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SOCIALISM IN THE NORD, 1880-1914

A REGIONAL VIEW OF THE FRENCH SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

This paper was written before the appearance of Leslie Derfler's "Reformism and Jules Guesde: 1891-1904" (*International Review of Social History*, XII (1967), pp. 66-80). It is not specifically aimed at answering or refuting Derfler's article; however, it adds to his discussion of French reformism and Jules Guesde. Derfler and I agree that an analysis of Socialist theory is of secondary importance for the historian trying to unravel the complexities of French Socialism; for "doctrinal discord" Derfler substitutes "personal enmity" as the key to understanding. I believe that investigation of Socialist organization in France will provide added insights into the reformist and revolutionary movements within French Socialism.

I agree with Derfler that in the 1890's much of Guesde's reformism was stimulated by his desire to exploit the good image of reformists and enlightened bourgeois, in order to capture votes which would give Socialists control of the French parliament. Derfler then argues that when this tactic did not work for Guesde in the elections of 1898, personal reasons motivated his return to intransigent Marxism. This explanation of Guesde's behavior may be valid, but it does not explain the behavior of an entire group of men, those "Guesdists" who in the 1890's formed the revolutionary wing of French Socialism. Derfler overemphasizes Guesde's personal power by asserting that he completely controlled the *Parti ouvrier français*. In fact, his early control of the POF was progressively weakened; by the mid-1890's Guesde's illnesses and the increased prestige of local Guesdist militants had cut into his ability to demand absolute obedience. Guesde's followers increasingly influenced their leader and ultimately determined the evolution of the revolutionary wing of French Socialism. The Paris archives used by Derfler say little about these "Guesdists" because Guesde had failed to stimulate Socialist organization in Paris and its suburbs. "Guesdism" was a provincial phenomenon, and its essence was disciplined unity and far-reaching organization. This Guesdist organization was threatened by the influx of reformists into the POF, causing dismay among Guesde's original followers. Organizational concerns dominated Gues-

dist thinking and to protect their organization the Guesdists were forced to practice survival tactics even before 1914; thus they were better equipped to fight the Communists after World War I. The old Guesdist veterans were therefore in a strong position within the post-war SFIO and imposed their time-tested tactics upon the entire party. This view from the Nord does not contradict Derfler's assertion that personal enmity played an important role in the evolution of French Socialist politics, but adds another dimension to the entire problem. More investigations into provincial Socialist movements are now necessary. If Derfler has opened the discussion along the lines of personal relationships, I would like to continue it along those of organizational analysis.

I

The uniqueness of Socialism in the Nord department¹ was assured before Socialists began their political careers there, for even at the beginning of the Third Republic the Nord was in many respects a unique department. In contrast to most other departments of France, the Nord was highly industrialized and urbanized.² By 1870 coal mines in the Nord were part of the most productive French coal basin, while the cities of the Lille arrondissement formed the largest textile manufacturing complex in France. Yet within these textile cities – Lille, Roubaix, Tourcoing, Armentières and their suburbs – the working class was relatively untouched by the great political upheavals of the nineteenth century. In contrast to the artisans of Paris who had been influenced by the June Days and the Commune and were already pledged to Blanquist, Proudhonist, or other social theories, the indus-

¹ For a more detailed account of Socialism in the Nord see Robert P. Baker, *A Regional Study of Working-Class Organization in France: Socialism in the Nord, 1870-1924* (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Stanford University, 1966).

² For the economic history of the Nord, see Association française pour l'avancement des sciences, *Lille et la région du Nord en 1909* (Lille, 1909); Raoul Blanchard, *La Flandre; étude géographique de la plaine flamande en France, Belgique et Hollande* (Paris, 1906); Claude Fohlen, *L'Industrie textile au temps du Second Empire* (Paris, 1956); René Gendarme, *La Région du Nord; essai d'analyse économique* (Paris, 1954); Edward A. Wrigley, *Industrial Growth and Population Change; A Regional Study of the Coalfield Areas of North-West Europe in the Later Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1961). A recent study of one region within the Nord has been made by René Fruit, *La Croissance économique du pays de Saint-Amand (Nord), 1668-1914* (Paris, 1963). A more detailed bibliography may be found in M. Gillet and J. Bouvier, "Orientation bibliographique sur l'histoire économique et sociale de la région du Nord aux XIXe et XXe siècles", in: *Revue du Nord*, XLIX (1967), pp. 367-74.

trial workers of the Nord – while occasionally rebellious – escaped such brutal experiences and were as yet uncommitted to any specific theory of working-class emancipation.¹ What historical tradition they possessed came from French Flanders, which stimulated intense communal life, a love of taverns, and a predilection for social activity. After 1870 it was inevitable that the strong organizational bias of this highly concentrated industrial working class would be turned to larger economic and political objectives.

When in the 1880's young working-class militants finally organized part of the working class of the Lille arrondissement, they were attracted to Marxism, an ideology which seemed well-suited to the industrialization, intransigent capitalism, and squalid social conditions of the Nord. They were not convinced by Marx's Marxism, however, but by that brand of Marxism preached by the Parisian journalist Jules Guesde, a man who soon became the theoretical guide, party leader, and confidant for the Socialists of the Nord. In the 1880's the Socialist Nord Federation was firmly attached to Guesde's *Parti ouvrier* (PO).²

Guesde and his followers have not been treated well by historians. Most have agreed with Guesde's contemporary Charles Rappoport, who compared Guesde with Jaurès: "Jules Guesde and Jean Jaurès, two men, two worlds, two psychologies, two personalities, two philosophies. Implacable struggle and the spirit of conciliation. Analysis and synthesis. Harshness and generosity. Sectarianism and flexibility."³ An American historian has recently noted that Guesde's theories were only a "...vulgarization of Marxism...a distorted French reflection of Kautsky's Marxist orthodoxy...[which]...at its best displayed a kind of sterile positivism and faith in science typical of the period."⁴ Both Guesde and his followers have been castigated for failing to alter their ideas to fit the changing times, and for practicing reformist Socialism

¹ For the working-class movement in the Nord before 1870 see Jean-Pierre Aguet, *Les Grèves sous la monarchie de juillet (1830-1847)* (Geneva, 1954); A. Chanut et. al., "Aspects industriels de la crise: le département du Nord", in: *Société d'histoire de la révolution de 1848, Aspects de la crise et de la dépression de l'économie française au milieu du XIXe siècle, 1846-1851* (La Roche-sur-Yon, 1956), pp. 93-141; Jean-Paul Courtéoux, "Naissance d'une conscience de classe dans le prolétariat textile du Nord? 1830-1870", in: *Revue économique*, VIII (1957), pp. 114-39; Claude Fohlen, "Crise textile et troubles sociaux: le Nord à la fin du Second Empire", in: *Revue du Nord*, XXXV (1953), pp. 107-23.

² Changed in the early 1890's to *Parti ouvrier français* (POF).

³ Quoted in Harvey Goldberg, *The Life of Jean Jaurès* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1962), p. 478.

⁴ Robert Wohl, *French Communism in the Making, 1914-1924* (Stanford, California, 1966), p. 435.

while mouthing Marxist revolutionary slogans.¹ In addition Guesde has been attacked as a “Torquemada in spectacles” (the phrase was coined by the Independent Socialist Clovis Hugues), a stern disciplinarian who shaped a following of mindless automatons. One French historian has defined pre-war Socialism in the Nord as “*le guesdisme fait fédération*”, and many of the worst allegations concerning the Guesdists refer to the kind of Socialism practiced in that department.²

Much of this criticism appears justified. Guesdist behavior is indeed difficult to explain, and one can sympathize with those historians who hesitate before placing the Guesdists in the right, left, or center of the Socialist spectrum.³ While Guesde preached class hatred to the workers of Roubaix, local Guesdist deputies from the Nord voted with reform-minded bourgeois politicians in parliament.⁴ While Guesdists praised sectarianism and isolation and in 1902 publicly lauded a crushing electoral defeat as “useful for the education” of the proletariat, they also urged reforms and tried to practice a pragmatic kind of “*municipalisme*”.⁵ This combination of radical language and immobility, of anti-societal sentiments and reformist political participation became characteristic of Guesdism in the pre-war years.

Were the Guesdists revolutionaries or reformists? Looking back, historians have agreed that their revolutionary words were sham: Robert Wohl has written, “What Guesde would not admit was that organizing the proletariat and attempting to win public office had changed the very nature of the party and influenced the way its goals were seen. Ultimately, the Guesdists were transformed by the political order they had set out to conquer: their success turned them into a party of reform.”⁶ But why could Guesde or his followers not admit this, even to themselves? Perhaps, as Theodore Lockwood has pointed out, the division of pre-1914 Socialism into the theoretical compartments of reformism or revolution is difficult for France, since all French Socialists believed in some kind of “revolution” and “reform”.⁷ Guesdist behavior is not really explained by merely pointing out that the

¹ Claude Willard, *Le Mouvement socialiste en France (1893-1905)*; *Les Guesdistes* (Paris, 1965), p. 588.

² *Ibid.*, p. 242.

³ See Milorad M. Drachkovitch, *Les Socialismes français et allemand et le problème de la guerre, 1870-1914* (Geneva, 1953), p. 81, especially note 4.

⁴ *Le Réveil du Nord* (Lille), September 17, 1901, p. 2:4; Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, p. 555.

⁵ *Le Réveil du Nord*, June 30, 1902, p. 2:5; *Le Travailleur* (Lille), July 14, 1901, p. 3: 1; Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, p. 242.

⁶ Wohl, *French Communism in the Making*, p. 15.

⁷ Theodore D. Lockwood, “A Study of French Socialist Ideology”, in: *Review of Politics*, XXI (1959), p. 411.

Guesdists were not in fact true revolutionaries; nor can it be explained by any analysis of Guesdist ideology alone.¹ Any understanding of Guesdist behavior must consider party organization, for the Guesdists were primarily organizers, and nowhere was this more true than in the Nord. Guesdist political organization, the relation of ideology to this organization, and the organizational corollaries of reformism and revolution in France will be investigated in this paper by focusing upon the development of Socialism in the Nord department.

