reconstitution of the pre-war *Comité* does indeed bear marks of continuity, but

²³¹ The best study of the Popular Front is Julian Jackson, *The Popular Front in France. Defending Democracy, 1934-38* (Cambridge: CUP, 1988). On the legacy of the Popular Front on industrialists' attitudes towards Vichy, see Vinen, op.cit.

²³² “Note d'info pour les groupements professionnels”, 13 August 1940, F 12 10134, AN.

²³³ “Rapport : situation des ferrailles en France pendant l'année 1940”, 28 October 1941, F 12 10059, AN.

must be juxtaposed with the significant change of leadership within the industry with the appointments of 9 November 1940. In order to complete our account of the construction of France's New Industrial Order in the steel industry, however, we must now consider the actions and motivations of the German authorities.

German authorities and French steel

As we have seen in Chapter One, the reaction of the German authorities to the law of 16 August 1940 was far from the anger claimed by René Belin and some historians. Accepting the extension of Vichy's powers in industrial production into the Occupied Zone, the German authorities did so on their own terms and took measures that subverted whatever sovereignty the French Government thought it might have asserted with the August law. Before the end of the summer of 1940, German authorities would hold the reins of French industrial production and harness French industry for the aims of the Nazi war economy, with the Vichy government willingly contributing to this Franco-German endeavour.

While Belin and some historians have suggested that Germany's acceptance of the legality of the law of 16 August 1940 represented an acknowledgement that they had been outwitted by Vichy,²³⁴ this was not the case. The August law purported to extend the new system of industrial organisation over the entirety of French territory, but this did not occur; rather, the German authorities accepted that Organisation Committees should oversee stocks and production in the Occupied Zone because it enabled the Germans to gain greater control over the Non-Occupied Zone by means of OCRPI. The Germans never entertained the idea that this system should be applied to Reichsland, as they called Alsace-Lorraine, which was quickly divided and integrated into the Gaue of Baden and Westmark.

There remains the question of the heavily industrialised northern departments of Nord and Pas-de-Calais. These were severed from the Occupied Zone and attached to Belgium, and placed under the control of the German Military Administration in Brussels. Nevertheless, Vichy had expected the New Industrial Order to extend to this northern region. The fact that the German authorities accepted the law of 16 August, and strengthened this new system with OCRPI, gave Vichy reason to hope that northernmost France would be

²³⁴ Arne Radtke-Delacor, "La position des comités d'organisation face aux autorités d'occupation: la pomme de discorde des commandes allemandes en 1940-1941" in Hervé Joly, *op. cit.*, 63-72.

integrated into the system. The German authorities, however, outmanoeuvred their French counterparts. While Germany had indeed accepted the law of 16 August, this law did not in itself create any new institutions. Although this law outlined the shape of the New Industrial Order, the first Organisation Committee was not constituted until September 1940, with those for Coal and Steel following in November. The German authorities took advantage of the gap between these laws of August and November to push for the creation of OCRPI, under *de facto* German control. Once this had been obtained, the German authorities consolidated their grip on Nord and Pas-de-Calais by vetoing the applicability to those departments of the laws establishing individual Organisation Committees.²³⁵ General Lieutenant Niehoff, responsible for industrial questions at the *Oberfeldkommandantur* for the region, wrote to the Prefect in Lille in July 1941 informing him that Niehoff “do[es] not permit the execution of the laws, orders, and decrees listed below issued by the French Government ” in Nord and Pas-de-Calais.²³⁶ He then attached a list of each of the laws creating any Organisation Committee. In other words, while the German authorities had accepted the principle of Organisation Committees in August 1940, they refused to recognise the formation of a single Organisation Committee in the northern region, vetoing each Committee’s applicability in the region. French industrialists in the North were allowed to set up the *Groupement des industries sidérurgiques du Nord et du Pas-de-Calais* (SIDENOR), which mirrored the functions of the CPS and was able to sustain contact with CORSID.²³⁷ For the most part, however, CORSID’s powers did not extend to Nord and Pas-de-Calais.²³⁸

Wagging the French dog

While the Germans limited the extension of Organisation Committees beyond the Occupied and Non-Occupied Zones, it might be argued that within these two zones, the French government and Organisation Committees had won decisive control over French industrial production. But this is to presume that industrial legislation ended in August 1940.

²³⁵ “Lettre du Préfet du Nord”, undated (1941), F 12 10134, AN.

²³⁶ “Note à M. le Préfet du Département du Nord sur la validité de la législation française nouvellement parue”, 17 July 1941, F 12 9974, AN.

²³⁷ On the functions of SIDENOR, see Françoise Berger, *La France, l’Allemagne et l’acier (1932-1952): de la stratégie des cartels à l’élaboration de la CECA*, Thèse de doctorat, Université de Paris I, 2000, 490-92.

²³⁸ As Minister for Industrial Production, François Lehideux attempted to negotiate the extension of the Organisation Committees’ powers to Nord-Pas-de-Calais, but was unsuccessful. See “Note. Objet: Application des décisions des CO dans les départements du Nord et Pas-de-Calais”, 4 March 1942, F 12 9974, AN.

As we saw in Chapter One, however, a significant addition was made with the law of 10 September, which established the OCRPI.

Belin admits that it was the head of the Economics section of the German Military Administration in Paris, Dr Elmar Michel, who pointed out in August 1940 that the newly-decreed Organisation Committees could only function if another organisation were created allocate raw materials to the Committees.²³⁹ Michel himself corroborated this claim in an end-of-war report, explaining how he offered “practical lessons accumulated over several years in Germany” to a France still groping its way towards efficient production.²⁴⁰ While this patronising tone might be expected from a high-ranking Nazi official in this context, it was echoed by Jean Bichelonne, one of the Secretaries General of the Ministry for Industrial Production and the official responsible for the running of OCRPI. The members of OCRPI were visited by their German counterparts from 1941, and Bichelonne urged the French industrialists to heed German advice: since “allocation has operated in Germany for seven years, the [French] distributors must listen to the suggestions of the German distributors and make an effort to integrate the distribution programme into the framework of professional organisation.”²⁴¹

Given that the Organisation Committees themselves were established to “harmonise” Franco-German industrial production,²⁴² this degree of German involvement was perhaps not surprising. Yet it should be remembered that this so-called “harmonisation” was increasingly resembling the Germanisation of French industry. A German analysis from the spring of 1941 shows the degree to which German authorities projected the view that France was adopting the superior German model to foster economic collaboration. “The French economy must integrate itself profoundly into the methods used for the organisation of the German economy [which is] already well underway.”²⁴³ The author added that the Organisation Committees were modelled after the “economic and technological bodies” that

²³⁹ Belin, *op.cit.*, 151.

²⁴⁰ “Rapport final du Dr MICHEL sur l’Administration Militaire en France, 1940-1944”, undated (1944), AJ 72 262, AN.

²⁴¹ Note de Bichelonne, 8 February 1941, F 12 10134, AN.

²⁴² See Chapter One.

²⁴³ Dr Karl Heinz Gerstner, *Cahiers franco-allemands*, May-June 1941, 69, AJ 40 1596, AN.

existed in Germany.²⁴⁴ He also noted that this economic collaboration would necessarily include “an adaptation and an alignment in the distribution of raw materials”, and that consultation between the distributors of both countries, which began in February 1941, marked “a first step towards permanent collaboration between the related organisations in both countries”.²⁴⁵

Taken on its own, this self-congratulatory extolment of German industry and the necessity that France assimilate to the superior model could be dismissed as mere propaganda. Yet it is entirely consistent with the stated aims of French and German authorities and with the formal correspondence between French industrialists and authorities. While French industrialists would highlight the slight differences between the French and German models (the German *Wirtschaftsgruppen* did not correspond exactly to the French Organisation Committees), they too conceded amongst themselves that “in Germany an analogous structure has existed for nearly a decade”, and that the Germans were consequently a valuable resource for improving French industry.²⁴⁶ The president of one Organisation Committee publicly thanked the Reich for “imposing upon us a discipline and [...] replacing disorganised competition, based on the degradation of conditions, a fertile emulation (*émulation féconde*) based on the improvement of technique and of the quality of the service provided”.²⁴⁷ In the case of the French steel industry, this *émulation féconde* also included adopting German specifications for steel products.²⁴⁸ If the New European Order was indeed to last for some time, as was still widely believed in the first half of 1941, then assimilating to the German model of industrial organisation and collaborating within the New European Order was seen by French industrialists to be logical and mutually beneficial.

The German authorities kept a very close watch on the activities of the Organisation Committees. In 1941, M. Neumann of the German Military Administration in Paris confirmed that German authorities had approved each decision made by each Organisation

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ “Déclaration de M. André GIARD”, February 1942, AJ 68 107, AN. Giard was President of the Organisation Committee for Lifting Equipment (*appareils de levage*) and noted France’s relative inexperience with such industrial organisation, as his Committee was created in January 1941.

²⁴⁷ “Discours de Guérard”, 7 March 1941, F 37 28, AN. Jacques Guérard was president of the Organisation Committee for Insurance.

²⁴⁸ The adoption of German specifications for steel products, overseen by CORSID’s *Bureau de normalisation de la sidérurgie* (BNS), is discussed in Chapter Three.

Committee, which reinforced the degree to which CORSID's actions were compatible with German objectives.²⁴⁹ Moreover, Dr Michel insisted that CORSID and other committees complete lengthy questionnaires, revealing the most vital information about stocks, production, and factories.²⁵⁰ Far from Belin's claim that the law of 16 August "enraged the Germans"²⁵¹, the German authorities accepted the new system on their own terms. They preferred to introduce their own form of industrial organisation in German-occupied Belgium, which included Nord and Pas-de-Calais.²⁵² Despite accepting the principle of Organisation Committees, the German authorities thus vetoed the introduction of any such bodies in northernmost France. In the Occupied and Non-Occupied Zones, meanwhile, the German authorities were able to gain control over resource allocation, on which all Organisation Committees depended. The Germans approved every decision made by CORSID, and were thus able to ensure that the latter's actions never went against German plans. The New Industrial Order, created to help "harmonise" French and German industry, progressed with this aim in part because the Germans exerted considerable control over industrial production in both countries.

Conclusion

The German role in the establishment of the New Industrial Order provides some insight into Vichy's jettisoning of tripartism and the degree of continuity in the steel industry. The tripartism in the August 1940 legislation seems to have been sacrificed for the sake of pragmatism, a tendency that was exacerbated by France's dealings with the Germans. French observers quickly noticed that "whenever the Germans find themselves in the presence of efficient civil servants or industrialists, the Germans quite willingly respect their authority".²⁵³ Eager to maintain French control over French industries, although entirely willing to supply the Germans, the Vichy government sought to appoint efficient experts based on their "ability to decide and to act" to run the Organisation Committees.²⁵⁴ While the

²⁴⁹ "Compte rendue" (sic), 30 May 1941, F 12 10059, AN.

²⁵⁰ "Note pour M. Barnaud", 20 February 1942, F 37 24, AN.

²⁵¹ Belin, op.cit., 150.

²⁵² "Kriegstagebuch der Rüstungs-Inspektion Belgien", 31 May 1940, RW 25 1a, BA-MA.

²⁵³ "Note sur l'activité de la délégation économique", 12 July 1940, F 60 1539, AN. Underlined in the original document.

²⁵⁴ Communiqué du ministre secrétaire d'Etat à la production et au travail, *Le Temps*, 6 October 1940.

debates between the corporatism extolled in the National Revolution and the “syndicalism” expressed in the law of 16 August 1940 would continue to play out in Vichy, notably with the drafting of the Labour Charter, CORSID’s priority remained maintaining a productive French steel industry.²⁵⁵

As for the continuity of the *Comité des forges* through 1940, this must be significantly qualified. The creation of the consultative *Commission générale* several months after the dissolution of the *Comité des forges* did include many of those who had formed the core of the latter body, albeit with a number of important exceptions. More importantly, however, the torch had passed from one group of industrialists to another, leaving high-ranking managers of fairly large, but not the largest, steelworks in charge in lieu of the presidents of the very biggest firms – a significant change that would prove permanent. The role of the State, another innovation from 1940, also influenced CORSID’s actions meaningfully, even if the Ministry’s representative never had to veto any of CORSID’s decisions. The direction of the steel industry was largely determined by the policies set by the government and particularly the Ministry for Industrial Production. As those policies changed, CORSID did its best to pursue its interests and keep factories running.

²⁵⁵ The elaboration of the Labour Charter is discussed in Chapter Three.

Chapter Three:

Fuelling the German War Economy, 1941-1944

Following the Fall of France in June 1940, French industry was reorganised and overseen by newly created Organisation Committees and German-led Sections of the Central Bureau for the Distribution of Industrial Products (OCRPI). Among the objectives of these bodies were to facilitate Franco-German economic cooperation, to “harmonise” the heavy industry of both countries, and to help secure France a leading position in a new, German-dominated Europe. By November 1940, these bodies were fully operational and led by men who understood that their task would be to coordinate French industry to supply the German war effort.²⁵⁶

The National Revolution, the official ideology of the Vichy regime based on the principles of “Work, Family, and the Nation”, and particularly its economic tenets were largely developed after the legislation establishing the Organisation Committees had been passed, yet the National Revolution soon became pervasive and started to exert its influence on French industry. In August 1941, Maréchal Pétain, who enjoyed full powers as Head of State in Vichy, intervened to try and reform the Organisation Committees in line with the regime’s official ideology. This doctrine was similarly a driving force behind the development of the Labour Charter, published in October 1941, which sought to transcend the class struggle. By 1942, however, the National Revolution had petered out and with the return of Pierre Laval to government in April 1942, industrial collaboration became increasingly important. Over the course of 1942, this was realised increasingly by sending thousands of French labourers to work in Germany, which had a pernicious effect on French industrial output. The flow of workers to Germany was ultimately reduced in September 1943 with an agreement between German Minister for Armaments and War Production Albert Speer and then French Minister for Industrial Production Jean Bichelonne. According to this agreement, the deportation of French workers to the Reich would be replaced by integrating French industry into the German war economy and orienting French output towards the Reich’s war effort.

²⁵⁶ These issues are discussed at length in Chapters One and Two of this dissertation.

Throughout this period and these shifting policies, CORSID did its best to represent the interests of the steel industry and to reconcile these with State policy. Based on the minutes of CORSID's meetings from December 1940 until July 1944 – a hitherto unexploited archival source²⁵⁷ – this chapter will show that CORSID's actions were motivated by the desire to keep its industry's factories running, an increasingly difficult task due to the worsening shortage of raw materials. This overarching objective manifested itself differently in relation to the various policies pursued by the Vichy government. Yet throughout the period, CORSID produced heavily for the Reich and adopted measures to “harmonise” French industry with Germany's, making such production more efficient. This chapter explores how CORSID's desire to keep its factories running interacted with the various industrial policies pursued by the French government from 1941 until the end of the regime in August 1944.

The National Revolution and the Labour Charter

René Belin's appointment as Minister for Industrial Production in July 1940 had come as a surprise to virtually everyone, not least Belin himself.²⁵⁸ In his first weeks as Minister, he and his senior staff established the legal underpinnings for the *ad hoc* set of arrangements that had sprung up in the weeks immediately following the Fall of France.²⁵⁹ As we have seen, Jacques Barnaud and Jean Bichelonne were two key advisors to Belin who played a decisive role in the elaboration of the Organisation Committees. While Barnaud left Belin's service in February 1941 to become Delegate General for Franco-German Economic Relations in Wiesbaden, Bichelonne retained central positions in the Ministry for Industrial Production for the remainder of the war. Bichelonne was named one of two Secretaries General of the Ministry and following the establishment of OCRPI in September 1940, he became the chief French civil servant responsible for it.²⁶⁰ Belin was relieved of his portfolio

²⁵⁷ The minutes of CORSID's meetings for the Groupement du Centre et de l'Ouest, roughly corresponding to the Occupied Zone of France, are preserved in the archives of Marine et d'Homécourt, the steel firm of which Léon Daum was Deputy Secretary General. These can be consulted in AQ 139 82, AN.

²⁵⁸ René Belin, *Du secrétariat du CGT au gouvernement de Vichy* (Paris: Albatros, 1978), 124.

²⁵⁹ See Chapter One.

²⁶⁰ The other Secretary General was Henri Lafond. OCRPI was centralised in the Ministry for Industrial Production, although the presence of a German official with veto powers on each OCRPI Section impinged on Vichy's freedom of action.

for Industrial Production in February 1941, with Pierre Pucheu taking his place.²⁶¹ Pucheu was only Minister for a few months before being succeeded by François Lehideux, who had been Secretary General of Renault (and, not coincidentally, Louis Renault's son-in-law) before the war and was named President of the Organisation Committee for Automobiles (COA) in the autumn of 1940.²⁶²

Barely a month after becoming Minister, Lehideux faced a challenge from an unlikely source. On 12 August 1941, Pétain gave a speech in which he attacked the Organisation Committees, which he claimed were dominated by “trusts”. This speech came after months of complaints about and attacks on the Committees, many of which were sent directly to the Maréchal.²⁶³ Pétain claimed that the Committees, “created to correct the errors of capitalism”, had been founded with the best of intentions. “Trusts”, however, “sought to reassert themselves by using the [Committees] for their own particular ends”.²⁶⁴ Pétain reassured the nation that “the provisional statute of the organisation of the economy will be rearranged on the basis of the reduction and the merging of Committees [and] of greater representation within [the Committees] of small industry and artisans”.²⁶⁵ Having spent most of the Vichy period up to that point as President of the the first Committee created and, as newly-appointed Minister for Industrial Production, now responsible for the Committees in their entirety, Lehideux had indeed been handed a challenge.

According to his memoirs, Lehideux questioned Pétain privately shortly after the speech, objecting to the use of the “imprecise, demagogic, lethal” term,²⁶⁶ “trusts”, and taking issue with Pétain's “unfair and inappropriate”²⁶⁷ speech. Lehideux claims that he made an impassioned defence of the valuable Committees and offered to resign on the grounds of the chasm that existed between Lehideux's and the Maréchal's views on the bodies. In Lehideux's version of events, Pétain sheepishly admitted that he had not meant to criticise the

²⁶¹ Pucheu defended the Organisation Committees until his death (he was executed by the Resistance for treason in 1944), while stressing that he played no part in their creation and that he simply took over the existing system for a few short months. See Pierre Pucheu, *Ma Vie* (Paris: Amiot-Dumont, 1948), 336-337. Pucheu is discussed further in Chapter Four of this thesis.

²⁶² COA was the first Organisation Committee created, on 9 September 1940, and Lehideux remained its president throughout the war.

²⁶³ Dozens are preserved among Pétain's papers, “Papiers du chef d'Etat, Etat français”, AG 2 611 and 612, AN.

²⁶⁴ Pétain, “Message du 12 août 1941” in *Discours aux français* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1989), 167. In his memoirs Lehideux mistakenly states that the speech was broadcast on 11 August. See Lehideux, *De Renault à Pétain* (Paris: Editions Pygmalion, 2001), 317.

²⁶⁵ Pétain, op.cit., 171.

²⁶⁶ Lehideux, op.cit., 317.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 318.

Committees so harshly and that “perhaps, he admitted, he had been insufficiently informed on a subject of which he understood little”.²⁶⁸ He also reassured Lehideux “that he had confidence in [him]. Before leaving, he invited [Lehideux] to come visit him more often”.²⁶⁹ Conveniently, this was a private conversation during which no notes were taken, so we have only Lehideux’s word for the incident. Given the implausibility of his account (and the consistently unreliable nature of his memoirs), however, it is sensible to approach Lehideux’s claim that Pétain’s attack on the Organisation Committees and his promises of reform were mistakenly articulated and misunderstood with a great deal of scepticism. Pétain had received letters and reports outlining these criticisms of the Committees since autumn 1940, when they were first created. More importantly, Pétain gave a speech on 1 March 1941 in which he criticised employers on the grounds that their “selfishness and [their] lack of understanding of the proletarian condition were all too often the best auxiliaries to communism” and called on employers, workers, and technicians to work together in Social Committees.²⁷⁰ In his speech on 12 August 1941, Pétain referred more explicitly to the National Revolution and some of its projects, such as the Labour Charter, thereby situating his criticisms of the Committees in the broader context of his national project. Pétain’s comments in August 1941 were entirely consistent with the policies he was overseeing and the central if still somewhat nebulous project of national revival he was pursuing.

Due to the nature of the steel industry, greater representation of artisans and small businesses – so revered in the ideology of the National Revolution²⁷¹ – never made much sense, but CORSID did its best to answer the call of 12 August 1941 by adding a member from a medium-sized steel firm one month after Pétain’s address. Pierre Francou was the Deputy Director General of Marrel Frères, a Loire-based firm that was somewhat smaller than the firms represented by the four original members of CORSID.²⁷² This change was well-timed, as a study dated 10 September 1941 – one year to the day after the creation of OCRPI – reiterated the criticism that France’s Committees were “led by the industrial elite”,

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 321.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Pétain, “Discours du 1 mars 1941” in *Discours aux français*, op.cit., 113. Social Committees, a key component of the Labour Charter, are discussed below.

²⁷¹ The most comprehensive treatment of the National Revolution is Limore Yagil, “*L’Homme nouveau*” et la Révolution nationale de Vichy (1940-1944) (Paris: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 1997), while Julian Jackson’s chapter on the National Revolution in *France: The Dark Years, 1940-1944* (Oxford: OUP, 2001) is the best synthesis.

²⁷² The four original members of CORSID came from some of the largest firms, although the two largest – De Wendel and Schneider – were not represented in the Committee. This was discussed in Chapter Two.

arguing that “some members must be replaced” and that in general “the make-up of the Organisation Committees must be revised”.²⁷³ The token addition of a fifth member from a smaller firm was as far as CORSID went to assuage such concerns. The inclusion of Francou, however, seems to have been entirely superficial, as the minutes of CORSID’s meetings suggest that he was not present at a single meeting.²⁷⁴

The project that went furthest in realising Pétain’s vision of the renovation of French labour was the Labour Charter, which appeared as the law of 4 October 1941.²⁷⁵ Belin began work on this Charter in the weeks following 16 August 1940, before the first Organisation Committees were even established. The first draft of the Labour Charter dates from September 1940, and subsequent drafts were produced monthly, taking account of feedback from different experts, ministers, and occasionally Pétain himself.²⁷⁶ Belin based the Charter in part on the Italian Labour Charter introduced under Mussolini in 1927,²⁷⁷ although given Belin’s career as a trade unionist, it is perhaps not surprising that his version offers far more rights to workers than the Italian document, which was meant largely to entrench the support of Italian industrialists for the Fascist regime.

In these early stages one of the chief architects of the Charter was Pierre Laroque. Laroque had joined the Ministry of Labour in 1931, coincidentally during Pierre Laval’s first stint as Prime Minister of France. In 1938 he published a study on the relationship between workers and employers and he was a key figure in drafting the Law of 16 August 1940, assisting Belin, Barnaud, and Bichelonne.²⁷⁸ He continued to work with Belin and contributed extensively to the early drafts of the Charter until the autumn of 1940, when he had to be dismissed under anti-Semitic legislation passed by Vichy.²⁷⁹ He later joined de

²⁷³ “Etude sur les CO”, 10 September 1941, F 37 20, AN.

²⁷⁴ The minutes are kept in the archives of the firm Marine and Homécourt, particularly AQ 139 82. These meetings were for the Groupement Centre-Ouest, corresponding roughly to the Occupied Zone. Although Léon Daum presided over this grouping, the other original members of CORSID attended nearly every meeting, as did the representative of the Ministry for Industrial Production. Francou’s name does not feature among the list of participants for a single meeting.

²⁷⁵ The best study of the Labour Charter is Jean-Pierre Le Crom’s *Syndicats nous voilà!* (Paris: Editions de l’Atelier, 1995), although the classic study remains Jacques Julliard, “La Charte du travail” in René Rémond (ed.), *Le gouvernement de Vichy, 1940-1942* (Paris: FNSP, 1972).

²⁷⁶ These can be found in the dossier “‘Charte du travail’, projets de base 1940-41” in 98J 9, Fonds Belin, IHS.

²⁷⁷ “Charte du travail italienne, 1927”, (undated, but among Belin’s papers from his first months as Minister for Industrial Production in summer 1940), 98J 8, Fonds Belin, IHS.

²⁷⁸ This is discussed in Chapter One. The study by Laroque is *Les rapports entre patrons et ouvriers* (Paris: Aubier, 1938).

²⁷⁹ See the dossier “Charte du travail, projets de René Belin avant decembre 1940, dossier de travail de P. Laroque” in 98J 7, Fonds Belin, IHS.

Gaulle in London in 1943 and was named Director General for Social Security in October 1944, where he would come to be known as the father of social security in post-war France.²⁸⁰

The development of the Charter was fraught with difficulties and internal divisions over its content. At its core, the document was meant to reorganise French society along corporatist lines as a means of transcending the class struggle, a core tenet of the National Revolution. Minister for Finance and for the Economy Yves Bouthillier rejected an early draft of the law in December 1940 because it relied too heavily on Organisation Committees which, “dominated by heads of ‘trusts’, cannot achieve the social reform” envisaged by Belin.²⁸¹ Such criticisms were brought to Pétain’s attention throughout 1941 by those who objected to “class syndicalism” and urged Pétain to push for “the fusion of workers, employers and managers in shared bodies”.²⁸² Bouthillier and Foreign Minister Paul Baudouin were among the influential members of Cabinet who lobbied for a more corporatist model that would abolish trade unions and employers’ associations altogether, much to Belin’s annoyance.²⁸³

In October 1941, Dr Michel, the head of the Economic Section of the German Military Administration in Paris, wrote to Belin expressing his authorisation of the Charter, despite some misgivings:

Reservations concerning certain parts of the project are withdrawn to avoid delaying its publication. The new social organisation must be applied as quickly as possible so as to organise collaboration between workers and employers and, notably, to ensure the representation of workers’ interests.²⁸⁴

This long-awaited albeit qualified support from the German authorities allowed the law to be published in full. The Charter was a fundamentally corporatist document and went much further than the legislation of August and September 1940 in breaking down the walls between the classes. Labour unions were banned outright, a step further than the dissolution of the principal trade union confederations realised in the summer of 1940. Moreover, both

²⁸⁰ See Eric Jabbari, *Pierre Laroque and the welfare state in postwar France* (Oxford: OUP, 2012). Laroque’s post-war interviews on Vichy’s industrial organisation have influenced the historiography on the subject. See, for example, Claire Andrieu, *La Banque sous l’occupation* (Paris: FNSP, 1990), particularly Chapter Five, “L’économie organisée sous l’occupation”, 119-140.

²⁸¹ See dossier “Correspondence avec le ministre des finances, décembre 1940”, December 1940, 98J 9, Fonds Belin, IHS.

²⁸² Lettre à Pétain (not signed), 28 April 1941, AG 2 611, AN.

²⁸³ Richard Vinen, *The Politics of French Business, 1936-1945* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), 107-108.

²⁸⁴ “Réponse de l’administration militaire allemande à la Charte”, 21 October 1941, 98J 9, IHS.

strikes and lock-outs were outlawed, removing the most provocative weapons of workers and employers, respectively, in the class warfare that had characterised the worst periods of the 1930s. Other, somewhat more progressive measures, such as the first guaranteed minimum wage in France, were also included in the Charter.²⁸⁵ Crucially, a corporation was to be created for each branch of industry, which would include representatives from employers and workers alike, while the State would be in control of the corporation. Industries were also asked to create Social Committees that would consist of representatives of employers and workers in equal measure.

Unlike the creation of the Organisation Committees, the drafting of the Charter was a slow process and one imbued with the ideology of the National Revolution. While the goals of the Law of 16 August 1940 were largely limited to industrial questions (i.e. how to ensure that French industry could continue to function after the Armistice), the Charter was an ambitious project to reorganise French society. Tellingly, it was undertaken by René Belin *qua* Minister for Labour rather than being a project of the Ministry for Industrial Production. As such, Belin remained focused on the Charter after he had left the latter ministry. Yet the project of the Charter was obstructed from achieving its goals by the perceived shortcomings of the Organisation Committees that Belin had created the year before. The Charter depended on a certain balance of power between labour and employers. Due to the exclusion of organised labour from the Organisation Committees, however, this balance did not exist, with the employers dominating all decisions related to the economy. The Charter was not able to redress this, and in these circumstances it is hardly surprising that labour was not supportive of Vichy's attempts to incorporate workers into Social Committees that – if the nominally tripartite Organisation Committees were any indication – would also be dominated by big business.²⁸⁶

Although the final text of the Charter established a broad framework for a new social organisation in France, the legislation in fact changed very little. The law of 16 August 1940 had created the legal framework for the Organisation Committees, but this skeletal system was only fleshed out with the creation of the first individual Organisation Committees in

²⁸⁵ In the event, the minimum wage was never put into practice due to the context of the war and France's worsening financial position. In 1944 the CFLN abolished the Charter in its entirety, including its more palatable provisions, meaning that the minimum wage provisions were never actually put into practice. Ultimately, minimum wage legislation would be introduced in 1950 in the form of the *salaires minimums interprofessionnels garantis* (SMIG).

²⁸⁶ See Le Crom, *op. cit.*, 392.

early November. Similarly, the Charter known as the Law of 4 October – despite the numerous changes imposed on the text between that date and its ultimate publication on 26 October²⁸⁷ – described what would be established. One important innovation echoed Pétain’s speech of 12 August, namely the merging of similar existing Committees into “families” for key industries, which would go some way towards addressing his call to reduce the number of Committees. Each “family” was to establish a Preparatory Commission that would be responsible for creating the Social Committee for that “family”, which would include mixed representation from employers and workers.²⁸⁸ Henri Lafond, one of the two Secretaries General for Industrial Production, proposed folding eleven existing Committees related to iron and steel into the “family” for the production of metals, which would still be presided by Jules Aubrun.²⁸⁹ Aubrun accepted this in principle in November 1941, although specifying that he would rather limit the number of Committees within the “family” to eight.²⁹⁰ The responsibility for the new “family” was passed on to the President of the largest Organisation Committee in each “family”. Progress was slow, however, and by 1944, 24 of the 29 “families” had stalled at the level of creating a Preparatory Commission. In the end, only three “families” ended up creating Social Committees at all: mining, clothing, and textiles.²⁹¹ The belated creation of an Office for Social Committees in March 1944 did little to alter the situation.²⁹²

For all the Charter’s lengthy negotiations and the determined propaganda campaign that accompanied its publication, its impact on economic and production issues in the steel industry was minimal. In every draft of the Charter after December 1940, the existence and independence of the Organisation Committees were guaranteed, and the final text of the law specified that “questions on economic matters will remain, until further notice, in the competences of the provisional Organisation Committees created in accordance with the law

²⁸⁷ A series of alternative drafts and requests for modifications from Belin and others between 4 and 22 October 1941 are preserved among Pétain’s papers. See “Papiers de chef d’Etat, Etat français”, AG 2 611, AN.

²⁸⁸ The “professional families” were ultimately created in May 1942. See “Création des familles professionnelles”, 16 May 1942, F 12 9953, AN.

²⁸⁹ “Projet de répartition des comités d’organisation du Secrétaire Général de l’énergie en famille” by Henri Lafond, 12 December 1941, F 12 9953, AN.

²⁹⁰ “Note pour Monsieur le secrétaire général de l’énergie”, 12 November 1941, F 12 9953, AN.

²⁹¹ Henry Rouso, “L’organisation industrielle de Vichy” in *Vichy. L’événement, la mémoire, l’histoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), 79-109, here 99-100. Richard Vinen rightly points out that the last two industries were typically more supportive of the National Revolution, but that the action on the part of the mining industry is surprising. See Vinen, *The politics of French business, 1936-1945* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), 115.

²⁹² “Création d’un office des comités sociaux”, 15 March 1944, F 12 9953, AN.

of 16 August 1940”.²⁹³ In discussing the eventual establishment of Social Committees, CORSID emphasised that these bodies should remain silent “when it comes to questions of allocation” of raw materials within the industry.²⁹⁴ Daum specified that the role of the Social Committees would instead be to focus on “questions related to the working conditions of the factory, working hours, hygiene, etc.”.²⁹⁵ By restricting the responsibilities of the proposed Social Committees, CORSID ensured that it would retain its powers in running the French steel industry.

Having ensured that the Social Committees would not encroach on the Organisation Committee’s powers, CORSID displayed a certain enthusiasm in setting up the bodies outlined in the Labour Charter. Léon Daum was an early champion of the Charter, emphasising the usefulness of the bodies which would “lead workers and employers to speak with each other” and discuss matters of mutual interest.²⁹⁶ He urged industrialists to “not delay in setting up this instrument of social peace”.²⁹⁷ Daum was more closely involved with the Vichy regime than the other members of CORSID – Pétain had appointed him to the *Conseil national* in January 1941 and Daum had been an early favourite to join the Vichy Cabinet as Minister for Industrial Production.²⁹⁸ In October 1942, CORSID announced that Daum had been named President of the Organisation Commission for the Professional Family of Metal Production,²⁹⁹ responsible for setting up the Social Committee for the “family” of which CORSID would be the leader. Daum claimed that, according to Belin, “the work of the Commission should last from six months to one year”.³⁰⁰ Just over a year later, on 24 November 1943, the Provisional National Social Committee had its first meeting. Its membership included 10 workers and 10 employers, in line with the National Revolution’s ideals of social harmony, and at the first meeting, wages and apprenticeships were identified as priorities, with commissions being proposed for each. Although progress was finally

²⁹³ Titre 1, Article 4, “Loi relative à l’organisation sociale des professions” (Charte du travail), 4 October 1941.

²⁹⁴ “Réunion du Groupe Centre-Ouest du 15 juillet 1942”, 15 July 1942, AQ 139 82, AN.

²⁹⁵ “Réunion du Groupe Centre-Ouest du 21 janvier 1942”, 21 January 1942, AQ 139 82, AN.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ “Réunion du Groupe Centre-Ouest. Séance du 18 février 1942”, 18 February 1942, AQ 139 82, AN.

²⁹⁸ For Daum’s appointment to the *Conseil national*, see “Groupement du Centre et de l’Ouest. Séance du 29 Janvier 1941”, 21 January 1941, AQ 139 82, AN. For more on Daum nearly being appointed Minister for Industrial Production in July 1940, see Chapter Two and René Belin, *Du secrétariat de la CGT au gouvernement de Vichy* (Paris: Albatros, 1978), 128.

²⁹⁹ “Groupement du Centre et de l’Ouest. Séance du 13 octobre 1942”, 13 October 1942, AQ 139 82, AN.

Although Aubrun remained President of the new “family”, Daum became President of its Organisation Commission, created to oversee the establishment of the National Social Committee.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

being made, the second meeting, on 3 March 1944, proved to be its last. A permanent Social Committee was never established and the incoming Provisional Government of the French Republic (GPRF) led by de Gaulle repealed the Labour Charter and its constituent institutions.³⁰¹

While the Social Committee outlined in the Labour Charter proved to be abortive, it is important to note CORSID's reaction to the initiative. The Organisation Committee's initial preoccupation was protecting its existing powers. Once reassured that the Social Committee would not have a say in economic questions or in matters of resource allocation, CORSID was willing and even enthusiastic to set up the new Social Committee that could treat social questions such as working conditions, wages, and apprenticeships. CORSID's chief concern was ensuring that the steel industry continued to function as optimally as possible given the disastrous shortage of raw materials. This motivation led CORSID to oppose the tenets of the National Revolution that would be harmful to its running the steel industry, such as a more equitable representation of SMEs to dilute the power of "trusts", while endorsing the elements that would not damage and might even benefit the industry, such as discussing social questions with workers and industrialists. CORSID's selective endorsement of certain aspects of the National Revolution demonstrates its eminently pragmatic attitude, a tendency that is even clearer in the case of French workers being sent to Germany.

Working in the Reich

The spring of 1942 marked an important turning point in the history of Vichy. On 18 April, Pierre Laval returned as Head of Government and quickly affirmed that France's overriding policy was to integrate itself into a German-led Europe (*l'Europe allemande*). In a radio address two days after his reinstatement, Laval described the choice facing France: "either we integrate [...] into a new and pacified Europe that will flourish after the war that is currently unfolding, or we resign ourselves to witnessing the destruction of our civilisation" by Bolshevism.³⁰² Laval's renewed enthusiasm for collaboration with Germany coincided with the sputtering out of the National Revolution by 1942. Under Laval, who had always been sceptical of the National Revolution, ambitious plans for a spiritual renewal of the

³⁰¹ See "Rétablissement de la liberté syndicale et épuration des organisations syndicales de travailleurs et d'employeurs", 13 January 1944, CFLN-GPRF 602, MAE.

³⁰² Qtd. in Jean-Paul Cointet, *Pierre Laval* (Paris: Fayard, 1993), 368.

nation were neglected in favour of securing for France a favourable position in post-war Europe through collaboration.³⁰³ Meanwhile, Germany was facing increasing difficulties on the Eastern Front nearly a year after its invasion of the Soviet Union and consequently abandoned its strategy of Blitzkrieg in favour of harnessing the economic potential of Europe for its war efforts.³⁰⁴

The central policy pursued by the Reich in building up the German war economy at this stage was to deport workers from occupied Europe and force them to work in German factories. Gauleiter Fritz Sauckel was placed in charge of the scheme, and he was soon demanding hundreds of thousands of French workers from Laval. The French Head of Government proposed the so-called *Relève*, whereby France would send workers to Germany, with the Reich releasing one French prisoner of war for every three French workers sent to Germany. This arrangement, established in June 1942, saw tens of thousands of French volunteers head to Germany, but the numbers fell far short of Sauckel's demands. As a result, Sauckel imposed labour conscription across occupied Europe in August 1942. Laval followed suit with the law of 4 September 1942, which established the labour draft in France. In response to further requests for workers from Sauckel, Laval set up the *Service du travail obligatoire* (STO) on 16 February 1943. Under these laws roughly 650,000 French workers were forcibly deported to Germany.³⁰⁵ Overseeing the sweeping changes this would bring to French industry was Jean Bichelonne. In the major Cabinet reshuffle that accompanied Laval's return, Lhéritier resigned and Bichelonne, his long-time Secretary General, was promoted to Minister for Industrial Production.

The situation would become even more serious after 8 November 1942, when American and British forces landed in Algeria to establish a foothold in the Mediterranean. The Allies thus gained a valuable springboard from which they soon worked their way up the Italian peninsula. In response, on 11 November 1942, the Wehrmacht crossed the

³⁰³ See Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940-1944* (Oxford: OUP, 2001), 139-141 and 213.

³⁰⁴ Arne Radtke-Delacor, "Produire pour le Reich. Les commandes allemandes à l'industrie française (1940-1944)" in *Vingtième siècle. Revue d'histoire*, no. 70, April-June 2001, 99-115. For Germany's industrial strategy throughout this period see Adam Tooze, *The Wages of Destruction. The Making & Breaking of the Nazi Economy* (London: Penguin, 2007).

³⁰⁵ To this number we must add 300,000 who volunteered to go to Germany, of whom 60,000 left before 4 September 1942. These volunteers generally went for economic reasons, as Germany offered higher wages and more hours of work. See Jean-Pierre Azéma's "Introduction" in *La main-d'oeuvre française exploitée par le IIIe Reich* (Caen: Centre de Recherche Quantitative, 2003). In addition to this excellent collected volume, the classic work on the STO in France remains Jacques Evrard, *La déportation des travailleurs français dans le IIIe Reich* (Paris: Fayard, 1972), while the best synthesis is Raphaël Spina's recent PhD thesis, *La France et les Français devant le service du travail obligatoire (1942-1945)* (Cachan: ENS, 2012).

demarcation line established in June 1940, ostensibly to protect the soft underbelly of Vichy France and its apparently vulnerable Mediterranean coast. Henceforth, the entirety of metropolitan France remained occupied by Germany (or Italy, in the case of the small Italian zone of occupation) until the D-Day landings in Normandy. Two days later, Laval secured from Pétain the powers to pass laws on his own authority, without the need for the Maréchal. As Julian Jackson has appositely put it, “Pétain, whose powers had been compared to those of Louis XIV two years earlier, was now more like a Third Republic president”.³⁰⁶ Meanwhile, the once seemingly invincible Wehrmacht started struggling in Stalingrad. The Soviets launched the first in a series of offensives on 19 November 1942 and by the end of the winter the Germans were in retreat. As the Reich abandoned its Blitzkrieg strategy in favour of harnessing the economic potential of occupied Europe for its war effort, it was clear that France would have an important role.