II

While Guesde's Marxism designated the revolutionary ends, it had neglected to define the necessary means. During the 1880's the Guesdists slowly realized not only that real insurrection by a minority of Marxist converts would be suicidal in France, but also that their virulent invective and occasionally violent attacks upon "reactionary" opponents were not enough to insure a large following. They needed more effective organization and propaganda; uncoordinated and undisciplined labor action like that of May Day, 1890 convinced the Nord militants that without political guidance and discipline the workers would remain unpredictable, unruly, unmanageable.²

Therefore the Guesdists improved their organization and modified their behavior; by the early 1890's the POF began to make electoral progress in the Nord. After the Fourmies massacre of 1891 Paul Lafargue was elected as Socialist deputy from Lille,³ and in 1892 Guesdists took control of the Roubaix city council. Intoxicated by these early successes, Guesde and his followers tied their hopes for the Socialist transformation of society to the belief that the majority of Frenchmen would soon vote the Socialists into power; Guesde's own electoral victory at Roubaix in 1893 put him, in the words of Laura

¹ In dealing with Socialist movements, most historians have identified Socialists on the basis of policy positions or ideologies; for a recent example, see Jean-Jacques Fiechter, *Le Socialisme français: de l'affaire Dreyfus à la grande guerre* (Geneva, 1965). But, as Nettl has pointed out in a recent article, such analytical methods are often overcomplicated and arbitrary, because often Socialist "groups" have no real existence beyond the issue being investigated or because public ideological statements do not always reflect the true motivations of Socialist activity. See Peter Nettl, "The German Social Democratic Party, 1890-1914 As a Political Model", in: *Past and Present*, XXX (1965), p. 71.

² See Archives départementales du Nord (Lille) (hereafter referred to as ADN), M154/61, police reports Tourcoing, February 3, 1884 and Lille, September 21, 1886; *Le Cri du travailleur* (Lille), April 13, 1890, p. 1:2, May 4, 1890, p. 3:4, and May 11, 1890, p. 1:1.

³ See Claude Willard, *La Fusillade de Fourmies* (Paris, 1957).

Lafargue, "in a state of chronic exhilaration of spirits".¹ After this date neither Guesde nor his followers retreated from a belief in a peaceful but proletarian "revolution", as described by Guesde at Lille in 1901: "The revolution is near. It will mean neither piles of cobblestones, nor guns, nor dead bodies; the revolution will be the peaceful seizure of power." For Guesde such a "revolution" was always in the immediate future: "With a Socialist majority in Parliament," he stated before the elections of 1906, "the revolution will be accomplished."² These beliefs allowed Guesdist militants such as Henri Ghesquière of Lille, an early Guesdist and the "theorist" of the Nord Federation, to uphold the idea of "revolutionary" social change while denying the need for violent revolution:

"We must not believe that we can transform a society in a single day, for this is not possible. I have similarly shared this delusion but quickly recognized its impossibility. I have been able to see for myself that one gets nothing through violence, that all our power comes from union and cohesion."³

After choosing peaceful and democratic means to get them to the revolution, the Guesdists of the Nord soon found themselves faced with another decision, that of choosing the best method of attracting electoral support. On the one hand there was the temptation to present the Socialist party as the newest and truest of French republican parties by emphasizing electorally attractive reformist schemes; enticed by such alluring proposals, the supporters of older republican parties and of the Radical party would be encouraged to slide to Socialism. On the other hand advanced Republicanism and Radicalism were not as deeply entrenched in the Nord department or the Lille arrondissement

¹ Laura Lafargue to Friedrich Engels, November 19, 1893, Correspondance (Paris, 1959), III, pp. 238, 313-14.

² *Le Réveil du Nord*, December 13, 1901, p. 1:1 and September 3, 1905, p. 2:5; *L'Égalité* (Roubaix), April 23, 1906, p. 3:3. Such statements negate the assertions by Guesde's critics (see Goldberg, *The Life of Jean Jaurès*, p. 257) that Guesde repudiated democracy during the Millerand controversy. In linking revolution to democracy, Guesde was following Marx himself, who at Amsterdam in 1872 said, "...we do not deny that there are countries, such as America, England, and - if I understand your institutions correctly - Holland, where the workers can attain their goal by peaceful means." Quoted in Carl Landauer, *European Socialism; A History of Ideas and Movements* (Berkeley, California, 1959), I, p. 133. Lockwood, "A Study of French Socialist Ideology", p. 408 points out that the term "revolution" now has such a communist cast that it is difficult to understand the broad Socialist meaning of the word as defined at the end of the nineteenth century by Guesde and his followers.

³ *Le Réveil du Nord*, September 25, 1906, p. 3:1.

as in the *centre* or south; because of the power of the Right the Radicals had organized as a distinct part of advanced Republican opinion at a relatively late date, concomitantly and in competition with the Guesdist Socialist party.¹ Because a large Socialist electoral clientele could not be guaranteed by reformist appeals alone, a second solution also presented itself, that of conversion. If the Guesdists through wide-ranging organization could enlist those newly industrialized workers who had been previously conservative or apolitical, the way to Socialism would be opened. Thus it happened that in the late 1880's and in the 1890's the parallel policies of organizational expansion for conversion and reformist tactics for persuasion were followed by the Guesdist Nord Federation.²

The Guesdist organizational apparatus in the Nord was fabricated piece by piece, under the stimulus of pragmatic pressures. For the sake of efficiency Guesde convinced his followers in the late 1880's to increase centralization and discipline within the Nord Federation and its sections; after 1890 the Nord Federation was a hierarchically structured political organization controlled by the powerful Guesdist sections of Roubaix and Lille.³ Local Guesdists, almost all of whom were former workers and trade union organizers, also agreed with Guesde that the Socialist party should maintain close links with the trade unions.

Guesde's influence was less important than the Flemish and industrial environment of the Nord or the example of the neighboring Belgian Labor party in stimulating other Socialist party activities. Consumer cooperatives, initially opposed by Guesde because his Marxist doctrine told him that any savings would be negated by the iron law of wages, were imported into the Nord by Belgians from Ghent; by the 1890's Socialist cooperatives had been opened in most of the large towns of the Lille arrondissement. The Guesdists attempted to make them true *maisons du peuple* by using them as centers for

¹ Robert Vandenbussche, *Le Radicalisme dans le département du Nord; naissance et essor d'un mouvement politique (1870-1905)* (Diplôme d'études supérieures, Faculté des lettres, Université de Lille, 1964), pp. 23-26. See also Paul-M. Bouju et. al., *Atlas historique de la France contemporaine, 1800-1965* (Paris, 1966), p. 118.

² Conversion and persuasion are not, of course, mutually exclusive. What is meant here is the difference between persuading those who were already on the "left" and therefore willing to listen (i.e., the Radicals) and attracting those who had previously been unwilling or unable to listen and could only be persuaded after they had been enticed into organizational activities below the level of the political party.

³ *Le Cri du travailleur*, February 2, 1889, p. 3:1; Gustave Delory, *Aperçu historique sur la Fédération du Nord, 1876-1920* (Lille, 1921), p. 69.

chorales, working-class theaters, study groups, anti-clerical clubs, concerts and dances.¹ In addition, the Flemish love of Sunday *fêtes*, street parades, singing, and group recreation was manipulated by Socialists in attempts to reach the uncommitted working class.²

As the organization of the POF in the Nord grew into an interlocking chain of activities, local Guesdists became more conscious both of the uniqueness of their organizational endeavors in France and of the similarity of their actions when compared to those of other European Socialists. In 1895 Ghesquière told a Nord Federation congress,

“...our great need is to extend our political and electoral geography, and especially to imitate the English trade union organization, the Belgian cooperative organization, and the German political organization; briefly, to take a bit from all those who are our superiors in labor and socialist organization and try to adapt it to our own spirit and habits...”³

Beyond these comparisons and the belief in the future victory of the Socialist party, however, the Guesdists failed to define explicitly or systematically the theoretical purpose of their organization; only from the occasional statements of Guesdist militants can the motives of the organizational effort be ascertained.⁴ Consistent and penetrating theory was not valued highly in the Nord. Guesde was not an original theorist but only a journalistic popularizer of Marxism; his followers in the Nord were mostly men of working-class origin, many of whom had not finished primary school. A few militants followed the example of Ghesquière, who had left school at an early age to help support his working-class family, but later returned to night school for his primary certificate; rarer still were true Socialist intellectuals.⁵ When Guesdist

¹ For the Socialist cooperatives in the Nord, see ADN, M455/1 and M456/41; *Le Cri de l'ouvrier* (Lille), January 18, 1885, p. 1:1; *Le Travailleur*, January 16, 1887, p. 2:3; Auguste Devaux, *Les Sociétés coopératives de consommation dans le Nord et principalement dans l'arrondissement de Lille* (Lille, 1907), pp. 35-41; Jean Gaumont, *Histoire générale de la coopération en France* (Paris, 1924), II, p. 27; Gustave Marlière, *La Coopération dans le Nord et le Pas-de-Calais* (St. Amand-les-Eaux, 1933), pp. 20-29.

² *Le Cri du travailleur*, March 30, 1890, p. 4:1; Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, pp. 138-39.

³ *Le Travailleur*, March 13, 1895, p. 3:1.

⁴ In this sense the POF in the Nord resembled the German Social Democratic party. See Nettl, “The German Social Democratic Party, 1890-1914 As a Political Model”, p. 74.