In terms of increasing German armaments production, the STO does seem to have been successful. In Adam Tooze’s assessment, “the foreign labour programme was clearly by far the most important contribution that occupied Europe made to Germany’s armaments effort”.³⁰⁷ From a French perspective, however, the results were far less impressive. From the time the *Relève* was first instituted, industrial productivity in France dropped, a trend that only worsened as more workers were deported.³⁰⁸ Perhaps more important was the negative reaction among the French public. As Richard Vinen notes, “for the first time, Vichy had an obviously malign effect on the lives of millions of French people, not just on those who left but also on those who endured risk or hardship in order not to go, and on the relatives of both these groups”.³⁰⁹ Among those in the second group, who opted not to go, joining the Resistance was the logical alternative, and the *maquis* in France swelled from the summer of 1942. As the Resistance grew in strength and the population turned against the regime, acts of sabotage increased in French factories, disrupting production further still. Of course, the STO was not the only factor causing these phenomena: the scarcity of raw materials slowed production after 1941, while the increasing probability of an Allied victory convinced many

³⁰⁶ Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years*, op.cit., 227.

³⁰⁷ Adam Tooze, *Wages of Destruction*, op.cit., 640. It should be noted that Tooze is referring to the German recruitment of labour from across Europe, not only France.

³⁰⁸ Françoise Berger has calculated that overall steel output in France declined significantly in 1943 compared to 1942. This is consistent with trends in other industries; coal production peaked in 1942, for example, before declining significantly in 1943. For steel, see Françoise Berger, *La France, l’Allemagne et l’acier (1932-1952). De la stratégie des cartels à l’élaboration de la CECA* (Paris : Université de Paris I, 2000), 460-1. For coal, see “The Coal Economy of France under German Occupation”, WO 219 3752, NA.

³⁰⁹ Richard Vinen, *The Unfree French. Life under the Occupation*, (London: Penguin, 2007), 249.

to join the Resistance. While the scheme proposed by Laval did secure the release and return to France of over 90,000 prisoners of war, it had a negative impact on French industry and weakened support for a regime already in decline.

In this broader context, it is worth considering how the Organisation Committees reacted to such initiatives. Based on the minutes of CORSID's private meetings, it is striking not only how staunchly they opposed the idea of sending French labourers to Germany, but indeed how early they made preparations to undermine such schemes. In March 1941, well over a year before the *Relève* was established, CORSID was wary of German attempts to poach unemployed workers from steel firms. By the winter of 1940-41, the shortage of coal was seriously affecting steel output, and the inconsistent deliveries of coal led to unpredictable periods of underemployment in many firms. In early 1941, Léon Daum urged industrialists to "prepare for the possibility of employing workers for general work", such as clearing wooded areas. Daum stressed that "we mustn't be lacking in ideas when we are suddenly faced with the question of unemployment. The witnesses of the occupying army are keeping an eye on the availability of our personnel".³¹⁰ Indeed, it emerged at the same meeting that the German authorities had allocated workers from the Hennebont firm in Brittany who were "not very busy" to work at the nearby port of Lorient. Despite Hennebont's appeals to the local prefecture, the Germans' decision prevailed.³¹¹

By the end of April 1941, the local prefecture sent a request to a steel firm on behalf of the *Feldkommandantur* that the working week at the firm be increased to 40 or even 48 hours in order to free up more workers. The firm was also asked to provide a list of workers who had "become available" due to decreased production levels.³¹² Daum reiterated that "labour that might appear to be surplus must be automatically taken on by us", even if this meant assigning them agricultural or forestry work outside the factory. CORSID was also made aware of a circular distributed by the German authorities in March to try to persuade workers to volunteer to work in Germany, in return for higher wages and more hours of work. It was specified that such arrangements were done "of the [workers'] free will and apply only to unemployed personnel in France", to which Daum flatly responded "we need to ensure that there is no unemployed personnel". Daum concluded that "we must get a head start to ensure

³¹⁰ "Groupement Centre-Ouest. Réunion du 18 mars 1941", 18 March 1941, AQ 139 82, AN. The minutes of this meeting state that "Daum repeats his previous recommendations" on keeping workers busy, but unfortunately the detailed minutes of the previous meetings are not available.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² "Groupement Centre-Ouest. Réunion du 29 avril 1941", 29 April 1941, AQ 139 82, AN.

that any presence of surplus labour not be revealed. We must also have the charade ready for any situations that may result from the precariousness of our supply of coal”.³¹³ Even Coqueugnot, the representative of the Ministry for Industrial Production at CORSID’s meetings, agreed with CORSID’s measures, stating that “it is not enough to simply inform the relevant authorities of the situation; [firms] must develop further initiatives capable of preventing the unemployment of their personnel”.³¹⁴ By early 1942, however, it seems that the small-scale work in forestry and agriculture that could be found for French workers “appear to be fairly weak compared to the degree of unemployment”.³¹⁵ By the start of 1942, the French steel industry had a growing number of under- and unemployed workers which was becoming increasingly difficult to conceal. Meanwhile, at least one firm was forced to hang recruitment posters in its factory encouraging workers to volunteer to work in Germany; CORSID admitted that they had no choice but to comply.³¹⁶

By the end of 1941, an interesting situation had arisen. The Audincourt factory found itself short of skilled labour and asked whether 50 to 60 rolling mill specialists from other firms could be dispatched to Audincourt. Daum noted that the question was of “theoretical interest, to let us know whether we can move 50 workers in France”.³¹⁷ He encouraged factories to send unemployed specialists to Audincourt, observing that “we have at the moment factories that are out of work while others are short-staffed, which should mean that we can fill the void at Audincourt”. This example shows how unpredictable production had become due to the inconsistent provision of coal. Although a firm might be suffering from underemployment, an important order requiring specialised rolling mill workers could suddenly demand 60 specialists. If the French steel industry hoped to be able to fill such orders, it would require sufficient labour when necessary.

What is striking from these discussions is that CORSID was already trying to undermine German attempts to recruit workers for the Reich, more than a year before the *Relève* was formalised. The lack of raw materials had slowed steel production significantly, with an average working week of between 32 and 35 hours in March 1941, being as low as

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ “Comité d’organisation de la sidérurgie. Région du Centre et de l’Ouest. Réunion du 27 août 1941”, 27 August 1941, AQ 139 82, AN.

³¹⁵ “Réunion du Groupe Centre-Ouest du 21 janvier 1942”, 21 January 1942, AQ 139 82, AN.

³¹⁶ “Réunion des Usines du Centre-Ouest du 23 mai 1941”, 23 May 1941, AQ 139 82, AN.

³¹⁷ “Réunion du Groupe Centre-Ouest du 21 janvier 1942”, 21 January 1942, AQ 139 82, AN.

24 hours in some firms.³¹⁸ CORSID's preoccupation seems to have been to maintain the full labour force and prevent outright unemployment. The motivations for this strategy are not entirely clear; while there could have been a patriotic dimension to refusing to give up labourers to the German authorities, the business reasoning against losing one's workers was likely a much stronger factor. Given how inconsistent coal deliveries had become, it was essential that the workforce not be depleted during a shortage of coal, only for industry to find itself short of workers when the provision of coal increased. Richard Vinen has also suggested that "social fear" motivated some Committees to oppose labour deportations, citing "a general fear among the patronat that if they did not distance themselves from the deportation of labour to Germany they would suffer the consequences of the workers' anger".³¹⁹ Whatever the motivation, it is clear that CORSID opposed early attempts to relocate French workers to Germany, and at the start of 1942, Daum predicted that in the months to come, "we will endure phenomena worse than the loss of a few specialist workers".³²⁰ With the establishment of the *Relève* in June and the labour draft later that summer, Daum's warning proved prophetic.

CORSID's initial reaction to the *Relève* was restrained. Eugène Roy, the Vice-President of CORSID, observed that the situation "leaves us a certain hope that we will not see calls for labour that are too massive".³²¹ CORSID also ensured that each firm provided an updated list of employees who were still prisoners of war in Germany, ranked in order of priority for release, with skilled labourers being at the top of the list.³²² Given that the terms of the *Relève* promised the release of one POW for every three workers sent to Germany, CORSID wanted to ensure that it secured the release of the industry's most useful workers. Following the law of 4 September 1942, which established compulsory labour drafts, CORSID decided to gather information from its factories before approaching the government,

³¹⁸ "Groupement Centre-Ouest. Réunion du 18 mars 1941", 18 March 1941, AQ 139 82, AN. In May and June 1941 the average working week for the industry fell to 30 hours and dropped below 29 hours for July 1941. See "Réunion du Groupe Centre-Ouest du 27 août 1941", 27 August 1941, AQ 139 82, AN.

³¹⁹ While Vinen includes examples of the COH undermining labour deportations in 1942, his discussion of the motivations for the opposition to these policies focuses on the STO. He notes that by 1943, when the STO was established, "business calculations were now founded on the assumption of an allied victory". He adds that "Resistance to STO... was in theory the policy of all COs". See Richard Vinen, "The French Coal Industry during the Occupation" in *The Historical Journal*, 33:1, 1990, 105-130, here 113-4 and 123. This "social Fear" may also explain CORSID's support for Social Committees, which would theoretically have improved relations between workers and employers.

³²⁰ "Réunion du Groupe Centre-Ouest du 21 janvier 1942", 21 January 1942, AQ 139 82, AN.

³²¹ "Réunion du Groupe Centre-Ouest du 15 juillet 1942", 15 July 1942, AQ 139 82, AN.

³²² *Ibid.* This request was sent out as "Circulaire du 13 juillet 1942", 13 July 1942, AQ 139 79, AN.

noting that “information is still imprecise in many cases” and they were not entirely sure what impact the labour draft would have on the industry.³²³ To this end, CORSID issued a circular to all factories only hours after the law was passed requesting information so that CORSID could establish statistics on the departure of workers to Germany.³²⁴ A file was opened for each worker sent to Germany in order to keep track of them, and in most cases communication was established between the workers sent to Germany and their firm back in France.³²⁵

By February 1943, CORSID observed that “important departures [were] underway in most factories”.³²⁶ Meeting on 16 February 1943, the very day the STO was formally established, Baboin, who had replaced Coqueugnot as representative of the Ministry for Industrial Production, reiterated his request “that factories inform him of workers who are not employed in their area of specialty”, noting that “the answers received so far are insufficient”.³²⁷ There could be little doubt that such documents would be used to compile lists of workers to be sent to Germany. It is worth noting the evolution of the attitude of the Ministry for Industrial Production regarding sending labour to Germany. While the Ministry’s representative had supported CORSID’s efforts to frustrate German attempts to acquire volunteers to work in Germany in 1941, the Ministry’s policy by February 1943 was to abet the conscription of French workers.³²⁸ CORSID’s position does not seem to have followed the Ministry’s conversion, however, since industrialists were primarily concerned with keeping their factories running, which was hardly compatible with the removal of large numbers of their workers. It appears that CORSID did not cooperate with the Ministry on the STO; Baboin renewed his request for lists of workers ripe for deportation again in April,

³²³ “Comité d’organisation de la sidérurgie. Région du Centre et de l’Ouest. Réunion du 13 octobre 1942”, 13 October 1942, AQ 139 82, AN.

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ “Comité d’organisation de la sidérurgie. Région du Centre et de l’Ouest. Réunion du 16 novembre 1942”, 16 November 1942, AQ 139 82, AN.

³²⁶ “Comité d’organisation de la sidérurgie. Région du Centre et de l’Ouest. Réunion du 16 février 1943”, 16 February 1943, AQ 139 82, AN.

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Richard Kuisel argues that in 1940, “the Pétainiste regime sought to quickly reduce or camouflage unemployment” and consequently created an Unemployment Commission in October 1940, which would later evolve into the DGEN. If State policy at the time did indeed extend to “camouflag[ing] unemployment” from the German authorities, then CORSID’s actions were in line with Vichy’s policies on this matter before the implementation of the STO. See Kuisel, “Vichy et les origines de la planification économique (1940-1946)” in *Le mouvement social*, no. 98, January-March 1977, 77-101, here 78.

suggesting that little progress had been made since his request at the beginning of the year.³²⁹ Daum seems to have lobbied the Ministry to ensure that steel was recognised as “an essential industry to the economic life of the country”, which entitled factories to “be exempt from all departures [of workers] that are not immediately compensated” with replacement workers, thereby keeping the number of workers as constant as possible.³³⁰ In several cases, deported French workers were replaced by the German authorities with workers from North Africa.³³¹ CORSID also pleaded for the release of several categories of workers. While requests for the repatriation of students, farmers, and women were dismissed, the possibility of repatriation was granted for the fathers of large families (with five or more children), workers older than 50, and workers who were seriously ill and deemed unfit for work.³³² Although these were relatively minor concessions, they demonstrate that CORSID was active in working with the German and French authorities in order to alleviate the effects of the STO. Given how CORSID had opposed German efforts to encourage individual workers to volunteer to travel to Germany for work in 1941, it is not surprising that they opposed the massive labour deportations envisaged by Sauckel. CORSID used its influence to work within the system to ease the symptoms of the STO most debilitating to the French steel industry. While CORSID tried to act as a shield to protect its firms and workers, its interventions were largely ineffective.

Franco-German integration under Speer and Bichelonne

The negative effects of the STO in France, particularly in terms of industrial production, were by no means lost on Bichelonne. Production in France was in steady decline: the lack of coal drove down production, which the Germans used to justify sending French workers to Germany, reducing production even further. Moreover, the majority of workers removed from French factories never made it to Germany. Alan Milward calculated that by September 1943, “only about ten per cent on average of the men detailed to go to

³²⁹ “Comité d’organisation de la sidérurgie. Région du Centre et de l’Ouest. Réunion du 13 avril 1943”, 13 April 1943, AQ 139 82, AN.

³³⁰ “Comité d’organisation de la sidérurgie. Région du Centre et de l’Ouest. Réunion du 18 mai 1943”, 18 May 1943, AQ 139 82, AN.

³³¹ “Comité d’organisation de la sidérurgie. Région du Centre et de l’Ouest. Réunion du 15 juin 1943”, 15 June, AQ 139 82, AN. The minutes of this meeting report that the factories of Guérigny and Imphy, both in Nièvre (Bourgogne), received North African workers from the German authorities.

³³² “Comité d’organisation de la sidérurgie. Région du Centre et de l’Ouest. Réunion du 13 juillet 1943”, 13 juillet, AQ 139 82, AN.

Germany actually arrived there”.³³³ A significant number of those fleeing the STO opted to join the Resistance, leading Vichy to cheekily refer to the *maquis* as *l’armée Sauckel*.³³⁴ With shortages of raw material and labour, dwindling production, low morale, and a burgeoning Resistance amongst its consequences, the STO was a disaster for French industry.

It was in this context that Jean Bichelonne travelled to Berlin to meet Albert Speer, the German Minister for Armaments and War Production, in September 1943.³³⁵ The two men had a great deal in common, both generally being described as young, apolitical technocrats.³³⁶ Bichelonne argued that France could produce far more efficiently for the German war economy if French workers could return to French factories and if the labour deportations were to cease. Speer proposed that France focus primarily on consumer goods, along with some military equipment, which would enable German factories to replace production of such goods with armaments, thereby increasing military output in Germany. In addition, all French factories participating in this scheme would be shielded from Sauckel’s labour drafts, giving further incentive for industrialists to take part.³³⁷

This arrangement marked the most explicit attempt to realise “the New Economic Order in Europe” outlined by German Minister for the Economy Walther Funk in July 1940.³³⁸ By shifting the production of consumer goods to France, Germany was in effect accepting a degree of interdependence with France, rather than considering it as a stable of workers that could be plundered at will. Crucially, Speer and Bichelonne recognised the key

³³³ Alan Milward, *The New Order and the French Economy* (Oxford: OUP, 1970), 153.

³³⁴ There is some debate as to how many conscripted for work in Germany actually joined the *maquis*, with one estimate placing the proportion as low as 19% (for the *département* of Tarn). See Jean-Pierre Azéma and Olivier Wieviorka, *Vichy, 1940-1944* (Paris: Perrin, 2004), 256.

³³⁵ Given that German industry was formally oriented towards armaments and war production, Speer can be considered Bichelonne’s opposite number.

³³⁶ This characterisation has been questioned in some recent works. Speer’s purported apoliticism is rejected by Tooze as “self-evidently absurd”, given Speer’s membership in the Nazi Party since 1931 and the political implications of his actions as Minister – by increasing German production he prolonged the war. The depiction of Jean Bichelonne as apolitical has recently come under similar criticism, notably by Jackie Clarke, who describes Bichelonne’s proposals to integrate the French economy into a German-led Europe as “political choices [...] despite the professed apoliticism of technicians”. See Tooze, *op.cit.*, 552-3 and Jackie Clark, *France in the Age of Organization* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2011), 132-135.

³³⁷ “Procès-verbal de la conférence tenue à Berlin le vendredi 17 septembre 1943 dans le bureau de Monsieur Speer”, 17 September 1943, AJ 72 1926, AN. In Speer’s memoirs, he writes favourably of the plan, as it allowed the Reich to gain armaments capacity and “seemed to be the only way [he] could harness French industrial production to [German] purposes”. He adds that “Hitler proved content” with the plan. See Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, (New York: Macmillan, 1970), 310-11.

³³⁸ Walther Funk, “The economic reorganization of Europe” in Walter Lipgens (ed.), *Documents on the history of European integration. Volume I: Continental plans for European union, 1939-1945* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1985), 65-70.

role the Organisation Committees would play in this arrangement.³³⁹ This is hardly surprising, since the Committees were initially created precisely to facilitate this kind of Franco-German integration.³⁴⁰ The Committees continued to receive orders from German firms and authorities and allocate them to the appropriate French firms. Given the opposition to labour deportations in the French steel industry, CORSID welcomed the agreement and cooperated with the scheme by accepting more German orders after September 1943.³⁴¹ Moreover, the agreement would ensure more work for French factories, which would prevent them from closing and could bring greater profits.³⁴² Crucially, the coal required for German orders was meant to be provided by Germany; with Germany itself increasingly short on coal, however, the provisions of coal often fell short of what was needed. Finally, the prospect of producing chiefly consumer goods rather than armaments undoubtedly made these orders easier to accept, as they could be presented as civilian production. Of course, in the European economy envisaged by Speer and Bichelonne, shifting civilian production to France freed up German factories to focus on armaments production and thereby contributed significantly to the German war effort.

Although industrialists welcomed the accord, its success is debatable. Adam Tooze dismisses the arrangement as “a last-ditch effort of little practical significance”,³⁴³ although he bases his assessment on whether the accord helped the New European Economy compete with Allied production, which by September 1943 was far outpacing that of the Nazi Empire. Alan Milward concludes that neither the STO nor the Speer-Bichelonne accord was successful, “since the level of exploitation of the French economy [by Germany] was so high already”.³⁴⁴ Furthermore, since Hitler never abandoned Sauckel’s policy entirely, the two remained in competition until the end of the occupation, which undermined the efficiency of both schemes.³⁴⁵ Arne Radtke-Delacor, meanwhile, argues that the Speer-Bichelonne

³³⁹ “Procès-verbal de la conférence tenue à Berlin le vendredi 17 septembre 1943 dans le bureau de Monsieur Speer”, 17 September 1943, AJ 72 1926, AN.

³⁴⁰ See Chapter One.

³⁴¹ “Comité d’organisation de la sidérurgie. Région du Centre et de l’Ouest. Réunion du 18 avril 1944”, 18 April 1944, AQ 139 82, AN.

³⁴² These were the two principal motivations for industrial collaboration among the French *patronat*. See Fabian Lemmes, “Collaboration in wartime France, 1940-1944” in *European Review of History: Revue européenne d’histoire*, 15:2, 2008, 157-177. Economic collaboration is discussed below.

³⁴³ Adam Tooze, *op.cit.*, 640

³⁴⁴ Alan Milward, *The New Order and the French Economy*, *op.cit.*, 179-80.

³⁴⁵ Although the number of deportations dropped significantly, several thousand continued to be deported monthly after September 1943. Milward calculates that 5000 workers were deported in September 1943 and fewer than 4000 in October; see Milward, *op.cit.*, 161. Speer cites very similar figures in his memoirs; see

arrangement was in fact successful for the Reich, since the amount of French production for Germany did increase following September 1943. Yet the rates cited by Radtke-Delacor are far from revolutionary: he calculates that the proportion of overall French production for Germany rose from just over 40% in the second quarter of 1943 to between 45-50% by the second quarter of 1944.³⁴⁶ We know that production for Germany in the steel industry was much higher: in the spring of 1944, a typical proportion of production for the Reich among French steel firms was between 75% and 85%.³⁴⁷ Over the period covered by the agreement, however, steel production in fact dropped slightly, with the output of Martin steel falling from 13,236 tonnes in September 1943 to 12,234 tonnes in May 1944 in the Centre-Ouest region.³⁴⁸ This was in large part due to the drastic shortages of coal confronting French industry. Despite taking part in the Speer-Bichelonne programme to produce consumer goods for Germany, the French steel industry in Centre-Ouest received only 7,500 tonnes of coal for April 1944, which came with the caveat that the entire amount had to be allocated to a single factory in order to maximise efficiency.³⁴⁹ This can be compared to 34,000 tonnes received in September 1942, which itself was a decrease from previous months.³⁵⁰ Indeed, given the circumstances, ranging from ever worsening shortages of coal to increasingly frequent Allied bombings of French factories, it is striking how much the French steel industry was able to produce, even if there was a real decline in output. From September 1943, we can observe an increase in the proportion of production for Germany, even if overall output continued to drop amidst the worsening shortages of raw materials.

More important than the question of whether production levels remained steady or whether they either increased or decreased slightly under the scheme is the policy pursued by the French government and CORSID at this point. From September 1943, Bichelonne opposed further deportations of workers to Germany and worked to keep them in France.

Speer, *op.cit.*, 311. In February 1944, the eligibility criteria for being drafted for compulsory labour were broadened even further, aggravating concerns over additional deportations.

³⁴⁶ Arne Radtke-Delacor, "Produire pour le Reich", *op.cit.*, 114.

³⁴⁷ "France industrie", 25 April 1944, F 12 9971, AN. According to this calculation, the Etablissements Edmond Chevalier in Verneuil-sur-Eure was producing 75% for the Reich, while the Fonderie des Avenues in Pont Audemer was producing 85% for the Reich, with the remainder reserved for the SNCF. Both firms were protected under the Speer-Bichelonne agreement from the STO (*Sperrbetriebe*).

³⁴⁸ "Comité d'organisation de la sidérurgie. Région du Centre et de l'Ouest. Réunion du 13 octobre, 1942", 13 October 1942 and "Comité d'organisation de la sidérurgie. Région du Centre et de l'Ouest. Réunion du 13 juin 1944", 13 June 1944, AQ 139 82, AN.

³⁴⁹ "Comité d'organisation de la sidérurgie. Région du Centre et de l'Ouest. Réunion du 16 mai 1944", 16 May 1944, AQ 139 82, AN.

³⁵⁰ "Comité d'organisation de la sidérurgie. Région du Centre et de l'Ouest. Réunion du 13 octobre 1942", 13 October 1942, AQ 139 82, AN.

The policy of the Ministry for Industrial Production was therefore to accept as many orders for the Reich as possible, thereby contributing to the German war economy by producing consumer goods rather than providing workers. Not surprisingly, this policy was promoted by the Organisation Committees that operated under the Ministry. Indeed, this broad policy had been at the foundation of the Committees, which had never been enthusiastic about the mass deportations of their workers. At the governmental level, meanwhile, Laval resisted Sauckel's further requests for labour, signalling support for the Bichelonne-Speer agreement as an alternative to the STO. From September 1943 until the end of the Vichy regime, the government opposed further deportations and focused its energies on increasing production for the Reich as a way of contributing to, and integrating into, the German war economy.³⁵¹

Harmonising Franco-German industry

By February 1942, with the worsening shortage of coal taking its toll on the steel industry, officials began discussing, apparently without irony, the prospect of melting down the Eiffel Tower to recycle its 7,200 tonnes of steel.³⁵² The intellectual Thierry Maulnier went further, suggesting that the much smaller Vendôme Column be recycled as well, not only for its raw materials but also “in the name of perspective and harmony”.³⁵³ The Column was famously made from the cannons captured from German armies by Napoleon at Austerlitz, and it was thought that destroying this monument to French victory over German forces might please the Nazis. Fortunately for Paris's skyline, neither of these schemes came to fruition, although French steel mills shipped many times the weight of the Eiffel Tower in steel products across the Rhine over the course of the war.

The majority of the work done by CORSID throughout the war was rather mundane and usually fairly technical,³⁵⁴ with its principal task being to distribute the raw materials

³⁵¹ Despite the opposition of Laval and Bichelonne, Hitler supported Sauckel's calls for more labour in early 1944 and the law of 4 September 1942 was consequently broadened on 1 February 1944 to include more categories, such as men up to 60 years old and women between 18 and 45.

³⁵² In one of the better-known anecdotes about Jean Bichelonne, the Minister was told of a German plan to melt down the Eiffel Tower for its steel. Bichelonne was able to spontaneously provide the figure for the exact tonnage of steel in the Tower, which was reassuringly small enough to make the scheme impractical. See Kuisel, *Capitalism and the State in Modern France: Renovation and Economic Management in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: CUP, 1981), 132.

³⁵³ “Bulletin d'information”, 9-11 February 1942, F 12 10933, AN. This was requested by Thierry Maulnier, a right-wing intellectual and future member of l'Académie française, in *l'Action Française*.

³⁵⁴ During the war, Committees' work was criticised for being arcane and unclear. One article claimed that employers affected by Committees' decisions were “incapable of understanding anything of the jumble of

allocated to the industry by OCRPI to the appropriate steel firms. Its other main responsibility was to receive and process orders from the German authorities, passing along the relevant order and the appropriate share of raw materials to a given steel firm. The Committees had after all been established in the summer of 1940 in order to stand between individual French firms and intimidating German authorities. The coordination of German orders was assigned to the *Comptoir des Produits Sidérurgiques* (CPS), created by CORSID in December 1940.³⁵⁵ It largely inherited the role of the pre-war *Comptoir sidérurgique de France* (CSF), which had been responsible for receiving and centralising orders and deliveries for the industry. The role that the new CPS played, however, was fundamentally different. The Committees, CORSID chief among them, had been created with a view to institutionalise and deepen economic collaboration between France and Germany. CORSID found it useful to adapt the pre-war CSF to this end in the form of the new CPS. The latter would deal extensively with German authorities and industrialists, receiving orders from and producing extensively for them. CORSID even published a bilingual technical vocabulary list to help German and French steel industrialists ensure they were placing and receiving the correct orders.³⁵⁶

In addition to receiving German orders, CORSID also oversaw attempts to “harmonise” French and German steel production. In reality, this involved adapting French practices to German ones. This was largely carried out by the *Bureau de normalisation de la sidérurgie* (BNS), another body established by CORSID and placed under the leadership of Eugène Dupuy. Its role was formally to standardise steel production across France, ensuring that various steel products were uniform and thus interchangeable.³⁵⁷ This is broadly in line with much of the literature that emphasises the technocratic standardisation imposed on French industry under Vichy.³⁵⁸ Crucially, however, the BNS took the specifications used in Germany as its point of reference, and sought to harmonise France’s steel products in line

often contradictory memoranda” emitted by the Committees, with the result of the memoranda simply being ignored. See *L’Espoir Français*, 10 November 1942 in “Revue de presse. Partie économique (du 23 au 29 Novembre)”, compiled by OCRPI, F 12 10931, AN.

³⁵⁵ Indeed, the creation of this body was only the second formal action CORSID took, the first being the appointment of Daum as responsible for the steel industry in Centre-Midi, on 25 November 1940.

“Déclaration no. 2”, CORSID, 3 December 1940, AQ 139 80, AN.

³⁵⁶ “Circulaire du 7 août 1941”, 7 August 1941, AQ 139 79, AN. CORSID issued the circular to ask how many copies of the French-German and German-French technical vocabulary list each factory wanted to receive.

³⁵⁷ “Circulaire du 27 octobre 1941”, 27 October 1941, AQ 139 79, AN.

³⁵⁸ See, for instance, Richard Kuisel, *Capitalism and the State in Modern France*, op.cit. and Gérard Brun, *Techniciens et technocratie en France* (Paris : Albatros, 1985).

with these dimensions. This started in earnest in March 1942, when the BNS informed all steel firms of the new “standard dimensions for thin sheet metal (*tôles minces*)”.³⁵⁹ These dimensions were confirmed throughout the war and while they had initially been “recommended”, they later became obligatory. These specifications remained in place after the Liberation and were confirmed in April 1945.³⁶⁰

Adopting German practices and specifications made sense in this context. Given that by 1944 the overwhelming majority of French steel production was geared towards filling German orders, it was logical to export products that could be used immediately by the German war economy without modification. Since French factories had replaced German ones in producing many non-military goods for the German market, many French steel mills had become little more than branch plants of the Reich’s economy by the late stages of the war, and so their products were made as if they were in Germany. Yet these developments had been underway for some time, as CORSID received orders from German firms and oversaw the adoption of German specifications well before the Speer-Bichelonne agreement was reached, since production for the Reich still accounted for the majority of the steel industry’s orders. The BNS had been active in this process of adopting German standards since 1941 and by June 1943 the CPS had compiled an extensive list of prices for products with German specifications that had been approved by the Reich authorities.³⁶¹ In December 1943, by now under the aegis of the Speer-Bichlonne agreement, the Reichsbahn ordered large sheet metal (*larges plats*) made according to German specifications,³⁶² while Stahlunion, a subsidiary of Otto Wolff, made numerous orders in 1944 for sheet metal (*larges plats* and *tôles fortes, moyennes et minces*), all explicitly following German standards and specifications.³⁶³ The CPS continued to send price lists and other documents to Stahlunion until at least mid-July 1944. In other words, CORSID was continuing to supply the Reich with French steel products even as the German army was fighting Allied troops on French soil. In November 1944, two months after the re-establishment of the French Republic, Otto

³⁵⁹ “Lettre d’Eugène Dupuy”, 17 March 1942, AQ 139 79, AN.

³⁶⁰ See, for instance, “Note du BNS sur l’épaisseur des tôles minces”, April 1945, AQ 139 80, AN.

³⁶¹ “Prix, produits selon les spécifications allemands homologués”, 4 June 1943, AQ 104 113, ANMT.

³⁶² “Larges plats satisfaisant à des spécifications allemandes”, December 1943, AQ 104 113, ANMT.

³⁶³ See, for example, “Larges plats suivant norme allemande”, 19 January 1944 and “Tôles fortes, moyennes et minces satisfaisant à des spécifications allemandes”, 28 April 1944, AQ 104 113, ANMT. I have included the French names of these steel products since both *plat* and *tôle* would be rendered into English as “sheet metal”.

Wolff, one of the leading armaments producers for the Wehrmacht, complained to the CPS that one of its orders had still not arrived.³⁶⁴

In Nord and Pas-de-Calais, meanwhile, the “harmonisation” of French and German steel production happened in a far more direct way. SIDENOR, the organisation analogous to CORSID in the two northernmost departments, reported that the German authorities there forced all steel firms in the region to adopt the German method for producing Thomas steel. Unsurprisingly, the Nazi authorities judged the German production method superior to the one used by the French.³⁶⁵ Annexed to Belgium by Germany and in the midst of a crippling shortage of coal, Nord and Pas-de-Calais had little choice but to assimilate to the production methods imposed on it by Germany.

This standardisation in the French steel industry was of tremendous significance. Not only did the BNS standardise steel products across France, but it harmonised Franco-German specifications (albeit by unilaterally accepting Germany’s), which facilitated the easy transfer of French steel products to the German economy. Importantly, this standardisation occurred before the Speer-Bichelonne agreement, demonstrating that even while CORSID was protesting against the deportation of French workers, it continued to integrate the French steel industry into *l’Europe allemande*. Given that the Organisation Committees were first created to facilitate the realisation of a “New Economic Order in Europe”,³⁶⁶ their progress in standardising French production to German norms is not surprising. Moreover, by the time that Speer and Bichelonne agreed to cross-Rhine economic cooperation, the French steel industry was already prepared to produce for Germany. The advances made by CORSID in this respect reveal that while they opposed the deportation of workers to Germany, they were entirely willing to produce for the Reich and to “harmonise” the industries of the two countries.

While this was particularly useful in the context of the German war economy, it presumably had longer-reaching consequences.³⁶⁷ In a report prepared for Jean Monnet in

³⁶⁴ Letter on behalf of Otto Wolff (signature illegible), 9 November 1944, AQ 106 14, ANMT.

³⁶⁵ “Note”, April 1942, in “Dossier Lille”, F 12 10935, AN.

³⁶⁶ This term is from a speech by German Minister for the Economy Walther Funk in July 1940, discussed in Chapter One. See Walther Funk, “The economic reorganization of Europe” in Walter Lipgens, *Documents on the history of European integration. Volume 1: Continental plans for European union, 1939-1945*, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1984), 65-70, here 66.

³⁶⁷ For instance, this harmonisation of French and German steel products would presumably facilitate the post-war integration of the two countries’ steel industries. While this thesis has traced the maintenance of the

July 1944, Secretary General for Industrial Production Lambert Blum-Picard described how French industry had been integrated into the German war economy. Admitting that some French industries were, “aside from a handful of French models, producing exclusively for German industry”, he noted that “these modifications were made for the sole purpose of waging war. They did not consist of determining the most efficient factory or method”.³⁶⁸ He concluded that “there will be lessons to be drawn [from the German occupation of Europe] regarding the organisation set up for economic planning over a vast area. But it seems to me that nothing will endure in terms of economic realities”. However, the remainder of the study makes the case for an economic union in Western Europe, including western Germany. The example of the “violent unification of Europe under German domination”,³⁶⁹ as Blum-Picard put it, was indeed studied by Monnet and others as they were developing plans for post-war France and Western Europe. In addition to providing a model for Jean Monnet to study, two individuals involved in this Franco-German collaboration, namely Léon Daum of CORSID and Karl-Maria Hettlage, an advisor of Albert Speer when the Speer-Bichelonne agreement was reached, went on to become members of the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community.³⁷⁰ While the ill-fated attempts to integrate Franco-German industry in the final stages of the Second World War proved were unsuccessful, we can observe some interesting continuities from the Speer-Bichelonne agreement to the eventual creation of the European Coal and Steel Community.

Economic collaboration in the French steel industry

Given the context of French industry under Vichy, it is hardly surprising that the steel industry produced massively for the Reich and the German war effort. Historians debate the exact figures regarding French output for Germany – a conservative estimate is that roughly

dimensions established under Vichy as far as the spring of 1945, it is beyond the scope of this study to consider the technical aspects of French steel production under the Fourth Republic leading up to the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community and the extent to which the wartime specifications were maintained. This would nevertheless be a useful topic for future research.

³⁶⁸ “Sur l’organisation de l’Europe d’après-guerre”, note de Blum-Picard, July 1944, AME 56 2, FJME.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

³⁷⁰ For Karl-Maria Hettlage, see Mauve Carbonell, “Karl-Maria Hettlage (1902-1995): un expert au service de l’Europe et des Allemagnes” in *Journal of European Integration History*, 23:1, 2006, 67-85.

56% of French steel products were for Germany,³⁷¹ while a bolder study has claimed that the French steel industry was producing 100% for the Reich.³⁷² It is beyond dispute that French steel firms produced heavily for Germany, and it was clear from the summer of 1940 that industrial production would henceforth be dependent on producing for the Reich. According to Fabian Lemmes, “this does not seem to have caused any serious reluctance among the great majority of French enterprises [...who] accommodated themselves to the new situation”.³⁷³ Precisely what form of cooperation this could take is generally divided into three categories of economic collaboration: economic collaborationism, driven by ideological identification with National Socialism; collaboration for profit, where firms were motivated by economic opportunism; and collaboration for survival, where the goal was simply to save one’s firm from occupation or closure.³⁷⁴ In the case of the steel industry, there does not seem to be any evidence of collaboration driven by ideological affinity, or collaborationism. Similarly, cases of outright resistance by employers in the steel industry are rare and disputed, as will be discussed below with the example of Schneider. The primary motivation for collaborating in the steel industry seems to have been the protection of one’s firm, with profit a secondary but nonetheless important motive.³⁷⁵ For much of the war, these goals could both be achieved by producing for the Reich, which provided an income stream and kept factories running.³⁷⁶

³⁷¹ Philippe Mioche, “Les entreprises sidérurgiques sous l’Occupation”, *Histoire, économie et société*, 11.3, 1992, 397-414, here 401. Mioche adds that this figure could reach 90% for the steel industry in Nord, which was detached from France and appended to Belgium for administrative purposes in 1940.

³⁷² Annie Lacroix-Riz, *Industriels et banquiers sous l’Occupation*, 146. Lacroix-Riz argues that ‘at the beginning of 1944, the [steel] industry was working at 100% (of which roughly 90% was directly delivered) for the Reich’. This calculation includes all steel products for which Germany was the final destination, and therefore includes steel used by other French industries to produce goods which were in turn sent to Germany (such as automobiles or aeroplanes). It is important to note that this is an estimate of production in 1944 only and does not apply to the earlier years of the Vichy period.

³⁷³ Fabian Lemmes, “Collaboration in wartime France, 1940-1944” in *European Review of History: Revue européenne d’histoire*, 15:2, 2008, 157-177, 163.

³⁷⁴ This typology is advanced in Robert Frank, Jean-Marie Flonneau and Robert Mancherini, “Conclusion” in Alain Beltran, Robert Frank and Henry Rousso (eds), *La vie des entreprises sous l’Occupation* (Paris: Belin, 1994). This categorisation has been favoured in recent literature, such as Fabian Lemmes, *op.cit.*, 162-3.

³⁷⁵ The related notion of professionalism among employers is discussed in Renaud de Rochebrune and Jean-Claude Hazera, *Les patrons sous l’Occupation* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 1995). For a recent discussion of professionalism in the railway industry, see Ludivine Broch, “Professionalism in the Final Solution: French Railway Workers and the Jewish Deportations, 1942-1944” in *Contemporary European History*, 23:3, August 2014.

³⁷⁶ Some scholars have argued that the final category, collaboration for survival, should not be considered as a form of collaboration, since it was not a freely chosen course of action. The terms “coerced accommodation” and “coerced adaptation” have been suggested as alternatives by Philippe Burrin and François Marcot,

Despite the central importance of the steel industry for both France and Germany, and the undeniable extent to which the industry produced for the Reich, it is striking how little attention the industry receives from historians of economic collaboration.³⁷⁷ One of the best collected volumes on economic collaboration, edited by Olivier Dard et al., mentions the steel industry only in passing over the course of three pages, ignoring the industry in the remainder of the book.³⁷⁸ Similarly, Annie Lacroix-Riz's provocative study of French industrialists and bankers during the war dedicates fewer than eight pages to the steel industry.³⁷⁹ Other landmark studies, such as Philippe Burrin's *France à l'heure allemande*, make only passing references to steel firms.³⁸⁰ The historian who has written most extensively on the French steel industry in the 1940s, Philippe Mioche, has explained in a number of publications that the war was neither beneficial nor profitable for the industry, largely because it was unable to modernise or replace its equipment which therefore deteriorated over the course of the war. Mioche nevertheless admits that the steel industry did indeed produce heavily for the Reich.³⁸¹ Ultimately, the precise figures detailing how much the French steel industry produced for the German war effort are of secondary importance. What is crucial and undeniable is that the French steel industry did indeed contribute massively to the German war economy.

respectively. While these new categories are useful for the discussion of economic collaboration of heads of individual firms, they are less helpful for describing the actions of the members of the Organisation Committees. Given that the Committees were created expressly to facilitate Franco-German collaboration, and that members of these bodies were not coerced to join, the newer categories are less accurate in describing the actions of Committee members. It should also be noted that there is no evidence of collaborationism among any members of CORSID. See Philippe Burrin, *La France à l'heure allemande* (Paris: Seuil, 1995), especially 468-470 and François Marcot, "Qu'est-ce qu'un patron résistant?" in Olivier Dard, Jean-Claude Daumas, and François Marcot (eds), *L'Occupation, l'Etat français et les entreprises* (Paris: ADHE, 2000), 277-292, here 278-80.

³⁷⁷ The key works in this field include Richard Vinen, *The politics of French business, 1936-1945*, op.cit.; Beltran, Frank and Rousso (eds.), *La vie des entreprises sous l'Occupation*, op.cit.; Annie Lacroix-Riz, *Industriels et banquiers sous l'Occupation*, op.cit.; Dard, Daumas and Marcot (eds.), *L'Occupation, l'Etat français et les entreprises*, op.cit.

³⁷⁸ Dard, Daumas and Marcot, op.cit., 248-250. These references are all contained in Hervé Joly's contribution, "Prosopographie des dirigeants des Comités d'organisation", 245-259. It is worth noting that his citations regarding the steel industry are without exception to Philippe Mioche's work. François Marcot's contribution to this volume, discussed above, makes no mention of the steel industry.

³⁷⁹ Annie Lacroix-Riz, op.cit., 146-153. Lacroix-Riz asks why the steel industry is looked on positively by historians, given that it produced 100% for the Reich by 1944.

³⁸⁰ Philippe Burrin, *La France à l'heure allemande*, op.cit. In his chapter "Capitaines d'industrie", Burrin mentions that Schneider accepted a representative of the Vichy regime to approve German industrial orders (251), and that the largest steel companies in France, de Wendel and Schneider, had lost the majority of their holdings with the German victory and annexations (254).

³⁸¹ Philippe Mioche advances this argument most clearly in "Les entreprises sidérurgiques sous l'Occupation", *Histoire, économie et société*, 11:3, 1992, 397-414.

One of the most interesting arguments to have emerged in the recent historiography on economic collaboration is that of deliberate underproduction (*freinage*). While this had been a common defence of industrialists in the early post-war period, it has become popular among some historians over the past fifteen years. The crux of the argument is that certain factories consciously chose to slow their production during the war as a means of hampering the German war economy. François Marcot first made the argument in relation to Peugeot, which he described as having pursued “a deliberate policy of underproduction by the most diverse means”.³⁸² He cites a declaration made by Jean-Pierre Peugeot in September 1945, who claimed that the firm’s priorities had been to protect French factories from German occupation and to supply work and well-being to its employees. Raw materials were needed in order to keep the factories running, however, and these could only be received from Germany if Peugeot agreed to produce for the Reich. Yet, Jean-Pierre Peugeot claims “we arranged that these materials not be transformed into arms”, but that they instead be used for non-military production.³⁸³

According to Marcot, the general strategy of the firm can be summarised as to produce for the Reich in order to survive, while minimising the amount of war *matériel* produced. He qualifies the production levels of Peugeot – 90% of its automotive production during the war went to the Reich – by noting that wartime production levels were markedly lower than those during the interwar period and that many of the orders for war *matériel*, ranging from cylinder heads for German military vehicles to parts for the V1 flying bombs, were only partially completed.³⁸⁴ Marcot also notes that producing more for the Reich was the alternative to seeing many workers shipped to Germany as part of the STO, and admits that Peugeot acted to protect his factory, “his capital, his business relations, his machines, [and] his [workers]” by accepting German orders. While these actions would place Peugeot

³⁸² François Marcot, “La direction de Peugeot sous l’Occupation: pétainisme, réticence, opposition et résistance” in *Mouvement social*, no. 189, October-December 1999, 27-46, 44.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, 29-30. The quotation from Jean-Pierre Peugeot is from 28 September 1945. Given that these claims were made at precisely the time when industrialists were being put on trial for collaboration (and that Renault, Peugeot’s main rival in the French automotive industry, had been nationalised earlier that year), it is worth treating such self-exonerating claims with some scepticism.

³⁸⁴ Indeed, Marcot notes that 80% of the orders for cylinder heads were completed, whereas production on the component parts of the V1 flying bombs, commissioned late in the war, was never completed. *Ibid.*, 29-32.

in the category of “collaboration for survival”, Marcot concludes that they qualify as having been part of the Resistance.³⁸⁵

This basic argument has been reiterated in the context of the steel industry by Christophe Capuano through his case study of Schneider in Creusot.³⁸⁶ He also argues that Schneider’s production for the Reich was focused on non-military goods, with only 20% of total production devoted to military orders, and that production in the factory “stagnated”, despite efforts by the German authorities to increase efficiency. Capuano attributes this to “the patriotic dimension and the refusal to work for Germany” of the directors of the factory.³⁸⁷ Accordingly, Capuano argues that Allied bombings of the factory in 1942 and 1943 as well as the chronic shortage of raw materials were merely convenient excuses to conceal the conscious underproduction pursued by Schneider, rather than causes of lower production levels. Like Marcot, Capuano advances that Schneider’s strategy was to accept orders from the Reich in order to keep the factory open and prevent workers from being sent to Germany, but that production was consciously reduced as much as possible, which he also categorises as Resistance.

There are a number of issues with the underproduction argument. As Marcot openly admits, there is no tangible proof that such actions took place. On official documents and pieces of correspondence from industrialists or from either French or German authorities, the reasons for reduced production are identified as serious shortages of raw material, particularly coal, and labour, blamed on the STO. Additionally, Allied bombings and occasional acts of sabotage by the Resistance are cited as disruptive factors. The claim that these were merely excuses given to the authorities to mask unverifiable strategies of producing less than what was possible is innately difficult if not impossible to prove. Moreover, as Richard Vinen has argued, certain acts by employers can be presented as both collaboration and resistance. Keeping factories open and thereby preventing workers from being deported to Germany, for instance, can be interpreted as patriotism, while keeping

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 45-46. Marcot describes Peugeot as being among “employers in the Resistance”, who balanced the needs of their firms with the values of the Resistance. Marcot also rejects the label “collaboration for survival” in favour of “coerced adaptation”, which he argues better describes the experience of Peugeot during the war.

³⁸⁶ Christophe Capuano, “Travailler chez Schneider sous l’Occupation, Le cas des usines du Creusot” in Christian Chevandier and Jean-Claude Daumas (eds.), *Travailler dans les entreprises sous l’Occupation* (Besançon: Presses universitaires de Franche-Comté, 2007), 187-207.

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 189-193. The figure of 20% cited by Capuano is from fairly early in the Vichy period, in January 1941. He also notes that at this time 46% of Schneider’s production was for German civilian orders, meaning that two-thirds of all production was for the Reich by January 1941.

factories open to produce extensively for the German war effort can be seen as collaboration.³⁸⁸

The worsening shortage of raw materials, and particularly coal, during the Vichy period is undisputed. For Capuano, however, the decision of the Director General of Schneider to postpone lighting a second blast furnace in 1944, and later to shut off the largest blast furnace due to lack of cast iron, was an act of resistance by consciously choosing to minimise production, rather than a consequence of the acute shortage of raw materials in 1944.³⁸⁹ This particular claim can be countered by CORSID's monthly reports, which describe how "the stocks [of cast iron] have decreased [and] factories with Martin blast furnaces in operation are encountering difficulties as a result of their provisions in cast iron".³⁹⁰ The following month's report confirmed that "Creusot had to stop one of its blast furnaces due to the lack of cast iron".³⁹¹ Moreover, the number of blast furnaces active in France fluctuated during the Vichy period as a result of the inconsistent deliveries of raw materials. As a result, the number of Martin blast furnaces active in 1941 varied from an average of 14 between January and May, to 12 in June, 10 in July, and 9 in August, only to rise back to 12 in November before dropping back to 10 in December.³⁹² Given how much the scarcity of raw materials had worsened between 1941 and 1944, it is hardly surprising that the number of active blast furnaces had to be slightly reduced, particularly as the number of active blast furnaces had varied according to provisions of raw materials throughout the period.

It is also important to note that all the works that advance the underproduction argument end their study in the summer of 1944. Indeed, one of the foundations of the argument rests on the observation that production before 1940 was higher than it was between the Fall of France and the Liberation, which is then used as evidence that firms were

³⁸⁸ Vinen notes that any activity that was seen to disadvantage the working classes was often interpreted as collaboration. Vinen also dismisses post-war claims by the *patronat* that they had consciously underproduced, concluding that "it was in the interests of the coal industry to produce as much as possible". See Richard Vinen, "The French Coal Industry during the Occupation", *op.cit.*, 119 and 117.

³⁸⁹ Capuano, *op.cit.*, 195.

³⁹⁰ "Comité d'organisation de la sidérurgie. Région du Centre et de l'Ouest. Réunion du 13 juin 1944", 13 June 1944, AQ 139 82, AN.

³⁹¹ "Comité d'organisation de la sidérurgie. Région du Centre et de l'Ouest. Réunion du 18 juillet 1944", 18 July 1944, AQ 139 82, AN.

³⁹² These figures are gathered from the minutes of CORSID's monthly meetings in AQ 139 82, AN.

consciously producing less than they could have.³⁹³ This argument consciously downplays the myriad factors that prevented French productivity from reaching pre-war levels. The most significant of these was the lack of raw materials, which became a crisis from the moment that Britain, responsible for a full third of France's pre-war provision of coal, stopped sending coal across the Channel in the summer of 1940. Impressively, the French steel industry was able to match 1938 production levels in the last quarter of 1940, the first quarter in which the industry was overseen by CORSID, but firms only achieved these levels of production by depleting their own stocks of coal.³⁹⁴ Once these had been exhausted, production inexorably declined as coal deliveries dropped further from their pre-war levels. The fact that steel production declined in this context is hardly convincing evidence of a conscious choice by employers to restrain production.

In addition to understanding the new circumstances of 1940, it is helpful to extend the frame of reference beyond the Liberation – something that no study advancing the underproduction argument has done. If underproduction in early 1944 was due to political opposition rather than lack of raw materials, it is reasonable to assume that the change of regime that accompanied the Liberation would lead to an immediate increase in production, as resistant firms stopped consciously underproducing. Yet steel production worsened following the Liberation, with production in November and December 1944 amounting to only 40% of that of November 1943.³⁹⁵ Even by November 1945 blast furnaces remained unlit due to lack of coal,³⁹⁶ and the CGT complained about the low levels of steel production, which were attributed to coal shortages.³⁹⁷ If the underproduction argument were to be believed, it would mean that low production levels in the first half of 1944 were caused by conscious opposition to the regime and not an acute shortage of raw materials, while low production levels after the Liberation were caused by an acute shortage of raw materials

³⁹³ See Marcot, *op.cit.*, 30-32. Talbot Imlay summarises this point as “if the Germans captured a large part of the productive pie, it was a pie that had considerably shrunk”. See Talbot Imlay and Martin Horn, *The Politics of Industrial Collaboration during World War II: Ford France, Vichy and Nazi Germany* (Cambridge: CUP, 2014), 267.

³⁹⁴ “Comité d’organisation de la sidérurgie. Région du Centre et de l’Ouest. Réunion du 14 janvier 1941”, 14 January 1941, AQ 139 82, AN. The production of Martin steel in the last quarter of 1940 in Centre-Ouest was actually 101% of that of the last quarter of 1938, although the production of finished products was only 71% compared to 1938.

³⁹⁵ “Note hebdomadaire sur la situation de l’industrie”, 28 December 1944, F 12 10024, AN. 20,000 tonnes were produced in both November and December 1944, compared to 50,000 in November 1943 and a monthly average of 65,000 tonnes in 1938.

³⁹⁶ “Note”, 23 November 1945, F 12 10028, AN.

³⁹⁷ “Note pour Vallon, directeur adjoint du cabinet du général de Gaulle”, 23 November 1945, F 12 10028, AN. The note concludes that “the solution is clear: we need more coal from the Ruhr”.

which was accompanied by support of the new regime. Far more plausible is that the penury of coal and other crucial resources was the determining factor in both situations.³⁹⁸

An additional qualification must be added to the claim of industrialists in the immediate post-war period, which has been reiterated more recently by Marcot and Capuano, namely that focusing on the production of civilian rather than military goods amounted to a form of resistance.³⁹⁹ It must be remembered that according to the Speer-Bichelonne accords, France would focus on producing consumer goods for the Reich, which would free up German factories for armaments production.⁴⁰⁰ In this case, the fact that civilian goods were made on one side of the Rhine and armaments on the other, with all products created according to German specifications and destined for the same market, can be seen as the realisation of a coordinated Franco-German economy geared towards prolonging the German war effort rather than an act of resistance. The French steel industry's extensive production for Germany thus contributed to the German war effort, regardless of whether the factories were producing train carriages or tank armour.

The only critical evaluation of the underproduction argument to date is by Talbot Imlay. Focusing on Ford France, Imlay constructs "a circumstantial case that Ford [France] probably did deliberately under-produce for the Germans", while recognising that "this outcome did not constitute resistance".⁴⁰¹ Imlay observes that Ford France had "to produce enough to keep its factories running and to appease the German (and French) authorities, but no more". Given the lack of incentive to produce more than minimal levels, Imlay argues that "one can reasonably conclude that Ford [France] deliberately under-produced during 1943-4" because this was what best served its business interests. Imlay stresses that this was "never motivated by any principled opposition to the occupiers or by a desire to undermine the German war economy".⁴⁰² While Imlay's study is focused on an automotive company, his assessment can reasonably be applied to the steel industry as well. It is entirely plausible

³⁹⁸ According to Klemmann and Kudryashov, French GDP was in fact lower in 1945 than in 1944, despite the majority of fighting on French soil, with all the disruption this caused, taking place in 1944. Only in 1946, with the Monnet Plan among other factors, did GDP decisively increase, although even in 1948 it remained lower than in 1940. See Hein Klemmann and Sergei Kudryashov, *Occupied Economies: An Economic History of Nazi-Occupied Europe, 1939-1945* (London: Berg, 2012), 331.

³⁹⁹ See Marcot, *op.cit.*, 44 and Capuano, *op.cit.*, 193-4.

⁴⁰⁰ In August 1940, the German authorities expressed their preference that France should produce component parts for war materiel rather than finished military goods. Speer similarly preferred that armaments be produced in Germany rather than in occupied territories. See "Tatigkeitsbericht", 10 August 1940, RW 24/15, BA-MA and, for Speer's preference for producing armaments in Germany, Speer, *op.cit.*, and Tooze, *op.cit.*

⁴⁰¹ Talbot Imlay and Martin Horn, *op.cit.*, 20.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, 243-4.

that steel firms produced slightly less than they possibly could have in order to maximise profits, while ensuring that they produced enough to please officials in Berlin and Vichy and thereby protect their factories. Similarly, it must be acknowledged that this strategy does not constitute resistance, but instead fits rather neatly into the categories of “collaboration for profit” and “collaboration for survival”. Indeed, producing enough to satisfy German and French authorities, even if it might have been possible to produce slightly more, still amounts to collaboration.

One vital element missing from both Marcot’s and Capuano’s pieces is any reference to the Organisation Committees.⁴⁰³ Both are case studies of particular firms that try to show the patriotic actions of particular employers. Raising our gaze to the level of the Organisation Committees, however, the evidence in favour of the underproduction argument becomes far weaker. Given CORSID’s willingness to conceal unemployment levels and to thwart German attempts to secure French labour, it may be conceivable that CORSID did the same for production levels. However, there is no evidence that such attempts were made, and they were certainly never discussed at CORSID’s meetings, unlike the schemes to disguise unemployment levels. Moreover, CORSID’s efforts to adapt the French steel industry to German specifications suggest not only that they were willing to produce for the Reich, but that they sought to do so as efficiently as possible. It must be remembered that the members of CORSID willingly joined of their own accord and were in no way coerced into becoming members of the new bodies geared towards furthering Franco-German collaboration. Finally, given how CORSID had agonised over the shortage of raw materials facing the industry, it is very unlikely that they would have accepted the waste of precious coal in order to produce slightly less for the Reich. Indeed, throughout the war CORSID established a number of commissions to improve the efficiency of factories and warned repeatedly against wasting coal. CORSID stated that “any waste [of coal] is severely proscribed”, and explained that “for the allocation of coal, we will be forced to choose the factories that make the most efficient use of coal”.⁴⁰⁴ As coal became ever scarcer, it is improbable that CORSID would have condoned the squandering of raw materials in order to underproduce for the Germans. Given that CORSID had to deal with both French and German authorities, it is likely that the

⁴⁰³ Imlay does discuss the Organisation Committee for Automobiles in his book, although the focus remains on COA’s role in the “Ford truck programme”, which saw Ford France producing trucks for Germany. See Imlay, *op.cit.*, 194-245.

⁴⁰⁴ “Réunion du Groupe Centre-Ouest du 8 avril 1941”, 8 April 1941, AQ 139 82, AN.

Committee did its best to ensure that production for the Reich was being carried out as efficiently as possible.

Conclusion

Having examined CORSID's actions in relation to the key policies pursued by the Vichy regime regarding French industry, we can consider CORSID's motivations. Clearly, CORSID did not blindly endorse whatever policies Pétain or Laval chose to pursue; on the contrary, CORSID went to considerable lengths to undermine German attempts to recruit workers from French steel factories. In choosing which policies to support and which to grudgingly implement (or even try to thwart), CORSID seems to have based its decisions on what was best for the French steel industry. In the case of the National Revolution and the Labour Charter, CORSID ignored the woolly tirades about reducing the dominance of "trusts" within the Organisation Committees, but does seem to have championed the creation of Social Committees outlined in the Charter, once it was made clear that these bodies would not impinge upon CORSID's powers. This same logic is apparent in CORSID's efforts to oppose the removal of workers from its factories. As the case of Audincourt demonstrates, the inconstant supply of raw materials meant that a factory might suddenly need more workers and it was therefore vital that the labour supply not be depleted during quieter periods. Finally, CORSID's efforts to standardise French steel production to German specifications and its increasing proportion of orders for the Reich show that its opposition was not to producing for the Reich, but rather that it objected to the removal of its workers. In each situation, CORSID acted in accordance with the goal of keeping its factories running. With reference to Frank et al., this constitutes one of the three categories of economic collaboration.⁴⁰⁵

Aside from the motivations of maintaining its factories' activity, CORSID's adoption of German specifications at French steel mills reveals the extent to which production was geared towards supplying the German war economy under Vichy. Given that the majority of French steel production was for the Reich, it is hardly surprising that they virtually ceased producing to French specifications altogether. Informed by considerations of efficiency, CORSID guided the industry into ever closer uniformity with the German model. The

⁴⁰⁵ Frank et al., "Conclusion", op.cit. and Lemmes, "Collaboration in wartime France", op.cit.

Organisation Committees were founded in the summer of 1940 to “harmonise” Franco-German industry and to facilitate France’s contribution to the German economy. In these tasks the Committee for Steel was remarkably successful.

The actions of CORSID during the war left an ambiguous legacy. While it opposed the labour draft and some aspects of the National Revolution, it embraced others and actively worked to integrate the French steel industry into the “new European economic order”. While CORSID was increasing its production for the Reich in early 1944, Charles de Gaulle and the other members of the *Comité français de Libération nationale* (CFLN) were discussing what would become of the Organisation Committees after the imminent demise of the Vichy regime. It is to that debate that we must now turn.

Chapter Four:

« *Nous serons les successeurs, sinon les héritiers de Vichy* »⁴⁰⁶ :

Maintaining the New Industrial Order in Post-Vichy France

As the final outcome of the Second World War in Europe became increasingly certain, various groups within the French Resistance began to intensify their efforts to develop coherent plans for the post-war period. Whereas the Fall of France had come as a surprise to virtually everyone, not least to Germany, and was followed by a flurry of relatively improvised legislation over the summer of 1940, the reconquest of France was a long-anticipated process, and the country's post-war economic, domestic, and foreign policies had already been debated extensively by the time Paris was liberated in August 1944. The standard narrative of this process highlights the re-establishment of the French Republic and the abolition of all Vichyste legislation, closing the bracket definitively on the *années noires*.⁴⁰⁷ Meanwhile, the unity of the Resistance is commended in accounts of the post-war programme issued by the *Conseil national de la Résistance* (CNR) on 15 March 1944, which is said to represent “a major trace of the transitory but real solidarity that existed among the French resisters”.⁴⁰⁸ This programme continues to be celebrated as the guiding text that shaped post-war France.⁴⁰⁹ From these accounts, it would seem as though the Resistance was unanimous in its commitment to wipe out Vichy's undemocratic legislation, to re-establish the French Republic, and to pursue the policies agreed upon in the CNR Programme.⁴¹⁰

This chapter will examine how the question of maintaining Vichy's industrial organisation figured in the Resistance's discussions of post-war policy. By 1943, a debate

⁴⁰⁶ Louis Vallon, “Note sur l'organisation professionnelle de la vie économique”, 2 June 1944, MAE, CFLN 687.

⁴⁰⁷ See, for example, Fondation Charles de Gaulle, *Le Rétablissement de la légalité républicaine* (Paris : Editions Complexe, 1996) and Jean Lacouture, *De Gaulle. Le rebelle, 1890-1944* (Paris : Seuil, 1984). Indeed, de Gaulle famously claimed that, since Vichy was illegitimate, the Republic had never ceased to exist and therefore did not need to be proclaimed. See Charles de Gaulle, *Mémoires de guerre. L'unité : 1942-1944* (vol. 2) (Paris: Plon, 1956).

⁴⁰⁸ Claire Andrieu, *Le programme commun de la Résistance. Des idées dans la guerre* (Paris : Editions de l'Erudit, 1984), 135.

⁴⁰⁹ For a recent example see Isser Woloch, *The Postwar Moment: The Allied Democracies in the Aftermath of World War II*, forthcoming.

⁴¹⁰ This Gaullist narrative has been challenged, notably in Henry Rousso, *Le syndrome de Vichy. De 1944 à nos jours* (Paris: Seuil, 1987), although Rousso does not discuss the CNR Programme in great detail.

had emerged over whether the Organisation Committees and offices of the Central Bureau for the Distribution of Industrial Products (OCRPI) created by Vichy in 1940 should be abolished or maintained by the new regime. On the one hand, these bodies were originally created to facilitate economic and political collaboration between Vichy France and Nazi Germany, with the goal of a harmonised European economy led by the Third Reich. Moreover, the Organisation Committees were dominated by the *patronat* and excluded labour representation, while largely overlooking the interests of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Given the profound implication of these institutions in France's collaboration with the Third Reich's war economy and the widespread unpopularity of the bodies, it was clear to many that they should be swept away with the re-establishment of the French Republic. On the other hand, the Committees and OCRPI had been established to deal with conditions of penury and chaos following the Fall of France – conditions that would in many respects be replicated following the reconquest of metropolitan France. In this light, a pragmatic argument in favour of maintaining the existing institutions until French industry was on sounder footing appealed to many. Despite differing opinions in 1943, by the spring of 1944 a consensus had been reached within the CFLN, and an uneasy agreement on the question was soon reached involving individuals from across the French political spectrum, from Communists to former Vichy ministers. By the time de Gaulle arrived in Paris, the fate of the Organisation Committees had long been decided.

Post-war programmes, Organisation Committees, and the division of the French left

Throughout the Second World War various groups within the Resistance issued declarations committing themselves to certain broad policies.⁴¹¹ The first post-war programme of any importance was issued by the *Comité d'action socialiste* (CAS) in January 1943. A socialist group within the Resistance, the CAS called for widespread nationalisations and the end of “trusts[...], competition, and profits”.⁴¹² Despite these socialist economic ambitions, however, no mention was made of the Organisation Committees or of how nationalised industries were to be organised in the still-hypothetical post-war era. The lack of details on this question is typical of early declarations on post-war

⁴¹¹ This section is indebted to the work of Claire Andrieu, Richard Kuisel, and Michel Margairaz. In particular, see Andrieu, *op.cit.*, Kuisel, *Capitalism and the State in Modern France* (Cambridge: CUP, 1981), and Margairaz, *L'Etat, les finances et l'économie. Histoire d'une conversion, 1932-1952* (Paris: CHEFF, 1991).

⁴¹² “Notre programme”, in *Le Populaire*, 16 janvier-1 février 1943. This is included in Andrieu, *op.cit.*

France, issued at a time when a German defeat seemed a distant, even if inevitable prospect. By the autumn of 1943, however, the advent of a post-war Europe seemed increasingly plausible. The Allies landed in North Africa in November 1942, and Algeria, still considered an integral part of France, was under Allied control. Over the summer of 1942 the Allies took Sicily, and in September landed on mainland Italy. As the defeat of Nazi Germany, and the accompanying fall of the Vichy regime, seemed to be approaching, the post-war programmes issued by the Resistance became more detailed in their policies. As the outcome of the war became clearer, more and more civil servants fled the ill-fated Vichy regime and joined the Resistance in Algiers, bringing with them their expertise and their intimate knowledge of Vichy's institutions.

In September 1943, two comprehensive post-war programmes produced by the Resistance appeared. The first, known as both the Laffon Report and the Guizot Report (Guizot was the Resistance name of the author, Emile Laffon), is a lengthy document that included an economic and social charter for post-Vichy France, as well as recommendations for domestic and foreign policy. The report echoes the CAS's call for nationalisations and the elimination of "trusts", so much so that Claire Andrieu has argued that Laffon derived his report from the CAS programme issued in January of that year.⁴¹³ While the earlier report had remained silent on the question of industrial organisation, however, Laffon was explicit: the Organisation Committees and OCRPI must be maintained, lest "France's depleted economy [...] lose itself in anarchy." Yet this support was not unconditional: the Committees had to be purged of their current leadership, be reduced in number, and be brought firmly under the control of the Ministry for Industrial Production. Furthermore, those who had engaged in economic collaboration – left undefined – were to be barred from serving the French state after the Liberation.⁴¹⁴ This formulation, calling at once for the maintenance and the purging of the Organisation Committees, indicates the balance sought by the author between economic pragmatism, on the one hand, and the demands of ideology and justice, on the other. The report, including its unequivocal call for the preservation of Vichy's industrial organisation bodies, enjoyed broad support from most of the interior Resistance, trade unions, and the remnants of the SFIO. It was nevertheless vehemently opposed by the Communists

⁴¹³ Andrieu, *op.cit.*, 38.

⁴¹⁴ Margairaz, *op.cit.*, 735-7

and the *Front national*⁴¹⁵, on the one hand, and by the right-wing factions of the Resistance, on the other.⁴¹⁶ The Communist opposition to the report hinged on the plans to maintain Vichy's industrial bodies, which were condemned as collaborationist. Despite significant support, the plan failed to achieve the consensus hoped for by the leaders of the Resistance.

That same month, the *Confédération générale du travail* (CGT) issued its *Programme d'action d'après-guerre*, although the long-standing divisions within the trade union confederation made it difficult to articulate a coherent policy. As with the contemporaneous Laffon Report, on the question of Organisation Committees, the CGT remained divided. The Communists within the CGT, known as the *unitaires*, demanded the "suppression of the Organisation Committees, whose malfeasance is obvious to all, and which constitute a strengthening of trusts".⁴¹⁷ The *confédérés*, the more moderate wing of the organisation, meanwhile, advocated the reform of the Organisation Committees, while recognising that maintaining them would be useful.⁴¹⁸ They suggested that the State should exert more control over the bodies, and be responsible for choosing Committee presidents from the ranks of the civil service. Moreover, the "trusts" would be stripped of their supposed monopoly within the bodies, while a "democratic representation of the elements of production", with members to be named by trade unions such as the CGT, would determine the composition of the Committees. We can therefore perceive a willingness to embrace a model of "industrial democracy" in the form of post-war Organisation Committees.⁴¹⁹ While this proposal to give greater powers to the State and to labour, at the expense of employers and factory-owners, won favour with the *confédérés* who supported Léon Jouhaux and generally backed the Socialists, it was unambiguously rejected by the Communist wing of the CGT. There are some significant similarities between the two post-war programmes issued in September 1943. In both cases, the Socialists supported the maintenance and reform of Vichy's Organisation Committees, with this proposal also enjoying broad support among the rest of the Resistance. The Communists, meanwhile, refused to endorse such plans, and insisted on the abolition of the Organisation Committees altogether. This division between the

⁴¹⁵ The *Front national* was a communist group within the Resistance, founded in May 1941. It has no link to the current French political party of the same name, which was founded in 1972.

⁴¹⁶ Margairaz, op.cit., 734.

⁴¹⁷ Andrieu, op.cit., 43.

⁴¹⁸ It is worth noting that René Belin, who created the Organisation Committees in August 1940 as Minister for Industrial Production and Labour, belonged to the latter group and rose to the rank of Deputy Secretary General of the CGT before resigning in 1940.

⁴¹⁹ Andrieu, op.cit., 43.

Communists and the rest of the French Left on the question of the Organisation Committees would replicate itself over the following months.

That particularly fruitful autumn produced yet another programme for post-war France, the so-called Courtin Report. Issued by the *Comité général d'études de la Résistance* (CGE), it was named after René Courtin, who led the small team of technocrats who drafted the document. The communists were intentionally excluded from this committee, although the Left was represented by Robert Lacoste, a socialist who would replace Jean Bichelonne as Minister for Industrial Production following the Liberation. In an earlier draft of the report, Courtin touched on the fate of the Organisation Committees and OCRPI: they would have to be maintained, despite their unpopularity, out of necessity and because Courtin concluded that French industrialists would prefer the maintenance of Vichy's system to an overly statist one.⁴²⁰ The final report, published in November 1943, suggested provisionally maintaining the Committees and OCRPI, allowing for their abolition once the economy was in a better state. It was suggested that Vichy's institutions could be substituted by a *Conseil des Investissements*, "véritable bureau du Plan", which was described as an independent body run by a small team of civil servants that would develop a *plan d'équipement* for the post-war years.⁴²¹ Yet the Courtin Report also failed to gain broad support: the communists, who had been excluded from its drafting, dismissed it as too liberal, as did many socialists, while the liberals derided it as overly *dirigiste*. The report ultimately failed to gain the CFLN's endorsement and was never directly implemented. Some historians have criticised the report for being plagued with internal contradictions, which could also explain its failure to enjoy widespread support.⁴²² It is nevertheless important to note that at this stage, the future Minister for Industrial Production, Lacoste, was promoting the strategy of maintaining Vichy's Organisation Committees. Moreover, the similar recommendations made in the Laffon report were generally received favourably by the Socialist wing of the CGT. Over the following months, this argument would increasingly gain traction, as socialists and liberals alike opted for the preservation of Vichy's industrial institutions.

These post-war programmes are useful for identifying the divisions within the French Left before the Liberation of the country. By the end of 1943, two distinct strategies were

⁴²⁰ Kuisel, op.cit., 287.

⁴²¹ Margairaz, op.cit., 729-30. The *Conseil des Investissements* of the Courtin Report is strikingly similar to what would ultimately emerge as the *Conseil Général du Plan* (CGP) under Monnet's leadership. The substitution of the Organisation Committees by the CGP's Modernisation Commissions is discussed in Chapter Six.

⁴²² Ibid., 733.

being pursued regarding French industrial policy. On the one hand, the centre-left saw in the existing Organisation Committees the tools for realising a strong, State-led economy with a greater role for workers in deciding on the direction of the nation's industry. On the other hand, the Communists remained steadfast in their opposition to maintaining Vichy's industrial organisation, and sought to abolish the Committees upon the Liberation of the country. Indeed, the Communist Party made it clear that the "radical *épuration* of the civilian and military administration" in France was a *sine que non* for its support.⁴²³ Given these divergent policies within the Left, it is hardly surprising that the first post-war Ministers for Industrial Policy acted in a way entirely consistent with the principles outlined in the autumn of 1943. Socialist Robert Lacoste protected the Organisation Committees and passed legislation to reform them lastingly. Conversely, his successor, communist Marcel Paul, seized the opportunity to abolish the Organisation Committees and OCRPI in 1946. The direction of post-war France's industrial policy was thus foreshadowed by the policies advanced by the factions within the Resistance during the Second World War.

The long shadow of Vichy

The post-war programmes from late 1943 are generally the beacons by which French historians are guided in their accounts of the evolution of the Resistance's post-war programmes. The role played by figures who had thrived in Vichy and who jumped ship to join the Resistance in 1943, however, has been overlooked. The examples of two figures – Maurice Couve de Murville and Pierre Pucheu – who held key posts in Vichy related to industrial production, who fled metropolitan France to join the Resistance in North Africa, and who later helped shape France's post-war industrial organisation is instructive. In both cases, preserving what had been established by Vichy was a priority, and they supported the maintenance of reformed Organisation Committees and OCRPI rather than their outright abolition. While many on the centre-left within the Resistance were favouring this option, they received vital support and expertise from those who had been immersed in the system in Vichy, who made their contributions to the debate in the crucial months before the Laffon report and the CGT's programme were completed.

⁴²³ Philippe Buton, *Les lendemains qui déchantent. Le Parti communiste français à la Libération* (Paris: FNSP, 1993), 36-38.

The first of these men who provided continuity from one regime to another was Maurice Couve de Murville, who had served as Director of External Finances, a top job in the civil service, in Vichy until February 1943. As the inevitable outcome of the war became clear, and as the Allies established themselves in North Africa, Couve de Murville defected to Algiers and joined the CFLN, where he was quickly appointed Commissioner for Finance. It was in this capacity that, on 13 May 1943, Couve de Murville presented an early report on how the Organisation Committees ought to be reformed.⁴²⁴ While the report dedicates thirteen pages to outlining specific reforms that should be imposed on the existing system, the most obvious reform is striking in its absence. Never is the possibility of dissolving the existing Vichy institutions entertained. This is all the more remarkable when one considers that, according to a CFLN document written only weeks earlier, the first and most important goal unifying all *résistants* was “the abolition of all Vichy legislation”.⁴²⁵ Couve de Murville’s innovation was to replace only the elements of Vichy’s industrial legislation seen as incompatible with some of the most obvious ideals of the Resistance, rather than annulling the entire canon of Vichy’s industrial legislation *a priori*. Having held a senior position in Vichy, Couve de Murville was well-placed to judge which elements of the existing system could be improved upon, and which should be left in place. This report reframed the question of France’s industrial organisation, and provided a technocratic roadmap for how Vichy’s New Industrial Order, first established to facilitate collaboration with the Reich, could be adapted for the post-war Republic.

Couve de Murville’s trajectory after he left Vichy for Algiers was a long and successful one, serving as Minister for Foreign Affairs for the first decade of the Fifth Republic and briefly as Prime Minister. His post-Vichy career contrasts markedly with that of his one-time associate, Pierre Pucheu. From 1941, Pucheu had held several portfolios in Vichy, notably as Minister for Industrial Production and for the Interior. After being shuffled out of the Cabinet in April 1942, Pucheu contacted General Giraud, a leader of the Resistance and then a rival to de Gaulle.⁴²⁶ Pucheu expressed his interest in joining the Resistance, and Giraud invited him to North Africa, which Pucheu accepted in 1943. Such a changing of sides was not uncommon at this stage in France, as the case of Couve de Murville shows. Pucheu, however, would not be so fortunate. Upon his arrival in Morocco from Spain, he

⁴²⁴ “Projet d’instruction de la réforme de l’organisation professionnelle et de la répartition”, 13 May 1943, CFLN 631, MAE.

⁴²⁵ “Note du Comité National Français”, 21 April 1943, CFLN 297, MAE.

⁴²⁶ Giraud’s title at this time was “Civilian and Military Commander-in-Chief”.

was indeed met by members of the Resistance – who placed him under arrest for treason. He was imprisoned in Algeria while awaiting trial, which took place in March 1944 under the watch of General de Gaulle. Pucheu did indeed have blood on his hands; as Minister for the Interior he passed heinous anti-Semitic legislation. He was found guilty and executed by firing squad on 20 March 1944 – the first case of formal *épuration*.⁴²⁷

The example of Pucheu reveals a number of themes related to *épuration*: the harsh penalty meted out early in 1944 compared to the relatively lighter sentences that were issued later in the year, for example, and the glaring dissimilarity between the fates of two Vichy figures – one a high-level civil servant, one a minister – who changed sides at approximately the same time.⁴²⁸ Perhaps most intriguing of all, however, is just how pervasive the idea of preserving Vichy's industrial order was becoming in Algiers. At the time of Pucheu's arrest, the CFLN had not formally articulated its position on the post-war fate of the Organisation Committees. De Gaulle was chronically reluctant to make any promises regarding post-war policy, insisting instead that only a future assembly chosen by the electorate of liberated France would have the legitimacy to pronounce such policies. To this effect, de Gaulle created the Provisional Consultative Assembly on 17 September 1943 to recreate a pseudo-parliamentary system and strengthen his claims to democratic legitimacy.⁴²⁹ By the spring of 1944, however, an apparent consensus had been reached within the CFLN to maintain Vichy's industrial committees. It is therefore worthwhile to examine how the conversations between the former Minister for Industrial Production and the CFLN's leaders may have contributed to the latter's industrial policies for post-war France.

⁴²⁷ "Procès Pucheu", MAE, CFLN 619. Pucheu's trial and execution were widely condemned by the international press, the consensus being that the former minister was not given a fair trial. De Gaulle justified the trial and the sentence in his memoirs, on the grounds that "it was necessary that our combatants, and our enemies, had immediate proof that culprits would have to answer for their actions". See de Gaulle, *Mémoires de guerre*, vol.2, op.cit., 213.

⁴²⁸ On France's *épuration*, the classic study in English remains Peter Novick, *The Resistance versus Vichy: the purge of collaborators in liberated France* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1968) ; the best recent synthesis is Jean-Paul Cointet's *Expier Vichy: l'épuration en France 1943-1958* (Paris : Perrin, 2008), while a helpful overview is provided in Henry Rousso, "L'Épuration en France : Une histoire inachevée" in *Vichy. L'événement, la mémoire, l'histoire* (Paris : Gallimard, 1992), 489-552. For more specific studies, see François Rouquet, *L'Épuration dans l'administration française. Agents de l'Etat et collaboration ordinaire* (Paris : CNRS, 1993) and Marc Bergère (ed.), *L'épuration économique en France à la Libération* (Rennes : Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2008). For a regional approach to the first, most brutal purges, see Philippe Bourdrel's *L'épuration sauvage, 1944-45* (Paris : Perrin, 2002).

⁴²⁹ This Assembly included the 80 members of the National Assembly who voted against handing full powers to Philippe Pétain on 10 July 1940. In his memoirs, de Gaulle criticised the Assembly's "harsh and extended debates" on *épuration*, and for their avoidance of "the most pressing issues" related to French foreign policy. Nevertheless, he noted the importance of the Assembly's recognition of his legitimacy as leader of the French Republic. See de Gaulle, op.cit., 185-190.

In his prison journal, Pucheu recorded that he met with a number of individuals from the leadership of the Resistance. Together they discussed industrial policy for post-war France, and after Pucheu's death and the Liberation of France, some of those individuals would accede to key ministerial posts in the Provisional Government.⁴³⁰ Pucheu definitely spoke at length with Couve de Murville, and he also had conversations with Leroy-Beaulieu and especially René Mayer about how industry should be organised in liberated France.⁴³¹ While no transcripts of these meetings exist, Pucheu's views on industrial questions are clearly expressed in his journal, and he is likely to have pursued similar lines of argument in his conversations with the CFLN figures. In his journal, he frames the issue:

With regard to the economy, what exactly will be France's organisation following its liberation? If the current framework remains in place, we will be faced with an economy that is almost entirely "managed" (*dirigée*). In addition to the role of relevant ministries, the system responsible for this economic management consists of the Organisation Committees and OCRPI. These entities were created in August and September 1940 [respectively]. Were they in response to the implementation of a new economic doctrine? Not in any way. They were in response to the exigencies of war, or rather of the Armistice and of the Occupation. Moreover, the laws that created the[se entities] were described as "provisional" in their preamble. For this reason, and notwithstanding their extreme impopularity [...] and the current bias favouring the systematic denigration of all that was done by the governments of the Maréchal, these cannot be seen – unless we are being intellectually dishonest – as the expression of a doctrine deliberately created or adopted by the men in Vichy. I can say this especially freely as I took no part in the drafting of these laws and as I simply inherited the state of affairs that they brought about, when I became Minister for [Industrial] Production several months later, in the final days of February 1941.⁴³²

In 1943, Pucheu made the case for maintaining the Organisation Committees and the New Industrial Order that had been erected in the months following the Fall of France. He justified this by appealing to practicality. First of all, by arguing that the Committees had been created out of pragmatism and not ideology, Pucheu advanced that they could be maintained because they had not been informed by the ideology of the National

⁴³⁰ Unlike most memoirs by Vichy-era figures, Pucheu composed his before the end of the war and was unable to alter them after the Liberation. While his writings reflect the broad strategy of exoneration typical of such memoirs, they were neither influenced by nor altered by the author in light of post-war events. See Pierre Pucheu, *Ma Vie* (Paris: Amiot-Dumont, 1948).