⁵ The absence of intellectuals may be attributed to the industrial climate of the Nord and to the attractions of Paris. The only Guesdist intellectual of any fame in the Nord was Bracke (a pseudonym for Alexandre Desrousseaux), a well-known classicist who was born in the St. Sauveur district of Lille. However, Bracke lived in Paris after 1898.

militants spoke of “education” they really meant the disciplined organization of the proletariat: “We are Flemish, we speak the language of our country poorly and we write it even worse; despite the fact that we are unconcerned with theories, we profoundly feel our class ties and we are conscious of the power of education – and of action which comes through education.”¹

No militant of the Nord Federation showed more of this practical and organizational mentality than Gustave Delory, one of the founders of the PO in the Nord and the leader of the Nord Federation until his death in 1925. Delory, born in 1858 at Lille, left school to work in a textile spinning mill, was persecuted for his Socialist and trade union activities and forced to find one job after another until he finally became a tavern-keeper. Between 1896 and 1904 he was mayor of Lille and after 1902 a parliamentary deputy.² Throughout his Socialist career he firmly controlled the powerful Lille section and was secretary of the Nord Federation, although after 1910 Delory shared power within the Nord Federation with Jean Lebas, treasurer of the Federation, Socialist leader at Roubaix, and (after 1912) mayor of that town.³ The auxiliary branches of the Nord Federation were managed by Victor Renard, a former textile worker and Guesdist pioneer in the Aisne department, who directed the local Guesdist textile unions of the Lille arrondissement as well as the Guesdist dominated *Fédération nationale ouvrière de l'industrie textile en France*, and by Henri Samson, a former shoemaker, who became director of the large Socialist cooperative at Lille, and then founded and led a federation of Socialist cooperatives in the Nord.

Born in textile mill towns and originally attracted to Socialism because of their immediate social and economic environment, Guesdist militants such as these men were not well-traveled or politically experienced. Most of the Nord Federation leaders had been born in the Nord, often in the same town in which they later became militants.⁴

¹ Ghesquière in *Le Travailleur*, October 12, 1907, p. 2:1. For this concept of “education” see Ghesquière’s speech to the Epernay Congress of 1899, in Guesde Archives, Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, Amsterdam, 300/7.

² ADN, M39/2, dossier “Delory”; *Le Réveil du Nord*, May 19, 1896, p. 1:1; Delory, *Aperçu historique sur la Fédération du Nord*, passim.

³ Lebas, born in 1878 into a Socialist textile workers’ family at Roubaix, was better educated than most militants, for his parents had sacrificed to send him to an *école primaire supérieure*. See Jean Piat, *Jean Lebas* (Paris, 1964), p. 7.

⁴ In the 1906-1914 period over ninety per cent of the leading militants at Lille and Roubaix were born in the Nord, and over seventy per cent of the leaders at Lille were born in Lille. More detailed statistical information concerning the militants of the Nord Federation may be found in Baker, *A Regional Study of Working-Class Organization in France*, Appendix VIII.

Only a few had been involved in Radical-Socialism before joining the Socialist party; membership in the Nord Federation was their only political experience, Socialism the only political doctrine they had ever considered.

The type of personal devotion which the Guesdists brought to politics created a special kind of group solidarity in the Nord. Each Sunday Ghesquière led a cortege out of Lille to one of the smaller towns of the Lille arrondissement, where after members of the Lille section provided songs, poems, and *tableaux*, he spoke on the benefits of Socialism and attempted to recruit members for the party.¹ Delory's organizational energy was boundless; as secretary he coordinated the various activities of the Nord Federation, managed electoral campaigns, founded and directed the Nord Federation printing press, and traveled constantly throughout the department to encourage and guide local Socialists.

By the end of the 1890's such organizational endeavors had produced significant results. The miner's leader Raoul Evrard was later to testify that it was the Lille Socialist atmosphere – the Socialist choral group and the congenial *maison du peuple* – to which he had come as a young man from the Pas-de-Calais – that greatly influenced his conversion to Socialism.² His experience was probably not unusual, for party membership grew rapidly during these years: in 1897 an official party estimate placed the total membership of the POF in the Nord at over 4,500, with almost 2,000 at Lille and over 500 at Roubaix; by 1901, before the deleterious effects of the Socialist schism, membership had grown to between 8,000 and 10,000.³

The auxiliary services of the Nord Federation also flourished. The Socialist cooperative-*maison du peuple*, although accepted as a goal by many French Socialists in the 1890's, was successful only in the Nord.⁴ By 1901 the Federation of Socialist cooperatives in the Nord joined ten cooperatives with a combined membership of about 14,000. The model Socialist cooperative for the department was the *Union* of Lille, which in 1902 moved into magnificent new headquarters containing a bakery and store, a café, a theater-meeting room which seated 2,000, smaller meeting rooms, a library, and the Socialist press.⁵ Between 1892 and 1911 the *Union* of Lille donated 140,000 francs to

¹ Daniel Ligou, *Histoire du socialisme en France, 1871-1961* (Paris, 1962), p. 205.

² Louis Lévy, *Comment ils sont devenus socialistes* (Paris, 1932), pp. 64-65.

³ Guesde Archives, IISG, 288/8. See also Appendix I.

⁴ Jean Gaumont, *Au confluent de deux grandes idées; Jaurès coopérateur* (Paris, 1959), p. 59.

⁵ See the description by Compère-Morel in *Le Travailleur*, October 12, 1902, p. 2:1; Marlière, *La Coopération dans le Nord et le Pas-de-Calais*, p. 41. The Guesdists at Lille also founded a brewery, the *Avenir*.

the Socialists for organizational work and propaganda; in a typical year, that of 1906, its 6,437 members brought 1,335,224 francs worth of business into the cooperative, which by the end of that year had distributed 30,000 francs to the Socialist party, strike funds, educational projects, and welfare cases.¹

Opponents claimed that the Guesdists encouraged cooperatives only to use them for financial support; however, for the Guesdists they were as much an essential part of a projected alternative "community" which would convert the working class to Socialism. The cooperatives would be the centers of opposition to the reactionary Catholic Church:

"It must be understood that church buildings, where the faithful meet to hear sermons and to receive instructions, have made possible the powerful Catholic organization. If the workers only had a *maison du peuple* in each commune, where they could meet, discuss, and work for their emancipation, capitalist domination would soon be ended."²

In addition, the Guesdists feared that the failure to organize the working class into cooperatives, trade unions, and specialized cultural organizations would mean that the working class would be organized by others to be used against the Socialists.³ For Delory, who was a politician above all, the political struggle would be successful only when the values and attitudes which the bourgeoisie had imposed upon the working class had been broken: "...it is exactly because we have ascertained that egoism is highly developed in the individual that it is necessary to accustom those who join our organizations to have a little more of the spirit of solidarity."⁴ Therefore Delory and his cohorts viewed Socialist cooperatives as providing a "first course in Socialism", a "primary school" where workers, not yet familiar with organization and ignorant of Socialist doctrine, would be introduced into the Socialist world.⁵

¹ Devaux, *Les Sociétés coopératives de consommation*, pp. 134, 183; Marlière, *La Coopération dans le Nord et le Pas-de-Calais*, p. 34.

² Speech given by the director of the Socialist cooperative of Houplines, quoted in *Bulletin mensuel de la Fédération des coopératives de la région du Nord* (Lille), February, 1906, p. 8:2.

³ Statement by the Roubaissian delegation, in *Parti ouvrier français, Fédération du Nord, Compte-rendu du XXVIII^e congrès régional tenu à Caudry le 5 août 1900* (Lille, 1900), p. 23.

⁴ *Bulletin mensuel de la Fédération des coopératives*, December, 1909, p. 1:1.

⁵ See letter of Delory in *Premier congrès national et international de la coopération socialiste tenu à Paris les 7, 8, 9, et 10 juillet 1900* (Paris, 1900), pp. 86-87, and the speech of Bracke in *Parti Socialiste (S.F.I.O.), 7^e congrès national tenu à Paris les 15 et 16 juillet 1910, compte-rendu sténographique* (Paris, n.d.), p. 170.

In the same manner Guesdists used trade unions as more advanced schools of Socialism, an organizational technique which was rare in France and never appreciated by other French labor and Socialist leaders. In the Nord the Guesdists made strenuous efforts to control the trade union movement, and they were particularly successful in keeping *bourses du travail* from playing their normal role as centers for anarcho-syndicalism. In the Lille arrondissement they organized powerful (by French standards) textile trade unions; that at Roubaix, the model for the region, by 1908 had over 10,000 members, supported two permanent secretaries, two librarians, and a squad of eighty collectors who visited members' homes each Sunday in search of dues.¹

The Guesdists believed that even successful trade unions could not overthrow the state:

"...although it is one of the necessary forms of the class struggle, trade unionism...is practiced within the limits of the capitalist system. Consequently, it is *and can only be reformist*, in the good sense of the word, even when it is accompanied by violence and force." (Italics in original)²

Reformist trade unionism would contribute to the political strength of the revolutionary Socialist party, however, since trade unionists would remain revolutionary because they would become more conscious of their rights when they were organized.³ They would thus support the Socialist party and in addition provide the organizational force to break a bourgeois counter-revolution:

"The transformation of society will result not...from ballots alone, not from trade union action alone. The two ought to work together, because if the capitalist bourgeoisie, its livelihood threatened, wishes to attempt a *coup de force*, it will find the formidably organized workers against it."⁴

But by themselves trade unions were powerless to effect revolutionary change. In 1906, on the eve of an anarcho-syndicalist sponsored general strike boycotted by the Guesdist textile unions, Victor Renard wrote,

¹ L'Ouvrier textile (Lille), January 1, 1908, p. 1:1 and Le Travailleur, March 14, 1908, p. 2:1.

² Henri Ghesquière in Parti socialiste (S.F.I.O.), Fédération du Nord, Comptendu officiel du IIe congrès départemental tenu à Somain, le 30 septembre 1906 (Lille, 1906), p. 39.

³ Ghesquière in Le Travailleur, February 10, 1906, p. 1:3.

⁴ From Delory's speech in the Pas-de-Calais, printed in L'Egalité, January 23, 1906, p. 1:1; see also L'Egalité, January 17, 1906, p. 3:1.