⁴³¹ Pucheu, *op.cit.*, 117. These meetings occurred in August 1943, although it is probable that other such meetings with CFLN figures took place between Pucheu's arrest in May 1943 and his execution in March 1944. Leroy-Beaulieu was an *Inspecteur général des finances* who held top posts at NATO and at the French embassy in Bonn after the war. René Mayer held a number of portfolios in the Fourth Republic, including Economic Affairs and Finance, and became Prime Minister in 1953. In 1955 he succeeded Jean Monnet as President of the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community, where he sat alongside Léon Daum.

⁴³² Pucheu, *op.cit.*, 336-337.

Revolution.⁴³³ Moreover, by highlighting that he had arrived in the Ministry and used the already created Committees to direct French industry, Pucheu argued that the future Provisional Government should do the same. Given the economic constraints in which France found itself in the summer of 1940, and which would again be the case following the Liberation, the Committees would be an invaluable and practical tool. He also emphasised the depth of experience that those in charge of the Organisation Committees had accumulated over four years, and that these would be a precious resource for the new administration:

If these new men can overcome ideological differences (*sectarismes de principes*), they will have access, in the ministries as well as in the Sections [of OCRPI] and the Committees, to an operating staff and to senior and middle management, trained through a long and difficult experience [...] many of whom will have developed sound expertise which could be adapted immediately to the new situation.

More importantly, rather than beginning from scratch when establishing priorities, operating procedures, and action plans, these new individuals responsible for running the economy will have at their disposal precious documentation. Thanks to the statistical archives of the Sections [of OCRPI] and the Committees, they will know immediately, for all branches of industry and commerce, all aspects of pre-war economic activity and also how things have changed under the challenges of the Occupation. With full knowledge of the facts, they will be able to deal with immediate challenges and to seamlessly manage the implementation of their own economic management model in accordance with the doctrinal pillars they will have developed for the post-transitional period.⁴³⁴

Pucheu advised maintaining the Organisation Committees and OCRPI in order to manage French industry at a tumultuous time of regime change and penury. He emphasised the expertise and experience of those who had worked in the Vichy-era bodies of industrial organisation, and how these formally apolitical bodies and their employees would be just as helpful to any post-war government as they had been to Vichy. Indeed, when Jean Monnet developed his eponymous Plan in 1946, production targets were based on the “precious documentation” compiled by the Organisation Committees under Vichy.⁴³⁵ Pucheu also noted that the economic tools established by Vichy would need to stay in place until France’s coal shortage – more severe in 1944 than it had been in 1940, when the Committees had been

⁴³³ This statement is confirmed in previous chapters, which show that the creation of the Organisation Committees was not decisively influenced by the National Revolution (Chapter One) and that the bodies were not significantly reformed in line with Vichy’s official ideology (Chapter Three).

⁴³⁴ Pucheu, *op.cit.*, 344.

⁴³⁵ “Projet de résolution soumis au Conseil du Plan. Objectifs généraux pour l’activité française”, 13 March 1946, AMF 2 3, FJME.

created, and which was exacting a heavy toll on French industry and transportation – had been resolved.⁴³⁶

Many individuals who had spent the war in Vichy or working with its institutions supported their survival in a post-war France.⁴³⁷ The expertise of those who had run French industry, from former Ministers for Industrial Production to leaders of the Organisation Committees, were not lightly dismissed by the new leaders of France.⁴³⁸ The claim that these bodies were apolitical and improvised pragmatically and not ideologically was made by virtually every official who had been associated with French industry during the war. This defence worked to exonerate individuals and institutions alike, and remains the predominant explanation in the historiography.⁴³⁹ It should also be noted that it was primarily Pucheu *qua* Minister for the Interior who was tried and convicted in Algiers. The racist and reprehensible laws he passed while responsible for this portfolio contrast with his competent handling of Industrial Production, which undoubtedly gave his advice concerning the latter more gravitas.

Ultimately, the direct influence of Pucheu on the CFLN's post-war programmes is difficult to measure. It is clear that he was discussing questions of economic and industrial organisation with those responsible for such questions within the CFLN at precisely the time when the Resistance was working to develop its own post-war programmes. While Pucheu was discussing Organisation Committees with Couve de Murville and René Mayer, for instance, the CGT and Laffon were drafting their post-war programmes. The CFLN was reluctant to publish any plans for liberated France, in large part due to de Gaulle's insistence on democratic legitimacy. After two aborted committees established at the end of 1943 and February 1944, respectively, the *Comité économique interministériel* (CEI) was established by the CFLN at the end of April 1944, more than a month after the CNR Programme had been published. It was within this Committee that the future of French industry was discussed until the creation of the Provisional Government in August 1944. While the

⁴³⁶ Pucheu, *op.cit.*, 345. France suffered coal shortages throughout the period 1940-1946.

⁴³⁷ René Belin and François Lehideux, the two Ministers for Industrial Production who survived the war, defended the New Industrial Order in their post-war accounts, as did Yves Bouthillier, Minister for the Economy in Vichy. See Belin, *Du secrétariat de la CGT au gouvernement de Vichy* (Paris: Albatros, 1978); Bouthillier, *La drame de Vichy* (Paris: Plon, 1951); Lehideux, *De Renault à Pétain* (Paris: Pygmalion, 2001).

⁴³⁸ According to François Lehideux, de Gaulle lamented that the former had been appointed minister by Pétain, since de Gaulle wanted to make him a minister in his own Cabinet. It should be noted, however, that Lehideux makes a number of highly questionable claims in his memoirs, so this should be treated with scepticism. See Lehideux, *op.cit.*, 459.

⁴³⁹ See, for example, Hervé Joly (ed.), *Les Comités d'organisation et l'économie dirigée de Vichy*, 2000. The historiography on the Organisation Committees is discussed in the Introduction, and the different interpretations of the creation of the Committees are considered in Chapter One.

exchanges recorded within the CEI are enlightening, no series of documents seems to exist today that can clearly demonstrate the CFLN's attitudes towards the Organisation Committees in 1943 and early 1944. Given these limitations, Pucheu's exchanges with the CFLN are important rather in demonstrating the pervasiveness of the argument in favour of maintaining Vichy's industrial organisation. Whether the various members of the CFLN were influenced by former Vichy ministers, by trade unionists, by socialists, by liberals, or by nationalists is ultimately less important than the fact that all these incongruent groups were pressing for the same policy. Regardless of which of these groups was most influential, the result was the CFLN's joining this consensus. Despite the formal promise to destroy all of Vichy's legislation,⁴⁴⁰ it was clear that this should not apply equally to all of Vichy's laws.

Both Couve de Murville and Pucheu saw in Vichy's industrial organisation indispensable tools to ensure the proper functioning of France's economy. They recognised the pragmatic value of maintaining the Organisation Committees and OCRPI and hoped to use them to ward off penury and industrial stagnation. In this respect, they shared the motivations of the creators of the New Industrial Order, albeit without the objective of closer Franco-German collaboration that characterised the creation of the Committees. The reforms that Couve de Murville and Pucheu proposed were in part technical adjustments to improve the efficacy of the system, and in part political concessions to distance the bodies from their wartime actions. We can clearly observe the trend of those who had worked with Vichy's industrial organisation wanting to keep the system in place, albeit with some modifications. This would continue to be the case in liberated France, as industrialists such as Jules Aubrun, President of the Organisation Committee for Steel (CORSID) for the duration of the war, pleaded with the new government to maintain the Organisation Committees and to minimise reforms that would make the bodies more representative.⁴⁴¹

As the year 1943 drew to a close, an unlikely agreement was forming between quondam Vichy officials and the more moderate members of the French Left. Both groups saw the value of maintaining what Vichy had erected and using this system to provide a relatively smooth transition for post-war France. Individuals as disparate as Pierre Pucheu and Léon Jouhaux embraced this strategy, despite the repeated promises of the Resistance to

⁴⁴⁰ "Projet sur le rétablissement de la légalité républicaine", 3 July 1944, CFLN, MAE.

⁴⁴¹ "Observations de la Chambre syndicale de la sidérurgie", 29 December 1944, F 12 10062, AN. Given that virtually all the active industrialists were still in France (and indeed working within the system of the Organisation Committees), they did not take part in the debates that unfolded in Algiers on the maintenance of the Committees.

abolish all Vichy legislation. These groups would join together with others in the debate that would determine the political economy of post-war France.

The first death of the New Industrial Order?

Over the course of the year 1943, we can observe a trend within the Resistance towards a growing if sometimes grudging acceptance that Vichy's Organisation Committees would need to be maintained after the war. One illustrative example of this tendency is given by General Henri Giraud and his advisor Jean Monnet.

The first legal measures regarding the fate of the Organisation Committees were in fact taken as early as May 1943. At this time, General Giraud was Civilian and Military Commander-in-Chief in North Africa, although de Gaulle would soon displace him as leader of the Resistance in Algiers. On 15 May 1943, Giraud issued a decree abolishing Vichy's "laws and decrees concerning professional organisation".⁴⁴² The decree allowed for a transition of three months by the end of which the Organisation Committees and OCRPI would cease to exist. This was thought to be sufficient time "to set up a liberal system that takes account of the pressing necessities of the moment". Giraud justified the decision by attacking the law of 16 August 1940, which he argued introduced "into French legislation a theory that is foreign to it: that of the Führer in charge, placed at the head of each organisation. We therefore had to abolish these laws".⁴⁴³ This decree would mean that by 15 August 1943, almost exactly three years after their creation, the Organisation Committees would cease to exist. Of course, this would have come as a surprise to Jules Aubrun, who continued to run the Organisation Committee for Steel until October 1944, which continued to exist after his forced resignation. It is unlikely that the leaders of French industry read Giraud's decree, since the "Civilian and Military Commander-in-Chief" had no authority in *l'Héxagone*. But this decree reflects the prevailing mood of those fighting Vichy in early 1943. While small technocratic committees drew up plans arguing for the necessity of keeping Vichy's industrial bodies, and former Vichy officials extolled the benefits of the institutions, many in the Resistance remained opposed to prolonging the life of the unpopular

⁴⁴² "Ordonnance du 15 mai 1943 portant abrogation des lois et décrets concernant l'organisation professionnelle", published in the *Journal officiel*, 16 May 1943, AME 34 6, FJME.

⁴⁴³ "La révision des lois de Vichy. Le général Giraud abroge les dispositions concernant l'organisation professionnelle", in *La Dépêche Algérienne*, 19 May 1943, AME 34 6, FJME. Underlined in the original.

Committees. Giraud was not alone in wanting to abolish the Committees at this stage, and he was almost certainly counselled on this decree by his advisor, Jean Monnet.

If Giraud's decree had no effect in metropolitan France, it did matter in the region where Allied troops were in control, namely North Africa. In March 1943, Giraud had issued a decree "concerning the validity of the existing legislation in the territories under his control". These included Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, and French West Africa. The decree specified that Giraud's legislation would have effect in these territories; implicitly, his decrees would be meaningless elsewhere, including metropolitan France.⁴⁴⁴ It is in this context that Giraud's abolition of the Organisation Committees took place, and the decree therefore only applied to French Africa. Indeed, Giraud was successful insofar as *liberté syndicale* was re-established in Tunisia in August 1943.⁴⁴⁵ This was largely a symbolic victory, however. The Organisation Committees had never had much control over the colonies; when CORSID carved up the map of France to assign each member a region to oversee, the colonies, including Algeria, were ignored. Giraud's decree helped re-establish trade unions in Tunisia, which had only been established in 1932, but its effect on the workings of the Organisation Committees in metropolitan France was negligible.

Given that Giraud's advisor at this point was Jean Monnet, we can reasonably expect that Giraud's decrees on issues of industrial organisation were in agreement with, if not informed by, Monnet. Indeed, in his memoirs Monnet claims that he "negotiated word by word" the text of Giraud's notable speech on 14 March 1943, in which he denounced the Armistice and embraced democratic principles. Monnet criticised a draft of the speech, particularly its treatment of Vichy's legislation: "it isn't mentioned that this legislation is now considered null and void, which is crucial".⁴⁴⁶ If Monnet was pushing Giraud in this direction in March, it is likely that Monnet was behind the decree abolishing Vichy's laws on industrial organisation two months later.

Based on the decrees issued and comments made by Giraud at this time, we can assume that in May 1943, Monnet was in favour of abolishing the Organisation Committees in French Africa and ultimately in France. By September 1943, however, Monnet's opinion may have changed. In a note prepared for him by an associate of his, the case is made for

⁴⁴⁴ "Déclaration et ordonnance du commandant en chef français civil et militaire concernant la validité de la législation en vigueur dans les territoires relevant de son autorité", March 1943, AME 34 2, FJME.

⁴⁴⁵ "Note sur l'Organisation syndicale de la Régence", 4 August 1943, CFLN 875, MAE.

⁴⁴⁶ Jean Monnet, *Mémoires* (Paris: Fayard, 1976), 271.

maintaining the Organisation Committees following the Liberation of France. “However desirable the complete abolition of the current measures of economic control would be from a psychological, and consequently from a political point of view, it is clear that such a solution is certainly inapplicable”. The note continues by outlining why the abolition of the Committees in the short-term would be catastrophic:

On the one hand, the penury will not disappear in a matter of weeks. It will therefore be necessary to let a large part of the mechanisms for rationing comestibles and allocating industrial products subsist. On the other hand, it would be dangerous to want to simultaneously pursue organisational reforms and substitutions of personnel. It seems that the latter is more urgent than the former...

The note concludes that “we are therefore forced to allocate [raw materials to French industry] using the bodies created three years ago: we must inevitably begin with the existing Organisation Committees”.⁴⁴⁷ While principled objection to the Vichy regime and its purportedly German-inspired laws concerning French industry demanded the abolition of the Committees, it would seem that pragmatism demanded the very opposite. By early 1944, the latter argument had gained considerable currency within the Resistance.

Debating the New Industrial Order: “*suppression ou transition?*”⁴⁴⁸

The first half of 1944 was marked by discussions over the fate of Vichy’s Organisation Committees and OCRPI. There was broad consensus that the Labour Charter, René Belin’s crowning achievement as Minister for Labour that sought to implement a comprehensive, corporatist organisation of the French economy, should be scrapped, and that *liberté syndicale* had to be re-established. These changes were proclaimed by the CFLN in January 1944.⁴⁴⁹ This was an uncontroversial decision within the Resistance, since the Labour Charter was explicitly developed within the framework of Pétain’s National Revolution and had little effect on the running of the French economy.⁴⁵⁰ For the members of the Resistance, the return to republicanism entailed the restoration of *liberté syndicale* and the proper functioning of trade unions and employers’ associations. On such matters, we can indeed observe a unified position of the Resistance.

⁴⁴⁷ “Note sur la simplification de l’organisation administrative de l’économie”, 3 September 1943, AME 33 2 8, FJME. While the note is not signed, it is filed among the “Notes de reflexion des collaborateurs de Jean Monnet” in the Monnet archives.

⁴⁴⁸ Blum-Picard, “Discussion de réforme des Comités d’Organisation”, 14 April 1944, CFLN 686, MAE.

⁴⁴⁹ “Note”, 13 January 1944, CFLN 602, MAE.

⁴⁵⁰ See Chapter Three.

On the question of the Organisation Committees and OCRPI, however, the debate had far more gradations. As we have seen with the post-war programmes produced in the autumn of 1943, unanimous agreement on the question proved elusive. In January 1944, Leprince issued a report on Vichy's industrial bodies in order to inform the debate within the CFLN. He admitted that the Organisation Committees were "anti-democratic [and] the creations most characteristic of the Vichy administration".⁴⁵¹ Yet, he asked in his introduction, "ought we to destroy them on principle?"⁴⁵² In the coming months, a significant majority within the CFLN would definitively make up their minds.

By early 1944, a consensus was emerging within the CFLN that maintaining the Organisation Committees was the only viable option for France. The greatest obstacle to this plan, however, was the Commissioner for Production and Provisions,⁴⁵³ André Diethelm.⁴⁵⁴ An esteemed civil servant in the interwar wars, he was an early supporter of de Gaulle and held key positions in the French Resistance from early 1941. Diethelm mounted a strong opposition to the maintenance of legislation from Vichy, and took issue with the policy of maintaining Vichy's industrial organisation towards which the CFLN seemed to be drifting. As early as July 1943, he called for the unqualified abolition of Vichy's Organisation Committees during a meeting of the CLFN, and his draft law to enact this was approved by the CFLN on 6 July 1943.⁴⁵⁵ On 9 February 1944, he circulated a report among the CFLN that unequivocally demanded the dissolution of the Committees:

The decree known as the "law of 16 August 1940" established, for both industry and commerce, a corporative system that ensures unlimited power for economic oligarchies. The unpopularity of these approximately 300 bodies, their never-ending quarrels over [resource] allocation, [and] the tyranny they exert on the small- and medium-sized enterprises in their industry leave no doubt as to the answer that the Assembly must give to the question of abolishing and liquidating the Committees.⁴⁵⁶

If the CFLN had supported abolishing the Committees in July 1943, their opinion had become very much the opposite by February 1944. The very next day after Diethelm's report was issued, the CFLN's General Secretariat, run by Louis Joxe, produced a response to the report criticising Diethelm's conclusions, and sent it to de Gaulle. While Diethelm had called

⁴⁵¹ Rapport Leprince, 26 January 1944, CFLN 686, MAE.

⁴⁵² Ibid.

⁴⁵³ *Commissaire à la production et au ravitaillement*, analogous to Minister for Industrial Production.

⁴⁵⁴ The best biography of this lesser-known figure of the CFLN is Frédéric Turpin's *André Diethelm 1896-1954. De Georges Mandel à Charles de Gaulle* (Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2004).

⁴⁵⁵ Turpin, *André Diethelm 1896-1954*, op.cit., 128-9.

⁴⁵⁶ "Note du Commissaire au ravitaillement et à la production", 9 February 1944, F 60 914, AN.

for an open debate in the Assembly on whether Vichy's organisms ought to be maintained, Joxe dismissed this idea, claiming that closed-door decisions by the relevant Cabinet members were preferable to democratic debate in the Assembly, as only the former would present a "clear and precise programme", while a parliamentary-style debate would only be "confused, riddled with contradictions, and would bring no effective contribution to resolving France's current problems". The report concluded that it is the role of the Government, and not of the Assembly, to consider such questions and to determine the industrial policy of the nation.⁴⁵⁷ On the question of Organisation Committees, Joxe suggested that they be reformed or, if they had to be abolished, that they be replaced with similar institutions. The author also argued that OCRPI must be maintained, albeit purged of its current leadership, despite the fact that its sections "were and remain the instrument used by the Germans to carry out their decrees".⁴⁵⁸

These rival reports demonstrate the debate over the maintenance of Vichy's industrial organisation. On the one hand, Diethelm argued that they should be abolished, following an open, democratic debate. On the other hand, Joxe made the case for maintaining the institutions regardless of their role in the Nazi war effort. While de Gaulle did not issue any formal endorsement of either position at the time, his actions spoke volumes. On 3 March, three weeks after the two reports had been sent to de Gaulle, Diethelm was relieved of the portfolio for Production and Provisions, and given the portfolio for War. He was replaced by Paul Giacobbi, a Radical member of the National Assembly before the war and one of the 80 who had voted against granting Pétain full powers on 10 July 1940.⁴⁵⁹ More importantly, Giacobbi had previously argued that the Committees and OCRPI should be maintained after the war. With this single reshuffle, de Gaulle had replaced the most significant opponent of Vichy's industrial organisation with one of its more vocal proponents. By reversing the policy of the Minister for Production and Provisions, de Gaulle quietly determined the ultimate outcome of the debate within the CFLN.⁴⁶⁰ Meanwhile, the issue was not raised in

⁴⁵⁷ "Note pour le général de Gaulle", 10 February 1944, F 60 914, AN.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ Interestingly, a certain Giacobbi worked as director of legal services for OCRPI as late as September 1943 and worked closely with Jean Bichelonne. It seems, however, that this is a different Giacobbi. For the Giacobbi at OCRPI, see "Note", April 1943, and "Note de Bichelonne", September 1943, F 12 10932, AN.

⁴⁶⁰ This Cabinet reshuffle is mentioned in the memoirs of both Joxe and de Gaulle. Curiously, Joxe makes no mention of Diethelm, noting only that Giacobbi "took on the difficult tasks of Supply and Production", while de Gaulle misidentifies Giacobbi's portfolio as the Economy. Both de Gaulle and Joxe present Giacobbi's promotion as part of a general reshuffle that saw the addition of two Communists (Fernard Grenier and François Billoux) to the CFLN, but in fact their appointment happened one month later, on 4 April, weeks after

the Consultative Assembly until July 1944, when it was announced that the members of the CFLN were in “absolute agreement” on maintaining the Committees and OCRPI.⁴⁶¹ By that point, the Assembly could do little but comment on the *fait accompli*. Joxe’s recommendation that the decision be taken by the CFLN rather than the Assembly was chosen over Diethelm’s calls for a more transparent process.

The timing of this reshuffle is highly significant. Within a fortnight of Diethelm’s dismissal, the CFLN agreed upon a post-war programme with the Communist elements of the Resistance, the celebrated CNR Programme of 15 March 1944. This long sought-after but until then elusive agreement unified the disparate factions of the Resistance around a common set of policies. Given how divisive the issue of the Organisation Committees and OCRPI had proved to be in earlier attempts at post-war programmes and in the ongoing debate over France’s political economy, one might expect that the breakthrough in negotiations was the result of some agreement regarding these institutions. In a sense, this is true – absolutely no mention of France’s post-war industrial organisation is made in the document. Given how the question of maintaining Vichy’s industrial organisation had divided the French Left in its 1943 attempts at producing a post-war programme, and how the debate within the CFLN had essentially been decided with the removal of Diethelm from his post, it is extremely unlikely that the omission of the question was a mere oversight on the part of the signatories. Far more likely is that its authors recognised the matter as an impasse and agreed to kick the question into the tall grass rather than let it obstruct the consensus, which was becoming increasingly urgent as plans for the Allied landings in France progressed. The absence of such an important question in such a vital document shows just how insurmountable the question was in March 1944. While communists and liberals, nationalists and socialists were able to broadly agree on such controversial questions as the nationalisation of France’s key industries, they were unable to concur on whether the

the CNR Programme was released. Overall, Diethelm is strikingly absent from Joxe’s narrative, as the Minister for War is not once mentioned in the chapter on the Liberation. For the Cabinet reshuffle, see Louis Joxe, *Victoires sur la nuit* (Paris: Flammarion, 1981), 188 and de Gaulle, *op.cit.*, 181.

⁴⁶¹ The issue was first introduced to the Consultative Assembly by Paul Giacobbi on 21 July 1944. Despite criticism of the decision by Vincent Auriol, the future President of the Fourth Republic, Giacobbi concluded the session by exclaiming that “there is an absolute agreement on the foundations of the economic doctrine of the Government and of the Nation”. See “La politique économique du gouvernement”, 22 July 1944, C I 591, AN.

institutions created by René Belin in the summer of 1940 ought to be abolished or instead maintained and reformed.⁴⁶²

Given Diethelm's obdurate position on the matter, he would have sided with the Communists in demanding the elimination of the Organisation Committees and OCRPI. This would have put Diethelm at odds with the remainder of the CFLN, consigning the staunch Gaullist to the company of unlikely bedfellows in the Communist resistance. This was doubtless an important consideration in his removal from the key ministry for Production and Provisions at this time. With the 15 March post-war programme, the Resistance was united under de Gaulle's leadership, which increased his standing with the Allies and his authority over France. Nevertheless, it was only achieved by having the signatories agree to avert their gaze from the elephant in the room. Meanwhile, Diethelm maintained his hard-line approach in his new role as Minister for War during the Liberation. Indeed, such was his zealotry that in September 1944 he had Robert Schuman sacked from his first post-war post, demanding the "immediately dismiss[al of] this product of Vichy". France's future Foreign Minister and Father of Europe would have to wait until September 1945 for his case to be dismissed.⁴⁶³

After the playing field was tilted with the replacement of Diethelm by Giacobbi, the debate on Vichy's industrial organisation became predictably one-sided; no significant opposition to maintaining the Organisation Committees and OCRPI was voiced within de Gaulle's entourage after Diethelm's dismissal. This was due in no small part to the exclusion of communist members of the Resistance. Following the successful passage of the CNR Programme, two Communists were appointed to the CFLN in April 1944: Fernand Grenier was named Commissioner for the Air and François Billoux was named Secretary of State without portfolio. Despite this gesture, no communist members of the Resistance were invited to the meetings at which France's industrial policies were discussed. At a meeting of the *Commission d'étude des problèmes économiques d'après-guerre*, presided by Lambert

⁴⁶² These vagueries suited the PCF, as it wanted to avoid "hav[ing] its hands tied by a detailed political programme or by precise measures that would be too constraining". Given the "radical" policies contained in the CNR Programme, Philippe Buton concludes that it was a "success for the PCF". See Buton, *op.cit.*, 53.

⁴⁶³ Frédéric Turpin, *op.cit.*, 142. Schuman had voted full powers to Pétain on 10 July 1940 and did not actively participate in the Resistance, which explains Diethelm's statement. Schuman's position in September 1944 was Political Counsellor for issues related to Alsace-Lorraine.

Blum-Picard,⁴⁶⁴ the Socialist Albert Gazier suggested that it might be sensible to invite a representative of the PCF to take part in the meetings. No response to his suggestion is noted in the minutes, but the fact that the PCF remained unrepresented in future meetings is a clear indication of the reaction of the Commission.⁴⁶⁵ The exclusion of dissidents on this question ensured that the bodies created by Vichy in 1940 would be maintained by the post-war regime.⁴⁶⁶

The debate in the Provisional Consultative Assembly demanded by Diethelm ultimately took place at the end of July 1944, long after the decision regarding the Committees had been made by the CFLN. Giacobbi presented the economic policies of the Provisional Government and noted that France “is turning towards a system of a planned economy [*économie dirigée*], regardless of the nation’s thirst for liberty”.⁴⁶⁷ Crucially, the economic policies were presented as a package, based on the CNR Programme that had already been endorsed by representatives of all major Resistance groups. The debate in the Assembly was thus not focused on the maintenance of the Organisation Committees alone, but on the entire post-war programme agreed upon in March 1944. It is important to remember that no mention of the Organisation Committees was made in that document; indeed, the inclusion of a commitment to maintain Vichy’s economic institutions could well have scuppered the agreement. By asking the Assembly to ratify the Provisional Government’s economic policies, the GPRF was in fact seeking approval not only of the CNR Programme, but also of policies too divisive to have been included in that agreement in the first place, namely the maintenance of Vichy’s Committees. Predictably, a number of deputies opposed the maintenance of the Organisation Committees, with Socialist Roger Mistral decrying that “it would be madness to maintain [Vichy’s] system. France wants a new economic regime”.⁴⁶⁸ A representative of the PCF criticised the studied ambiguity of the

⁴⁶⁴ Blum-Picard, an *Inspecteur général des Mines* before the war, joined de Gaulle in London in December 1943 and became his Economic Advisor in 1943 before being named Secretary General for the Commissariat for Industrial Production in 1944.

⁴⁶⁵ “Commission d’étude des problèmes économiques d’après-guerre. Procès-verbal de la séance du 17 avril 1944”, 17 April 1944, CFLN 686, MAE.

⁴⁶⁶ In his memoirs, de Gaulle describes how meetings of the CFLN were organised. Assisted by Joxe, de Gaulle would decide on the matters to be discussed and would ask ministers for their opinions. “Then, I would conclude by formulating the resolution of the Council and, if need be, providing a final decision to resolve any disputes”. If this were the case, opposition from either of the Communist members of the CFLN, or indeed from Diethelm *qua* Minister for War, could have been easily overruled by de Gaulle, particularly as Giacobbi supported maintaining the Committees. See de Gaulle, *op.cit.*, 210.

⁴⁶⁷ “La politique économique du gouvernement”, 21 July 1944, C I 591, AN. The debate took place over two days, 21-22 July 1944.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 22 July 1944.

economic policies outlined by Giacobbi, stating that “the Communist delegation can only deplore the inadequate precision of these declarations”.⁴⁶⁹ Despite these reproaches, however, support for the CNR Programme and the economic priorities it outlined was remarkably strong and the Assembly consequently endorsed the overall economic policies of the Provisional Government. Giacobbi enthused that “all the speakers demonstrated that there exists absolute agreement on the foundations of the economic doctrine of the Government and of the Nation”.⁴⁷⁰ Such an outcome would have been unthinkable had Giacobbi not replaced Diethelm as Commissioner for Production.

Within the CFLN, meanwhile, the discussion had long since turned to the nature of the reforms that should be implemented on the Organisation Committees, rather than whether the Committees should continue to exist at all.⁴⁷¹ By mid-April, Pierre Mendès France, by now Commissioner for the National Economy, was able to declare that “the CFLN has discussed the question and the majority of its members seems to have decided, as I have, to maintain these institutions after the [Allied] landing” in France. He justified this decision by noting that “it seems to me that it would be very dangerous to dissolve these institutions at the very moment when a planned economy would require us to rely on effective *organes d’action*. The disappearance of these institutions would create a serious void that could only be filled after a long delay needed to reconstruct new institutions that would be impossible to improvise”.⁴⁷² With the removal of Diethelm and the exclusion of the Communists from the debate, the decision to maintain Vichy’s undemocratic and unpopular institutions was made without opposition. The debate in the Provisional Consultative Assembly at the end of July merely added credibility to the decision, particularly crucial to de Gaulle’s strategy of legitimising himself as the rightful leader of the French Republic.⁴⁷³ Within the Assembly, meanwhile, even those who questioned the decision to maintain the Committees supported the Provisional Government’s overall economic policies.

In his celebrated account of post-war France, William Hitchcock argues that the fall of Mendès France – marked by his resignation as Minister for the National Economy in April

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., 21 July 1944.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., 22 July 1944.

⁴⁷¹ The reform of the Organisation Committees and OCRPI will be discussed in Chapter Five.

⁴⁷² Lettre de Pierre Mendès France, “Objet : Groupements économiques institues par l’autorité de fait de VICHY”, 20 April 1944, F 60 914, AN. A copy of this letter can also be found in F 60 896, AN.

⁴⁷³ It must be remembered that de Gaulle *qua* leader of the GPRF was only recognised by the United States, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain as France’s legitimate representative on 23 October 1944.

1945 – was due to his support of maintaining Vichy’s industrial institutions.⁴⁷⁴ This claim is curious for two reasons. First, it is strikingly at odds with Hitchcock’s simultaneous depiction of Mendès France as the arch-purger within the Resistance – in Hitchcock’s analysis, the man who pushed steadfastly for a thorough purging of post-war France blatantly betrayed his own mission by trying to maintain some of the most disliked institutions Vichy had created. Second, it implies that Mendès France was alone in his defence of the Organisation Committees and OCRPI. According to Hitchcock, “while still in Algiers, [Mendès France] had argued in the CEI that the organizational committees established by Vichy to exert control over the economy would have to be maintained”.⁴⁷⁵ Hitchcock continues that “as time wore on, it appeared to his colleagues that Mendès France wanted to maintain the same kind of control that Vichy had exercised, but now through the means of a powerful Ministry of the National Economy. This was perhaps his greatest sin. He wanted to use the political channels of an outmoded and inefficient administration to institute economic change.”⁴⁷⁶ For Hitchcock, Mendès France’s “greatest sin”, for which the only absolution was his resignation as minister, was his desire to maintain parts of Vichy’s “outmoded and inefficient system”. It is difficult to accept this argument, however, given that support for maintaining the Organisation Committees was virtually unanimous within the CFLN, as we have seen. Moreover, the Organisation Committees continued to operate in France well beyond Mendès France’s resignation. In addition, the State continued to intervene heavily in the economy, even more so after the series of nationalisations that only intensified after Mendès France’s departure.⁴⁷⁷ Maintaining Vichy’s Organisation Committees to serve an interventionist French state was a broadly shared goal explicitly supported by every major party in post-war France – with the significant exception of the PCF. Hitchcock’s claim that a notable minister, namely Mendès France, was forced to resign for holding precisely such views is more a reflection of the Gaullist myth of a decisive break between Vichy and post-war France than it is of the reality of events. Indeed, as the case of André Diethelm demonstrates, it was

⁴⁷⁴ William Hitchcock, *France Restored. Cold War Diplomacy and the Quest for Leadership in Europe, 1944-1954* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 28-29.

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 28-29.

⁴⁷⁷ While France’s coal mines were nationalised in December 1944 and certain companies, notably Renault, in early 1945, the majority of nationalisations occurred after Mendès France’s resignation on 6 April 1945. These included the Banque de France as well as the largest banks in the country, and key sectors such as gas and electricity. The best study of the post-war nationalisations remains Claire Andrieu, Lucette Le Van, and Antoine Prost (eds.), *Les nationalisations de la Libération* (Paris: FNSP, 1987).

not support for the maintenance of Vichy's organisms that threatened a ministerial career, but rather opposition to their maintenance.

Conclusion

By the time the Allies landed in Normandy in June 1944, the French government-in-waiting had developed a coherent political economy for post-war France. Rather than focussing on the celebrated post-war programme of 15 March 1944, however, it is necessary to consider the debates that evolved over 1943 and 1944 to understand the CFLN's plans for France's industrial organisation. Throughout 1943, the question of whether Vichy's Organisation Committees and OCRPI should be maintained divided the French Left. These institutions were created to facilitate France's collaboration with the German war economy, and afforded a small handful of industrialists unprecedented power over French industry. This was enough for their abolition to be unwaveringly demanded by the Communist elements of the Resistance. Yet the more moderate members of the French Left argued that these bodies could be reformed and thereby maintained. The latter position was increasingly shared by virtually all the groups in Algiers, from former civil servants and ministers in Vichy to judicious *résistants* working alongside de Gaulle. The general himself intervened to remove the most significant obstacle to an agreement on the matter, replacing Diethelm with Giacobbi. While the fate of the Organisation Committees was intentionally omitted from the 15 March post-war programme, barely a month later the CFLN had agreed that Vichy's industrial apparatus would be maintained. The consensus on this question ran the gamut from socialists such as Robert Lacoste and André Philip to pseudo-fascist former Vichy ministers such as Pierre Pucheu. It is also important to note the importance of industrial issues at this stage; indeed, the crucial appointment of a new Commissioner for War, Diethelm, shortly before the reconquest of France was determined by his discordant position on France's post-war industrial policy.⁴⁷⁸

On 3 July 1944, the CFLN, by now calling itself the Provisional Government of the French Republic (GPRF), drafted a law re-establishing the legality of the Republic. "All laws

⁴⁷⁸ While a number of works have summarised the debates within the CFLN regarding the maintenance of the Organisation Committees, none have addressed these issues nor explained de Gaulle's strategy. See Richard Kuisel, *op.cit.*, Michel Margairaz, *op.cit.*, and Andrew Shennan, *Rethinking France: Plans for Renewal, 1940-1946* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989).

and decrees” passed by Vichy were henceforth “null and void”.⁴⁷⁹ This would, of course, nullify the laws of 16 August and 10 September 1940, which created the Organisation Committees and OCRPI, respectively. Yet this was not the case. The CFLN preferred to amend these laws rather than to actually abolish them, and the first article of the law of 16 August 1940 was overturned in January 1944.⁴⁸⁰ The apparent contradiction of amending a law that was declared “null and void” in the first place was deliberately overlooked. Anticipating this inconsistency in April 1944, Leprince had suggested that the CFLN could “appeal to the law of 11 July 1938, which might mask the fact that we would be using Vichy’s organisations from the time of the Liberation”.⁴⁸¹ Leprince was right to recognise that the French public would not look favourably upon the maintenance of Vichy’s Committees.

The Provisional Government had succeeded in maintaining Vichy’s industrial organisation, but it now faced two challenges to this policy. The Communists, who would emerge from the first elections in liberated France as the largest party in the National Assembly, never renounced their opposition to these bodies and continued to criticise them openly following the Liberation.⁴⁸² The second threat to the Organisation Committees was public opinion – the maintenance of deeply unpopular institutions that were enduring symbols of Vichy and collaboration was never destined to please the electorate. With the return of open, democratic debate, the continued existence of Vichy’s industrial organisation was called into question. Ultimately, the Provisional Government’s success in preserving Vichy’s New Industrial Order would prove to be similarly provisional.

⁴⁷⁹ “Projet sur le rétablissement de la légalité républicaine”, 3 July 1944, CFLN 603, MAE.

⁴⁸⁰ “Rétablissement de la liberté syndicale et épuration des organisations syndicales de travailleurs et d’employeurs”, 21 January 1944, CFLN 602, MAE. The first article of the law abolished national confederations of trade unions and employers’ associations, although individual confederations, notably the CGT, the CFTC, and the CGPF, were not formally dissolved until 9 November 1940. The re-establishment of *liberté syndicale* necessitated the removal of this clause, but the remaining articles remained valid.

⁴⁸¹ “Commission d’étude des problèmes économiques d’après-guerre. Sous-commission des Comités d’organisation. Séance du 21 avril 1944”, 21 April 1944, CFLN 686, MAE. The law of 11 July 1938 “on the general organisation of the Nation for wartime” included articles on “Economic organisation in wartime”, but these fell far short of what had been established with the law of 16 August 1940. The 1938 law granted relevant ministers the possibility of managing the trade, use, and rationing of resources deemed to be vital to the needs of the country. No new institutions were foreseen in the legislation, as the Organisation Committees would only be created in 1940.

⁴⁸² Andrew Shennan, *op.cit.*, 274.

Chapter Five:

*Conserver la forme en réformant l'esprit*⁴⁸³:

Reforming Vichy's Industrial Order, 1944-1946

The Organisation Committees created by the law of 16 August 1940, along with the Central Bureau for the Distribution of Industrial Products (OCRPI) instituted the following month, marked the beginning of the New Industrial Order. Almost from its inception, however, this new system and its components were criticised and demands for reform became increasingly frequent, both from within Vichy and without. By spring 1944, the *Comité français de libération nationale* (CFLN) and its successor, the *Gouvernement provisoire de la République française* (GPRF),⁴⁸⁴ committed to maintaining Vichy's industrial institutions, but only if they underwent significant reforms. These reforms fell broadly into two categories: on the one hand, the existing Committees and OCRPI Sections had to be purged of their current leadership, thereby distancing the post-war offices from wartime collaboration. On the other hand, with the re-establishment of *liberté syndicale* and the strong position of the labour movement within the Resistance, the wartime dominance of the Committees by "trusts" was to be tempered with greater representation for organised labour, as well as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). It was believed that with new leadership and a more balanced, tripartite representation,⁴⁸⁵ the Organisation Committees could remain the central pillars of France's political economy after the war.

Within weeks of the creation of the first Organisation Committees by Vichy in autumn 1940,⁴⁸⁶ criticism had begun pouring into the spa town's government offices. Doctrinaire corporatists objected to the inherent "syndicalism" of the document and condemned the legislation passed by the reactionary regime as "the triumphant realisation of

⁴⁸³ "Si l'on conserve la forme du comité d'organisation, il faut en réformer l'esprit", in "Maintien éventuel du CO du bâtiment et des travaux publics", by Leprince, 26 January 1944, CFLN 686, MAE.

⁴⁸⁴ The CFLN was the principal Resistance body created on 3 June 1943 and led by de Gaulle from 9 November of that year. On 3 June 1944, three days before the Allied landings in France, the CFLN became the GPRF, which would rule France until the formal establishment of the Fourth Republic in October 1946.

⁴⁸⁵ The term "tripartite" is used in this thesis in the context of labour relations, denoting representation of employers, organised labour, and the State. It should not be confused with the governing coalition of MRP, SFIO, and PCF in France from 1944 until 1947.

⁴⁸⁶ The first Organisation Committee (for the automotive industry) was created in September 1940, with the Committee for Steel (CORSID) created on 9 November 1940.

the policies of the Popular Front”⁴⁸⁷ Organised labour attacked the Committees for being composed exclusively of industrialists, despite initial promises of labour representation following the dissolution of trade union confederations with the law of 16 August 1940. SMEs decried their lack of representation in the Committees and successfully lobbied for Pétain to support their cause.⁴⁸⁸ Meanwhile, the Committees oversaw massive production for the German war economy. With the advent of forced labour deportations, which saw hundreds of thousands of French workers sent to work in German factories, the already unpopular Committees became demonised as the embodiment of collaboration with the Reich, even as some Committees opposed the deportations.