“Do not be mistaken, we are revolutionaries... But we desire that a revolutionary movement produce serious results. If the confederation [CGT] is going to limit itself to marches in the streets and to confrontations with the army, I think that more harm than good will come from it.”¹

At the same time Ghesquière made it clear that the Guesdists believed elections to be of more importance:

“Between the general strike [of]... May 1, and the gesture that the proletariat could make only five days afterward, on May 6, to conquer political power without suffering loss of work, sacrificing blood, or even shedding a tear, hesitation is not possible. The workers will act: they will make the revolution, not with guns, but with ballots.”²

The Guesdists believed that the conversion of the workers into politically conscious voters would require far-reaching organization. With a certain naïveté they placed their faith in the ability of their party to effect beneficial social change. Strong and disciplined party organization would therefore hasten the revolution and in addition would defend it against reactionary forces when once achieved. This party of the working class stood against bourgeois society:

“We do not know anything about metaphysics, but we know about proletarian misery and the class struggle, which is sufficient for us. Our program – what we wish, what we will do – is to sweep away the Republic of bosses and their stooges. Be egotists, class egotists, it is the only conceivable altruism.”³

For outsiders these words reflected an intolerable sectarianism, but such criticism did not deter the Guesdists: “It is our love of the party which has made our ‘sectarianism’”, a writer in the Guesdist weekly *Travailleur* wrote in 1901, “and we will never regret it.”⁴

III

During the 1890’s the Nord Federation attracted many new voters: between the legislative elections of 1893 and those of 1898 Socialist

¹ *Le Réveil du Nord*, April 14, 1906, p. 2:1.

² *Le Travailleur*, April 28, 1906, p. 1:2.

³ From a speech by Guesde at Roubaix, printed in *Le Réveil du Nord*, September 17, 1901, p. 2:4.

⁴ *Le Travailleur*, July 14, 1901, p. 3:1.

votes in the Nord grew from 44,900 to 82,300. But while extensive Guesdist organization contributed to this increase by converting workers to the Socialist cause, party organization and auxiliary Socialist services do not wholly explain the causes of electoral growth. The Guesdists had also been using reformist persuasion to identify the Socialist party with republican progress and to attract left-wing voters who remained outside of the party organization. Left-wing members of the Radical-Socialist party in the Nord – led by Edouard Delesalle, a businessman-editor of the successful daily newspaper the *Réveil du Nord*, a leading Freemason, and a reformist friend of labor – became Independent Socialists and were then welcomed into the POF. By 1894 the Guesdists accentuated their reformism and cooperation with bourgeois reformers by merging their small weekly newspaper with the *Réveil du Nord* and making Delesalle one of the influential policy makers within the Nord Federation. This kind of party expansion, coupled with Radical-Socialist alliances after the first ballot, insured Guesdist victories in the municipal elections at Roubaix in 1892 and at Lille in 1896, and contributed to the election of Guesde at Roubaix in 1893.

The working-class Guesdists of the Nord believed that they were skillfully manipulating the bourgeois reformers and their electoral following; in Guesdist eyes reformism and shrewd electoral alliances advanced the cause of collectivism and a peaceful revolution.¹ However, the local representatives of advanced republicanism who had adopted Socialism, led by more educated men like Delesalle, held (as might be expected) completely different ideas: in their view the crude Guesdists and their followers were to be manipulated for true reformist purposes while their revolutionary faith was slowly undermined.² Delesalle openly linked reformism with loose organization; he scarcely hid his desire to replace “Socialist discipline” by a higher “Republican discipline”, to win freedom for local Socialist sections, and to create a Socialist party which would be a party “...for all temperaments”, which would provide a place “...for free discussion where blind faith and submission would be banished, a place of flexible tactics...”³

Delesalle, like Delory, was willing to broaden the base of the Socialist movement to include men with whom he disagreed, to make his particular type of Socialism successful. But each man remained sus-

¹ See speeches of Delory printed in *Le Réveil du Nord*, June 2, 1896, p. 2:3, July 14, 1896, p. 2:6, and October 20, 1897, p. 1:6. See also Paul Lafargue to Engels, February 23, 1893, and Laura Lafargue to Engels, March 6, 1893, Correspondance, III, pp. 259, 265-66.

² Vandenbussche, *Le Radicalisme dans le département du Nord*, pp. 118-19.

³ *Le Réveil du Nord*, May 20, 1900, p. 1:1, August 8, 1903, p. 3:4, May 25, 1905, p. 1:3, and October 24, 1905, p. 2:4.

picious of the other, for good reasons. Beyond personal rivalries and minor issues which inevitably complicate local politics, two fundamentally different types of political organization confronted each other in the Nord. The original Guesdist organization of the PO in the Nord was designed, in the view of men like Delory, to create a new political force and a new kind of disciplined working-class solidarity; other French Socialist parties which emerged in the early years of the Third Republic and which influenced men like Delesalle were for the most part not to be based on new political forces but were to be the continuation of French Radicalism.¹ In the Nord Socialism as a new political force and Socialism as the natural continuation of republicanism were combined in the 1890's, but the union was unstable; by the end of the decade Delesalle and his reformist followers had antagonized the working-class Guesdist militants, encouraged the Lille section to allow a non-Socialist printer to assume leadership of that city's trade union federation, and disturbed the disciplined unity of the Nord Federation, particularly in those sections far from the Lille arrondissement where the Guesdist combination of Marxism and extensive organization were less popular. When the elections of 1898 failed to present the Socialists with an overwhelming departmental success, the Guesdist reformist alliance was threatened.² Without quick success the Guesdists were less willing to jeopardize their organization and discipline; on their part the reformists were angered when working-class Guesdists refused to participate in the crucial "republican" crusade arising out of the Dreyfus case.³

The Guesdist leadership of the Nord Federation originally tried to organize a Socialist party which would be a far-reaching, strongly disciplined, and self-conscious political force isolated from society, and to defeat moderate Socialists who hoped to make the Socialist party an electorally active but organizationally quiescent force to penetrate and influence the Republic.⁴ The resulting antagonism between re-

¹ "L'Évolution de la gauche s'opérait moins par addition que par substitutions, fait classique de toute l'histoire politique française qui rend le mouvement plus apparent que réel: simulacres de changement; masques de la stabilité." Quoted from Michelle Perrot, "Les Socialistes français et les problèmes du pouvoir, 1871-1914", in: Annie Kreigel and Michelle Perrot, *Le Socialisme français et le pouvoir* (Paris, 1966), p. 87.

² Although Socialist votes increased, Guesde was defeated at Roubaix and no POF deputy was elected from the Nord.

³ The pro-Dreyfus position in the Nord was led by Delesalle and supported by moderate Socialists rather than by the Guesdist leadership. See *Le Réveil du Nord*, January 21, 1898, p. 1:3 and February 16, 1898, p. 1:3.

⁴ For an identification of Socialist positions on the basis of attitudes toward "isolation from" or "penetration of" existing society see Nettl, "The German Social Democratic Party, 1890-1914 As a Political Model", *passim*.

formist-participationists and Guesdist-isolationists influenced Socialist attitudes toward the Dreyfus Affair, the Millerand controversy, the Socialist schism, the unification of all Socialists in the SFIO and the ultimate orientation of the unified Socialist party; in each instance the behavior of the Guesdists was as much determined by organizational anxieties as by theoretical beliefs. Guesdists of the Nord soon found themselves battling the reformists on three geographical fronts: within the various Socialist sections of the Nord, between sections of the Nord Federation, and between the Nord and the rest of France. At first the Guesdists were most suspicious of local men like Delesalle, but by the 1900's their attention was turned toward one Frenchman who represented the gravest threat to that special Socialist movement at least partially constructed by the Guesdist working-class militants of the Lille arrondissement: that man was Jean Jaurès.

In the closing months of 1903 Jean Jaurès visited Armentières, where a wildcat textile strike had erupted and spread to neighboring cities in the Lille arrondissement. Jaurès's admirers have seen this visit as one more proof of Jaurès's sympathy for the working class and his efforts on their behalf.¹ Indeed, Jaurès, aided by Delesalle's *Réveil du Nord* (after the Millerand crisis again independent of the Nord Federation) did support the strike and criticize those who opposed it. But in the context of Guesdist working-class action in the Nord, this turned out to be a curious kind of sympathy. The Guesdist textile unions had been carefully preparing for an arrondissement-wide strike of textile workers to be held the following April and premature action on the part of the workers would ruin any chance of success the larger strike might have had.² The Guesdists therefore opposed the wildcat strike, which allowed Jaurès to accuse them of being working-class enemies and to persuade the Socialist mayor of Armentières to break with the Nord Federation and to join a rival Socialist federation which had been established by the reformists. The Guesdists believed that under the guise of aiding the workers Jaurès actually came into the Nord as the national party leader of anti-Guesdist Socialists, intent on crushing the Guesdists in their own stronghold. It was not the first time that Jaurès came into the Nord in such circumstances, nor was it to be the last.³

¹ Goldberg, *The Life of Jean Jaurès*, pp. 314-16.

² For the textile strikes of 1903 and 1904 see *Le Réveil du Nord*, October 24, 1903, p. 1:3, October 26, 1903, p. 3:1, and November 28, 1903, p. 2:5; *Le Travailleur*, October 15, 1903, p. 1:1 and October 18, 1903, p. 2:1; *L'Ouvrier textile*, November, 1903, p. 1:3; Emile Levasseur, *Salariat et salaires* (Paris, 1909), pp. 284-85; Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, p. 569.

³ Jaurès's official position during the Socialist schism was that Socialist unity would be more easily achieved when the prejudices created by Guesdist propa-

Jaurès was the most attractive of French Socialist reformists and like Delesalle he coupled his reformism with a distaste for party organization.¹ His ideal Socialist party was one that was loosely disciplined, informal, open to bourgeois of good intentions, and unconcerned with the heterogeneous "Socialist" beliefs of its members; in addition, he believed in the independent development of supposedly non-political working-class organizations such as cooperatives, trade unions, and anti-clerical groups.

It might have been possible for the Guesdists to counter Jaurès by presenting their ideas concerning Socialist organization in an attractive form, stressing the virtues of solidarity, education, and well-being of the working class, pointing out the need for conversion and community, publicizing the political benefits of auxiliary Socialist services. This did not happen. To outsiders "Guesdism" remained a method of manipulating the workers for the Guesdists' selfish political gains. Even Guesde, the usual but not necessarily imaginative spokesman for his provincial followers, by 1905 was an aging and sick man, often absent from the Socialist scene for long periods of time. The Guesdists in the Nord were left in the frustrating position of having organized large sections, Socialist cooperatives, and allied trade unions which no one would properly defend, while the brilliant Jaurès used his considerable talents to belittle their accomplishments.

This threat from the outside was very real. After 1905 the Guesdists witnessed the rejection of their most cherished organizational ideals at the hands of an SFIO majority manipulated by Jaurès, a defeat which was all the more irritating because it was the Guesdists who had emerged victorious at the Amsterdam International Socialist congress of 1904 and forced their principles upon the newly formed SFIO. Yet almost immediately Jaurès took over. In 1906 restrictions against parliamentarians on the national council of the party effectively barred Delory, Guesde, and Ghesquière from participating in high level party discussions.² In 1907 the Guesdists criticized the new leadership for tolerating

ganda in the Nord were dissipated. See *Le Réveil du Nord*, October 8, 1900, p. 1:1. Jaurès led Independent Socialist speakers into the Nord in 1900 and again in 1903, and the possible effectiveness of these sorties frightened the Guesdists. See Cartegnies to Delory, March 20, 1903, Guesde Archives, IISG, 348/6.

¹ Jaurès emphasized shrewd political alliances with enlightened bourgeois parties over strong discipline as the means to attain Socialist progress. See *Le Réveil du Nord*, May 20, 1900, p. 1:1.

² Applied uniformly, this ruling was in practice more crippling to the followers of Guesde than to those of Jaurès, because of the weakness of Guesdism at Paris. See *Parti socialiste (S.F.I.O.)*, 3e congrès national tenu à Limoges les 1er, 2, 3, et 4 novembre 1906, *compte-rendu analytique* (Paris, n.d.), pp. 74-81; *Le Réveil du Nord*, July 21, 1906, p. 3:3.

reformist Socialist deputies from the Nord who ignored party discipline.¹ In 1909, when the leftist Gustave Hervé was touring the Nord and denouncing the Guesdist leadership of the Nord Federation, the Guesdists were again disgusted by the national council's refusal to take disciplinary action.² During these years Jaurès's newspaper *L'Humanité*, the central organ of the SFIO, publicized views which in Guesdist eyes encouraged reformists within the party to assert their doctrinal and organizational independence and attack Guesdist organizational principles.³ What was even more serious for the Guesdists were the direct attacks by the SFIO majority upon Guesdist relations with other working-class organizations, relations which formed the warp and woof of Guesdist organization.

Guesdist assertions that labor agitation for reforms would be effective only if the trade unions closely coordinated their efforts with the Socialist political party, that trade unions were to train potential Socialist recruits, and that unions by themselves could not sustain revolutionary action were immediately attacked by the majority of the newly formed SFIO. Influenced by the dominant anarcho-syndicalist mood of the CGT, Jaurès agreed that the labor movement was itself a revolutionary force and that the CGT should remain completely separate from all political parties; he accepted the CGT as the natural ally of the Socialist party. The SFIO, over the protests of the Guesdists, followed his lead and officially accepted the separation of the two movements.⁴

Four years later the Jaurès-oriented SFIO accomplished for the cooperative movement what it had previously done for the trade union movement, by removing it from the scope of official Socialist party activity. For Jaurès, cooperation *was* Socialism and its autonomous development would further the Socialist cause.⁵ At the SFIO congress of 1910 Guesde answered that cooperation was not necessarily socialist but could be used for any political purpose, and he pointed to Belgium as a country in which all political parties sponsored cooperatives and in which Socialists used them properly by treating them as a means

¹ *Le Travailleur*, November 9, 1907, p. 1:2.

² *L'Humanité* (Paris), February 7, 1910, p. 1:1.

³ See the debate over *L'Humanité* at the SFIO congress of 1907 in *Parti socialiste (S.F.I.O.), 4e congrès national tenu à Nancy les 11, 12, 13, et 14 août 1907, compte-rendu sténographique* (Paris, n.d.), pp. 91-113.

⁴ *Parti socialiste, 3e congrès national, Limoges, 1906*, pp. 92, 186.

⁵ By 1910 Jaurès had been converted to the idea of a politically neutral cooperative movement, as espoused in France by Charles Gide and his followers. See Gaumont, *Au confluent de deux grandes idées; Jaurès coopérateur*, p. 99.

rather than as an end. Supporting Guesdist cooperatives both for the financial aid which they gave the party and for the role they played as centers of working-class activity, Guesde painted an emotional picture of the general meetings of the Socialist cooperative at Lille, attended by local men, women, and children: "They come not only to draw upon the surplus profits, they come to learn the use which will be made of that part of the surplus which they have relinquished to the party, to the collectivist future, to the general emancipation of humanity." The SFIO majority would have none of this fluffy idealism; the Guesdists were humiliated once again.¹

Why did the Guesdists stay in the SFIO when their organizational ideals were attacked by their fellow Socialists? In the early years of unity some wanted to reopen the Socialist schism: Charles Verecque, a typographer turned journalist and one of Guesde's most faithful followers at Lille suggested drastic action: "When will we make the necessary amputation to get rid of the outsiders who are anarchists, confusionists, or simply Radicals...? It is time... to regain our freedom of action..."² But in 1906 the leaders of the Nord Federation agreed with Guesde that correct tactics necessitated remaining in the SFIO and attempting to change the Guesdist minority position to a majority position.³ Even after this possibility became less and less likely, Delory and his followers increasingly realized the need to practice on the national level what they preached to non-Guesdists within the Guesdist-oriented Nord Federation: that to be successful the workers must present a united front to the bourgeoisie, and that any minority must "...accept gracefully the decisions which have been made and will not indulge itself, under the pretext of personal friendship or freedom, the malicious pleasure of allying with its enemies against its friends."⁴ In the decade before World War I the Guesdists of the Nord had been forced to recognize their minority position within the French Socialist and working-class movement. How were they to protect their own organization in the Nord department, threatened not only from the outside, but from inside the department itself? The answer to this question will provide a more complete understanding of Guesdist psychology and Guesdist behavior.

¹ Parti socialiste, 7e congrès national, Paris, 1910, p. 128.

² Charles Verecque to Guesde, November 9, 1906, Guesde Archives, IISG, 387/2.

³ Parti socialiste, 3e congrès national, Limoges, 1906, p. 74, 81; *Le Réveil du Nord*, July 21, 1906, p. 3:3. See also the letter of the Roubaisian Guesdist Henri Lefebvre to Guesde, November 5, 1906, Guesde Archives, IISG, 387/1.

⁴ Delory in *Le Travailleur*, October 12, 1907, p. 2:1.

IV

By French standards the Nord Federation was a successful political organization, which had attracted a higher percentage of the population in its department to Socialism than any other departmental federation in France.¹ In the 1914 legislative elections Socialists in the Nord captured 29.1 per cent of the vote and elected ten of twenty-three departmental deputies; by that date the Federation contained 12,400 members, 17 per cent of the total membership of the SFIO. In spite of this strength, the Guesdists were not secure. As Delory recognized, not all of the members of the Nord Federation agreed with the Guesdist leadership. Although followers of Guesde were scattered throughout the department, Jaurès also influenced many militants in working-class centers of the Nord such as Dunkerque, Maubeuge, Caudry, and some cities of the mining basin. The solid Guesdist sections of the Nord were limited to the original strongholds of Lille, Roubaix, and the smaller cities of the Lille arrondissement. The Guesdists never lost control of the Nord Federation, but they were forced to contend with a growing anti-Guesdist minority in the Nord.²

Moreover, between 1900 and 1914 changing membership within the Nord Federation indicated that the earliest Guesdist sections had lost their vitality. The sections of Lille and Roubaix, which in 1897 enrolled over half of the membership of the entire Nord Federation, in 1905 controlled only forty per cent of the Federation membership, in 1911 twenty-six per cent, and in 1913 twenty-four per cent. While the total membership of the Federation expanded rapidly during these years, doubling between 1905 and 1913, the membership of the Lille section declined in relative strength and actually lost membership between 1911 and 1913. Although the majority of Socialist party members remained in the Lille arrondissement, membership grew most rapidly in the four arrondissements south of Lille, where moderate and non-Guesdist Socialist sentiments were more prevalent.³

Election statistics confirmed what membership patterns had intimated: that while the Socialist percentage of the total departmental vote increased in election after election, in the textile towns of the Lille arrondissement the Socialist percentage of the total vote remained

¹ Parti socialiste (S.F.I.O.), 11e congrès national tenu à Amiens les 25, 26, 27, et 28 janvier 1914, compte-rendu sténographique (Paris, n.d.), p. 23.

² In 1911, after a debate over Jaurès's editorship of *L'Humanité*, a large minority of 147 mandated delegates (40 per cent) opposed a resolution urging the replacement of Jaurès by an editorial board. See Parti socialiste (S.F.I.O.), *Fédération du Nord, Compte-rendu officiel du VIIe congrès départemental tenu à Valenciennes, le 2 avril 1911* (Lille, 1911), pp. 48-49.

³ See Appendix I.

remarkably stable. In certain towns such as Roubaix where the Guesdists had attracted an early following, this stability rewarded the Socialists. However, at Lille and at Armentières the Socialists were unable to capture a majority of the working-class votes or to win municipal elections after 1904.¹ At Lille, the largest city in the department, the center of departmental political activity, and the site of the headquarters of the Nord Federation, the failure of the Socialist party to become the party of the majority of the workers was disappointing; it was also surprising for the Guesdists, since at Lille the Socialist section contained the most disciplined and devoted militants in the entire Federation. On the other hand, voting trends were encouraging in the mining and metallurgy regions south of Lille, where the Socialist party regularly increased its share of the poll. And it was precisely in these non-textile cantons that Socialism had slid into more established pre-Socialist left-wing voting patterns and thus could develop without the elaborate organization and Socialist services which characterized the Guesdism of the Lille arrondissement.