Given their unpopularity in 1940, it is hardly surprising that after four years of indigence, industrial decline, and collaboration with the Reich, the Organisation Committees were the subject of widespread disapproval among the French population of 1944. Discussing French industrial organisation from their headquarters in Algiers, the CFLN noted that the bodies were hated and perhaps the most characteristic institutions of Vichy.⁴⁸⁹ By the time Allied troops landed in France, however, the CFLN had agreed that the Organisation Committees should be maintained due to their pragmatic value, provided they underwent several key reforms.⁴⁹⁰ These reforms would be a priority of the GPRF upon its entry into Paris.

One of the most significant shortcomings in the existing historiography on the Organisation Committees is that virtually all studies conclude with the end of the Vichy regime and the restoration of Republican government in France. Claire Andrieu has lamented “the forgetting of the final act of the drama, namely the survival of the Committees in liberated France, from 1944 until 1946”,⁴⁹¹ yet this gap remains unfilled. The only book-length study of the Organisation Committees, edited by Hervé Joly, focuses on the Committees in the context of Vichy’s economy and rarely alludes to the fact that the bodies outlived the regime.⁴⁹² Three of the most important works to consider the French economy in 1944-1946 in a broader context summarise the debate within the CFLN regarding the

⁴⁸⁷ Lettre de Jules Verger et Léonce Reynès à Pétain, 14 December 1940, AG 2 611, AN.

⁴⁸⁸ See, for example, “Texte de discours de Pétain”, 21 November 1941, F 37 20, AN.

⁴⁸⁹ “Maintien éventuel du CO du bâtiment et des travaux publics”, 26 January 1944, CFLN 686, MAE.

⁴⁹⁰ See Chapter Four.

⁴⁹¹ Claire Andrieu, *La Banque sous l’Occupation. Paradoxes de l’histoire d’une profession* (Paris: FNSP, 1990), 128.

⁴⁹² Hervé Joly (ed.), *Les Comités d’organisation et l’économie dirigée du régime de Vichy* (Caen: Centre de recherché d’histoire quantitative, 2004).

maintenance of the Committees, but then each of these studies provides no more than a single paragraph to discuss the actual reforms carried out over the next two years.⁴⁹³ Existing accounts recognise that the survival of the Committees in 1944 was conditional on their reform, yet fail to provide a satisfactory account of these reforms between the Liberation and the dissolution of the Committees in 1946. This chapter thus constitutes the most detailed study of the reform of the Organisation Committees under the Provisional Government, focusing particularly on the Committee for Steel.

A Newer Industrial Order

During the war, the Resistance began looking to other countries' models of industrial organisation for inspiration. Unsurprisingly, the Communist Party suggested copying the Soviet model, but also encouraged drawing inspiration from Britain's Joint Production Committees (*comités mixtes de production*) and Franklin Delano Roosevelt's innovations in the United States.⁴⁹⁴ Of these options, the British model seemed to inspire the members of the Resistance far more than those of the emerging superpowers. André Philip, who served as Commissioner for the Interior in the CFLN, drafted several studies of the Joint Production Committees, which were advanced as an alternative to the existing Organisation Committees.⁴⁹⁵ Central to these analyses was the observation that the British bodies were tripartite, ensuring representation of and input from workers and industrialists, with the state acting as mediator.

In November 1944, the Secretary General for Industrial Production, Lambert Blum-Picard, requested copies of William Beveridge's influential report from 1942 on social insurance (known as the Beveridge Report, which led to the creation of Joint Production

⁴⁹³ Richard Kuisel provides one paragraph describing Minister for Industrial Production Robert Lacoste's desire to reform and maintain the Committees despite their unpopularity. In a similarly brief paragraph, Andrew Shennan notes that the CFLN concluded that the Committees could be maintained, provided their number be reduced and their form changed to allow for greater State control. Finally, in his 1500-page study of the French economy, Michel Margairaz provides a single paragraph to the reforms of the Organisation Committees, and most of this remains focused on the issue of *épuration*. See Kuisel, *Capitalism and the State in Modern France* (Cambridge: CUP, 1981), 358; Shennan, *Rethinking France* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), 272; and Margairaz, *L'Etat, les finances et l'économie. Histoire d'une conversion, 1932-1952* (Paris: CHEFF, 1991), 775-6.

⁴⁹⁴ "Procès-verbal de la séance de l'Assemblée Consultative Provisoire du 5 janvier 1944", 5 January 1944, C I 591, AN.

⁴⁹⁵ "Études d'A. Philip sur les Comités mixtes de production", F 60 895, AN; see also "Étude sur les Joint Production Committees", 28 June 1944, CFLN 687, MAE. Philip was one of the 80 deputies who voted against handing full powers to Maréchal Pétain on 10 July 1940 and he joined de Gaulle in London in July 1942.

Committees in wartime Britain) as well as his most recent work, *Full Employment in a Free Society*, published earlier that year. He also requested a copy of the “Bretten-Woods accords” (sic) and the Lend-Lease Agreement. Finally, to make sense of it all, he asked for a copy of the Oxford Dictionary.⁴⁹⁶ He would receive all these documents in February 1945, with one curious exception: the Oxford Dictionary proved “impossible to find in England”, so the Secretary General had to make do with his tenuous grasp of English.⁴⁹⁷ Despite the language barrier, it is clear that the Secretary General for Industrial Production, as well as others in his ministry and in the government, were aware of the British alternative to France’s Organisation Committees.

Some authors have emphasised the influence of the Joint Production Committees and of British thinkers such as Beveridge and John Maynard Keynes, suggesting that the post-war reforms of France’s industrial organisation were in large part an adoption of British innovations.⁴⁹⁸ This tends to misrepresent the similarities between the Organisation Committees as they existed after 1944 and the Joint Production Committees. Indeed, the latter were small-scale groupings that existed within individual factories, gathering workers, technicians, and employers “on the shop floor”. By the time of the Liberation of Paris, nearly 4,500 such committees existed in the UK, a far cry from the overarching Organisation Committees that oversaw entire branches of industry instead of isolated factories.⁴⁹⁹

In reality, the post-war reforms in France flowed quite naturally from the early Vichy legislation on industrial organisation. There is far more in common between the Joint Production Committees and the Committees foreseen in Belin’s law from 16 August 1940 than is generally realised – in no small part because Belin and Beveridge had both been very interested in industrial and social reform in the interwar years.⁵⁰⁰ Precisely because of these

⁴⁹⁶ “Note”, 30 November 1944, F 12 10024, AN

⁴⁹⁷ “Note”, 20 February 1945, F 12 10025, AN.

⁴⁹⁸ See Richard Kuisel, *op.cit.*, 278 and Andrew Shennan, *op.cit.*, 58-64 and 191-201. The influence of Beveridge on the political economy debates within the Resistance is also highlighted by Georges Boris in his post-war writings. See Boris, *Servir la République* (Paris: Julliard, 1963), 324-26.

⁴⁹⁹ For a description of the Joint Production Committees, see Arthur McIvor, *A History of Work in Britain 1880-1950* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 105-107.

⁵⁰⁰ Belin belonged to the group of nonconformists who questioned the economic and social orthodoxies of the Third Republic in such publications as *Nouveaux cahiers* and *Syndicats*. Beveridge, although never a Fabian or a Socialist, was influenced by Sidney and Beatrice Webb’s writings on industrial democracy and advocated social security in the 1920s. See Brian Abel-Smith, “The Beveridge Report: Its Origins and Outcomes” in *Beveridge and Social Security: An International Retrospective* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994). An overview of interwar debates regarding the modernisation of the economy in Britain is provided in Richard Overy, *The Morbid Age. Britain between the Wars* (London: Penguin, 2009), Chapter Two. For related discussions on economic planning in Britain, see Daniel Ritschel, *The Politics of Planning: The Debate on Economic Planning in*

common interests, the idea of reformed Organisation Committees was compatible with the British model being studied within the Resistance. Indeed, the text of the law of 16 August 1940 was entirely conducive to the tripartite spirit of the Joint Production Committees, perhaps more so than it had been to the spirit of Vichy's National Revolution, to which a more overtly corporatist system would have been better suited. We shall see that ironically, the end result of the post-war reforms, despite the influence of British formulations, amounted to a strikingly consistent application of the law of 16 August 1940 itself.

By any other name: unveiling the Professional Offices

The most conspicuous reform of the Organisation Committees was carried out at the beginning of 1945. Robert Lacoste, Minister for Industrial Production, was briefed on the systematic attacks against the continued existence of the Organisation Committees in the French press. Lacoste, "anguished by this state of affairs", decided to launch a counter-campaign in the press explaining the necessity of the Committees. He supplemented this strategy with the obvious renaming of the institutions, with the hope that a new name would give the institutions a new lease on life.⁵⁰¹ It was agreed that at the end of February 1945, a decree would rename Organisation Committees, which would be henceforth known as Professional Offices.⁵⁰² Ironically, this was one of the names first used in July 1940 for the nascent Organisation Committees, although the reprise of this name by the GPRF is likely coincidental.⁵⁰³ An update on the transformation of the Organisation Committees into Professional Offices was given in August 1945,⁵⁰⁴ although staff of the Offices and of the Ministry alike continued to refer to the institutions by their Vichy-era names, an embarrassing slip exacerbated by the continued use of the Organisation Committees' letterhead.⁵⁰⁵ Despite the obvious continuities between the Organisation Committees and the Professional Offices –

Britain in the 1930s (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997). On the French nonconformists and their influence in Vichy and post-war France, see Philip Nord, *France's New Deal* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2010).

⁵⁰¹ "Procès-verbal de la réunion des directeurs", 11 January 1945, F 12 10025, AN.

⁵⁰² "Note. Objet: réforme des CO", 16 February 1945, F 12 10025, AN.

⁵⁰³ The French Delegation in Paris used this term as early as 26 July in a letter to Elmar Michel, the Head of the Economic Section of the German Military Administration in Paris. The other name used for the proto-Organisation Committees discussed in Chapter One of this thesis was "Liaison Offices". See "Note à Michel", 26 July 1940, F 60 1539, AN.

⁵⁰⁴ "Réunion des directeurs. Ordre du jour: Offices professionnels", 8 August 1945, F 12 10027, AN.

⁵⁰⁵ In October 1945, the Professional Office for Steel sent a circular to French steel firms making clear that they should use the term "Professional Office" and "OPSID" rather than "Organisation Committee" and "CORSID". See "Circulaire d'OPSID", 16 October 1945, AQ 139 83, AN.

the new name belied the fact that they were in fact the same institutions – the Ministry for Industrial Production denied even the most remote similarity between the institutions. In the autumn of 1945, one ministry official insisted to a small-businessman that “the Professional Offices have nothing in common with the organisations of the Vichy regime aside from the extreme shortage of primary materials that they have to manage”.⁵⁰⁶ The businessman was by no means the only individual who found the purported dissociation of the new Professional Offices from Vichy’s Organisation Committees unconvincing.

While some reforms to industrial organisation were foreseen in the early post-war period, it was seen as necessary to establish an *Ecole Supérieure d’Organisation Professionnelle* (ESOP), under the auspices of the Ministry for Industrial Production, to “oversee the training of economic executives both for the existing institutions and for the establishment of a new organisation”.⁵⁰⁷ Just as 1944-45 saw the overhaul of Sciences Po and the creation of the *Ecole nationale d’administration* (ENA), the Provisional Government decided to create the ESOP to train France’s post-war executives who would be working within the Organisation Committees and their successor institutions. This decision reveals that France’s leadership expected Vichy’s system of industrial organisation, with inevitable reforms, to last well into the post-war years – it would hardly have made sense to establish a school to train executives for bodies that were to be imminently dissolved. In an influential report to de Gaulle in February 1944, CFLN Secretary General Louis Joxe observed that even if the Organisation Committees were abolished, the government would need to organise bodies “to take over the duties entrusted to the Organisation Committees by Vichy, which cannot be surrendered to private initiative”.⁵⁰⁸ It was clear that the Committees or institutions very much like them would endure well into the post-war years.

Reforming Vichy’s Committees

Politically, the most important reform to be made to the post-war Organisation Committees was the removal of the leaders who had collaborated during the war. This was an essential condition of maintaining the Organisation Committees, and was accepted

⁵⁰⁶ “Lettre de Piette au Président de la Chambre de métiers de l’Ain”, 18 October 1945, F 12 10031, AN.

⁵⁰⁷ “Note sur la formation des cadres économiques”, 30 October 1944, F 12 10031.

⁵⁰⁸ “Note sur les questions d’ordre économique et de ravitaillement”, 10 February 1944, F 60 914, AN.

unanimously throughout the CFLN and then the GPRF.⁵⁰⁹ On 7 October, a government decree annulled all appointments to Organisation Committees, effectively sacking the entire industrial leadership of the Vichy era, regardless of the extent to which they had engaged in various forms of collaboration.⁵¹⁰ As their final act, the members of CORSID submitted their resignation on 9 October 1944.⁵¹¹ With this simple letter, which merely confirmed the government's decree, the vital step of purging the Committee of its wartime leadership was complete.

Finding successors for the wartime presidents of the Organisation Committees, however, proved to be a difficult task. Nominations were sought within the Ministry for Industrial Production, although such recommendations had to include an explanatory report justifying the nomination, the candidate's CV, no less than six copies of the completed nomination form, and perhaps most daunting of all, written approval from the CGT.⁵¹² Perhaps due to the stringent conditions involved in the nomination process, civil servants from the Ministry for Industrial Production ended up running the Organisation Committees for months after the dismissal of the wartime leadership in November 1944. Furthermore, it was routinely highlighted that, in the context of the *épuration* that marked late-1944, the new leaders of the Organisation Committees had to be "unassailable figures" (*personnalités inattaquables*).⁵¹³ The Ministry ran CORSID, formally renamed OPSID in February 1945, until the formal appointment of Alexis Aron as Provisional Commissioner of OPSID on 8 March 1945.⁵¹⁴ Aron had been an original member of CORSID's *Commission générale*, a consultative commission of steel industrialists established by CORSID in February 1941.⁵¹⁵ In this capacity, Aron was included in the early organisation of the steel industry under Vichy. With the imposition of anti-Semitic legislation by Vichy, however, Aron, himself the son of a rabbi, was dismissed from the Commission and he spent the remainder of the war in Savoie, which remained in the Non-Occupied Zone until November 1942. He remained in

⁵⁰⁹ "Projet d'ordonnance relative aux organismes industriels dits comités d'organisation", 29 May 1944, CFLN 602, MAE. Indeed, the "radical *épuration* of the civilian and military administration" was a non-negotiable condition of the PCF's support for de Gaulle and the GPRF. See Philippe Buton, *Les lendemains qui déchantent: Le Parti communiste français à la Libération* (Paris: FNSP, 1993), 36-38.

⁵¹⁰ "Ordonnance du 7 octobre 1944" in *Journal officiel*, 8 October 1944.

⁵¹¹ Lettre de Jules Aubrun, 9 October 1944, AQ 139 80, AN.

⁵¹² "Note", 24 November 1944, F 12 10024, AN.

⁵¹³ "Procès-verbal de la réunion [des directeurs] du 26 septembre 1944", 28 September 1944, F 12 10024, AN.

⁵¹⁴ "Rapport sur la situation du CO de la sidérurgie fin 1944-début 1945. Note du Commissaire provisoire", 27 April 1945, F 12 10063, AN. The title of President was replaced with that of Provisional Commissioner. Aron would retain this "provisional" role until the formal abolition of OPSID in mid-1946.

⁵¹⁵ "Déclaration No. 15 du CORSID", 5 February 1941, AQ 139 80, AN.

close contact with CORSID, which sent him money during the war, and they exchanged draft projects for the French steel industry.⁵¹⁶ He was thus kept abreast of CORSID's actions, participated in the debates on the organisation of the industry, and maintained a close personal friendship with Aubrun in particular.⁵¹⁷ Given his initial position within CORSID's *Commission générale* and his ongoing involvement with CORSID regarding the organisation of the industry, the appointment of Aron to succeed his friend Aubrun as head of CORSID serves as an example of continuity within the management of the French steel industry.

In March 1945, newly-appointed Commissioner Aron commended the “considerable work accomplished by the former Committee” and to the “independence and the courage unwaveringly displayed by the Committee in the face of the ever-increasing demands of the Occupation authorities”.⁵¹⁸ Moreover, he reiterated Aubrun's pleas from December 1944 to maintain “an effective leadership, centralised in the hands of a single, responsible individual, namely the Provisional Commissioner”, Aron himself. He also made the case for “the necessity of a strong, uninterrupted Professional Office [with] sufficient latitude” to rule itself.⁵¹⁹ Aron was perhaps the ideal candidate for those who sought the appearance of *épuration* yet the reality of continuity from the Vichy years. Undeniably a victim of some of Vichy's most heinous legislation – it must be remembered that Vichy's anti-Semitic laws caused the deaths of roughly 75,000 Jews – Aron did indeed fit the bill as an “unassailable figure”. Yet his involvement with CORSID throughout the war is impossible to ignore, even if his formal participation in the *Commission générale* was forcibly ended in 1941. His unsevered contact with CORSID throughout the war, and his early paean to Aubrun upon succeeding him, reveal that Aron sought to continue and defend the work of the Vichy-era leadership in the steel industry.⁵²⁰

While the palpable change in leadership indeed replaced the five wartime Committee members with an “unassailable figure”, the changes in staff seemed to end there. The remainder of those who had worked at CORSID during the war retained their roles in the

⁵¹⁶ Philippe Mioche, “Une vision conciliante du futur de l'Europe: le plan d'Alexis Aron en 1943” in Michel Dumoulin (ed.), *Plans des temps de guerre pour l'Europe d'après-guerre, 1940-1944* (Brussels: Bruylant, 1995), 307-323. Mioche argues that Aron's was the most significant plan for the modernisation of the steel industry developed during the war.

⁵¹⁷ Françoise Berger, “Alexis Aron, ingénieur sidérurgiste”, *Archives Juives* 1/2011 (Vol. 44), 136-139.

⁵¹⁸ “Rapport sur la situation du CO de la sidérurgie fin 1944-début 1945. Note du Commissaire provisoire”, 27 April 1945, F 12 10063, AN.

⁵¹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁰ Indeed, as head of OPSID Aron would start to implement the post-war plans he had developed with CORSID during the war.

newly-rechristened OPSID. The Under-Secretary of CORSID, Jean Latourte, retained his position and continued to refer to the new Office by its wartime name. Similarly, Eugène Dupuy, who as President of the *Bureau de normalisation de la sidérurgie* (BNS) worked tirelessly to bring French steel production in line with German specifications, stayed put. The technical staff employed by the Committee continued their work, which would be used by Jean Monnet as the foundation of his plans for modernising French industry.⁵²¹ This continuation was seen perhaps even more clearly in OCRPI, which remained part of the Ministry for Industrial Production. While the Minister and Secretary General, Robert Lacoste and Blum-Picard respectively, arrived at rue de Grenelle from Algiers, OCRPI's staff remained unchanged. Norguet, who had worked closely with Jean Bichelonne, Vichy's Minister for Industrial Production from 1942 until 1944, now wrote his memos to the former *résistants*. Even the practice of Christmas bonuses that had developed during the war was maintained by OCRPI.⁵²² More troublingly, CORSID's allocation of raw materials to firms remained based on wartime production figures, which resulted in the largest quantities of raw materials being sent to the firms that had produced most extensively for the Reich during the war.⁵²³

If *épuration* was indeed an essential condition for maintaining Vichy's industrial bodies, it turned out to be very slight. All but the members of the Committee itself – a total of five individuals – retained their positions.⁵²⁴ Of those five who were forced to resign, none was investigated for collaboration, and they were able to continue their careers as leaders of the French steel industry. Indeed, as OPSID became bogged down with reforms, the individuals who had managed the industry so well for Vichy now found themselves in high demand.

Jules Aubrun, who had served as CORSID's only president from its establishment in November 1940 until his forced resignation in October 1944, was named President of the

⁵²¹“Projet de résolution soumis au Conseil du Plan. Objectifs généraux pour l'activité française”, 13 March 1946, AMF 2 3, FJME.

⁵²² “Note”, 14 December 1945, F 12 10028, AN.

⁵²³ The system of sub-allocation developed during the war, which allocated greater quantities to firms producing heavily for the Reich, remained in place at the end of 1944. This led some industrialists to decry that CORSID's system “rewarded industrialists who collaborated with the Germans”. See “Procès-verbal de la 20e réunion des directeurs”, 20 December 1944, F 12 10024, AN.

⁵²⁴ This list could be expanded to include Vichy's last Minister for Industrial Production, Jean Bichelonne, who was technically in charge of OCRPI. Bichelonne died in Berlin in 1945, however, and was not subjected to formal *épuration* in France. Needless to say, the German representatives on the Sections of OCRPI were not invited to remain.

Chambre syndicale de la sidérurgie française (CSSF), a revived version of the *Comité des forges*, that autumn. While the creation of Vichy's Organisation Committees had abolished and superseded the employers' associations for coal and steel (as well as the main employers' confederation, the CGPF) and trade union confederations, the re-establishment of *liberté syndicale* in 1944 facilitated their return. While CORSID under Aubrun had presumed to combine the syndicates representing employers and workers alike, in the post-war era he contented himself representing only the former. It is important to note that the interwar leaders of the *Comité des forges*, de Wendel and Lambert Ribot, were not returned to their positions in the new CSSF, but that instead Aubrun was maintained as the leader of the industry's employers' association. His power within the industry was further increased in 1946, when the resurrected *Conseil national du patronat français* (CNPF)⁵²⁵ named Aubrun President of its Association for the Steel Industry. Meanwhile Eugène Roy, the Vice President of CORSID, had a similarly successful post-war career. At the end of 1944, the Ministry for Industrial Production asked professionals from various industries to recommend representatives for French industry to participate in the work of the *Commission d'études générales pour l'Allemagne*. An overwhelming endorsement from the steel industry converged around Roy, who only two months earlier had been forced to resign from his position as Vice President of CORSID. The ministry accepted the nomination, and Roy was given the first of a series of important roles in post-Vichy France.⁵²⁶

The Ministry for Industrial Production did what it could to temper the attempts to purge Vichy-era industrialists. The director of the Firminy mines was arrested in November 1944. The Ministry pleaded for his release, citing his "technical, social, and patriotic role" during the occupation.⁵²⁷ Even in January 1944, the CFLN acknowledged that, while factory owners had supported the Vichy regime and produced for the Reich, "it would be unjust to

⁵²⁵ The *Conseil national du patronat français* (CNPF) was established in December 1945 to take the place of the pre-war *Confédération générale du patronat français* (CGPF) that was abolished by Vichy in 1940. Although the CFLN had agreed that the reconstitution of the CGPF would be (politically) impossible after the war, this did not prevent the employers from proceeding with this plan. See "Rétablissement de la liberté syndicale et épuration des organisations syndicales des travailleurs et d'employeurs", 13 January 1944, CFLN 602, MAE.

⁵²⁶ "Note du secrétaire général à la production [Blum-Picard] au directeur du commerce extérieur, ministère de l'économie nationale", 15 December 1944, F 12 10024, AN.

⁵²⁷ "Note", 30 November 1944, F 12 10024, AN. Richard Vinen cites an example of the head of the COH in Loire, Perrin Pelletier, who was similarly arrested and put before a *Commission Régionale d'Épuration*. Here too, Robert Lacoste sent a letter on 30 November 1944 asking for the industrialist's release on the grounds of his "patriotic attitude". See Richard Vinen, "The French Coal Industry during the Occupation" in *Historical Journal*, 33:1, 1990, 105-130, here 122-3.

consider filling German orders as necessarily expressing an attitude of collaboration”.⁵²⁸ This fine distinction between “expressing an attitude of collaborating” and producing for the Reich while supporting the Vichy regime informed the State-managed purges that followed the brief and bloody *épuration sauvage* and its “*divines raisons d’assassiner*”⁵²⁹ of the early months following the Liberation.⁵³⁰ The claim that the French steel industrialists acted patriotically in the war, however, is offset by the selective silence of the industrialists themselves on this question. In November 1944, the Ministry for Industrial Production asked industrialists to nominate candidates amongst themselves for the Croix de la Libération and the Médaille de la Résistance, decorations to acknowledge patriotic actions associated with the Liberation and the Resistance. The coal industry nominated ten, including Aimé Lepercq, Aubrun’s counterpart in the Organisation Committee for Coal who was then briefly Minister for Finance before his premature death at the end of 1944. The chemical industry, despite being tainted with its collaboration with the Reich through I.G. Farben and other Franco-German ventures, nominated nine patriotic industrialists. The steel industry was unable to produce the name of a single nominee from within its ranks.⁵³¹ While hardly conclusive in itself, this example does suggest that the steel industrialists themselves did not see themselves or their peers as having participated actively in either the Resistance or the Liberation. This stands uneasily next to the rhetoric surrounding this purportedly “technical, social, and patriotic” group.⁵³²

In the autumn of 1944, with the war still raging in Europe and French industry in tatters, the Ministry for Industrial Production was clearly more interested in maintaining even the minimal levels of production at that time than in purging vital industries of their leadership. The Ministry revealed its more pragmatic reasoning in demanding the immediate release of another industrialist a month earlier: “[This arrest] is susceptible to impede the

⁵²⁸ “Rétablissement de la liberté syndicale et épuration des organisations syndicales de travailleurs et d’employeurs”, 13 January 1944, CFLN, 602, MAE. For the historiographical debate as to whether this constituted collaboration, see Philippe Burrin, *La France à l’heure allemande, 1940-1944* (Paris: Seuil, 1995) and François Marcot, “Qu’est-ce qu’un patron résistant?” in Olivier Dard, Jean-Claude Daumas, and François Marcot (eds.), *L’Occupation, l’Etat français et les entreprises* (Paris: ADHE, 2000), 277-292.

⁵²⁹ Céline, *D’un château l’autre*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1957), 49.

⁵³⁰ The best recent overview of *l’épuration* in France is Jean-Paul Cointet’s *Expier Vichy: l’épuration en France 1943-1958* (Paris : Perrin, 2008). Philippe Bourdrel’s *L’épuration sauvage, 1944-45* (Paris : Perrin, 2002) provides regional studies of the early, violent purges of 1944-45, demonstrating the extent to which *l’épuration* varied across France.

⁵³¹ “Propositions d’attribution de la Croix de Libération ou de la Médaille de la Résistance”, 30 November 1944, F 12 10024, AN.

⁵³² The issue of economic collaboration is discussed in Chapter Three.

proper functioning of this factory, and we therefore ask that he be released without further delay, or at least that he appear before the *épuration* committee immediately”.⁵³³ Clearly, the value of an industrialist in contributing to timely production outweighed any potential punishment for wartime indiscretions. Henry Rouso has characterised the *épuration* as “incoherent, notably by leaving the most extensive form of collaboration, that is to say economic collaboration, out of reach”.⁵³⁴ More recently, Hervé Joly has argued that the purging of French business did indeed take place, claiming that while industrial leaders “were not rejected by their profession and left with neither employment nor subsistence, they never regained their leading positions” within the industry. According to Joly, the Vichy-era leaders of French industry were permanently demoted after the Liberation, amounting to a moderate but nonetheless real form of *épuration*.⁵³⁵ In the case of the steel industry, however, the industrialists promoted to leadership positions within CORSID in 1940 continued to thrive after the Liberation, while the demotion of pre-war leaders proved to be similarly permanent.

Barely a year after the first Allied landings in France, the leaders of the wartime Organisation Committees had been fully reintegrated into France’s industrial elite. On 1 August 1945, the Tripartite Commission on Steel met in Brussels, with the purpose of coordinating the steel industries of the Benelux and France, in terms of both domestic production and the policy to be pursued with regard to German steel production. France chose its most qualified representatives from the French steel industry: Jules Aubrun, Léon Daum, and Jean Raty. While Aubrun and Daum had spent the war running CORSID, Jean Raty had been President of the *Chambre Syndicale des Mines de Fer* from 1941.⁵³⁶ The French delegation was completed by Aron, Aubrun’s friend, colleague, and successor as leader of OPSID. Together, these four individuals represented France at these early negotiations on a coordinated steel policy for post-war Western Europe. So important was their presence at the negotiations that Blum-Picard even wrote directly to the Minister for the Interior and to the French police prefecture to ensure that they all received their passports in

⁵³³ “Note”, 30 October 1944, F 12 10024, AN.

⁵³⁴ Henry Rouso, “L’*épuration* en France: une histoire inachevée” in *Vingtième siècle. Revue d’histoire*, no.33, 1992, 101. In his memoirs, de Gaulle describes his approach to *épuration*: “to limit the punishment to the individuals who played a leading role in Vichy’s policies and to the men who were in direct collusion with the enemy”. See de Gaulle, *Mémoires de guerre. L’unité: 1942-1944* (vol. 2) (Paris: Plon, 1956), 186.

⁵³⁵ Hervé Joly, “Mobilités patronales dans l’après-guerre et impact de l’*épuration*” in Marc Bergère (ed.), *L’*épuration* économique en France à la Libération* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2008), 83-100.

⁵³⁶ Raty held this position from 1941 until 1949, during which time the name of the *Chambre syndicale* remained the same. He ultimately became President of the CSSF after Aubrun’s death.

time to attend the meeting in Brussels.⁵³⁷ Far from being subjected to the *de facto* épuration suggested by Joly – let alone the “radical épuration” demanded by the PCF – the French steel industry continued to be managed and represented by the same small group of industrialists first promoted to these positions by Vichy in 1940. This small handful of industrialists would negotiate on behalf of France with its Western European neighbours and play key roles in the European project.

In the final assessment, the épuration of CORSID demanded as a condition of maintaining Vichy’s Organisation Committees consisted of shifting its leaders to other influential positions representing the same industry. The new Provisional Commissioner, Alexis Aron, had indeed fled from Vichy’s repressive and odious anti-Semitic laws. For this reason, he was indeed an “unassailable figure” fit to rehabilitate Vichy’s unpopular institutions. Yet he was himself closely involved with the Organisation Committee, explicitly in its early stages, clandestinely for the final years of the war. He had developed plans for the modernisation of the industry in consultation with CORSID and remained a close friend of Aubrun throughout the period. In itself, placing Aron at the helm of OPSID, while keeping the rest of the Vichy-era staff in place, was barely more significant than changing the name “Organisation Committee” to “Professional Office”. The wartime leaders of France’s steel industry were merely laterally relocated to other key posts within the industry. Before the fighting in Europe had even finished, CORSID’s President and Vice-President were awarded plum jobs at the *Chambre syndicale de la sidérurgie française* and the *Commission d’études générales pour l’Allemagne*, respectively.

From dictatorship to triumvirate

As we have seen, a consensus had emerged within the Resistance, and indeed among many who had served Vichy, that the regime’s industrial organisation ought to be maintained for pragmatic reasons. This maintenance, however, was conditional on significant reform of Vichy’s industrial institutions. While the Organisation Committees would continue doing what they had done since their creation in 1940, the new members had to be drawn not only from large firms, but also from organised labour and the State.

⁵³⁷ “Lettre de Blum-Picard au Préfet de police”, 27 July 1945 and “Lettre de Blum-Picard au Ministre de l’Intérieur”, 26 July 1945, F 12 10027, AN.

The support for these reforms was not unanimous. Predictably, the loudest objections came from the *grand patronat*, who enjoyed unprecedented power under the Vichy-era structure, which disregarded organised labour and SMEs, despite Pétain's wartime attempts to bring them in line with the National Revolution.⁵³⁸ In his new role as President of the CSSF, Jules Aubrun did all he could to retain the Organisation Committees as they had been during the war. In December 1944, he argued that any reorganisation of the steel industry must only be carried out by the industrialists themselves, who would then place themselves under the authority of the State, whose role it would be to oversee the proper functioning of the employer-forged system. Moreover, Aubrun demanded that the profession "remain in the framework of the law of 16 August 1940" – in other words, to maintain Vichy's legislation and that regime's system of Organisation Committees which were dominated by industrialists. In what was perhaps a Freudian slip, Aubrun wrote that "the profession would like to see the appointment of a *collège dictatorial* composed of three people chosen by the profession and granted public powers" – the word "*dictatorial*" was then crossed out in favour of "*directorial*".⁵³⁹ Trying his hand at compromise, Aubrun noted that if the government insisted that Organisation Committees had to include labour representation, then he could accept a tripartite representation, but only if the *patronat* would be assured 50% of the seats, with the remaining half to be divided amongst workers, technicians, and the State.⁵⁴⁰ Rejecting talk of a more equally distributed tripartite arrangement, he defended the autocratic structure of the Organisation Committee: "we reject the idea of a triumvirate, a method that can only weaken the authority of the leader".⁵⁴¹ After having enjoyed unprecedented authority under Vichy, the steel industrialists and their unwavering representative, Jules Aubrun, were reluctant to surrender any of their power to the State or to organised labour.

⁵³⁸ Although Mioche has argued that the Vichy era was not advantageous to the *patronat* in the steel industry, they nevertheless sought to maintain the Vichy-era system for as long as possible, since they were over-represented compared with organised labour and SMEs. See Philippe Mioche, "Les entreprises sidérurgiques sous l'Occupation" in *Histoire, économie et société*, 1992, 11:3, 397-414.

⁵³⁹ "Projet d'organisation des groupements sidérurgiques, observations de la Chambre syndicale de la sidérurgie", 29 December 1944, F 12 10062, AN. "Collège directorial" translates as "board of directors".

⁵⁴⁰ Surprisingly, a similar ratio, guaranteeing 50% representation for the *patronat*, was entertained by Blum-Picard as early as April 1944, before the CFLN had discussed the matter with French industrialists. Blum-Picard justified his proposal on the grounds that "the conduct of the workers and the technicians in 1936-37 does not inspire great optimism". See "Discussion de réforme des CO", 14 April 1944, CFLN 686, MAE.

⁵⁴¹ "Projet d'organisation des groupements sidérurgiques, observations de la Chambre syndicale de la sidérurgie", 29 December 1944, F 12 10062, AN.

Aside from the reticence of the *patronat* to embrace any system in which they were not themselves dominant, further difficulties emerged from the trade unions. Allotting a portion of the seats of the new Professional Offices to organised labour ran into trouble quite quickly. The wartime cooperation of the labour movement soon splintered as the antagonistic turf wars between the various labour unions re-emerged. The CGT, although already divided between the *confédérés* and the *unitaires*, sought to take advantage of the prestige and popularity of the PCF in the immediate post-war era, and the leading role of communists in the interior resistance.⁵⁴² Meanwhile, the Catholic CFTC saw that it could increase its popularity by aligning itself more closely with the moderate Christian Democrats of the MRP, preferring this to collaboration with the CGT.⁵⁴³ As a result, the government's directive that a third of the seats in the new Offices be filled by trade unions opened the door to bickering among the CGT, the CFTC, and others, each eager to ensure that its own interests were represented in the new organisation. By April 1945, the Ministry for Industrial Production was visibly concerned that the inclusion of labour in the Professional Offices could paralyse their development.⁵⁴⁴ Further difficulties were encountered when trying to name representatives from among company executives and employers to the reformed Offices.⁵⁴⁵

While it had been agreed in the first half of 1944 that such bodies would have to be maintained to ensure that French industry continued to function smoothly, the uncertainty over leadership and composition prevented the bodies from exerting effective control over the industry as they had done under Vichy. Meanwhile, the re-emergence of employers' associations and strong trade unions – whose functions had initially been folded into those of the Organisation Committees – further complicated the role of the Professional Offices. External factors played a major role in this as well: Germany continued to fight until May 1945, nearly a full year after the Allied landings in Normandy. This made deliveries of German coal – essential for French steel production and already insufficient at the most collaborative of times under Vichy – drop off dramatically, while imports from the Allies

⁵⁴² The CGT contained supporters of both the Socialist SFIO and the Communist Party (PCF). This division had already split the CGT in 1921, when the pro-Communist *unitaire* wing broke away to create the CGTU. The two factions were reunited in 1935, although the emergence of the Cold War in France would lead the *unitaires* to again separate from the CGT, creating CGT-Force ouvrière (FO) in December 1947. See Michel Dreyfus, *Histoire de la CGT: cent ans de syndicalisme en France* (Brussels: Editions Complexe, 1995).

⁵⁴³ Guy Groux and René Mouriaux, "1944. Les syndicats, la légalité républicaine et le pluralisme" in Fondation Charles de Gaulle, *Le rétablissement de la légalité républicaine* (Paris: Editions Complexe, 1996), 755-765.

⁵⁴⁴ "Note pour Messieurs les secrétaires généraux et directeurs", 20 April 1945, F 12 9974, AN.

⁵⁴⁵ "Procès-verbal de la 20e réunion des directeurs", 20 December 1944, F 12 10024, AN.

remained inadequate. The worsening shortage of coal for French industry was a constant predicament of the Ministry for Industrial Production. Coal extraction had worsened under Vichy, particularly from 1943, and the first trimester of 1944 yielded the lowest amount of coal yet. By the last quarter of 1944, however, liberated France could barely produce 75% of that disappointing amount. This inevitably affected the steel industry, which in November 1944 could produce only 20,000 tonnes, compared to 50,000 the previous November and 65,000 in an average month in 1938.⁵⁴⁶ By 1945, the shortage of coal was so acute that swimming pools were closed and rail transport reduced, while blast furnaces at steel mills were unable to be lit due to the lack of coal.⁵⁴⁷ In the short term, the reformed Professional Offices were unable to staunch the declining output of the French steel industry.

From autarky to planned production

The reform of the New Industrial Order was completed with some vital changes to OCRPI. When René Belin first signed the law creating Organisation Committees on 16 August 1940 Elmar Michel, the Head of the Economic Section of the German Military Administration in France, promptly informed him that such bodies would only be effective if there were complementary bodies that performed an initial allocation of materials to each branch of industry. Within weeks, OCRPI was created, which oversaw the allocation of resources to each branch of industry before the individual Organisation Committees distributed the resources to its various firms. OCRPI was closely controlled by the Germans, who were thereby able to influence French industry throughout the war.⁵⁴⁸

Germany's influence over OCRPI informed Blum-Picard's stance towards reforming Vichy's industrial organisation. In Algiers, he had championed maintaining the Organisation Committees, arguing that these were "created by the French". OCRPI, however, was "imposed on France by the Germans" as a means of controlling French industry, and he argued that it should consequently be abolished.⁵⁴⁹ As Belin had discovered in the summer of

⁵⁴⁶ "Note hebdomadaire sur la situation de l'industrie", 28 December 1944, F 12 10024, AN.

⁵⁴⁷ "Note", 23 November 1945, F 12 10028, AN.

⁵⁴⁸ See Chapter One.

⁵⁴⁹ "Procès-verbal de la sous-commission des CO", April 1944, CFLN 686, MAE. This same juxtaposition of "French" Organisation Committees and "German" Sections of OCRPI continues to be popular with historians. See, for example, Arne Radtke-Delacor, "La position des comités d'organisation face aux autorités d'occupation: la pomme de discorde des commandes allemandes en 1940-1941" in Hervé Joly (ed.), *Les Comités d'organisation*, op.cit., 63-72.

1940, however, it was not possible to have the Organisation Committees without a body responsible for an initial allocation of materials to the various branches of French industry, and OCRPI was maintained. In October 1944, the sections of OCRPI were placed directly under the control of the Secretary General for Industrial Production, Blum-Picard.⁵⁵⁰ Despite his earlier objections, he readily assumed control over OCRPI and oversaw their reform. It was also agreed that a representative of the Ministry would sit on each Section, and have a right of veto.⁵⁵¹ While the Organisation Committees were always meant to have a State representative equipped with a veto, in practice the veto was never used.⁵⁵² OCRPI, meanwhile, had always had a veto-wielding representative of the State – albeit of the German State rather than Vichy. The reforms thus restored the powers originally provided for the Organisation Committee in the law of 16 August 1940, while handing the veto power within the OCRPI Sections from German to French representatives.

Further reforms were prompted in 1945 when OCRPI's directors and distributors noted that the system of allocation established during the war was somewhat backward. They observed that in other countries, industrial planning begins with the finished industrial products desired, then traces what raw materials would be needed for this outcome, and allots those to the appropriate industries. The existing system, on the other hand, took note of the limited amount of raw materials, and apportioned amounts based on the importance and needs of various branches of industry, who were then obliged to produce what they could with what they had been allotted. Indeed, Richard Kuisel has described “economic survival” as “the dominant motive of Vichy’s political economy”.⁵⁵³ By the spring of 1945, this approach was condemned as the “fundamental error” of the wartime system, and the alignment of allocation with production goals was agreed.⁵⁵⁴ This greater emphasis on “manufacturing programmes” fit quite well with the increased interest in post-war industrial planning already being developed by Jean Monnet and others. This also marked a shift away from Vichy’s autarkical political economy, which took a shortage of raw materials as its starting point, and sought to manage the scarcity as effectively as possible. The switch to a production-based political economy was only possible, however, once France had access to massive export markets. As Frances Lynch has pointed out, the French steel industry

⁵⁵⁰ “Note sur la réforme d’OCRPI”, 28 October 1944, F 12 10024, AN.