If membership and voting patterns were ominous portents for Guesdism, the ambiguous functioning of the auxiliary services which supported Guesdist political organization was even more menacing. The Guesdist cooperatives, for instance, did not fulfill the promise of the 1890's or play their desired roles as the initial organizers and educators of the working class. Plagued by political quarrels and inefficient management, Guesdist cooperatives dropped behind their non-Socialist and anti-Socialist rivals.² Poor decisions, such as the building of imposing and expensive *maisons du peuple* in which to house cooperatives or the establishment of a Socialist flour mill which failed due to lack of expertise, sapped their strength.³ Socialist cooperatives in the Nord had attracted a large number of loyal member families and had contributed significant amounts of money to the Nord Federation, but by 1910 further expansion or the attainment of original Guesdist cooperative goals were increasingly difficult to achieve.

The Guesdists of the Nord also failed to propagate their trade union ideals far beyond the Lille arrondissement, for elsewhere in the department either the apolitical reformism of the dockers' and miners' unions or the apolitical revolutionism of the CGT-oriented metal and building

¹ Delory and Ghesquière were both elected as deputies from Lille after 1906 (Delory had also been elected in 1902) but only with the aid of suburban votes and Radical-Socialist support on the second ballot. See Appendix II for electoral results.

² See Appendix III.

³ Bulletin mensuel de la Fédération des coopératives, August, 1909, p. 2:2; Marlière, *La Coopération dans le Nord et le Pas-de-Calais*, p. 41.

trades' unions halted Guesdist progress. In the cities of the Lille arrondissement the Guesdists continued to maintain tight control of the textile unions and partial control over unions in other trades.

Even with their own textile unions the Guesdists experienced only partial success. If the Guesdist trade unions were to function as true schools for Socialism and attain their legitimate reformist ends, Guesdists urged the organization of all of the workers – regardless of political beliefs – into well-disciplined and responsible trade unions which would effectively press for collective contracts with employers.¹ This type of large-scale action was attempted at Lille in 1900 and 1904, without success. In 1909 the powerful Socialist weavers' union at Lille formed alliances with non-Socialist textile workers' unions and with other weavers of the arrondissement and demanded that the Lille textile manufacturers give a collective wage scale. When negotiations failed, the workers waged a ten-week strike which halted work in twenty-eight factories and involved between 3,700 and 5,000 workers. Despite the discipline and tenacity shown by labor, the employers refused to recognize the existence of the union, much less the demands of the workers. The capitulation of the mill workers injured Guesdist prestige, discredited faith in responsible unionism, and confused the Guesdists themselves.²

After 1905 Guesdist organization in the Nord did not expand as rapidly or function as smoothly as the Guesdists had originally expected; such difficulties were closely related to Guesdist inability to manipulate local public opinion through a successful daily newspaper.³ Politically interested workers read the *Réveil du Nord*, edited by the independent leftist Edouard Delesalle, a man of outspoken anti-Guesdist convictions; the Nord Federation broke with the *Réveil du Nord* during the Millerand crisis and Guesdists considered its mild reformism un-Socialistic. Yet, as militants like Ghesquière pointed out in despair, even the increasingly popular *Réveil du Nord* (which boosted

¹ See the statement by the Lille textile leader Richard Collen in *Le Travailleur*, March 17, 1908, p. 2:1.

² ADN, M626/31; *L'Ouvrier textile*, October 1, 1909, p. 2:1; *Le Travailleur*, October 30, 1909, p. 2:4 and December 25, 1909, p. 2:3.

³ In the early years the Guesdists had placed great emphasis on oral communication and direct contact between the Socialist militant and the worker through songs, tavern talks, meetings, festivals, and parades. After 1900, however, the Guesdists slowly realized that these means were not sufficient to attract members to the Socialist party, since speeches were soon forgotten and many potential Socialists did not frequent Socialist taverns or go to meetings where speeches could be heard. The party press and electoral circulars were therefore given more prominence in the Socialist propaganda scheme. See *Fédération du Nord, Congrès départemental du 27 septembre 1914, rapport de la commission administrative de la Fédération*, Guesde Archives, IISG, 456/16.

its circulation from 25,000 to 50,000 in the pre-war years) was outsold at least four to one by the most successful "reactionary" Lille newspapers.¹ To reach the working class the Guesdists needed a successful daily; but every attempt at large circulation journalism was frustrated by dull writing, poor editing, and inadequate financial support. The weekly tabloid of the Nord Federation constantly lost money and failed to interest Socialists, much less any unaffiliated workers.² Worse still, the Guesdists could not even give newspapers away to their cooperative and trade union followers.³ In 1911 a desperate attempt to sell a daily regional version of *L'Humanité* ended in failure.⁴ By that date the dismal journalistic record of the Nord Federation had stimulated local sections to create their own weeklies, resulting in a proliferation of tawdry and low level party newspapers which seriously undermined departmental Socialist unity and ended any hopes of reaching the uncommitted workers through journalism.

Between 1905 and 1910 the Guesdists of the Nord became conscious of their organizational dilemmas and admitted to themselves that the progress of their organization had not been sustained. Guesde explained the failure of the Socialists to sweep the 1906 elections by criticizing the workers: "Ah! it is not universal suffrage itself which is bankrupt, but only the working class which has caused that bankruptcy."⁵ By 1909 the Guesdists were more pessimistic about working class organization; an editorial writer (probably Charles Verecque) in the Nord Federation weekly newspaper, commenting on organizational difficulties, wrote that the workers

"...remain deaf to our appeals, and the majority of the working class, except during periods of great agitation, by their inertia oppose the just claims that we formulate in its [the working class's] favor...[the workers have been]...enervated by the rottenness of the bourgeoisie, their brains deformed and themselves corrupted at all levels; it would require a great effort of will to affect this dead weight, to attempt to set in motion this working-class machine, the wheels of which no longer wish to turn."⁶

¹ Parti socialiste de France, Fédération du Nord, Compte-rendu du XXXIIIe congrès régional tenu à Lille, le 3 juillet 1904 (Lille, 1904), pp. 25-28.

² Parti socialiste (S.F.I.O.), Fédération du Nord, Compte-rendu du IXe congrès départemental tenu à Lille, le 29 septembre 1912 (Lille, 1912), p. 33.

³ See Bulletin mensuel de la Fédération des coopératives, August, 1907, p. 2:3.

⁴ A single copy of this regional edition, dated September 17, 1911, may be found in the Archives nationales (Paris) (hereafter referred to as AN), F⁷ 13609, 49.

⁵ *L'Egalité*, March 6, 1906, p. 3:2.

⁶ *Le Travailleur*, October 30, 1909, p. 1:1.

In 1912, after the Socialists at Lille were again defeated in municipal elections, Charles St. Venant, a longtime Guesdist militant and Lille trade union leader, urged a more complete coordination of the party, the trade unions, and the cooperatives, suggesting in addition that street demonstrations be encouraged "... to make the timid emerge from their torpor". St. Venant concluded,

"We must recognize that our working-class organizations have for some years lacked that spontaneity which dominated them twenty years ago and that young Socialists and trade unionists have for ten years undergone the influence of changing methods which, far from leading them along the revolutionary path, have concentrated their attention on individualism rather than on the means to attain social victory."¹

To explain the organizational sluggishness into which they had fallen, the Guesdists often pointed out that their success had stimulated a counter-attack on the part of anti-Socialists, and that in the Catholic and reactionary Nord competition for the allegiance of the worker was fierce. Catholic organizers, particularly strong in Tourcoing and Armentières, made great efforts to retain religiously faithful workers in Catholic clubs and trade unions.² Other anti-Socialists, sometimes working closely with the Catholics, established cooperatives and mutual aid societies which competed for the allegiance of the workers. The success of such competition may be gauged from the remarks of Victor Renard, commenting on 1908 elections in which more members of mutual aid societies had voted for mutual aid commissions in the department than regular voters had voted in the cantonal elections of that year:

"Now, if one takes into consideration that each mutualist represents a voter, one can judge the number of proletarians who avoid the political and economic action of this proletariat in its battle against the capitalist class... This explains on the one hand the surprising number of votes that the enemies of Socialism obtain at municipal, departmental, and general elections, since these mutual aid societies are carefully controlled by the reactionaries... on the other hand, these facts indicate the reason why our trade union membership is so weak and why progress is so difficult."³

¹ *Ibid.*, August 24, 1912, p. 1:1.

² Y. M. Hilaire, "Les Ouvriers du Nord devant l'église catholique (XIXe et XXe siècles)", in: *Le Mouvement social*, LVII (1966), p. 193 and Henri Rollet, *L'Action sociale des Catholiques en France (1871-1914)* (Paris, 1958), II, pp. 223-26.

³ *L'Ouvrier textile*, February 1, 1908, p. 1:1.

Such "facts" did not wholly reveal why progress had been so difficult, but Renard and his fellow Guesdists could not discover better reasons than to blame labor and Socialist rivals, anti-Socialist competition, or temporary economic crises for their troubles.¹ Nevertheless, something was fundamentally wrong, as the director of the Guesdist cooperative at Roubaix candidly recognized. "We search in vain", he wrote, "for the reasons why the Socialist and unionized workers remain indifferent to Socialist cooperatives."² Although his problem was specific, his anguish accurately characterizes the mood of pre-War Guesdist organizers.

What the Guesdists could not understand was that a dual process of economic change and political integration was undercutting the social basis of Guesdist growth in the Nord. In the early years of the Third Republic the rapid growth of the textile industry and the textile mill towns had provided both the social conditions and the recruits for the successful implantation of Guesdism. But by the turn of the century the Nord was changing, as E. A. Wrigley has pointed out:

"In 1893 the production of steel in Nord was 117,000 tons; in 1901 239,000 tons; and in 1913 849,000 tons. The tone of the area was changing; textiles were being supplemented by heavy industry. In the textile *cantons* of Lille, Roubaix and Tourcoing population growth fell away sharply in these twenty years, whereas in the heavy industrial *cantons* of Valenciennes, Avesnes and Douai growth was marked. Between 1891 and 1906 the population of all the Lille textile *cantons* increased by only 12 percent, while that of a group of seven iron and steel manufacturing *cantons* at Maubeuge, Denain, Valenciennes and Douai grew by 22 per cent."³

While the total working population of the Nord continued to grow after 1896, the number of workers in the textile industry actually declined. Roubaix reached its maximum population in 1896, Armentières in 1900; at Lille the population declined between 1896 and 1906.⁴ Without the immigration of large numbers of new workers to

¹ See statement of Delory in Parti socialiste (S.F.I.O.), Fédération du Nord, Compte-rendu officiel du VIII^{me} congrès départemental tenu à Lille, le 4 février 1912 (Lille, 1912), p. 5.

² Bulletin mensuel de la Fédération des coopératives, December, 1909, p. 4:1. Wrigley, *Industrial Growth and Population Change*, p. 74.

⁴ Belgians, who had played a pioneering role in the organization of Socialism in the Lille arrondissement, by the 1890's no longer immigrated to France but rather settled on the Belgian side of the border, where the cost of living was lower and from where it was possible to commute daily to work in the French textile factories. See F. Lentacker, "Les Frontaliers belges travaillant en France: caractères et fluctuations d'un courant de main d'œuvre", in: *Revue du Nord*, XXXII (1950), pp. 48-51.

the cities of the Lille arrondissement, the Guesdist *maisons du peuple*, cooperatives, and trade unions lost an important source of new recruits. Those resident workers of the Lille arrondissement, having achieved a pitiful amount of social and economic improvement, clung to what they had obtained, hoped for more immediate improvement, and often turned a deaf ear to Socialist appeals of solidarity and greater (but more distant) social gains. The textile worker in particular became firmly attached to his home and his tavern, developed conservative daily habits, and displayed a conspicuous lack of concern for national or international issues.¹

There where the Guesdists had organized early and well, the workers' conservatism worked in favor of the Socialist party, providing a loyal following through the most difficult of times. The conversion to Socialism of younger men became more and more difficult. They might vote for the Socialist party as their fathers had done or because they believed it was a better alternative to other political parties, but they were increasingly reluctant to sacrifice their time, money, and careers to Socialist political action. The Guesdist ideal demanded commitment, and even among convinced Socialists this commodity was in short supply and becoming more scarce as the twentieth century progressed.

No doubt the organization of the workers had always been difficult; for the Guesdists it became more difficult. In the 1890's the Guesdists were optimistic about the future of an extensive Socialist organization in the Nord: the growing textile industry furnished large numbers of workers apparently ready for recruitment, the Socialist cooperative movement was attracting enthusiastic members, the Socialist trade unions were expanding, there was a successful Socialist daily newspaper, and the number of devoted militants and Socialist voters was growing rapidly. By 1910 one could only be pessimistic: few uncommitted workers appeared receptive to Socialist propaganda, the Guesdist cooperative and trade union movement had been unsuccessful in recruiting the majority of the working class, and the ideal of a successful daily newspaper had been abandoned. Despite ambitious campaign promises, the Guesdists had been unable to effect significant changes in the municipalities they controlled;² the Socialist seizure of power through elections was still a dream for the distant future.

¹ On the mentality of textile workers, see ADN, M599/1, police report Armentières, January 30, 1906; Pierre Belleville, *Une Nouvelle classe ouvrière* (Paris, 1963), p. 110; Maurice Petitcollet, *Les syndicats ouvriers de l'industrie textile dans l'arrondissement de Lille* (Lille, 1907), pp. 188-89.

² At both Lille (1896-1904) and Roubaix (1892-1902, 1912-14) the Socialists were limited by financial considerations and by the hostility of the central government. See ADN, M151/21, police report Lille, November 29, 1898; Ville

Living in undynamic textile towns the Guesdists finally reflected their environment instead of changing it. In the 1880's and 1890's, animated by great devotion and faith, they had spread Socialist doctrine in the face of bitter hostility. Blacklisted in the factories, they often sought refuge within their own Socialist organization, either as employees in Socialist municipalities, Socialist cooperatives or trade unions, or as tavernkeepers in taverns which were used as local Socialist meeting halls. Having involved themselves so intimately and so personally in their own political organization, they monopolized the most powerful positions within that organization over the course of a quarter century. In 1910 Delory was fifty-two, Ghesquière forty-seven, St. Venant forty-two; these were not men beginning to think of retirement. But after so many years of militancy and organizational endeavors, they were no longer thinking of expansion either; protecting their positions in the Lille arrondissement from the encroachments of hostile reformists, anarcho-syndicalists, and "reactionaries" became their chief concern.

Threatened in their own strongholds, the Guesdists of the Nord were forced to curtail outside proselytism and seek accommodation with their working-class rivals to protect their local positions. By 1914 the Guesdists had grudgingly accepted the influence of Jaurès over the SFIO¹ and the unpleasant fact that Socialists of the Nord Federation who lived outside of the Lille arrondissement were unlikely to buy the Guesdist combination of Marxist theory, and disciplined organization.² After 1910 the Guesdist leadership of the Nord Federation accepted the fact that fellow Socialists in the Federation outside of the Lille arrondissement belonged to politically neutral cooperatives;³ the leadership also coexisted peacefully with anarcho-syndicalists and

de Lille, Conseil municipal, Procès-verbaux des séances, 1896, pp. 227, 522, 568, 620, 648; Robert Pierreuse, *La Vie ouvrière à Roubaix de 1890 à 1900* (Diplôme d'études supérieures, Faculté des lettres, Université de Lille, 1957), pp. 141-142.

¹ See remarks by Ghesquière in *Le Travailleur*, January 31, 1914, p. 1:1.

² In 1912 minority representation in the delegation to national congresses was finally conceded by Guesdist leaders of the Nord Federation. See *Fédération du Nord, Compte-rendu officiel du VIII^e congrès départemental*, Lille, 1912, pp. 28, 40-52.

³ By 1913 François Lefebvre, the Socialist mayor of Denain, had organized a neutralist *Fédération Nord-Sud* of cooperatives located in the southern arrondissements of the department, including important cooperatives in Caudry and Denain; this federation became a departmental rival to the Guesdist federation of cooperatives. See Marlière, *La Coopération dans le Nord et le Pas-de-Calais*, pp. 30-32, 48-49; Gaston Prache, *Cambrésis, terre coopérative* (Paris, 1963), p. 46.

reformists outside of the Lille *arrondissement* who practiced apolitical unionism.¹

What was more surprising was that the old Guesdist rivals in turn accommodated themselves to Guesdist leadership over the Nord Federation and to Guesdist control of the trade unions, cooperatives, and Socialist sections of the Lille *arrondissement*. By dividing the department into spheres of influence and tacitly admitting (because of mutual exhaustion) that one's competitors could not be eliminated, reformists, anarcho-syndicalists, and Guesdists cooperated fraternally in the Nord during the immediate pre-war years.²

For those concerned with dynamic and aggressive Socialism this resignation and conservatism was intolerable. For the Guesdists such attitudes were necessary. Challenged by hostile anti-Socialist forces in the Nord, defeated by a powerful Jaurès-reformist current within the SFIO, plagued by static organizational and electoral trends which increased their vulnerability, forced into geographical isolation within the Lille *arrondissement*, and buffeted by social forces beyond their comprehension, the uneducated working-class Guesdists of the Nord determinedly clung to what they had already won.

V

It is undeniable that the pressures of even partial success pushed the Guesdists toward reformism and toward participation in French society. Guesdist trade unions and cooperatives, besides supporting the political party, were organized to win piecemeal improvement for the workers; both were based upon the tacit assumption that life could

¹ In 1913 Guesdists and anarcho-syndicalists of the CGT established a Union départementale des syndicats. While the CGT accepted the Guesdist leadership of St. Venant, its first secretary, for the departmental union, the Guesdists accepted the reality of CGT trade unionism in the Valenciennes and Douai *arrondissements*, where anarcho-syndicalist union leaders remained dominant in the metal and building trades. For this evolution see AN, F⁷ 13609, report 313, January 17, 1913 and report 294, February 10, 1914; ADN, Alpha 2176, police report Lille, May 28, 1913 and RM 4173, police report Lille, June 29, 1914; *Le Réveil du Nord*, February 21, 1910, p. 2:1.

² In 1910 and 1911 the Guesdists and the CGT united against the pension law and the high cost of living, in 1912 and 1913 they were joined by Jaurès's reformists in campaigns against militarism and the three-year military service law. The Guesdists were not always enthusiastic about these campaigns, but arranged working-class unity to pre-empt their rivals in the Lille *arrondissement* and to control the protest movements there. See ADN, RM 4173, police report Valenciennes, December 2, 1912 and Alpha 2176; H. Lefebvre to Guesde, March 8, 1913, Guesde Archives, IISG, 439/2; *Le Travailleur*, December 21, 1912, p. 1:1; Delory, *Aperçu historique sur la Fédération du Nord*, pp. 211-12.

gradually improve and both involved Guesdist militants in reformist activity. Few Guesdist militants remained totally free of the persuasive influence of bourgeois reformists: at Valenciennes and Roubaix many were Freemasons despite official Guesdist disapproval of dual membership in the party and in the lodge; in other cases anti-clericalism bridged the class division. The influence of party and public responsibility upon the revolutionary temperament may be seen clearly in the life of Henri Ghesquière, who while beginning his Socialist career as a violently outspoken revolutionary in the 1880's, was by the 1890's a patient city councilor planning social welfare for Lille, and by 1911 a responsible parliamentary deputy who shocked many of his fellow Socialists by publicly praising reformist moderation in trade unions.¹

Despite his image, Ghesquière considered himself a revolutionary. Although he practiced reformism when in public office, he could not be a reformist, because French reformists, like Jaurès and Delesalle, demanded a relaxation of party discipline, the abandonment of close relations with trade unions and cooperatives, and the acceptance of the party as a common political and electoral machine rather than as a special extension of proletarian life.² In Guesdist eyes only revolutionary Marxism justified the necessity for their special kind of Socialist organization. In the 1880's and early 1890's Marxist ideology had combined with local tradition to stimulate the organization of the Nord Federation; by the twentieth century, the organization determined the need for the ideology, and both had to be vigorously defended, increasingly so as they became more threatened. Little by little the Guesdist militants of the Nord, some of whom were actually related,³ drew closer together into an exclusive political "family". To be initiated into this family the militant worked with the cooperative, trade union, or electoral activities associated with the party; when once a member he willingly accepted the family ideology, and at times allowed the

¹ L'Ouvrier textile, January 1, 1912, p. 2:1.