⁵⁵¹ “Exposé des motifs”, 29 May 1944, CFLN 602, MAE.

⁵⁵² The text of the law of 16 August 1940 explicitly foresaw a representative of the government with a veto. See *Journal officiel*, 18 August 1940.

⁵⁵³ Richard Kuisel, *Capitalism and the State in Modern France*, op.cit., 130-1.

⁵⁵⁴ “Procès-verbal de la séance de la 5e réunion des directeurs et répartiteurs”, 26 March 1945, F 12 9974, AN.

emerged from the war with the capacity to produce 12 million tonnes of steel, even if barely a quarter of this amount was produced in 1945.⁵⁵⁵ In these circumstances, increasing steel production fourfold could be accomplished simply by increasing the amount of coal at that industry's disposition. The German policy initially pursued by de Gaulle and the Provisional Government was in large part motivated by the desire to ensure that the defeated country's coal production would nourish the revival of French heavy industry.⁵⁵⁶ While France was forced to do without coal imports from Britain and most other countries during the war, the Liberation of France gave the country renewed access to Allied markets and, by 1945, a measure of influence over German coal production. Freed from its wartime constraints, the French economy could be reoriented towards large-scale production rather than wallowing in autarkical penury. The OCRPI Sections were well-suited to harness this change of direction, and the reformed bodies contributed to France's post-war recovery. It is worth remembering that this shift in French political economy occurred in 1945, well before the instauration of the Marshall Plan.⁵⁵⁷ Alan Milward notably argued that the French economy had already begun its recovery before the implementation of this celebrated programme.⁵⁵⁸ While the reform of OCRPI in 1945 facilitated the success of the Marshall Plan from 1947, the broader political economy generally associated with that plan dates from as early as 1945.

Consolidating Vichy's Committees

One of the central reforms demanded by the Resistance as a condition of maintaining Vichy's Organisation Committees was that their number be drastically reduced. This idea of reducing the overall number of Organisation Committees by integrating related committees

⁵⁵⁵ Frances M.B. Lynch, *France and the International Economy: From Vichy to the Treaty of Rome*. (London: Routledge, 1997), 59.

⁵⁵⁶ France's German policy until at least 1947 was centred on limiting Germany's productive capacity and ensuring the France would have uninhibited access to coal from the Ruhr. This strategy is outlined by Jean Monnet in "Note de Jean Monnet sur le premier rapport de remise en marche de l'économie française en 1945, sur les objectifs pour 1946 et sur le but final à atteindre", 11 November 1945, AMF 1 6, FJME. For an overview of France's German policy during this period, see Raymond Poidevin, "Frankreich und die Ruhrfrage 1945-1951", in *Historische Zeitschrift*, 228:2, April 1979, 101-119.

⁵⁵⁷ It should be noted that it was the Marshall Plan that ultimately permitted France to pay for these imports to develop its industry. According to Frances Lynch, it was thus the Marshall Plan that saved the Monnet Plan; see Lynch, op.cit. While the goal of increasing production rather than managing scarce resources succeeded after 1947, the reorientation of France's political economy towards increasing production can be observed in 1945.

⁵⁵⁸ Alan Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1945-1951* (London: Routledge, 1984). Milward also argues that France's goal in this period was to supplant Germany as Europe's leading producer of steel.

into larger ones was by no means new. It had figured in Pétain's notorious 12 August 1941 speech, less than a year after the law creating the Committees had been passed, and in late 1941 Henri Lafond circulated plans to concentrate the spiralling number of Committees into six "families", corresponding to six key sectors of the French economy: water, gas, and electricity; metals and minerals; quarries; petrol; coal; and steel. The steel "family" would consist of eleven Organisation Committees related to the production and sale of steel and steel-related products, and thereby help reduce the overall number of Organisation Committees.⁵⁵⁹ This project was endorsed by Jules Aubrun, president of CORSID, although he requested that the Committees dealing with mechanical industries such as automobiles and bicycles not be included in steel's "professional family".⁵⁶⁰

The eventual reduction in the number of Organisation Committees must be seen for what it was. Henry Rousso has suggested that slashing the number of Committees from its peak of over 300 down to a more manageable size of a few dozen reflected a shrinking of their power, and that many industries were consequently freed from control by the wartime Committees.⁵⁶¹ This strictly quantitative approach belies the reality that although the number of Committees was reduced, this was done by consolidating several related Committees into fewer yet much more powerful ones. The elimination of ten of the eleven Committees related to steel would not free the industry from central organisation; on the contrary, it would hand additional powers to the surviving Committees, which could henceforth function even more efficiently with their increased powers. In the end, this concentration of powers took place in October 1944 under the auspices of the Provisional Government of the French Republic. Finally, six Organisation Committees were folded into the new Organisation Committee for Steel (CORSID), which created a stronger, centralised body to control the whole of France's steel industry.⁵⁶²

Moreover, it is interesting to note that the idea of concentrating on six "core industries", such as coal, steel, electricity, and petrol, did not originate with Jean Monnet *ex nihilo*, but was rather a central part of Vichy's industrial plans from as early as 1941.

⁵⁵⁹ "Projet de répartition des comités d'organisation du secrétaire général de l'énergie en famille" by Henri Lafond, 12 December 1941, F 12 9953, AN.

⁵⁶⁰ "Note pour Monsieur le secrétaire général de l'énergie" from Jules Aubrun, 12 November 1941, F 12 9953, AN. These reforms involving the consolidation of "professional families" are discussed in Chapter Three.

⁵⁶¹ See, for example, Henry Rousso, "Les élites économiques dans les années 1940: Epuration et transition" in *Vichy. L'événement, le mémoire, l'histoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), 553-593.

⁵⁶² "Projet de répartition des CO", 30 October 1944, F 12 10024, AN. This was then renamed OPSID in February 1945.

Similarly, the concentrated “professional families” that would be realised in the reformed Professional Offices would survive in the form of the Modernisation Commissions of the General Commissariat for the Plan, the central office of the Monnet Plan.⁵⁶³

Return to first principles: applying Vichy’s laws in post-war France

To assess the degree of reform that actually took place following the Liberation, it is worthwhile to re-examine the text of the law of 16 August 1940. The preamble emphasised the pressures on French industry with the division of the country, the Nazi occupation of northern and western France, the sudden stoppage of military production following the Armistice, and the virtual cessation of trade imposed on the country. In this context, “it was not possible to immediately establish a system that ensured effective and complete representation of employers and workers”, but reassuringly “we will strive to ensure [such representation] later”.⁵⁶⁴ Citing the current difficulties facing French industry, Belin justified the “statist character” of the proposed organisation, which for the time being was necessary instead of a system “more oriented towards the formulae of ‘industrial democracy’ often advocated in recent years”. Again, the law alluded to future reforms, promising that “[o]nce the current difficulties have been overcome, it will certainly be possible to increase the role of the interested parties in the management of the economy”.⁵⁶⁵

Indeed, an earlier draft of the law included a stipulation that there must only be “a single employers’ association and a single workers’ union” for the whole of France, and which would participate in the Organisation Committees.⁵⁶⁶ While this article was omitted from the final text of the law, it does reveal that the authors of the law were considering a formalised representation of both employers and workers within the new system, as would ultimately emerge in 1944. The allusion to future reforms of the law that would bring the French system more in line with the ideas of “industrial democracy” would come to fruition with the GPRF’s reforms. Belin himself had favoured such reforms in his pre-war writings,

⁵⁶³ See Chapter Six.

⁵⁶⁴ *Journal officiel*, 18 August 1940.

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶⁶ “Premiers projets de la loi du 16 août 1940”, 98J 7, Fonds Belin, IHS.

notably in the journals *Syndicats* and *Nouveaux cahiers*.⁵⁶⁷ Given his career in the CGT and his pre-war writings, it is probable that this expressed desire to increase workers' representation within the Organisation Committees as soon as this was feasible was indeed genuine.

Notably, the anticipated representation of workers in the Organisation Committees contained in the law was picked up by the CFLN during their discussions on industrial organisation in post-war France. A report from January 1944 which was discussed by the CFLN that spring even claimed that the law foresaw the participation of employers and workers "within several weeks"⁵⁶⁸ – an overly generous estimate that is not actually contained in the text of the law published in the *Journal officiel*. Leprince, the author of the report, insisted that the reforms desired by the CFLN could be carried out within the framework of Belin's legislation. He argued that "if we maintain the form of the Organisation Committee, we must reform the spirit; we must abolish the exclusively employer-led model and hand leadership to a Government Commissioner surrounded by others. This would be possible simply by applying the text of the Vichy law".⁵⁶⁹ Surprisingly, he was absolutely correct. While the report did not provide further details, a close reading of the 16 August law reveals that just such provisions were included in the initial legislation. Article 3 of the law declares that "in the event of inefficiency on the part of the Committee, the Government Commissioner will assume all the powers held by the Committee".⁵⁷⁰ Following the forced resignation of Aubrun and the other members of CORSID, the Government Commissioner from the Ministry of Industrial Production indeed assumed the powers of the Committee. Similarly, the eventual addition of workers' representation on the Committees was foreseen in and legitimated by the text of the law itself, although this provision was not applied under Vichy. In this sense, while the CFLN reformed the spirit of the Organisation Committees as they existed in 1944, they did so in accordance with the spirit of the law that had created those bodies in the first place.

⁵⁶⁷ See, for example, "La compréhension ouvrière sera acquise aux nécessités de l'Exposition" in *Syndicats*, 25 February 1937, and reprinted in *Nouveaux cahiers*, 15 March 1937. An extensive array of Belin's pre-war writings on industrial relations can be consulted at the Fonds Belin, IHS.

⁵⁶⁸ "Maintien éventuel du CO du bâtiment et des travaux publics", 26 January 1944, CFLN 686, MAE.

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid. Given how problematic supporting Vichy legislation could be for the new regime, Leprince suggested that the Provisional Government could appeal to a 1938 law related to French industry in order to "mask the fact that we would be using Vichy's organisations". See "Commission d'étude des problèmes économiques d'après-guerre. Sous-commission des Comités d'organisation. Séance du 21 avril 1944", 21 April 1944, CFLN 602, MAE.

⁵⁷⁰ *Journal officiel*, 18 September 1940.

The restoration of *liberté syndicale* was the most notable reform of the Committees, and the one that explicitly departed from the text of the law. Although labour representation within the Committees had been anticipated, the text of the law itself precluded their inclusion. For this reason, the CFLN agreed to “suppress Article 1 of the law known as the ‘law of 16 August 1940’, which dissolved” national trade unions and employer’s associations.⁵⁷¹ As we have seen, however, this reform is consistent with the CFLN’s reading of the law as outlined by Leprince. More important is the fact that the remaining nine articles of the law were left untouched, and that only the first article was repealed. The CFLN had no qualms with abolishing Vichyste laws and decrees with which they disagreed – the Labour Charter, seemingly Belin’s crowning achievement as Minister for Labour, was abolished altogether, as was the corporatist organisation of agriculture that had been implemented by Vichy.⁵⁷² The fact that the CFLN abolished only the first article of the law of 16 August reveals that they sought to keep the remaining sections intact.

The remaining reforms implemented in 1944 and 1945 were entirely in accordance with the August 1940 legislation. It is incredibly unlikely that Belin had foreseen that hundreds of Organisation Committees would be created within four years; no numbers are explicitly mentioned in the law, and fewer than twenty Committees had been created by the end of 1940. The concern that there were already too many Committees was voiced by Pétain in 1941, and plans to concentrate of similar Committees into “families” were developed during the war, as we have seen. By whittling down the number of Committees closer to the number established under Belin’s watch, the GPRF ended up closer to the spirit of the August law.

The half-hearted shuffling of CORSID’s members to other key positions within the steel industry, and placing a close collaborator of theirs at the helm of the Committee, was similarly done in accordance with the 16 August law. The legislation stipulates that members of the Committee could be suggested by unions and employers, but that the individuals would be appointed by the Government, who would make the decision unilaterally. Moreover, sitting members could be removed from the Committee at the Government’s discretion. This

⁵⁷¹ "Rétablissement de la liberté syndicale et épuration des organisations syndicales de travailleurs et d'employeurs", 21 January 1944, CFLN 602, MAE.

⁵⁷² "Ordonnance déclarant nuls les textes relatifs a l'organisation corporative de l'agriculture", 25 April 1944, CFLN 602, MAE.

process was followed with the forced resignation of the five wartime members and the subsequent appointment of Aron as Provisional Commissioner, as well as the invitation to trade union confederations to recommend representatives to sit on the reformed Organisation Committees.

The remaining reforms taken in 1944 would certainly have appealed to Belin in 1940, but they were simply impossible in the context of a defeated and half-occupied France. The measures set out in the 16 August law were intended to control industry in all of France, including occupied and even annexed regions, but in practice this was vetoed by the German authorities.⁵⁷³ Similarly, the establishment of OCRPI under German tutelage precluded the possibility of having the Sections under the direct authority of the Ministry for Industrial Production; rather, the German representative in each section enjoyed the most power. Yet the law itself only mentioned veto power for the French representative. The extension of the Vichy-era legislation to all of French territory as it was reconquered by the Allies, and the replacement of a German veto with a French one, were desired by the authors of the law, but impossible in the context of a German-dominated Europe.

Lastly, the guiding principles behind Belin's law were echoed within the CFLN. Blum-Picard recalled that in reforming Vichy's industrial organisation, they "must not forget the difficulties of the pre-war system".⁵⁷⁴ De Gaulle himself promised in March 1944 that his government "will not tolerate coalitions of shareholders, private monopolies, trusts",⁵⁷⁵ using language that echoes the rhetoric of Pétain and the National Revolution. Belin and his colleagues were critical of the pre-war, laissez-faire system, and ruled out "giving a free hand to the interested parties [...] to re-establish a destroyed equilibrium".⁵⁷⁶ The law denotes that "only the State has the means and the authority"⁵⁷⁷ to run this industrial system, and the CFLN confirmed their adherence to this shift away from pre-war liberalism, noting that "France's economy will remain managed (*dirigée*) for quite some time", even if liberals within the Resistance "conceded regretfully that such economic management would be necessary" in the years following the Liberation.⁵⁷⁸ A return to the economic *status quo ante*

⁵⁷³ In practice, CORSID's jurisdiction extended to the Occupied Zone as well as the Non-Occupied Zone, but did not include either Nord-Pas-de-Calais (Nordfrankreich) or Alsace-Lorraine (Reichsland).

⁵⁷⁴ "Procès-verbal", 14 April 1944, CFLN 686, MAE.

⁵⁷⁵ "Exposé de de Gaulle sur la politique du Gouvernement français", 18 March 1944, CFLN 297, MAE.

⁵⁷⁶ *Journal officiel*, 18 August 1940.

⁵⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁸ "Rôle de la Commission économique", 7 April 1944, CFLN 686, MAE.

bellum was simply not on the table, and maintaining Vichy's *dirigiste* industrial order was an effective way of pursuing a statist political economy.

Conclusion

In early spring 1944, André Philip succinctly summarised the consensus within the CLFN regarding the reform of Vichy's industrial order. "We recognise that we must reduce the number of Committees, assure the authority of the State and the effective participation of labour unions".⁵⁷⁹ To this list, we must add the *épuration* of the Committees, replacing those tainted by their palpable collaboration with the Vichy regime with "unassailable figures". This programme of industrial reform was agreed upon by the CFLN before the Allied landings in Normandy, and would be carried out by the GPRF under de Gaulle.

On the surface, it would seem that the GPRF did indeed succeed in realising these objectives. The wartime membership of CORSID was swept out, to be replaced by an industrialist who had survived the heinous anti-Semitic legislation of the loathed regime. The number of Committees dropped from hundreds to dozens and the bodies were overseen by a veto-wielding representative of the Ministry for Industrial Production. *Liberté syndicale* was re-established, and organised labour was included in the Committees, ending the longstanding monopoly of employers. It would seem that the bodies created by Vichy had indeed been purged of any incriminating elements and that the parenthesis could be closed on the *années noires*.

Yet this narrative, however expedient for the leaders of the GPRF, does not withstand close scrutiny. The *épuration* of CORSID amounted to shifting wartime leaders into other similarly prestigious and influential positions, in which they continued to represent the industry both domestically and internationally. The "unassailable figure" of Alexis Aron who succeeded Aubrun at the helm of CORSID had participated actively in the undertakings of the Committee throughout the war, and from 1945 he carried through with the programmes he and the members of CORSID had developed under Vichy. Meanwhile, the consolidation of Organisation Committees into a smaller number of more powerful bodies, first envisaged in 1941 during François Lehideux's time as Minister for Industrial Production, was finally realised by the GPRF. With the withdrawal of German forces from French territory, the role

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid.

exerted by the representative of the French Ministry for Industrial Production could finally match what had been foreseen in the law of 16 August 1940. With some slight circumstantial changes, all of these reforms could just as well have occurred under Pétain as under de Gaulle.

Studying the reform of the Organisation Committees following the Liberation, which no study has yet done adequately, reveals a significant degree of continuity in industrial organisation through 1944.⁵⁸⁰ It also shows that the most important reform carried out in 1944, and the only one that wavered in any significant way from the text of the law of 16 August 1940, was the restoration of *liberté syndicale*. Not only did this permit the existence of national labour union confederations – notably the CGT and the CFTC – but it also opened the door for the resurrection of the national employers’ confederation. From their establishment in autumn 1940, the Organisation Committees had superseded national trade unions and employers’ associations yet were run almost exclusively by employers. The return of *liberté syndicale* and the inclusion of labour in the Committees transformed them into properly functioning tripartite bodies – and marked a notable break from the Vichy era.⁵⁸¹

Even this substantial reform, however, was not without foundation in the Vichy law itself. The law did foresee the inclusion of workers’ representation, but at a later date, once the immediate and extraordinary challenges facing French industry had been resolved. The fact that these conditions – foreign occupation, virtual cessation of trade, excruciating shortage of raw materials – endured for years rather than months meant that the provisional composition of the Committees remained unchanged until the Liberation. Only then could the inclusion of labour representation and the steps towards “industrial democracy” alluded to in the August 1940 law be realised. While this marked an important step in the development of French industrial relations, it was hardly the radical programme of a group that had declared all of Vichy’s legislation “null and void”.⁵⁸² Rather, it was the politically expedient solution of an administration desperate to rebuild French industry and prevent civil war. In

⁵⁸⁰ Among the works that discuss the Organisation Committees from 1940 until 1944 but largely ignore the reform of the bodies after the end of the Vichy regime are Kuisel, op.cit., Shennan, op.cit., Margairaz, op.cit., and Joly (ed.), op. cit.

⁵⁸¹ It should be remembered that the only article of the law of 16 August 1940 that was repealed (Article 1) was the one banning national confederations of trade unions and employers’ associations and was therefore incompatible with the re-establishment of *liberté syndicale*.

⁵⁸² “Projet sur le rétablissement de la légalité républicaine”, 3 July 1944, CFLN 603, MAE.

this context, the strategy first proposed by Leprince to reform the New Industrial Order “simply by applying the text of the Vichy law” emerged triumphant.⁵⁸³

⁵⁸³ “Maintien éventuel du CO du bâtiment et des travaux publics”, 26 January 1944, CFLN 686, MAE.

Chapter Six:

From Organisation Committees to Monnet's Modernisation Commissions, 1946

The legislative elections of October 1945, the first since the Popular Front's victory in 1936, heralded significant changes for French industry. With the Communist Party (PCF) emerging with more seats than either the Christian Democratic MRP or the Socialist SFIO, it was inevitable that the far left would exert unprecedented control over French policy. Given the PCF's longstanding opposition to the maintenance of the Organisation Committees inherited from Vichy, it was not surprising that they sought the definitive abolition of Vichy's New Industrial Order. This project was facilitated by the appointment of Communist Marcel Paul as Minister for Industrial Production in November, which gave him control over the Organisation Committees and OCRPI, the complementary network for the allocation of raw materials to French industry. With Paul in charge of these institutions, the consensus that had emerged the previous year – namely that these reformed bodies ought to be maintained⁵⁸⁴ – was seriously threatened.

Meanwhile, ambitious plans for the modernisation of French industry were being drawn up by Jean Monnet. In December 1945 he submitted these plans to de Gaulle, who approved them on 3 January and announced them a week later. Monnet's plans relied on the existence of Organisation Committees or analogous institutions – these had existed in France since 1940 and their survival was confirmed by the CFLN and the Provisional Government in 1944. By the end of 1945, however, the dominance of economic portfolios by the PCF threatened not only the direction but the very existence of the crucial Committees. Under these circumstances, Monnet opted to create parallel bodies, christened Modernisation Commissions, which would take the place of the Committees. These aped the beleaguered Organisation Committees in structure, responsibilities, and even membership. By the time the PCF realised its enduring ambition to dismantle Vichy's industrial institutions, Monnet had already erected their successors to carry on their work under his own auspices. While 1946 marks the formal end of the Organisation Committees (formally renamed Professional

⁵⁸⁴ The arrival at this consensus is discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis. The realisation of particular reforms for the Organisation Committees and OCRPI is elaborated in Chapter Five.

Offices in 1944) created under Vichy in 1940, it also constitutes the seamless transition of these bodies into the keystones of the Monnet Plan that would revive French industry under the Fourth Republic.

Who lost the Ministry for Industrial Production?

The October 1945 legislative elections saw the PCF take the largest share of the vote, winning 26.2% of the ballot and 159 seats. Given the outcome of the elections, PCF leader Maurice Thorez demanded for his party at least one of what they perceived to be the three most important portfolios: Foreign Affairs, National Defence, and the Interior. De Gaulle, who as President had the delicate task of forming a government following rather disappointing election results, flatly refused Thorez's demands. He announced in a radio address that he could not surrender to the Communists control of any of "the three levers that control [France's] foreign policy: diplomacy that expresses it, the army that supports it, the police that covers it".⁵⁸⁵ De Gaulle instead offered to the PCF portfolios that he considered of secondary importance, namely "only the 'economic' ministries".⁵⁸⁶ This in part reveals how secondary economic matters were to de Gaulle. In the end, the PCF was given control over four ministries, the same number as the SFIO and the MRP. In the elected government of post-war France, Communist members were named as Ministers for the National Economy, Labour, Armaments Production, and Industrial Production. The Ministry of Finance, meanwhile, remained firmly in the hands of liberal René Pleven. In addition, Maurice Thorez was named one of four Ministers of State, raising the total number of Communist members of government to five. Despite the PCF's decisive victory in the first post-war legislative elections, de Gaulle had succeeded in limiting the fruits of this mandate by ensuring that the "three levers that control [France's] foreign policy" remained firmly in republican hands.⁵⁸⁷

Although unsuccessful in securing the most prestigious portfolios, the PCF was nonetheless able to make the most of the economic portfolios they had dismissively been

⁵⁸⁵ Charles de Gaulle, "Allocution à la radio, le 17 novembre 1945" in *Mémoires de guerre. Le salut: 1944-1946* (Paris: Plon, 1959), 517.

⁵⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 327.

⁵⁸⁷ Philippe Buton confirms that the PCF tried to obtain one of these three portfolios and that their failure to do so amounted to a failure for the party. See Buton, *Les lendemains qui déchantent. Le Parti communiste français à la Libération* (Paris: FNSP, 1993), 206-211.

given by de Gaulle. Marcel Paul was named Robert Lacoste's successor as Minister for Industrial Production. Paul's brief tenure in the position marks the only interruption in that ministry for Lacoste, who otherwise held the portfolio from the days of the CFLN during the war until 1950, providing an unusual degree of stability. A passionate defender of the Organisation Committees created under Vichy, Lacoste secured a consensus within the Resistance and the Provisional Government that the bodies should be maintained yet reformed following the Liberation.⁵⁸⁸ Consequently, the wartime leadership of the Committees was replaced, labour representation drastically increased, and the myriad Committees were consolidated into fewer but more powerful ones. In response to their ongoing unpopularity, Lacoste also rechristened the Committees "Professional Offices", a move that met with very limited success, not least because the Minister and his associates continued to refer to the bodies as "Organisation Committees".⁵⁸⁹ Despite his longstanding relationship with de Gaulle and his proven capabilities as Minister, however, Lacoste had to relinquish his position in order to give the PCF their due representation within the Cabinet.

The outcome of the October 1945 elections initially paralysed the Ministry for Industrial Production. As the various parties wrangled to allot portfolios in the soon-to-be-created coalition government, ministries were unable to make key decisions without knowing who their minister might be. Lambert Blum-Picard, who had worked closely with Lacoste in Algiers and then served as Secretary General for Industrial Production, kept his position as the chief mandarin in the Ministry. Nevertheless, he had to postpone important decisions until Lacoste's successor was named. At the end of October, he received a proposal to dissolve the Organisation Committee for Salt. While he agreed that this particular Committee ought to be dismantled, the decision was postponed "until the general policies of the future government with regard to professional organisation have been decided upon".⁵⁹⁰ Expecting a change of some importance with the impending arrival of a minister with a very different political agenda, the Ministry was unable to continue the route it had charted for itself following the Liberation. This state of uncertainty was dissipated on 21 November with the appointment of Marcel Paul as Lacoste's successor.

⁵⁸⁸ See Chapter Four.

⁵⁸⁹ See Chapter Five.

⁵⁹⁰ "Note. Objet: Dissolution du CO du sel", 31 October 1945, F 12 10028, AN.

The conversions of Paul: nationalising French industry

The arrival of Marcel Paul at rue de Grenelle marked quite a change. The ministerial archives demonstrate a palpable shift in style; while every month under Lacoste contains hundreds of notes, reports, and letters, under Paul fewer than 70 pages exist for the first three months of 1946.⁵⁹¹ It is not clear whether this is due to drastically less communication between Paul and his civil servants, or whether Paul kept or destroyed most of the files that passed through his hands. Whichever the reason, we can clearly detect a change in the working relationship between the Minister and his staff. Moreover, Paul lacked the longstanding personal relationships with his senior staff enjoyed by his predecessor. While Lacoste and Blum-Picard had worked together in the overseas Resistance and the CFLN in Algiers, Paul had no such connections. Despite not having been in North Africa, Paul's credentials as a *résistant* were nevertheless impeccable. A trade unionist and a member of the PCF since 1923, he fought in the infantry in 1940 before being captured by the Nazis. After escaping, he organised a series of resistance acts, culminating in a failed assassination attempt against Hermann Göring in August 1941, for which he was arrested and tortured by Vichy in November. He spent the remainder of the war in custody, being transferred to Auschwitz in April 1944 and to Buchenwald the following month. Yet Paul's experiences during the war associated him far more with the Communist-dominated interior Resistance than with the exterior Resistance led by de Gaulle. Despite the truce reached by these factions in the form of the CNR Programme of March 1944, the fundamental differences between them became increasingly visible once peace was restored to France.⁵⁹²

Given the stated policies of the CNR Programme, it was no surprise that Paul pursued an agenda of the "return to the State" of France's key industries.⁵⁹³ The first wave of nationalisations had been completed over the winter of 1944-1945, with the State taking control of the coalfields of Nord and Pas-de-Calais, Renault's factories, and a number of smaller companies. In collaboration with the Communist ministers given economic

⁵⁹¹ These are contained in the folder F 12 10028, AN.

⁵⁹² In his memoirs, de Gaulle describes the Communists in the Provisional Consultative Assembly: they "formed a solid group, followed issues very closely, tried to outdo [other parties], and resorted to propaganda". See Charles de Gaulle, *Mémoires de guerre. L'unité, 1942-1944* (Paris: Plon, 1956), 183.

⁵⁹³ The CNR Programme of March 1944 outlined broad policies to be pursued in post-war France and was endorsed by all major political parties. Among the central policies was the "return to the State", a euphemism for nationalisation, of France's strategic industries. The best study of this programme is Claire Andrieu's *Le programme commun de la Résistance. Des idées dans la guerre* (Paris: Editions de l'Erudit, 1984). The CNR Programme is also discussed in Chapter Four.

portfolios by de Gaulle, Paul oversaw a second wave of nationalisations representing a significant swathe of the French economy.⁵⁹⁴ On 2 December 1945, less than two weeks after being named Minister, Paul voted to nationalise the Banque de France and the country's credit organisations, creating the *Conseil national du crédit*. This was followed by the nationalisation of insurance companies on 25 April. As Minister for Industrial Production, Paul's most significant project in early 1946 was the nationalisation of electricity and gas and the concomitant establishment of EDF and GDF.⁵⁹⁵ Paul also extended the nationalisation of France's northern coalfields to those of the entire country, with the creation of Charbonnages de France to oversee national coal production.⁵⁹⁶ These nationalisations troubled many in the private sector, and in January 1946 Jean Monnet argued that "it is essential that the government quickly and definitively draw up a list of industries to be nationalised" on the grounds that investment in the modernisation of industries would be stifled if there was a chance that they would soon be nationalised.⁵⁹⁷ Eventually, the elections of June 1946, which saw the MRP emerge as the largest party, brought the second wave of nationalisations to an end.⁵⁹⁸

Through the nationalisations of 1944-1946, the steel industry was spared in large part due to the deft diplomacy of the industry's representative: Jules Aubrun. Already President of the *Chambre syndicale de la sidérurgie française* (CSSF), he was appointed President of the Commission for Private Enterprise of the *Conseil national du patronat français* (CNPF), France's resurrected employers' confederation. This Commission's chief task was to oppose "all the ravages resulting from the idea of nationalisation and *étatisation*, and to study all the consequences, direct and indirect, on the sectors that are still free, of the already executed nationalisations".⁵⁹⁹ Aubrun had long argued against the nationalisation of the steel industry – one of the most strategic industries in France, and therefore an obvious candidate to be

⁵⁹⁴ Claire Andrieu argues that while the first wave of capitalisations was "insurrectionary", the second, "parliamentary" wave of nationalisations overseen by Marcel Paul was in fact more anti-capitalist. See "Les nationalisations disparates" in Claire Andrieu, Lucette Le Van, Antoine Prost (eds), *Les nationalisations de la Libération* (Paris: FNSP, 1987), 250-266.

⁵⁹⁵ Energie de France and Gaz de France. This project was proposed by Paul in the National Assembly on 27 March 1946 and was approved by parliamentary vote on 8 April.

⁵⁹⁶ 'Loi relative à la nationalisation de l'industrie des combustibles minéraux', 19 April 1946, Assemblée nationale.

⁵⁹⁷ "Note sur les impressions préliminaires retirées des consultations que le Commissaire Général au Plan a été amené à avoir avec les représentants de l'administration et de la production", 23 January 1946, AMF 1 6, FJME.

⁵⁹⁸ Andrieu et al. (eds.), op.cit., 253.

⁵⁹⁹ "Procès-verbal, Assemblée générale du 12 juin 1946", CNPF, AS 72 835, ANMT.

“returned to the State”.⁶⁰⁰ Indeed, calls to nationalise the industry were voiced at the very first meeting of the Provisional Consultative Assembly, the forerunner of the reconvened National Assembly, in Algiers in January 1944. André Marty, a leading PCF representative, denounced the leaders of the steel industry as opportunists who had collaborated with and supported Vichy, whom he alleged were only beginning to support the CFLN in early 1944 as the outcome of the war was becoming increasingly certain. He encouraged France to follow the Soviet model, claiming that “what they have achieved there we could achieve here, if only fewer of the leaders of our economy belonged to the Schneider group”, referring to the second-largest steel company in France.⁶⁰¹ He also insisted that the Commissariat for Production and Provisions – the GPRF’s department analogous to the Ministry for Industrial Production – must have absolute power, and that “no other department must intervene in this domain”.⁶⁰² It is interesting to note the PCF’s defence of sweeping powers for the Ministry for Industrial Production, the control of which was given to a PCF member nearly two years later. Nationalisations were a key part of the CNR Programme of March 1944, endorsed by all parties, and a review of the economic policies of the government-in-waiting in July 1944 confirmed cross-party agreement to “limit the power of trusts” and to pursue “nationalisations in certain cases”.⁶⁰³ Aubrun’s success in keeping steel private undoubtedly aided his candidacy to preside over the new CNPF Commission. He continued to argue for the maintenance of the Vichy system in post-war France, in part as a means of preventing outright nationalisation of the steel industry.⁶⁰⁴

In February 1945, while nationalisations were proceeding apace, Aubrun and the CSSF celebrated the supposed independence and patriotism of the steel industry before and during the war. They argued that they had actively supported the Third Republic in its final years, but their project remained unfinished in 1940, and they sought to continue their work that had been interrupted by the war. They claimed to have acted in the collective interest of France, and maintained that they should therefore be accorded a free hand to run the

⁶⁰⁰ See, for instance, “Projet d’organisation des groupements sidérurgiques, observations de la Chambre syndicale de la sidérurgie”, 29 December 1944, F 12 10062, AN.

⁶⁰¹ “Procès-verbal de la première séance [de l’Assemblée Consultative Provisoire]”, 5 January 1944, C I 591, AN. Interestingly, Aubrun had worked for Schneider in the interwar period before pursuing a career with the Lazard Bank, although Marty does not seem to be referring to Aubrun in particular.

⁶⁰² *Ibid.*

⁶⁰³ “La politique économique du gouvernement”, 21 July 1944, C I 591, AN.

⁶⁰⁴ “Projet d’organisation des groupements sidérurgiques, observations de la chambre syndicale de la sidérurgie”, 29 December 1944, F 12 10062, AN.

industry.⁶⁰⁵ Aubrun's intervention proved to be effective: two days later the PCF tabled a motion to nationalise the steel industry, along with the chemical industry and the merchant marine, but the Assembly never voted on it.⁶⁰⁶ Aubrun's line of argument was reiterated by Alexis Aron once he was named head of OPSID, as CORSID was renamed, in March 1945. He commended the "independence and courage" of the wartime leaders of CORSID, Aubrun chief amongst them, and insisted on "the necessity of a strong Professional Office" with "sufficient latitude" to run the industry.⁶⁰⁷ The *Commission de sidérurgie* meanwhile argued that the nationalisation of the steel industry was inadvisable, because of the significant differences that existed between the industry in the Loire and in Lorraine. Rather than trying to forcibly harmonise the two, it would be far better to let each region be run in its own way under the guidance of industrialists.⁶⁰⁸ Similar arguments did not dissuade the government from nationalising the French coal industry, beginning in Nord and Pas-de-Calais before enlarging the strategy to include the entire country.

Once nationalised industries were firmly in State hands, Paul proceeded to issue some clearly politically-motivated orders – in September 1946, for instance, he introduced legislation forcing all nationalised companies to rehire all certified workers (*salariés licenciés*) who had been sacked following the strike of 30 November 1938.⁶⁰⁹ Government involvement with such directives infuriated French employers, who by 1946 had organised themselves in the revived CNPF.⁶¹⁰ Paul's decision stoked the embers of the class warfare that had raged in the final years of the Third Republic. Predictably, the leaders of French industry were at odds with the Communist Minister for Industrial Production.

⁶⁰⁵ "Organisation de la sidérurgie française", 26 February 1945, F 12 10062, AN. Philippe Mioche echoes this view; see, for example, "Les entreprises sidérurgiques sous l'Occupation" in *Histoire, économie et société*, 1992, 11:3, 397-414.

⁶⁰⁶ This motion was tabled by the PCF on 28 February 1945 but not voted on. The PCF would introduce similar motions to nationalise the steel industry well after the end of the "second wave" of nationalisations, on 5 September 1946 and again on 12 December 1946, but neither motion was voted on. See Andrieu et al. (eds.), *op.cit.*, 262-265.

⁶⁰⁷ "Rapport sur la situation du CO de la sidérurgie fin 1944-début 1945", 27 April 1945, F 12 10063.

⁶⁰⁸ "Rapport de la Commission de sidérurgie", 6 September 1945, F 12 10027, AN.

⁶⁰⁹ "Note. Objet: Réembauchage des salariés licenciés à la suite de la grève du 30 novembre 1938", 11 September 1946, F 12 10009, AN. The CGT-organised general strike on 30 November 1938 was to protest against the repeal of some of the Popular Front's social legislation, notably the 40-hour work week, by Edouard Daladier's government. Given that striking workers were technically in breach of their contracts, employers had the right to sack them, and many employers took the opportunity to dismiss "troublemakers". For a discussion of the consequences of this strike, see Richard Vinen, *The politics of French business* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), 68-87.

⁶¹⁰ "Procès-verbal, Assemblée générale du 12 juin 1946", CNPF, AS 72 835, ANMT.

The end of the New Industrial Order?

As we have seen, throughout the period 1944-46, the need to revive key industries quickly during a chaotic period led to many Vichy-era officials remaining in their posts for the sake of expediency. Just as the PCF had pleaded all along for a deeper *épuration* following the collapse of the Vichy regime, Paul insisted that the new management be drawn from the Resistance.⁶¹¹ Practically, the best way of doing this would be to remove the existing system of Organisation Committees maintained by Lacoste, which left the representatives of the wartime *patronat* with considerable control of French industry, even if labour representation had increased under the Provisional Government. This fit nicely with the PCF's broader agenda of thoroughly purging France of Vichy's individuals and institutions.⁶¹² The Communists continued to criticise the Organisation Committees under Lacoste.⁶¹³ Despite having agreed to leave the fate of the Organisation Committees out of the CNR Programme, the PCF never renounced their wartime condemnation of the bodies and now that the party held four key economic portfolios, including the one directly responsible for industrial organisation, they had the ideal opportunity to implement their desired reforms.

The morning of 23 April 1946, only four days after the National Assembly had approved the nationalisation of the country's coalfields, Marcel Paul requested an immediate debate on his proposal to abolish the Organisation Committees and OCRPI. The motion referenced a number of proposals advocating the dismantling of the bodies from across the political spectrum: Albert Rigal, of the PCF, Edouard Frédéric-Dupont and Jean-Marie Bouvier O'Cottreau, both of the moderate right Parti républicain de la liberté (PRL), and Jean Palewski of the MRP. Palewski's proposal made the case for abolishing the existing order and to instead "establish a system based on liberty".⁶¹⁴ The debate that followed was

⁶¹¹ See Jean-Pierre Rioux, *La France de Quatrième République. L'ardeur et la nécessité 1944-1952* (Paris: Seuil, 1980), 110.

⁶¹² See Stéphane Courtois and Marc Lazar, *Histoire du Parti communiste français* (Paris: PUF, 1995) and Philippe Buton, *Les Lendemain qui déchantent: Le Parti communiste à la Libération* (Paris: FNSP, 1993).

⁶¹³ As discussed in Chapter Five, the ongoing attacks on the Committees in the press prompted Lacoste to change their name to "Professional Offices" in February 1945 in an attempt to distance the bodies from their Vichy past, but this ruse was unsuccessful. Shennan describes the criticisms of the Committees in the press during this period. See Andrew Shennan, *France Restored: Plans for Renewal, 1940-1946* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), 273-4.

⁶¹⁴ "Séance du mardi 23 avril 1946", 23 April 1946, C I 594, AN.

remarkably one-sided. Bouvier O’Cottereau was the only person to take the floor to speak in favour of the proposal, claiming that “we are all in absolute agreement that the Professional Offices that succeeded the Organisation Committees should be abolished”.⁶¹⁵ His brief remarks justified the need for a debate, rather than to simply pass the legislation without discussion, noting that a question “as important as the reorganisation of our economy must not be treated lightly”. Yet the call for a parliamentary debate proved to be a mere formality, since not a single voice was raised to oppose the motion. As the Speaker of the Assembly confirmed, “nobody else wishes to speak?” – a query that was met with silence – he proceeded to read aloud each of the 17 articles of the law, which were then adopted unanimously. The first article, stipulating the “abolition of the Organisation Committees [and] of OCRPI and its Sections”, seemingly sounded the death knell of what remained of Vichy’s New Industrial Order.⁶¹⁶ It was agreed that the existing system would remain in place for up to six months, until legislation to replace it had been passed. The discussion then swiftly moved on to the issue of publicly posting transcripts of certain speeches made in the National Assembly, which soon descended into representatives trading accusations of having supported Pétain.⁶¹⁷ In such an Assembly, the issue of abolishing Vichy’s Organisation Committees was an uncommonly calm and widely supported affair.