² It was not inevitable that reformism be linked to loose organization. Annie Kriegel has pointed out: "En soi, un parti-société n'est pas nécessairement un agent de dissociation révolutionnaire de la société établie; ce peut en être simplement un agent de structuration pluraliste. Ce fut le cas précisément des partis socialistes scandinaves, belge, allemand de la II Internationale qui, bien avant les partis communistes de type bolchevik, surent se transformer en puissances sociales autonomes." Quoted from Annie Kriegel, "Les Communistes français et le pouvoir", in: Kriegel and Perrot, *Le Socialisme français et le pouvoir*, p. 106.

³ See *Le Réveil du Nord*, December 20, 1896, p. 1:3; *Le Travailleur*, December 8, 1904, p. 2:3; Claude Willard, "Contribution au portrait du militant Guesdiste dans la seconde moitié du XIXe siècle", in: *Le Mouvement social*, XXXIII-XXXIV (1960-61), p. 60.

family to regulate his relations with the outside world.¹ Both organization and ideology were linked together to perpetuate Guesdist isolation from society and at the same time to protect Guesdist achievements.²

The Guesdists were caught between reformism and revolution; they could neither fully participate in nor fully isolate themselves from society. No matter how much their cooperative, trade union, and parliamentary experience encouraged pragmatism, to change their theoretical positions or their behavior would have weakened their cohesion and invited other French working-class organizations to dismantle the Guesdist organization of the Lille arrondissement. Moreover, the Socialist voters of the Nord desired the familiar but incompatible mixture of reformism, anti-clericalism, and orthodox Marxist economic and social criticism.³ Caught in this dilemma the Guesdists developed a peculiar "halfway house" mentality and in the immediate pre-war years refused to consider the ambiguity of their situation.⁴ This reluctance was understandable: as politicians and as former revolutionaries with years of speeches behind them, they could not publicly admit that their organizational theories had been inappropriate, that their Marxism had been misguided, or that they had been stalemated by strong forces within the French working-class movement and French society. To preserve the organizational structure which had already been constructed and to insure that their large constituency remained faithful and devoted, the Guesdists emphasized and reemphasized their long history of Socialist service to the working class of the Nord, tried to turn old sacrifices and accomplishments into working-class myths,⁵

¹ In 1914 an important militant at Roubaix, F. Louis, was nominated for a state honor, causing a great tumult among the Guesdists. Delory investigated at Paris to discover the source of the nomination; at an open meeting the members of the Roubaix section decided that Louis would decline the nomination. See ADN, Alpha 2262, police report Lille, February 23, 1914.

² Ideology functioning to insure a party's "identity" is emphasized by Nettl, "The German Social Democratic Party, 1890-1914 As a Political Model", p. 80.

³ For example, Delory was blocked when he tried to change the anti-clericalism of the Nord Federation. See *Le Travailleur*, July 10, 1909, p. 2:1, July 17, 1909, p. 2:1, and July 24, 1909, p. 1:1.

⁴ This refusal to consider real organizational and theoretical problems was signaled by the demotion of the outspoken Verecque, who in 1911 was criticized by Ghesquière for his anti-SFIO attitude and in 1912 replaced as editor of the *Travailleur*. See Verecque to Guesde, November 24, 1910, Guesde Archives, IISG, 413/2; *Le Travailleur*, April 22, 1911, p. 1:1, April 29, 1911, p. 2:1, and August 5, 1911, p. 1:3.

⁵ Such events at the arrest of Delory during the textile strikes of 1880, the role of Delory in stimulating the writing of the *Internationale*, the fight (later called an assassination attempt) between Ghesquière and local patriotic gangs in 1896 all became part of the working-class folklore of the Nord. See (for examples which could be multiplied many times over) *Le Travailleur*, July 9, 1910, p. 1:1 and *La Bataille* (Lille), April 23, 1922, p. 1:1.

maintained all familiar (but often incompatible) slogans, combined intransigence and conciliation, Marxism and reformism, coarseness and politeness. Despite the criticisms of outsiders, this behavior insured that the Guesdists would be recognized as the transmitters of a very special Socialist tradition and allowed them to remain powerful in the Nord department. The Guesdists were practicing successful survival tactics long before 1914, which explains why, even after the Communist challenge and the difficulties of French Socialism throughout the twentieth century, Socialism remains a strong political force in the industrial Nord.

APPENDIX

I

MEMBERSHIP

Arrondissements	1897-98			1905			1913		
	S	M	%	S	M	%	S	M	%
Lille	31	3,815	84.0	39	4,447	74.3	77	7,777	62.8
Northern ¹	2	136	3.0	6	264	4.4	7	266	2.2
Southern ²	25	599	13.0	26	1,273	21.3	109	4,338	35.0
Federation	58	4,550		71	5,984		183	12,381	
City of Lille		1,998	43.9		1,804	32.0		2,040	16.5
City of Roubaix		546	12.0		466	7.8		900	7.3

S = Number of Sections M = Paying Membership % = Percentage of the total membership of the Nord Federation

¹ Dunkerque, Hazebrouck Arrondissements.

² Avesnes, Cambrai, Douai, Valenciennes Arrondissements.

Sources: Membership statistics, even for a carefully managed organization such as the Nord Federation, should be viewed as only a general indication of actual size rather than as absolutely accurate. The statistics come from disparate sources and the Socialists themselves were usually careful to give the public the best possible impression, so that printed membership figures may be assumed to err in favor of the party (but this in turn makes significant the figures which show

that a section declined in membership). Statistics for 1897-98 were taken from Guesde Archives, IISG, 288/8; for 1905 and 1913 from Adéodat Compère-Morel, ed., *Encyclopédie socialiste syndicale et co-opérative de l'internationale ouvrière, les fédérations socialistes* (Paris, 1913), I, pp. 459-62; Gustave Delory, *Aperçu historique sur la Fédération du Nord 1876-1920* (Lille), pp. 244-50.

II

Percentage of Registered Voters voting for Guesdist candidates on the First Ballot (POF, PS de F., SFIO), 1892-1914 in Elections at Lille, Roubaix, and Armentières.

	Lille	Roubaix	Armentières
1892-M	14.9	33.2	
1893-L	19.4	43.1	31.8
1896-M	25.2	47.1	
1898-L	30.8	38.9	29.2
1900-M	35.6	48.3	
1902-L	28.3	36.6	25.1
1904-M	28.2	42.3	
1906-L	40.5	42.9	25.4
1908-M	34.6	42.5	
1910-L	35.0	43.9	26.9
1912-M	32.8	43.3	
1914-L	36.9	44.6	23.2

L = Legislative Elections

M = Municipal Elections

Statistics were taken from *Procès-verbaux des élections législatives*, in ADN, M37/34 (1893), M37/45 (1898), M37/62 (1902), in the Archives of the Chamber of Deputies, Paris (1906, 1910, 1914), and from the Municipal Archives of Lille and Roubaix. Gaps in the information have been filled by reference to local newspapers, notably the *Journal de Roubaix* (Roubaix) and the *Réveil du Nord* (Lille). In municipal elections, run on the basis of the *scrutin de liste*, the average number of votes obtained by a particular list was used as the basis for calculations.

III

Membership of Socialist and Leading Anti-Socialist Cooperatives at Lille and Roubaix, 1890-1914.

	<i>L'Union*</i> (Lille) Founded- 1892	<i>L'Indépendante</i> † (Lille) Founded- 1902	<i>La Paix*</i> (Roubaix) Founded- 1885	<i>L'Union</i> † (Roubaix) Founded- 1892
1890			1,350	
1892	36-150			
1893	300		2,070	
1894	650-743		2,000	
1896	1,900-3,074			
1897			3,500	
1898	3,222-4,642		3,500	
1900	4,575-5,100		5,110	
1901	5,000			
1902	5,459			
1903	5,459		6,000	
1904	5,703			
1905	5,898			
1906	6,437	9,524	4,000	14,787
1907	6,500	9,000	5,000	15,347
1908	7,500	11,000		15,453
1909	7,500	12,500	4,000-5,000	15,237
1910	7,500	13,500		15,826
1911	7,450	16,000	3,600	15,300
1912	7,428	17,000		16,000
1913	7,850	17,800		16,300
1914	7,570			

* = Socialist † = Anti-Socialist

Cooperative statistics are taken from France, Direction du travail, *Bulletin*, 1900-1914; *Bulletin mensuel de la fédération des coopératives de la région du Nord* (Lille), 1902-1911; ADN, M 154/61, M154/67, M154/68, M455/1, M455/4; *Le Travailleur* (Lille), January 11, 1903; Gustave Marlière, *La Coopération dans le Nord et le Pas-de-Calais* (Saint-Amand-les-Eaux, 1933), p. 43; Henri Samson, *Guide pratique pour la constitution de la société coopérative* (Lille, 1911), p. 11. When figures conflicted, the high and low extremes have been given.