The introduction of the text, and particularly the insistence that the motion be discussed immediately and voted upon that same day, could suggest that Marcel Paul and his allies may have been seeking to take advantage of favourable absences from the Assembly that day to push through the legislation. Yet only six members were reported to be absent on 23 April, meaning that such erstwhile defenders of the Organisation Committees as Robert Lacoste and André Philip were indeed in the Assembly that day.⁶¹⁸ Moreover, it was standard practice at this time for a proposal to be introduced, debated, and voted upon in a single day. On 25 April, for example, two days after the law abolishing the New Industrial Order was

⁶¹⁵ Ibid. This can be contrasted with Paul Giacobbi’s statement in the Provisional Consultative Assembly in July 1944 that there was “absolute agreement on the foundations of the economic doctrine of the Government and of the Nation”, which included the maintenance of the Organisation Committees. See “La politique économique du gouvernement”, 21 July 1944, C I 591, AN.

⁶¹⁶ “Séance du mardi 23 avril 1946”, 23 April 1946, C I 594, AN. It is worth noting that the law referred first and foremost to “Organisation Committees” even though these had been renamed “Professional Offices” over a year earlier, in February 1945. This suggests both the desire to associate the bodies more closely with Vichy and the fact that the new label never caught on.

⁶¹⁷ ‘Rappel au règlement’ in “Séance du mardi 23 avril 1946”, 23 April 1946, C I 594, AN.

⁶¹⁸ Those who were absent from the National Assembly that day were MM Solinhac, Deyron, Rencurel, Soustelle, Emmanuel d’Astier, and Barthélémy Ott. “Séance du mardi 23 avril 1946”, 23 April 1946, C I 594, AN. André Philip was Minister for the National Economy by this time.

discussed, there were 10 separate requests for immediate discussion of a draft bill.⁶¹⁹ The complete and utter absence of opposition to the legislation shows that it was not a controversial measure to be squeezed through the legislature by a single, decisive vote, but rather that by April 1946 it had become unanimously accepted that the Organisation Committees ought not to remain part of France's industrial organisation.⁶²⁰

While nationalisations and dictated hires figured among the chief complaints of the *patronat* in 1946, the abolition of the Organisation Committees gave rise to exceptional objections. The action was denounced by employers as a blatantly political move by the Ministry for Industrial Production. They were stunned by “the abrupt decision, obviously based on electoral considerations, to abolish, over the course of the month of June, a great number of Organisation Committees and [OCRPI] Offices”.⁶²¹ Employers believed that the system established under a regime to which electoral considerations were of no importance favoured the employers far more than the emerging one did, particularly with a Communist Minister for Industrial Production. The employers decried Paul's actions, although the Socialist Léon Blum received more than his share of opprobrium in the minutes of the CNPF's first General Assembly.⁶²² It is worth noting that the decision to abolish the Committees, like the decisions to create and later to reform the bodies, was taken without consulting the *patronat*.

Despite the shock at the sudden abolition of the Organisation Committees, the recently reconstituted CNPF was soon able to make the most of the legislation to increase its members' powers. While Paul's draft law called for the abolition of the remaining Vichyste industrial bodies, it did not outline what bodies if any would succeed them. However, Article 7.2.b of the legislation stated that, “for large firms, sub-allocation (*sous-répartition*) is entrusted to the most representative employers' association”, a clause that was not lost on the CNPF.⁶²³ By nature of the industry, virtually all steel firms fell under the provisions for “large firms”, although separate ones were advanced for SMEs and for nationalised industries. This was good news for the employers' association for the steel industry, the CSSF, and particularly for its president, Jules Aubrun, who regained control over sub-

⁶¹⁹ Ibid.

⁶²⁰ According to Shennan, candidates from all three governing parties had campaigned against the Organisation Committees ahead of the October 1945 elections. See Shennan, *op.cit.*, 274.

⁶²¹ “Assemblée générale du 12 juin 1946”, 12 June 1946, CNPF, AS 72 835, ANMT.

⁶²² Ibid.

⁶²³ “Séance du mardi 23 avril 1946”, 23 April 1946, C I 594, AN.

allocation after the reforms of Vichy's industrial organisation. Within six weeks of the introduction of the legislation, the CNPF was able to celebrate that they had "secured a number of amendments which ensure[d] a greater role for employers' associations in the functioning of sub-allocation".⁶²⁴ The CNPF was also convinced that "this law will not be applied without many delays (*atermoiments*) by the Minister for Industrial Production", which allowed industrialists time to adapt to the changes.⁶²⁵ Despite the evident worries engendered by a Communist Minister and by what they saw as rash legislation, the employers succeeded in securing a decisive role in the sub-allocation of raw materials to their industry, a power that had previously been in the hands of the tripartite Organisation Committees. For Jules Aubrun, this was a particularly ironic turn of events. Aubrun had been forced to resign as President of CORSID in October 1944 as part of the *épuration* of the wartime leadership of the Committees. In April 1946, some of the most crucial powers of the Organisation Committees were returned to Aubrun as head of the CSSF.

This deft manoeuvring by the CNPF undercut some of the expected advantages of Paul's project. The PCF's opposition to the Organisation Committees was in large part based on their perceived dominance by "trusts" and big business. But this longstanding opposition failed to take into account the significant reforms the Committees had undergone in 1944 and 1945. Far from being bastions of power of the *grand patronat*, as they largely had been under Vichy, they were by 1946 regulated, tripartite bodies under the control of a Communist Minister in which trade unions had a significant voice. Yet the abolition of those loathed bodies ended up handing more power directly to employers' associations, which represented the *patronat* exclusively. Moreover, it returned key powers to the wartime President of CORSID, who had been forced to resign them in October 1944. Ironically, organised labour had more control over sub-allocation as long as the reformed Organisation Committees continued to exist. With the dismantling of the Committees, the responsibilities previously shared between employers and workers were transferred to the former exclusively. Despite his intentions, Paul's legislation ended up weakening the voice of organised labour while strengthening that of the largest employers in France.⁶²⁶

⁶²⁴ "Exposé de M. Ricard, Président de la Commission économique du CNPF", 12 June 1946, AS 72 835, ANMT.

⁶²⁵ Ibid.

⁶²⁶ Despite the importance of the legislation of 23 April 1946 and of Paul's actions as Minister for Industrial Production, the abolition of the Organisation Committees is not mentioned (and Paul is mentioned only in

This notable victory for the CNPF was not lost on the Socialists, who soon regretted the disappearance of the Organisation Committees and OCRPI. In December 1946, André Philip, a long-time supporter of maintaining Vichy's industrial bodies, admitted that "we committed a grave error in accepting Marcel Paul's proposal to abolish the Organisation Committees. They have resulted in the State no longer controlling allocations [of raw materials], and this power being passed to employers' associations. *Dirigisme* remains the only solution to this problem".⁶²⁷ For Philip, by then Minister for the National Economy, and the SFIO, the lengthy reforms to the Organisation Committees overseen by Robert Lacoste to ensure labour and the State a proper portion of industrial control had come to nought; Paul's move to abolish the remnants of Vichy's industrial organisation had paradoxically strengthened the hand of the *patronat* at the expense of the State and labour. In this context, *dirigisme*, particularly the economic planning being undertaken by the General Commissariat for the Plan (CGP), represented the best way of salvaging what the SFIO and their allies had achieved with the reformed Committees. This gave mourners of defunct Organisation Committees further reason to support the most promising embodiment of *dirigisme* – the nascent Monnet Plan.

The Monnet Plan

Much has already been written on the supposed Vichy origins of Monnet's *Plan de Modernisation et d'Équipement*. These claims have focused principally on the *Délégation générale à l'équipement national* (DGEN), established by François Lehideux in 1941, which produced two plans for the French economy: the Plan for National Equipment, a ten-year plan produced in 1942, and the *Tranche de Démarrage* completed in early 1944. Richard Kuisel was the first historian to suggest that these projects drawn up under Vichy should be seen as "a crucial step in the history of economic planning" in France.⁶²⁸ This claim has been challenged by Adrian Jones, who has argued that these two isolated plans are rather "the

passing) in the most important histories of the PCF at this time. See Philippe Buton, op.cit., and Stéphane Courtois and Marc Lazar, op.cit.

⁶²⁷ "Procès-verbal de la séance des Comités directeurs de la SFIO", 3 December 1946, quoted in Michel Margairaz, *L'Etat, les finances et l'économie: Histoire d'une conversion, 1932-1952* (Paris: CHEFF, 1991), 827.

⁶²⁸ See Richard Kuisel, "Vichy et les origines de la planification économique, 1940-1946", in *Mouvement social*, 98, January-March 1977, 77-101. A less detailed discussion is also included in his monograph, *Capitalism and the State in Modern France* (Cambridge: CUP, 1981), 256-270. Kuisel does not discuss continuities between Organisation Committees and Modernisation Commissions in either study.

exception that proves the rule”, since neither plan was treated with great interest by any Vichy ministers and that the regime eschewed economic planning overall.⁶²⁹ Seemingly the most promising monograph on the subject, Philippe Mioche’s *Le plan Monnet: Genèse et élaboration 1941-1947*, purports to trace the origins of the Monnet Plan from the early days of Vichy.⁶³⁰ The study is disappointing, however, not least because fewer than 20 pages are devoted to the Vichy period. Mioche, like Michel Margairaz, emphasises the roots of Monnet’s plan in the French Resistance and downplays the importance of Vichy’s fruitless plans.⁶³¹ The consensus today seems to be that these planning documents drafted by a minor office under Vichy were not decisive in shaping Monnet’s plans,⁶³² although the detailed statistical data gathered by the Organisation Committees facilitated the successful realisation of the plan.⁶³³ It is also important to note that the DGEN’s plan ignores the steel industry, preferring to focus on textiles, automobiles, and chemical products.⁶³⁴

It is certainly true that in May 1944, Vichy technocrats at the DGEN produced their *Tranche de démarrage*. This set out how, after the end of the war in France, the nation’s economy could be revived, yet the plan was ignored by the Vichy leadership. Interestingly, this technocratic plan was received by Jean Monnet, who found much to agree with in its pages. He circulated the document approvingly in November 1944, with only one subtle change. While the title and the content of the plan remained intact, he cautiously changed the date of the document from May 1944 to November 1944, presumably to avoid the plan being associated with the previous regime.⁶³⁵

The historiographical debate, however, has focused on continuities in economic planning as such from Vichy to Monnet. What is overlooked is the role of the Organisation Committees in the development of the Monnet Plan. As we shall see, the Organisation

⁶²⁹ Adrian Jones, “Illusions of sovereignty: business and organization of Committees of Vichy France”, in *Social History*, January 1986, 1-31.

⁶³⁰ Philippe Mioche, *Le Plan Monnet: Genèse et élaboration 1941-1947* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1987).

⁶³¹ Michel Margairaz, *L’Etat, les finances et l’économie*, op.cit.

⁶³² This is the view promoted by Monnet in his memoirs. See also William Hitchcock, *France Restored: Cold War Diplomacy and the Quest for Leadership in Europe, 1944-1954* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 23-24 and Philip Nord, *France’s New Deal* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2010).

⁶³³ See, for example, Mioche, “Un tournant dans l’histoire technique de la sidérurgie: la création de l’Irsid. Compétition et collaboration entre l’Etat et l’industrie” in *Histoire, économie et société*, 1989 (8:1), 119-140.

⁶³⁴ This oversight is highlighted in Kuisel, “Vichy et les origines de la planification économique”, op.cit., 87, and is confirmed upon examination of the “Plan d’équipement national, tranche de démarrage”, November 1944, AJ 80 11, AN. A copy can also be consulted in F 60 659, AN.

⁶³⁵ “Plan d’équipement national, tranche de démarrage”, November 1944, AJ 80 11, AN.

Committees served as a model for Monnet's Modernisation Commissions, which took over the responsibilities, documents, and staff of the moribund Committees in 1946. The *Tranche de démarrage* consulted by Monnet focuses on imports and production levels, while ignoring questions of internal organisation of particular industries. Given that it was drafted under Vichy, there is no reason to suppose that its authors had envisaged an alternative to the system of Organisation Committees. Similarly, when this project was championed by Monnet in late 1944, the survival of the Organisation Committees had received strong endorsement from the Provisional Government. The implementation of such a plan to revive French industry would necessarily rely on the Organisation Committees established under Vichy and maintained after the Liberation. Given the consensus on the survival of Vichy's industrial organisation at the time when Monnet was developing his ambitious plans for French industry, it is almost certain that Monnet based his plans on the assumption that these bodies would be maintained. In the event that they were threatened, he would need to create analogous bodies to carry on their work. With growing partisanship among the nation's political leaders and the victory of the Communist Party in the October 1945 elections, this is precisely what Jean Monnet did.

Building the *Commissariat Général du Plan*

Shortly after Marcel Paul's appointment as Minister for Industrial Production in November 1945, Jean Monnet submitted a proposal to de Gaulle for the *Plan de modernisation et d'équipement* – better known as the Monnet Plan. The text made the case for using the context of post-war reconstruction to effect a rapid modernisation of French industry. This would facilitate an increase of domestic consumption, but more importantly allow France to pay for its imports of raw materials – particularly coal – by increasing its exports of industrial products.⁶³⁶ Perhaps most convincing for de Gaulle was the warning that if France failed to embrace such a rapid modernisation the country would “be reduced to the rank of a second-rate power”.⁶³⁷ By strengthening France's economic clout, Monnet claimed that his Plan would strengthen the nation's hand in international power politics. He found in de Gaulle and his famous obsession with France's *grandeur* a receptive audience.

⁶³⁶ On the aims of the Monnet Plan, see Frances Lynch, *France and the International Economy. From Vichy to the Treaty of Rome* (London: Routledge, 1997).

⁶³⁷ “Mémoire sur le Plan de Modernisation et d'Équipement”, 13 December 1945, AJ 80 1.

The first weeks of 1946 proved decisive for Monnet's initiative. On 3 January, de Gaulle formally approved the Monnet Plan and the establishment of the General Commissariat for the Plan (CGP). Reading the text of Monnet's proposal, it is easy to see how the project was couched in terms certain to appeal to de Gaulle. The CGP, which would oversee the organisation and implementation of the Monnet Plan, would operate outside the jurisdiction of any partisan minister and would act in accordance with the national interest. De Gaulle's own political philosophy stipulated "the nation requires a regime where power is strong and continuous. Political parties are obviously incapable of providing such power".⁶³⁸ Moreover, following the October 1945 elections, he believed that "not one political party believes that it represents the general interest" of the country, with even the largest party having secured barely a quarter of all votes.⁶³⁹ Monnet's prospect of having a powerful, non-partisan Commissariat acting with only the national interest in mind to organise French industry could hardly have been more appealing to de Gaulle, particularly once Monnet added that France's international standing as a great power could only be secured by reviving the national economy.⁶⁴⁰ Furthermore, having just given the PCF four economic portfolios, de Gaulle must have been intrigued by Monnet's plan to co-opt the heart of their powers. Industrial organisation in France would no longer be in the hands of a Communist minister motivated by "electoral demagoguery"⁶⁴¹ and allegiance to Moscow, but would instead be run by a rational, non-partisan body doing what was best for the nation.

The text approved by de Gaulle set out how the Plan and the CGP would operate. Given the importance of the success of the Plan for France, it was imperative that "the entire Nation take part in this effort". It was therefore "indispensable that all vital elements of the Nation participate in its elaboration. It is for this reason that the proposed organisation will bring together, for each branch [of industry], the Administration in charge, the most qualified Experts, and Representatives from professional Syndicates (workers, management, and employers)".⁶⁴² These representatives would together constitute a Modernisation Commission for each branch of industry. In addition, "a representative from the General Commissariat will sit on each Modernisation Commission as President, Chairperson, or Secretary to ensure

⁶³⁸ De Gaulle, *Mémoires de guerre. Le salut, 1944-1946*, op.cit., 286.

⁶³⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁰ The link between the Monnet Plan and the improvement of France's international standing is explored by William Hitchcock in *France Restored*, op.cit., 29-40.

⁶⁴¹ De Gaulle decried the "electoral demagoguery and the ill will against me" that characterised the increasingly partisan National Assembly. See de Gaulle, *Mémoires de guerre. Le salut, 1944-1946*, op.cit., 332.

⁶⁴² "Mémorandum sur le Plan de Modernisation et d'Équipement", 13 December 1945, AJ 80 1.

the coordination of the Commission's work".⁶⁴³ One cannot ignore the striking similarities between the proposed Modernisation Commissions and the existing Organisation Committees. In both cases, a body was organised for each key branch of French industry that included representation from employers, management (*les cadres*), and workers. Also in both cases, the body was completed with the addition of a representative of the State. The crucial difference, however, was which part of the State that individual represented. In the Organisation Committees, he represented the Ministry for Industrial Production and was responsible to the Minister – by now Marcel Paul. In the emerging Modernisation Commissions, however, the representative would be from the General Commissariat for the Plan, led by Jean Monnet and directly responsible to the President of the Republic. The formation of Modernisation Commissions alongside existing Organisation Committees therefore marks the creation of rival committees with essentially the same functions and representation, but overseen by the purportedly apolitical and purely technocratic CGP instead of the Ministry for Industrial Production, whose leadership was susceptible to change depending on the results of the latest elections.

Signing the decree creating the CGP was one of de Gaulle's most significant acts in the opening weeks of 1946, but his involvement by no means ended with his signature on 3 January. In a document written by Monnet, marked "secret" and addressed only to his two closest collaborators, Robert Marjolin and Etienne Hirsch, he detailed the significant work that had to be completed on an unusually pressing deadline. The document, dated 13 January, specified that the membership of the Council for the Plan, which would involve a number of relevant ministers as well as Monnet and his staff, would need to be finalised and prepared as an ordinance for de Gaulle to sign by 17 January, only four days later. The first five Modernisation Commissions then had to be "constituted, their presidents chosen and confirmed, their chairmen appointed", for Saturday 19 January. "Jean Monnet must present the constitution of these commissions to General de Gaulle for his signature on this date", with the content of the document to be announced to the Council for the Plan at its first meeting, scheduled for 21 January.⁶⁴⁴ The haste in which these documents would have to be drawn up recalls that surrounding the drafting of the law of 16 August 1940, particularly

⁶⁴³ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁴ "Note pour MM. Marjolin-Hirsch. Agenda des choses à faire avant le Conseil du Plan", 13 January 1946, AMF 1 0, FJME.

when one considers that Monnet had been able to work for several weeks in December on the text of the initial proposal signed on 3 January.⁶⁴⁵

The frantic pace at which the fundamental institutions of the CGP were developed was determined quite clearly by a decision that de Gaulle claims in his memoirs he made on 1 January 1946: to resign as President of the Republic.⁶⁴⁶ Clearly, between de Gaulle's formal approval of the creation of the CGP on 3 January and the secret note Monnet drafted on 13 January, a Sunday, the two men agreed on a very tight schedule during which the essential components of the CGP would be formally endorsed by and backed with ordinances from the President. These had to be presented to de Gaulle for his signature on 19 January for a very simple reason: the following morning he resigned as President. One of his very final acts as President was therefore the approval of the establishment of the first Modernisation Commissions, which were presented to the Council for the Plan as a *fait accompli* the day after de Gaulle's resignation. At that meeting the Commissions were described as "the specific and essential apparatus of the whole project".⁶⁴⁷ Just as de Gaulle's quiet removal of André Diethelm from his post in the CFLN assured the survival of the Organisation Committees following the Liberation,⁶⁴⁸ de Gaulle's cooperation with Monnet in the final days before resigning as President ensured that the Monnet Plan and its keystones, the Modernisation Commissions, would survive long after de Gaulle's resignation.

In light of this apparent challenge to the Ministry for Industrial Production, involving the creation of parallel Organisation Committees under Monnet's control rather than Paul's, it is worth considering whether this was done in consultation and coordination with the Ministry. To assess this, it is worth looking at the relations between Jean Monnet and Marcel Paul. Paul was named Minister for Industrial Production on 21 November 1945 after weeks

⁶⁴⁵ In their respective memoirs, Marjolin and Hirsch use almost identical phrasing when stating that "on 3 January 1946, the [Commissariat for the] Plan was created by decree" (the text in square brackets is in Hirsch's version only), and neither makes any reference to the activity that went on between that date and the first meeting of the Council on 21 January. Hirsch does, however, note that "the proposals we submitted to General de Gaulle became, without the slightest modification, the instructions given" to the members of the CGP, which suggests that whatever Monnet gave to de Gaulle to sign before his resignation was approved without amendment. See Robert Marjolin, *Le travail d'une vie* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1986), 163 and Etienne Hirsch, *Ainsi va la vie* (Lausanne: Fondation Jean Monnet pour l'Europe, 1988), 89.

⁶⁴⁶ De Gaulle, *Mémoires de guerre. Le salut, 1944-1946*, op.cit., 334. "Leaving the Palais Bourbon [the National Assembly] the evening of 1 January [1946], I had already made up my mind to resign. All that remained to do was to choose the date."

⁶⁴⁷ "Note pour MM. Marjolin-Hirsch. Agenda des choses à faire avant le Conseil du Plan", 13 January 1946, AMF 1 0, FJME.

⁶⁴⁸ See Chapter Four.

of negotiations following the October elections. In the weeks following his appointment, Paul made repeated requests to meet with Monnet to discuss the development of his Plan – to no avail. On 4 December, two weeks after Paul’s appointment, Monnet sent his proposal for the establishment of the Plan to de Gaulle; by 13 December de Gaulle had responded with a draft memorandum summarising Monnet’s plans.⁶⁴⁹ Meanwhile, Paul charged Blum-Picard, Secretary General for Industrial Production, with the task of arranging a meeting between the Minister and Monnet. This meeting never came about. On 10 January 1946, a week after de Gaulle had approved the Monnet Plan, details of the project including a description of the Modernisation Commissions were made public. Meanwhile, by 18 January Blum-Picard was still unable to arrange any kind of meeting between Monnet and Paul. An exasperated Blum-Picard informed Paul that Monnet “seem[ed] to systematically evade any meeting with” either Blum-Picard or Paul.⁶⁵⁰ Of course we know that on 18 January Monnet was scrambling to finalise all the ordinances that de Gaulle would have to sign the next day. In this context, Monnet would have had little time for meetings that he would consider superfluous. More important, however, is the fact that Monnet proceeded with such an ambitious project that so obviously implicated issues of Industrial Production – and created rival Organisation Committees in the form of the Modernisation Commissions – while systematically avoiding any kind of meeting with the Minister for Industrial Production. Marcel Paul was one of 12 ministers who attended the first meeting of the Council for the Plan on 21 January, and it was only then that he was briefed on the creation of the new Modernisation Commissions created two days earlier.

In his very first meeting with Monnet after succeeding de Gaulle as President, Félix Gouin informed Monnet that he planned to modify the statute of the CGP by attaching it to the Ministry for the National Economy. Politically, this made more sense than it would have a month earlier, since Gouin had given that portfolio to fellow Socialist André Philip, who replaced Communist François Billoux on 26 January. Monnet flatly told the new President that attaching the CGP to the Ministry would be “a mistake that would compromise the success of the whole undertaking”. The principal reason he gave to justify his argument was that “it is always bad to modify the conditions in which a project operates once it is already underway”.⁶⁵¹ In other words, the decrees signed by de Gaulle during his last day as

⁶⁴⁹ Jean Monnet, *Mémoires*, (Paris: Fayard, 1976), 346.

⁶⁵⁰ Note de Blum-Picard à Marcel Paul, 18 January 1946, F 12 10028, AN.

⁶⁵¹ “Lettre de Monnet au Président”, dated 7 February 1946 but not sent, AMF 1 3, FJME.

President created a *fait accompli* which Monnet seized upon and defended. Indeed, Monnet drafted a letter of resignation to Gouin in case the President went ahead and placed the CGP under the auspices of the Ministry for the National Economy. Faced with this ultimatum, Gouin reconsidered and, in June of that year, was succeeded as President by Georges Bidault of the MRP. As Gouin had done, Bidault swiftly appointed one of his own party colleagues, François de Menthon, as Minister for the National Economy. The fact that the first six months of the year saw this portfolio change hands from a Communist to a Socialist to a Christian Democrat does indeed lend credibility to Monnet's insistence on "placing the CGP above these [partisan] polemics".⁶⁵² Aside from the justification of the Commissariat's structure, it is important to note Monnet's strategy in creating the CGP, namely rushing the plans so that they could be signed into law by de Gaulle, then defending the *status quo* against challenges by de Gaulle's successor. It proved to be a successful formula and one that ensured the independence of the CGP vis-à-vis the Ministry for the National Economy.

There are a number of explanations for Monnet's strategy. Monnet may have been motivated by the simple desire to secure the widest possible jurisdiction over French industry for himself. A more generous interpretation could be that he genuinely believed that France needed its industry to be overseen by a benevolent and thoroughly non-partisan group of experts, rather than by a Ministry whose fundamental direction could change according to the caprice of the electorate. The results of the October 1945 elections, and especially the naming of Communists as Ministers for Industrial Production and for the National Economy, may have further influenced Monnet in this direction. He was certainly distrustful of the PCF, which he claimed "became more aggressive the faster elections approached".⁶⁵³ Irrespective of Monnet's personal beliefs, having a Communist in charge of these two key ministries certainly strengthened his case with de Gaulle for handing the reins of French industry over to a republican technocrat. In his memoirs, Monnet unsurprisingly claims that his actions were patriotic and selfless. He explains that the "success of the Plan depended on its structure and on the position it would have in the political and administrative life of the country". Monnet insisted that the CGP be placed under the direct authority of the President, despite the fact that "tradition demanded that the Commissioner be under the supervision of an economic ministry, and all the administrative ponderousness pushed [the Plan] towards this state of subordination". He only insisted on his preferred structure because "no

⁶⁵² Ibid.

⁶⁵³ Monnet, op.cit., 368.

ministerial post could have given me as vast a field of action as the one afforded me by the indefinable job of Commissariat of the Plan, Delegate to the President of the Government”.⁶⁵⁴ Although it remains unmentioned in his own recollections, the fact that the main economic ministries were all controlled by PCF members undoubtedly influenced this line of thinking. This likely influenced his decision to include so many ministers in the Council for the Plan. The fact that the two portfolios most central to industrial organisation – namely Industrial Production and the National Economy – were held by Communists would have encouraged Monnet to include as many ministers as possible so as to dilute the influence of the PCF within the Council for the Plan. As a result, Monnet proposed inviting 10 ministers, including those for the Colonies, for Foreign Affairs, and for Communications.⁶⁵⁵ By the time de Gaulle authorised the creation of the Council on 3 January, this had increased to 12, with the addition of the Ministers for Transportation and for Public Works, as well as the Commissioner for German Affairs.⁶⁵⁶ While the inclusion of such a range of Cabinet members is consistent with Monnet’s claim that the CGP’s work transcended many ministries and was a collective national effort, it also conveniently put PCF ministers in the minority, despite their holding the two most crucial portfolios.

Institutional metempsychosis: from Committees to Commissions

Given how Monnet had replicated the Organisation Committees under the CGP and ensured that they would remain beyond the reach of any ministry, we may well ask: to what extent were the Modernisation Commissions merely duplicates of the similar bodies created under Vichy? In 1945, a note was given to Blum-Picard regarding the future of the Organisation Committee for Steel (CORSID). The author stressed that “regardless of political developments in the months ahead, it will always be necessary to maintain bodies equivalent to [CORSID] in order to execute its functions”.⁶⁵⁷ This recognition of the necessity of an Organisation Committee, or an analogous body, to organise French steel production is telling. The note also observed that the State must “invest tens of thousands of

⁶⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 347.

⁶⁵⁵ The ten ministries are first listed in a note prepared by Monnet in early December 1945 and this list was later shown to de Gaulle. See “Conseil du Plan”, 6 December 1945, AMF 1 2, FJME.

⁶⁵⁶ “Décret du 3 janvier 1946”, 3 January 1946, AMF 1 2, FJME.

⁶⁵⁷ “Note pour M. le Secrétaire Général à la Production”, undated note, but certainly between March and October 1945, F 12 10063, AN.

francs to reorganise and modernise the steel industry, for this, we will need such an institution [CORSID]”.⁶⁵⁸ This note reveals the view that, while CORSID could indeed be dissolved due to “political developments in the months ahead” – that is, following the legislative elections that would see the PCF emerge as France’s largest party – a successor institution with essentially the same powers and mandate would still be needed. It is clear that by the time Marcel Paul assumed his responsibilities as Minister, his Secretary General was aware of the argument for the necessity of maintaining the bodies created by Vichy, or at least replacing them by analogous bodies.

Already in 1942, Etienne Hirsch, who along with Robert Marjolin was Monnet’s closest assistant in building the General Commissariat for the Plan and what would become known as the Monnet Plan, had proposed a reorganisation of French industry. Despite being labelled a neo-liberal, Hirsch recommended that French industry be overseen by corporatist bodies that included employers and workers, but were directed firmly by civil servants and a powerful Ministry for the National Economy. Socialist André Philip, a notable advocate of State *planisme*, found this model to be too similar to the existing one established by Vichy, while Socialist Georges Boris found it overly corporatist. Richard Kuisel has described Hirsch’s proposals as “technocorporatist”.⁶⁵⁹ Curiously, Hirsch’s plans were deemed too Vichyste in 1942, yet proved to be predictive of the system that would emerge after the Liberation. Moreover, we can see already in 1942 one of Monnet’s principal associates supporting a vision of French industrial organisation strikingly similar to the one enshrined in the Monnet Plan.

On 9 March 1946, barely two months after the creation of the CGP, the Modernisation Commission for Steel was created.⁶⁶⁰ This was one of the first Commissions created within the CGP, following the creation of the first five by de Gaulle the day before his resignation.⁶⁶¹ Moreover, steel was highlighted as the single most important industry by Monnet, who granted it “absolute priority” for access to coal and insisted that “in effect, it is steel that controls all other activities”.⁶⁶² Its composition mirrored that of the reformed Organisation Committee: five of its 15 members were managers of steel firms, with the

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁹ Richard Kuisel, *Capitalism and the State in Modern France*, op.cit., 279-280.

⁶⁶⁰ “Arrêté du 9 mars 1946”, 9 March 1946, AJ 80 1, AN.

⁶⁶¹ The first five Commissions, all approved by de Gaulle on 19 January 1946, were for coal, electricity, construction materials, animal farming, and agriculture.

⁶⁶² “Présentation des programmes de base”, 9 September 1946, AMF 5 9, FJME.

remaining members being drawn from labour (three), management (two), experts (two), and administrators (three). The leadership of the Commission contains some familiar names. Eugène Roy, who had served as Vice-President of CORSID for the duration of the war, was promoted to President of the new Commission.⁶⁶³ Jean Latourte, who had worked as Under Secretary of CORSID and remained in that role in the renamed OPSID, was named Chairman of the Modernisation Commission. Bureau, another CORSID veteran, was poached from OPSID and named Vice-President of the Commission.⁶⁶⁴ Given that the three top positions were given to individuals who had worked together closely within CORSID under Vichy, it was hardly surprising that the Commission bore more than a passing resemblance to that institution. It was also stated that the Commission would work closely with two other institutions: the *Chambre syndicale de la sidérurgie française* (CSSF), of which Jules Aubrun was still President, and OPSID, still led by Alexis Aron.⁶⁶⁵ This arrangement thus reunited the President and Vice-President of CORSID along with their wartime ally Aron to coordinate and manage the French steel industry as they had for the duration of the Vichy regime.⁶⁶⁶ It is worth remembering that the appointment of Aubrun and Roy to the leadership of CORSID marked a decisive break from the pre-war *Comité des forges*, which was led by François de Wendel. The replacement of factory owners by managerial directors from the industry proved to be an enduring change, as Aubrun's and Roy's post-1944 careers demonstrate.⁶⁶⁷

In the first six months of the GPRF, the preoccupation of steel industrialists was the modernisation of their machinery.⁶⁶⁸ After four years of strenuous production with limited access to spare parts, let alone the latest innovations in production, the industry's hardware was in poor shape. While the period during the Second World War had been one of great technological innovation, particularly for the Allies, France had been shut out from such advances. To bring France up to speed, the Ministry for Industrial Production commissioned

⁶⁶³ Curiously in his memoirs Jean Monnet remembers having appointed "Etienne Roy" to the post. While this might have been an attempt to distance the Monnet Plan from the Vichy figure, it was more likely an oversight on Monnet's part. See Monnet's *Mémoires*, op.cit., 357.

⁶⁶⁴ "Dossier de presse", March 1947, AJ 80 2, AN.

⁶⁶⁵ "Rapport de la commission de modernisation de la sidérurgie", February 1947, AJ 80 11, AN.

⁶⁶⁶ As we have seen earlier in this chapter, the dissolution of OPSID, completed in autumn 1946, transferred that body's powers of allocation back to Aubrun at the CSSF.

⁶⁶⁷ See Chapter Two for a discussion on the selection of members for CORSID and how this marked a break with the organisation of the industry before 1940.

⁶⁶⁸ "Programme d'organisation de la sidérurgie française", undated but from between September 1944 and February 1945, F 12 10062, AN.

the *Centre national de la recherche scientifique* (CNRS) to work with researchers in London to learn the latest technological advances, including in industrial methods.⁶⁶⁹ When the Government announced the creation of the CGP and the Monnet Plan on 10 January 1946, Monnet stressed that “the reconstruction of France does not merely mean repairing the destruction from the war, but also the modernisation of our equipment and our production methods”, concluding that “modernisation and reconstruction must be pursued simultaneously”.⁶⁷⁰ This mission imbued the CGP and its constituent Modernisation Commissions.

The role of the Modernisation Commissions was defined by Monnet as “to coordinate, to manage (*diriger*), but at all costs not to suffocate or sterilise the efforts of the technicians”.⁶⁷¹ Within ten days of its creation, the Commission for Steel was given the task of “defining all measures that would permit [the French steel industry] to produce ... 6 million tonnes of steel in ingots and 1 million tonnes of pig iron (*fonte brute*) for direct consumption”.⁶⁷² They were also to develop a plan to enable the industry to increase that production to 10 million tonnes in ingots and 2.5 million tonnes of pig iron within three years, thereby matching 1929 production levels. After another two years, the industry would be expected to increase production to 12 million and 2.7 million tonnes, respectively.⁶⁷³ This resolution recognised that the single greatest obstacle to increasing French steel output was “the insufficient coal supply, in particular imports of coke and coke fines from the Ruhr”.⁶⁷⁴ The Modernisation Commission was therefore advised to “take into consideration the necessity of minimising the use of coal and labour as much as possible”.⁶⁷⁵ The Commission for Steel would issue its first report, including projected output and recommendations for the modernisation of the industry, in November 1946.⁶⁷⁶ Given that the leaders of the Commission had spent the war running the industry while struggling with shortages of both coal and labour, their 74-page report continued the work done by CORSID during the war.

⁶⁶⁹ “Note. Objet: Le Centre national de la recherche scientifique française”, 16 December 1944, F 12 9974, AN.

⁶⁷⁰ “Instructions envoyées par M. le Président du Gouvernement Provisoire de la République à M. le Commissaire Général du Plan, après décision du Conseil des Ministres”, 10 January 1946, AJ 80 1, AN. Although this document was issued by the President, de Gaulle, the text is virtually identical to that of the memorandum written by Monnet and submitted to de Gaulle in December 1946. We may therefore attribute the statement to Monnet.

⁶⁷¹ “Rapport de la commission de modernisation de la sidérurgie”, February 1947, AJ 80 11, AN.

⁶⁷² “Résolution adoptée le 19 mars par le Conseil du Plan pour la Sidérurgie”, 19 March 1946, AJ 80 1, AN.

⁶⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷⁶ “Rapport de la Commission de Modernisation de la Sidérurgie”, November 1946, AJ 80 11, AN.

They emphasised one conclusion in particular: “Of course, in waiting for the realisation of this long-term endeavour, which after all remains merely a possibility, France can and must continue to rely on the Ruhr, as before the war, for the fuel needed for our steel industry”.⁶⁷⁷ This central recommendation was presumably not lost on Monnet who would propose the pooling of the French and German coal and steel industries in May 1950.

Jean Monnet had succeeded in creating the first five Modernisation Commissions, which replicated the work of the Organisation Committees, and they were signed into law by the President on 19 January 1946. Five days later, Monnet was already moving to resolve this redundancy by having his Commissions replace the Committees altogether. He noted that there was a “psychologically disastrous environment which risks indirectly compromising [France’s] economic recovery”,⁶⁷⁸ alluding to the unpopularity of the Committees and of certain measures still in place, such as price controls.⁶⁷⁹ Explaining the situation, Monnet recognised “the legitimacy of the maintenance, at least provisionally, of certain regulations”, but added that “the French are unanimous in objecting to the maintenance of many of these regulations more than a year after the Liberation [and] to the administrative carelessness of the Offices responsible for their application”. The solution, he concluded, was “the abolition or at least the transformation of certain regulations” which could be done “immediately or in the very near future”. Referring to the various “administrative offices” responsible for allocating materials to different industries – in other words, the Organisation Committees and OCRPI – Monnet called for a “transfer [of responsibilities] to bodies that are genuinely professional and democratic”. Monnet recognised that the “profession will not reform itself”, and proposed the creation of a “provisional Commissariat with absolute powers”, whose leader could, “for a period of four to five months”, introduce “all the simplifications he deems necessary”.⁶⁸⁰ While this last suggestion was not endorsed by the Council for the Plan, it does reveal that Monnet was trying to convince the Council, which included all ministers related to the French economy and industry, of the need to “simplify” the existing system of industrial organisation. By referring to the measures which were maintained after the Liberation – including the

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁸ “Simplification de la réglementation économique”, 24 January 1946, AMF 1 6, FJME.

⁶⁷⁹ Kenneth Mouré explains the administration’s need to maintain price controls and the unpopularity of this decision in “Economic Choice in Dark Times: The Vichy Economy”, in *French Politics, Culture & Society* (25:1), Spring 2007.

⁶⁸⁰ “Simplification de la réglementation économique”, 24 January 1946, AMF 1 6, FJME.

Organisation Committees – and adding that the population unanimously opposed their continued existence, Monnet was making the case for abolishing the Committees. His suggestion that the system be “simplified” by transferring their powers to “genuinely professional and democratic” bodies is a clear reference to the Modernisation Commissions he had just established, which he consistently described as democratic and representing the interests of the industry as a whole through the “essential collaboration of the State, workers, and [employers in] the industry”.⁶⁸¹ Having created Commissions that replicated the existing Committees and ensuring that the new institutions would be under his control rather than tied to any ministry, Monnet suggested that the Committees be dispensed with altogether. In this Monnet found common cause with the Communist Minister for Industrial Production, Marcel Paul.

The morning of 23 April 1946, Marcel Paul proposed in the National Assembly that the Organisation Committees be abolished, a motion that received unanimous support. This agreement was undoubtedly helped by Monnet’s suggestion to the key ministers from all parties that the Organisation Committees ought to be abolished and their powers transferred to the Modernisation Committees. The day that this vote took place, Monnet wrote a lengthy note explaining “the necessity of maintaining the Council for the Plan and the Modernisation Commissions”. The ordinances signed by de Gaulle had in fact created only a *provisional* Commissariat and *provisional* Modernisation Commissions. Monnet had admitted in February that “the Administration only accepted this method because it knows that the Commissariat and the Commissions will disappear in six months [...and] because they consider them to be temporary”.⁶⁸² The very day the Organisation Committees had been abolished by the National Assembly, Monnet argued that “it is necessary to maintain the Council for the Plan and the Modernisation Commissions and to give them permanent status”, and that they continue to operate within the CGP. It is not clear to whom this note was sent, but it was apparently effective, as Monnet’s demands were met and his Modernisation Commissions permanently replaced the Organisation Committees that were

⁶⁸¹ “Note de Jean Monnet sur le premier rapport de remise en marche de l’économie française en 1945, sur les objectifs pour 1946 et sur le but final à atteindre”, 11 November 1945, AMF 1 6, FJME.

⁶⁸² Untitled document by Monnet beginning with “Les raisons pour lesquelles je considère qu’il n’est pas possible de rattacher le Plan à l’Economie nationale sont les suivants”, 12 February 1946, AMF 1 3, FJME.

abolished that same day.⁶⁸³ As with his resistance to Gouin's attempts to attach the CGP to the Ministry for the National Economy, Monnet was again able to ensure the survival of his preferred system on the grounds of defending the *status quo*.

Despite the striking institutional and individual continuities between the Organisation Committees and the Modernisation Commissions, Monnet insisted on the novelty of the Plan and its Commissions in his memoirs. "I took nobody's place... I occupied a territory that had until that time been with neither name nor master".⁶⁸⁴ According to this account, the Commissions therefore had entirely novel functions – while in reality they replicated those of the existing Organisation Committees. He also claims the innovation of the tripartite composition of the Commissions: "administration, producers, and workers had never been gathered around the same table. If they ever did negotiate, it was in a climate of confrontation. There was a winner and a loser, to the detriment of production or the currency".⁶⁸⁵ This last formulation is reminiscent of the bitter labour disputes of the late 1930s, which pitted employers and workers against each other. Monnet claims that he had observed the Working Parties of wartime Britain, which had gathered industrialists, technicians, and labour union representatives, but he found them "seriously limited by the absence of civil servants representing the public interest and by the lack of general objectives".⁶⁸⁶ He claims that he was the first to gather labour union representatives, employers, and civil servants around the same table to discuss and plan their common industry. In his memoirs, Etienne Hirsch makes an almost identical reference to Britain's Working Parties and adds that "it was necessary to add [...] representatives from the civil service. This is how the concept of the Modernisation Commissions came about, which constitutes the originality and indeed the foundation of French planning".⁶⁸⁷ Monnet consciously, and rather conveniently, ignores the Organisation Committees of 1944-46, which indeed gathered administration, producers, and workers around the same table, along with civil servants. The expunction of the Committees from his narrative certainly makes his own efforts seem all the more revolutionary, yet it ignores the important and very real continuities in industrial organisation in *l'entre-deux-républiques*.

⁶⁸³ "Note sur l'élaboration et l'exécution du Plan, ainsi que sur les questions qui doivent y concourir", 23 April 1946, AMF 5 2, FJME. Given that the vote on the Organisation Committees occurred in the morning, it is likely that this note was written afterwards, in response to the vote.

⁶⁸⁴ Monnet, *op. cit.*, 347.

⁶⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 342.

⁶⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸⁷ Etienne Hirsch, *Ainsi va la vie*, *op.cit.*, 89.

Monnet's version of events is certainly understandable, given that admitting continuity from Vichy's loathed Organisation Committees to his Modernisation Committees could very well have been fatal to his Plan. Similarly, Monnet does his utmost to stress how innovative his project was, downplaying any possible continuities from what came before.⁶⁸⁸ But this perverted narrative is also advanced in most of the historiography on the subject. Most key works fail to consider this question of continuity altogether.⁶⁸⁹ One of the very few works to consider the continuities from the Organisation Committees to the Monnet Plan's Modernisation Commissions is an article by Henry Rousso written in 1983. He feels compelled to justify even the consideration of such a question, admitting that the comparison of Vichy's and Monnet's institutions "may seem incorrect".⁶⁹⁰ He also underlines the fundamental differences between the two institutions, describing the Commissions as "tripartite", in contrast to the "exclusively employer-led" Committees.⁶⁹¹ Yet this distinction ignores the significant reforms imposed on the Committees between the end of the Vichy regime and the establishment of the CGP. By 1946, when the first Commissions were established, the Organisation Committees had long ceased to be "exclusively employer-led", and had instead become "tripartite". While the chasm between the Committees of 1944 and the Commissions of 1946 is clear, it is discernibly bridged by the reforms of the Committees overseen by the GPRF. Rousso's argument against the institutional continuities between the Committees and the Commissions rests on ignoring the entire period of the Provisional Government, as virtually all studies of the Organisation Committees do.

Rousso also seeks to downplay the continuities in personnel between the Committees and the Commissions. Adopting a purely quantitative approach, he calculates that "of 57 individuals placed at the head of the Modernisation Commissions, only 5 came from

⁶⁸⁸ Andrew Shennan has noted that Monnet's vaunted "méthode" in fact contained very little that was innovative, although he does not address the issue of continuities from Organisation Committees to Modernisation Commissions. See Shennan, *op.cit.*, 247-49.

⁶⁸⁹ Among the most important studies on the organisation of French industry in this period – all of which fail to engage with the question of continuity from the Organisation Committees to the Modernisation Commissions – are Margairaz, *L'Etat, les finances et l'économie*, *op.cit.*, Frances Lynch, *France and the International Economy*, *op.cit.*, and Richard Kuisel, *Capitalism and the State in Modern France*, *op.cit.* The only detailed collection on Organisation Committees also fails to consider the emergence of the Monnet Plan and its Modernisation Committees and tends to ignore developments after 1944. See Hervé Joly, (ed.) *Les Comités d'organisation et l'économie dirigée du régime de Vichy* (Caen: Centre de recherché d'histoire quantitative, 2004).

⁶⁹⁰ "La comparaison *a priori* peut paraître abusive", Henry Rousso, "Les Elites économiques dans les années 1940: Epuración et transition", in *Vichy: L'événement, la mémoire, l'histoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), 573.

⁶⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 574.

Organisation Committees”.⁶⁹² This quantitative analysis suggests only negligible continuities, with fewer than 9% of Commission presidents having served in Vichy’s Committees. Yet a more qualitative approach shows that the opposite is true in the case of the steel industry: the Commission’s president was the Committee’s vice-president from 1940 to 1944, having held an important post advising the French government on German industry between the two appointments. Moreover, Roussio focuses on the heads of the Commissions and the very limited leadership on the Committees, which obscures the fact that the Commission’s Vice-President, Latourte, and Chairman, Bureau, both held important positions in CORSID’s secretariat. Additionally, the post-war roles of Committee presidents is overlooked – Jules Aubrun, for instance, was quickly appointed President of the CSSF, in which he was called upon to collaborate with the newly-formed Modernisation Commission for Steel. Furthermore, Aubrun gained further powers of sub-allocation from the Organisation Committees following their abolition, as we have seen. The Modernisation Commission for Steel asked the CSSF for a briefing on the latter’s latest work programmes and expressed its desire “to associate to our work the great majority of the personnel of the steel industry”.⁶⁹³ While never formally part of the new Commission, Aubrun was nevertheless invited to play an active part in its activities. The institutional and individual continuities between the Organisation Committee for Steel and the analogous Modernisation Commission are thus apparent, despite attempts by Monnet to decouple the two, and historians’ unwillingness to date to debunk Monnet’s claims.⁶⁹⁴

One lesson that Jean Monnet seems to have learned from the decline and fall of the Organisation Committees is the importance of securing public support for key institutions and projects. Despite their pragmatic value, of which Monnet was well aware as early as 1943, the Committees were the target of merciless criticism from politicians and journalists alike. No matter how practical or even how technical and seemingly apolitical an institution might be, public opposition could force their abolition, as the fate of the Committees revealed. Consequently, convincing the public of the value of the Monnet Plan and of the Modernisation Commissions in particular was a priority for Monnet from the very beginning.

⁶⁹² *Ibid.*, 575.

⁶⁹³ “Rapport de la Commission de Modernisation de la Sidérurgie”, February 1947, AJ 80 11, AN.

⁶⁹⁴ In his recent study, Philip Nord writes that “the [Modernisation] Commissions bore a family resemblance to the [Organisation Committees], but they were more cousins once removed than lineal descendants”. Yet this statement is supported by a reference to Roussio’s article, demonstrating how historians have continued to accept this version of events. See Philip Nord, *France’s New Deal* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2010), 157.

In his secret note to Marjolin and Hirsch on 13 January 1946, Monnet outlined what needed to be contained in a briefing note on the Modernisation Commissions. The third item on the list was “publicity”.⁶⁹⁵ In June 1946, Monnet outlined the need “to bring into public opinion and to make the Government accept a number of ideas”, notably that private industry “such as the steel industry” should execute the elements of the Plan already agreed upon. He also singled out the Modernisation Commissions, writing on the need to “make them popular among the public and within the administration”.⁶⁹⁶ By December 1946, Monnet was developing strategies for promoting the Plan to the public, including the distribution of “a popular leaflet on the Plan” and “propaganda in schools”.⁶⁹⁷ Clearly, Monnet was willing to go to great lengths to ensure that his initiative enjoyed broad public support, from government ministers to school children. Monnet’s insistence that public opinion be “informed” of the virtues of the Plan quickly reached Félix Gouin, who in March stated that “we will elicit the enthusiasm and cooperation of the country, provided we define and explain to French opinion what we expect of the [Plan] that we are asking them to support”.⁶⁹⁸ Having witnessed the fate of the Organisation Committees, Monnet ensured that his Plan and indeed his later initiatives would be accompanied by wide-ranging publicity campaigns to shore up public support.

Conclusion

With the victory of the Communist Party in the first legislative elections after the fall of the Vichy regime, the post-war consensus on the fate of Vichy’s industrial organisation became uncertain. This was exacerbated by de Gaulle’s decision to hand control of four economic portfolios – including the one directly responsible for overseeing the Organisation Committees – to the PCF in order to deny them influence over France’s foreign affairs. Marcel Paul’s time as Minister for Industrial Production was marked by a determined wave

⁶⁹⁵ “Note pour MM. Marjolin-Hirsch. Agenda des choses à faire avant le Conseil du Plan”, 13 January 1946, AMF 1 0, FJME.

⁶⁹⁶ “Objectifs pour le 30 juin”, document dated 22 December 1946, but clearly from before 30 June 1946, AMM 2 1, FJME.

⁶⁹⁷ “Note du 7 décembre”, dated 8 December 1946, AMM 2 1, FJME. The term used by Monnet, “*brochure populaire*”, connotes that it was intended for the *classes populaires*, or the working class. Monnet specifies that the Plan should be promoted at both universities and elementary schools.

⁶⁹⁸ “Discours prononcé par M. Félix Gouin, Président du Gouvernement provisoire de la République française, le 16 mars, à l’occasion de la première séance du Conseil du Plan”, 16 March 1946, AMF 2 4, FJME.

of nationalisations and, in April 1946, the realisation of a long-standing PCF goal: the abolition of the Organisation Committees and OCRPI created by Vichy in 1940. While employers were initially furious, particularly as they had not been consulted beforehand, they quickly manoeuvred the power vacuum left by the removal of the Committees and OCRPI to gain further control over the allocation of raw materials to their industries.⁶⁹⁹ The Socialists, meanwhile, soon regretted having supported Paul's motion as it became apparent that, paradoxically, the Communists' insistence on destroying Vichy's bodies in fact gave more power to the *grand patronat*.

Meanwhile, Jean Monnet was crafting his *Plan de Modernisation et d'Équipement*, which had always presupposed the continued existence of Vichy's Organisation Committees and OCRPI. As this came under threat with the appointment of a Communist Minister for Industrial Production openly hostile to their preservation, Monnet created parallel institutions that assumed the responsibilities, the data, and even the staff of the existing Organisation Committees. Placing these within the CGP and directly under the auspices of the President rather than any ministry appealed to de Gaulle, who approved the plan days before announcing his resignation from what he saw as an unbearably partisan system. This was done while Monnet systematically cut off communication with Paul and his ministry. By the time the Organisation Committees were officially closed down in 1946, their work, their structure, and their leaders had been seamlessly maintained in the form of the Modernisation Commissions set up under Monnet's CGP. As part of the CGP, they were shielded from the changing fortunes of electoral politics and were instead allowed to pursue their work in technocratic peace. In this form, they oversaw the modernisation and the revival of French industry. Moreover, they advised Monnet to find a way to secure more coal from the Ruhr for the French steel industry, a policy ultimately realised in the form of the European Coal and Steel Community. We can therefore appreciate the importance of the institutional wrangling between the Ministry for Industrial Production and Jean Monnet's CGP not only for France but also for Europe.

⁶⁹⁹ The CNPF would later unanimously endorse the creation of the CGP and the Monnet Plan. See "Assemblée générale du 21 juin 1947", CNPF, 21 June 1947, AS 72 836, ANMT.

Conclusions

This thesis has examined France's Organisation Committees, and particularly the Organisation Committee for Steel (CORSID), from their inception in 1940 to their formal dissolution in 1946. It has argued that French industry was reorganised in 1940 as a New Industrial Order with a view to facilitate Franco-German collaboration, and that the key institutions of the Organisation Committees, which were maintained and reformed after the war, were the forerunners to the Modernisation Commissions, described by Jean Monnet as the "keystones" of his Plan. The study has focused on 1940-46 largely because this corresponds to the lifespan of the Organisation Committees. They were formally created with the law of 16 August 1940, although in practice these were preceded by Liaison Offices which were first created in July 1940. The Committees were ultimately dissolved with a legislative motion on 23 April 1946, albeit allowing for a transition period of six months, bringing the formal end date to 23 October 1946. The existence of the Committees therefore corresponds almost exactly with the period between the end of the Third Republic on 10 July 1940 and the establishment of the Fourth Republic on 27 October 1946,⁷⁰⁰ or *l'entre-deux-républiques*. Unfortunately, the few studies that have been published on the Committees focus on the Vichy period,⁷⁰¹ while more general works that mention the Committees tend to treat the post-Vichy era as a parenthesis, if this phase is mentioned at all.⁷⁰² By studying the Organisation Committees from their inception, through the various reforms imposed on them by the Vichy regime and the GPRF, to their dissolution in 1946, this thesis has reached some important conclusions concerning the legacies of the Committees as well as the characteristics of *l'entre-deux-républiques*.

⁷⁰⁰ These are the generally accepted dates for the end of the Third Republic, with the vote of the National Assembly granting Pétain full powers, and the adoption of the constitution of the Fourth Republic, which came into force on 27 October 1946 after being supported in a referendum on 13 October.

⁷⁰¹ The only book-length study on the Organisation Committees is an edited volume, Hervé Joly (ed.), *Les comités d'organisation et l'économie dirigée du régime de Vichy*, (Caen: Centre de recherche d'histoire quantitative, 2004). See also Henry Rouso, "L'organisation industrielle de Vichy" in *Vichy. L'événement, la mémoire, l'histoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), 79-109.

⁷⁰² Claire Andrieu commented on this tendency in *La Banque sous l'occupation. Paradoxes de l'histoire d'une profession* (Paris: FNSP, 1990), 128.

The New Industrial Order: a summing up

This thesis challenges the standard view that the Organisation Committees were created without the knowledge – and much to the displeasure – of the German authorities.⁷⁰³ On the contrary, virtually every element of the law of 16 August 1940 was approved by the German authorities ahead of time as the Committees were *de facto* set up in the weeks preceding 16 August. Moreover, it was clearly understood by the French authorities that the new bodies would contribute to the “New Economic Order in Europe”⁷⁰⁴ outlined by the Reich in July 1940; this was also clear to the individuals who agreed to join the Committees, who knew that they would be expected to oversee production for the Reich. Far from being an audacious policy that protected France from having to serve Germany, the creation of the Organisation Committees was on the contrary a means of institutionalising and formalising France’s economic collaboration with the Reich. Furthermore, economic collaboration was at the heart of the Committees from the very beginning, not a later development that emerged only after Germany abandoned the Blitzkrieg and focused on building a German war economy.⁷⁰⁵

1940 marked a significant turning point in the organisation of the French steel industry. The standard narrative advances that the leaders of the industry remained unchanged through 1940, with the same leading industrialists maintaining their positions *de facto* if not *de jure*.⁷⁰⁶ But the dissolution of the *Comité des forges*, the pre-war employers’ association for the steel industry, and the creation of CORSID saw a decisive change in leadership. Pre-war figures such as François de Wendel and Lambert Ribot were excluded from CORSID and were replaced by younger, managerial technicians who neither held the highest positions in their firms nor came from the largest companies. This promotion of a new generation of technocratic leaders who had succeeded on merit rather than inheritance marked a notable legacy of the creation of CORSID.

⁷⁰³ Arne Radtke-Delacor, “La position des comités d’organisation face aux autorités d’occupation: la pomme de discorde des commandes allemandes en 1940-1941” in Hervé Joly (ed.), *Les comités d’organisation*, op.cit.

⁷⁰⁴ Walther Funk, “The economic reorganization of Europe” in Walter Lipgens (ed.), *Documents on the history of European integration. Volume I: Continental plans for European union, 1939-1945* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1985), 65-70.

⁷⁰⁵ These arguments are presented in Chapter One.

⁷⁰⁶ Henry Rouso, “L’organisation industrielle de Vichy” in *Vichy. L’événement, la mémoire, l’histoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992); Annie Lacroix-Riz, “Les comités d’organisation en Allemagne: tentative d’évaluation” in Hervé Joly (ed.), op.cit.; Philippe Mioche, “Le comité d’organisation de la sidérurgie: un lieu d’affrontement entre modernisateurs de la sidérurgie et gardiens de la profession?”, in *ibid.*

There is a consensus in the historiography that the French steel industry produced massively for the German war effort – perhaps not surprising given that CORSID was created to oversee just such efforts. Yet CORSID cooperated to different degrees with the government’s policy of collaboration depending on how it affected the industry’s interests. CORSID, and Léon Daum in particular, embraced some innovations of the National Revolution, such as the creation of Social Committees, while rejecting Pétain’s demands that would hamper the industry, such as greater representation for SMEs. In the case of labour deportations of French workers to Germany, CORSID showed itself to be particularly obstructive and went to great lengths to keep their workers in France. This must not be seen as an act of resistance, however, since CORSID pursued this strategy to ensure that it maintained a sufficient number of workers to produce effectively. They welcomed the Speer-Bichelonne agreement in September 1943, which sought to integrate French industry even more closely with the Reich’s and saw the French steel industry produce vastly for the German war effort. In the historiographical debate over deliberate underproduction (*freinage*), this thesis argues that CORSID did not attempt to limit French steel production in order to hamper the German economy. Throughout the war, CORSID ensured that the steel industry supplied the Reich insofar as it remained beneficial for France’s firms.

This thesis also sheds light on the internal debate regarding the maintenance of the Committees established under Vichy. By 1943 a near-consensus had emerged that the Committees ought to be maintained regardless of the ideological difficulties this presented. For some within the Resistance this was unacceptable, but they were excluded from the decision-making process. Indeed, the appointment of André Diethelm as Commissioner for War three months before D-Day was the result of this debate, as his opposition to maintaining the Organisation Committees necessitated his removal as Commissioner for Production. This thesis shows how the celebrated CNR Programme, endorsed by the CFLN and by the Communist members of the Resistance, was only supported by all sides because it made no mention of the Organisation Committees. The ratification of the GPRF’s economic policies by the Provisional Consultative Assembly in July 1944 was based on the popularity of the CNR Programme, but it also ensured that the Organisation Committees would endure well beyond the Liberation.

The maintenance of the Committees was conditional on the purging of their leadership and on their reform, particularly to include labour representation. In the case of

CORSID, however, its members were asked to resign and were then appointed to leading positions within the industry, preserving the influence they had gained in 1940. Aubrun became President of the *Chambre syndicale de la sidérurgie française* (CSSF) in 1944; Eugène Roy was named President of the Modernisation Commission for Steel in 1946; Léon Daum was appointed to the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952. For all three, the decisive turning point in their careers came with their appointment to CORSID in 1940. The reforms of the Organisation Committees, meanwhile, amounted to the application of most of the articles of the law of 16 August 1940 that created the bodies in the first place. While *liberté syndicale* was re-established, the inclusion of workers, the reduction in the number of Committees, and the roles of the bodies were all in line with the text of the Vichy legislation. Ironically, parts of the law were applied more completely under de Gaulle than they had been under Pétain.

By examining the Organisation Committees in the overlooked period of 1944-46, this thesis reveals the evolution from the Vichy-era bodies to the Modernisation Commissions of the Monnet Plan. The October 1945 elections had a decisive influence on the Committees, as the appointment of Communist Ministers to the key economic portfolios, including Industrial Production, prompted Jean Monnet to establish parallel bodies, Modernisation Commissions, which replicated the work of the Committees but would be controlled by a supraministerial General Commissariat for the Plan. When Marcel Paul abolished the Committees in 1946, thereby fulfilling a longstanding PCF objective, the Modernisation Commissions, originally meant to be provisional, became permanent and took over the Committees' responsibilities and staff as they worked to modernise and revive French industry. This thesis thus reveals a clear line from the 16 August 1940 law to the Monnet Plan.

A pragmatic and provisional age

Unlike previous studies of French industry and particularly the Organisation Committees, this thesis considers the period from the end of the Third Republic to the establishment of the Fourth, or *l'entre-deux-républiques*. By focusing on 1940-46, this thesis reveals some characteristics which apply to the period as a whole. Chief among these is the importance of pragmatism and provisionality. Successive regimes made decisions on industrial organisation that would be seen to work in the short term in the face of direct problems, particularly acute material shortages. These were understood to be pragmatic, in

that they would alleviate the immediate problem, and provisional, insofar as they could be abandoned once that immediate problem had been resolved. Since the influential writings of Richard Kuisel, this period has come to be seen as characterised by interest in *planisme*, suggesting that the industry was organised with a view to the long term.⁷⁰⁷ Andrew Shennan, meanwhile, has stressed that the theme of renewal characterised this period.⁷⁰⁸ What this thesis shows, however, is that the key decisions regarding the organisation of French industry were motivated chiefly by pragmatism and were seen as provisional. The creation and the staffing of the Organisation Committees in 1940 were done hurriedly and in order to come up with an efficient solution to pressing issues. Moreover, this “provisional reorganisation” was not meant to be a durable new order for a thousand-year regime, but was instead an improvised response to an immediate crisis. Similarly, economic collaboration with the Reich made pragmatic sense during the war, while attempts at reshaping the New Industrial Order to conform to the regime’s nebulous ideological project fell flat. Throughout the war, short-term pragmatism trumped long-term renewal, despite the rhetorical emphasis on the latter. Indeed, with the future so uncertain at various stages of the war and with material shortages remaining a persistent problem, the Committees’ priority was keeping factories running rather than five-year plans for the modernisation of industrial equipment.

This tendency towards the pragmatic and the provisional was clear within the Resistance as well, even as they discussed plans for the future and the renewal of France in the post-war era. In Algiers, the CFLN weighed the ideological merits of abolishing the Committees created by Vichy but soon concluded that their practical purpose would be invaluable in a liberated France and they were maintained. The reform of these bodies was similarly carried out by the Provisional Government with a view to maintaining efficiency and causing the least possible disruption to French industry. However desirable their dissolution might have been on ideological grounds, the shortage of materials and the disruption caused by the war would require the provisional maintenance of the Committees. Even the Modernisation Commissions, the “keystones” of French *planisme*, were initially

⁷⁰⁷ Richard Kuisel, “Vichy et les origines de la planification économique, 1940-1946” in *Mouvement social*, 98, January-March 1977, 77-101. These are also addressed in his monograph, *Le capitalisme et l’Etat en France*. Richard Vinen similarly argues that the Committees “fit into a post-war perspective of planisme and modernization”. See Vinen, *The politics of French business* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), 141.

⁷⁰⁸ Andrew Shennan, *Rethinking France: Plans for Renewal 1940-1946* (Oxford: OUP, 1989). Others have instead emphasised the “restoration” of France, albeit by focusing on the post-1944 era. See Jean Bouvier and François Bloch-Lainé, *La France restaurée* (Paris: Fayard, 1986) and William Hitchcock, *France Restored: Cold War Diplomacy and the Quest for Leadership in Europe, 1944-1954* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

only meant to exist for six months; it was the decision in April 1946 to dissolve the Committees that prompted calls for the maintenance of the Commissions to carry out the defunct bodies' work on a more permanent basis.

After 1946, this preference for the pragmatic and the provisional was affected by a number of factors. The French economy was recovering and the shortages that had characterised *l'entre-deux-républiques* were coming to an end. This coincided with the beginning of the Marshall Plan in 1947, which further stabilised the economy and helped establish the conditions in which longer-term planning in France was possible. That same year, the emergence of the Cold War in France introduced a more predictable international order which similarly contributed to the ability of politicians and civil servants to plan for the long term. As the economic and political instability that had characterised *l'entre-deux-républiques* came to an end, so too did the reliance on the pragmatic and the provisional. Of course, ideology shaped a number of key decisions during this period, and it is not always possible to neatly divide the pragmatic from the ideological. The decision to nationalise key industries, for instance, was motivated in large part by ideology and was not seen as a provisional measure. On the other hand, arriving at a consensus on a post-war programme for France was certainly a pragmatic objective, and few were naïve enough to think that such a consensus stretching across the political spectrum could be much more than provisional. Furthermore, ideology was often used to justify pragmatic actions, from applying a veneer of National Revolution rhetoric to the creation of the Committees to Monnet's conscientious propaganda campaign in favour of the "democratic" Modernisation Commissions.⁷⁰⁹

A final observation based on the study of this period is the tendency of industrialists in particular to oppose change. While many industrialists were initially wary of the new Organisation Committees, they defended the New Industrial Order consistently throughout the period of study, despite the fact that it had been created without their consultation. Attempts by Pétain to reform the Committees in line with the National Revolution in 1941 were neutralised and the composition of CORSID remained strikingly consistent throughout the war, with only a single change to its membership with the addition of another industrialist, Pierre Francou, in September 1941. In December 1944, Aubrun pleaded at length for the maintenance of the system as it existed, offering little more than token compromises. In April 1946, employers were furious when the National Assembly decided

⁷⁰⁹ The latter is discussed in a note by Jean Monnet. "Note du 7 décembre", dated 8 December 1946, AMM 2 1 15, FJME.

to abolish the Committees. Throughout the period, industrialists clung to the New Industrial Order and defended it – particularly behind closed doors – until the end. Their support for the Monnet Plan was no doubt bolstered by the continuity offered in the form of the Modernisation Commissions, which in the case of the steel industry in particular maintained the role of and many individuals from CORSID.

This period highlights how new institutions that were purported to be of short duration and were couched in terms of pragmatism were successfully created and maintained. Indeed, the law of 16 August 1940, reportedly hammered out over a weekend in Vichy, outlasted the more ambitious Labour Charter, which was bogged down in 15 months of discussions. When debating whether to maintain the Committees after the Liberation, the CFLN (and indeed former minister Pierre Pucheu) stressed that the bodies had been created out of practical necessity, and that preserving them was justified on the same grounds. Yet it was agreed that the maintenance of the Committees would be provisional – an ill-defined caveat that doubtless made it easier for *résistants* to accept the proposal. Indeed, Monnet seems to have been aware that it is easier to sell provisional plans and then extend their life, rather than pitch a long-term plan to wary politicians. He admitted in February 1946 that “the administration accepted this method because it knows that the Commissariat and the Commissions will disappear in six months”.⁷¹⁰ The fact that the Commissariat instead lasted until 2006 shows that purportedly short-term, pragmatic initiatives can often outlast grander projects geared towards national renewal.⁷¹¹

Epilogue: d'une Europe l'autre

By demonstrating the important continuities between Vichy's New Industrial Order and the “keystones” of the Monnet Plan, this thesis sheds some light on the origins of European integration. Preparing the first report of the *Conseil du Plan*, Monnet wrote a note explaining to the members (drawn from all the major political parties) the centrality of coal and steel for France's reconstruction:

⁷¹⁰ Untitled document by Monnet beginning with “Les raisons pour lesquelles je considère qu'il n'est pas possible de rattacher le plan à l'économie nationale”, 12 February 1946, AMF 1 3, FJME.

⁷¹¹ The *Commissariat Général du Plan* formally existed until 2006, when it was transformed into the *Centre d'Analyse Stratégique* (CAS). The CAS was then turned into the *Commissariat Général à la Stratégie et à la Prospective* (CGSP) in 2013.

I would like to draw the Council's attention to the fact that without a strong steel industry, there is no strong economy. There is no strong steel industry without coking coal in sufficient quantities. Well, we do not have this coal and we can only get it from the Ruhr.⁷¹²

He stressed this point throughout the document, concluding that “our steel industry needs coal from the Ruhr. Our economy needs coal from the Ruhr”.⁷¹³ Indeed, the chronic shortage of coal and unsuccessful attempts to secure greater quantities from Germany for the French steel industry is another characteristic of *l'entre-deux-républiques*. When Monnet first wrote de Gaulle setting out the details of the Plan, he explained that his projected production levels for French industry in 1946 depended “on one essential condition, namely that German coal arrives in sufficient quantities”.⁷¹⁴ In the same document he explained that “France's weight in the world will depend on the extent to which we can increase our production”.⁷¹⁵ By February 1946, Monnet warned that “the lack of coal threatens to halt the expansion of French industry” and called for “a change in the quantity of coal allocated to the steel industry” to increase production in that sector.⁷¹⁶

Unsurprisingly, the first Modernisation Commission to be created was that for coal. At the first meeting of the *Conseil du Plan*, the Commission was given “as its first task [...] to calculate how much coal France needs, and to publish it in order to inform French and international opinion and to thus support the French government's legitimate requests to the Allied governments that greater quantities of coal from the Ruhr be sent to France”.⁷¹⁷ It is telling that the first task given to the first Modernisation Commission was essentially to try to secure more coal from the Ruhr for French industry. The great weakness of the Monnet Plan was that its ambitious targets for French production in steel and other industries was entirely dependent on coking coal from outside of France, namely the Ruhr. France's vaunted recovery could only be realised if it received sufficient coal from the Ruhr.

Within two years, Monnet recognised that France's modernisation was struggling. In April 1948 he wrote a letter to then Prime Minister Georges Bidault, explaining that despite the “increased production thanks to the application of the Plan de Modernisation, [...] the national effort of different countries on their current foundations will not, in my opinion, be

⁷¹² “Ensemble de six pages de notes diverses ayant servi à l'élaboration du premier rapport”, 11 March 1946, AMF 2 1, FJME.

⁷¹³ Ibid.

⁷¹⁴ “Note de Jean Monnet pour de Gaulle”, 11 November 1945, AMF 1 6, FJME.

⁷¹⁵ Ibid.

⁷¹⁶ “L'amélioration de la productivité, clef du relèvement français”, 11 February 1946, AMF 1 6, FJME.

⁷¹⁷ “Premier projet memorandum Jean Monnet pour le Conseil”, 13 January 1946, AMF 2 1, FJME.

sufficient”. He concluded that a “federation of the west” of Europe was the only solution.⁷¹⁸ That same day, he also wrote to then Foreign Minister Robert Schuman, explaining that “we expose ourselves to bitter disappointment in thinking that Marshall credits will continue for long if Europe cannot quickly demonstrate increased and modernised production”. Again, he concluded that to do so required “a veritable European effort that only the existence of a federation of the West would make possible”.⁷¹⁹ These letters show how the Monnet Plan led logically to plans for European union.⁷²⁰

Of course it helped that Monnet had already been predisposed to European federalism. In August 1943 he had written that “the countries of Europe are too small to assure their peoples the prosperity that modern conditions made possible and consequently necessary. They need larger markets. It is equally important that they not use an important portion of their resources to maintain so-called ‘key’ industries, necessitated by the form of ‘nationally sovereign’ states”.⁷²¹ That same year, Blum-Picard, then Economic Advisor to de Gaulle, had proposed a solution to obtaining sufficient quantities of German coal. In a report he prepared in December 1943, and which he sent to Monnet in July 1944, Blum-Picard observed that “there is, in Europe, an issue of “coal” and “coke”, which are intimately linked to the issue of cast iron and steel. We lack coking coal” in France, limiting the capacity of the nation’s steel industry. Blum-Picard therefore proposed a “Western Union”, pooling the coal of the Low Countries, France, and parts of Germany (Saarland and Aachen) to “supply all the coke for the metallurgical industries” of the participating countries. He noted that the Ruhr was “too essential for the entire German economy” for it to be detached from the country and added to the Union, a position with which Monnet clearly disagreed. Nevertheless, Blum-Picard argued that “it is therefore with a European economic organisation that the issue of steel will be resolved”, even adding that “this trust will be subject to a European international authority”.⁷²² By 1950, it seemed clear that the way of solving France’s industrial model, which depended on French steel which itself depended on coking coal from the Ruhr, was by pooling the coal and steel industries of France and Germany. The Schuman Declaration,

⁷¹⁸ “Lettre de Jean Monnet à G. Bidault”, 18 April 1948, AMF 22 1, FJME.

⁷¹⁹ “Lettre de Jean Monnet à Robert Schuman”, 18 April 1948, AMF 22 1, FJME.

⁷²⁰ It should be noted that these letters also cite the security concerns, implicitly fears of the Soviet Union, which prompted France to propose the path of European union.

⁷²¹ “Note de réflexion de Jean Monnet”, 5 August 1943, AME 33 1, FJME.

⁷²² “Sur l’organisation de l’Europe d’après-guerre”, Blum-Picard, 1 December 1943, AME 56 2, FJME. This report was sent to Monnet in July 1944; see “Lettre de Blum-Picard à Monnet”, 12 July 1944, AME 56 2, FJME.

written by Jean Monnet and pronounced by Robert Schuman on 9 May 1950, proposed precisely that.

The literature on France's post-war economy and the origins of the ECSC highlight the link between the Monnet Plan and the Schuman Plan. According to Frances Lynch:

The particular forms which [post-war European] integration took were more a response to the problems of French economic development which could not be solved within the purely national framework. Thus the Schuman Plan addressed the problem which a relatively small, protected steel industry was seen to have created for French manufacturing industry and for French security in the interwar period. Building on the investment in the steel industry undertaken within the framework of the Monnet Plan and made possible by Marshall Aid, the Schuman Plan aimed to make the French steel industry compete in western Europe. In return the French steel industry was to be guaranteed access to the coal and coke resources of the Ruhr on equal terms with the West German steel industry.⁷²³

As Lynch demonstrates, the Schuman Plan was essentially an outgrowth of the Monnet Plan, as France's national strategy for its economy outgrew the confines of the nation state and required greater access to coal from the Ruhr. In his memoirs Robert Marjolin, one of Monnet's closest collaborators, acknowledged that "the functional model of the Monnet Plan was transposed to the European level" with the creation of the ECSC.⁷²⁴ Indeed, Monnet's strategy of developing a project in relative secrecy and receiving support from a powerful patron – de Gaulle in 1946 and Schuman in 1950 – before springing it on unsuspecting colleagues and public opinion, was used in creating both the Monnet Plan and the ECSC. Understanding the origins of the Monnet Plan therefore adds to our knowledge of the beginnings of European integration.

There is an important literature on the continuities between Vichy and the Fourth Republic in France, beginning especially with the ground-breaking work of Robert Paxton.⁷²⁵ The historiography on the origins of European integration and on post-war France, meanwhile, emphasises that the European Coal and Steel Community was fundamentally a French initiative, with France playing the decisive role.⁷²⁶ These two bodies of work tend to remain separate, however, as the former tends to remain national in scope, while the standard

⁷²³ Frances Lynch, *France and the International Economy* (London: Routledge, 1997), 214.

⁷²⁴ Robert Marjolin, *Le travail d'une vie. Mémoires 1911-1986* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1986).

⁷²⁵ Robert Paxton, *Vichy France. Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944* (New York: Knopf, 1972).

⁷²⁶ See, for example, Dirk Spierenburg and Raymond Poidevin, *The History of the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community. Supranationality in Motion* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1994); Frances Lynch, op.cit.; William Hitchcock, *France Restored*, op.cit.; Michael Sutton, *France and the Construction of Europe, 1944-2007* (New York: Berghahn, 2007).

narrative of European integration history considers 1945 as “*l’année zéro*”,⁷²⁷ an approach which *a priori* obscures the continuities from Vichy to the European Coal and Steel Community.⁷²⁸ Given the continuities analysed in this thesis from Vichy to the Monnet Plan, and the extent to which the ECSC was an extension of the latter, this gap deserves to be closed. This thesis suggests some ways in which this could be done.

First, the harmonisation of Franco-German steel specifications that occurred during the war and endured until at least 1945 is potentially very important. Further research is needed to determine whether these specifications were maintained in both countries in the years following the end of the war. If so, this would doubtlessly mean that the pooling of the French and German steel industries after 1950 was in fact facilitated by the measures taken by French industrialists under Vichy to “harmonise” the nation’s industry with the Reich’s in the context of an integrated European economy. While such a claim cannot be conclusively made without further research on the 1945-1950 period, such a finding would re-evaluate our understanding of the origins of the ECSC.

Second, the structure of the European Coal and Steel Community can be traced back to its forerunner at the national level, the CGP. Like the Council of the CGP, the High Authority oversaw the modernisation of the steel industry, allocation of coal, and increased production. Just as Monnet ensured that the CGP was separate from the Ministries, with their competing interests and changing leadership, the High Authority was staffed with figures who would act in the common interests of the Community rather than those of their particular states. The inclusion of trade unionist Paul Finet on the High Authority and the creation of the tripartite Consultative Committee similarly echoed the inclusion of labour in Monnet’s Modernisation Committees.⁷²⁹ Likewise, the High Authority’s Directorates General for Coal and Steel were essentially supranational projections of the Modernisation Commissions for those industries. Given that the “keystones” of the Monnet Plan were in fact based on the Organisation Committees established in 1940, this means that we can trace a clear line from

⁷²⁷ For a recent example, see Sylvain Kahn, *Histoire de la construction européenne de l’Europe depuis 1945* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2011).

⁷²⁸ There is a small number of works that attempt to bridge this gap to some extent, but they tend to suffer from significant limitations. Antonin Cohen’s *De Vichy à la Communauté européenne* (Paris: PUF, 2012) makes the case for ideological continuities between Vichy’s National Revolution and the post-war European project, but treats economic issues only superficially. Meanwhile, John Laughland’s *The Tainted Source. The Undemocratic Origins of the European Idea* (London: Warner Books, 1997) is a muddled and politically-motivated attempt to trace the origins of the EU to Hitler’s New Order.

⁷²⁹ Paul Finet was Secretary General of the *Fédération générale du travail de Belgique*, one of the two main trade union federations in Belgium, until his appointment to the High Authority in 1952.

the law of 16 August 1940 to the architecture of the ECSC. The fact that further institutions, notably the Council, were added to the ECSC (mostly at the instance of Dutch negotiators) does not dilute the continuities from the CGP to the High Authority of the ECSC.

Third, the continuities of individuals are just as striking if we extend the narrative to the establishment of the ECSC in 1952. France sent two representatives to the High Authority in Luxembourg: Jean Monnet and Léon Daum. Curiously, the more controversial of the two was apparently Monnet, as a number of German industrialists voiced their concerns that he was not sufficiently sensitive to the particular issues facing the Saarland.⁷³⁰ Nobody seems to have objected to the presence of Daum, who a decade before the Schuman Declaration was being championed by Pierre Laval in Vichy for the position of Minister for Industrial Production and who spent the war overseeing France's steel production for the German war economy. At least one other member of the High Authority of the ECSC was also involved in wartime plans for Franco-German industrial integration: Karl-Maria Hettlage was an advisor to Albert Speer when the Speer-Bichelonne agreement was reached.⁷³¹ While the very top figures responsible for the creation of the ECSC, from Jean Monnet to Konrad Adenauer, generally had credentials of wartime Resistance, digging slightly deeper reveals interesting continuities that transcend *l'année zéro*.

In a famous article, David Reynolds argued that the Fall of France fundamentally reordered international politics, calling it the “fulcrum of the twentieth century”.⁷³² Correspondingly, this thesis argues that the Fall of France reshaped French industrial organisation decisively and enduringly. Two of the most significant economic projects to blossom in post-war France and Europe – the Monnet Plan and the Schuman Plan, respectively – were in fact rooted in France's *années noires*. By studying the organisation of the French steel industry during *l'entre-deux-républiques*, this thesis shows how the provisional and pragmatic law of 16 August 1940 laid the institutional foundations for France's *Trente glorieuses* and for the European Union.

⁷³⁰ “Lettre de Filliol”, 18 June 1952, P 6353, MAE.

⁷³¹ See Mauve Carbonell, “Karl-Maria Hettlage (1902-1995): un expert au service de l'Europe et des Allemagnes” in *Journal of European Integration History*, 23:1, 2006, 67-85.

⁷³² David Reynolds, “1940: fulcrum of the twentieth century?” in *International Affairs*, 66:2, 1990, 325-250.

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ADM, *Records of the Admiralty, Naval Forces, Royal Marines, Coastguard and Related Bodies*

FO, *Foreign Office*

GFM, *Copies of Captured Records of the German, Italian and Japanese Governments*

MT, *Ministry of Transport*

PREM, *Prime Minister's Office*

SOE, *Special Operations Executive*

T, *Treasury*

WO, *War Office*

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