

# The Historical Militancy of Madeleine Rebérioux, 1920 – 2005

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## Abstract

The thesis critically examines the life of French historian Madeleine Rebérioux (1920 – 2005), through the unstudied connections between academic, political and social engagement. Embedded in militancy through her academic interest in Jean Jaurès and French socialism, Rebérioux's diverse engagement was remarkable. A leading figure of the anticolonial left in the 1950s and 1960s, Rebérioux was excluded from the French Communist Party in 1969 before later becoming president of the Ligue des droits de l'homme in the 1990s. I have developed the epistemological term 'historical militancy' – namely the transaction between being a professional historian and being a social movement activist – in order to assess Rebérioux's copious archives, bequeathed to the French state after her death. How did Rebérioux's activism shape her historical interpretation of the past? Likewise, to what extent did Rebérioux's nuanced view of history frame injustice in her intellectual interventions in French society?

Using three case studies, the research scrutinises how Rebérioux used collective action as a vehicle for militancy: from ephemeral anticolonial groups like the Comité Audin, academic activist networks such as the Collectif intersyndical universitaire and action during May '68 through to well-established national organisation the Ligue des droits de l'homme. This critical analysis of Rebérioux's archival papers indicates, for the first time, how Rebérioux sat at the heart of a complex web of overlapping campaign-networks. Her activism forms an unbroken thread woven into polemical political moments of the Fourth and Fifth Republics, offering a unique window on historians' practical engagement outside of their professional academic discipline as well as a new understanding of the culture of left-wing political militancy.



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## Abbreviations

AC !	Agir contre le chômage
ALN	Armée de libération nationale
AN	Archives Nationales
BDIC	Bibliothèque de documentation internationale et contemporaine
BNF	Bibliothèque nationale de France
CCCP	Commission centrale de contrôle politique (PCF)
CFDT	Confédération française démocratique du travail
CGT	Confédération générale du travail
CNRS	Centre national de la recherche scientifique
CRS	Compagnies républicaines de sécurité
CVB	Comités Vietnam de base
CVL	Comités Vietnam lycéens
CVN	Comité Vietnam national
ÉHÉSS	École des hautes études en sciences sociales
ÉNS	École normale supérieure
FLN	Front de libération nationale
FN	Front national
FNL	Front national de libération du Sud-Vietnam
IHTP	Institut d'histoire du temps présent
INA	Institut national d'audiovisuel
JCR	Jeunesses communistes révolutionnaires
LDH	Ligue des droits de l'homme
LICRA	Ligue internationale contre le racisme et l'antisémitisme
LMS	<i>Le Mouvement social</i>
MDC	Mouvement des citoyens
MHV	Musée de l'histoire vivante
MLF	Mouvement de libération des femmes
MNCR	Mouvement national contre le racisme
MRAP	Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l'amitié entre les peuples
OAS	Organisation de l'armée secrète
PCA	Parti communiste algérien
PCF	Parti communiste français
PS	Parti socialiste
PSU	Parti socialiste unifié
RDV	République démocratique du Vietnam
RPR	Rassemblement pour la République
SÉJ	Société d'études jaurésiennes
SFIO	Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière
SGÉN	Syndicat général de l'éducation nationale (CFDT)
SHAT	Service historique de l'armée du terre
SNB	Syndicat national des bibliothèques
SNCS	Syndicat national des chercheurs scientifiques
SNÉS	Syndicat national des enseignements de second degré
SNÉSup	Syndicat national de l'enseignement supérieur
UÉC	Union des étudiants communistes
UGCS	Union des groupes et clubs socialistes
UNÉF	Union nationale des étudiants de France
VDC	Vietnam Day Committee



## Chapter 1. Introduction

*Sa vie, on l'écrira un jour, parce qu'elle traverse le XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, ses drames, ses conflits, ses déceptions et ses espoirs.*

**Michelle Perrot<sup>1</sup>**

### 1.1 The Rebérioux 'continent'

Madeleine Rebérioux (1920-2005) is best known for her work as an historian, notably as the leading specialist of Jean Jaurès, a founding member of the French socialist party who was assassinated on the eve of the First World War. Yet Rebérioux's description of her historical specialism as 'the Jaurès continent' offers an equally apt portrayal of the depth and scale of her own accomplishments as an historian, militant and teacher.<sup>2</sup> This thesis transcends Rebérioux's profession to scrutinise her militancy as presented in her private papers.<sup>3</sup> Rebérioux was a rare case: a woman historian who expertly archived her five decades of militancy in a diverse range of political, historical, cultural and social spheres. I have developed the epistemological term 'historical militancy' as a framework for unpicking the connections between writing history and the political, social and cultural engagement of an historian. My research answers recent calls for new, innovative ways to understand contemporary French politics.<sup>4</sup> The approach investigates the mechanics of militancy in post-war France. The three case studies explore wider questions of individual agency; the role of historians in the public sphere; and forms of political action, from grass-roots militancy to national campaigns. How did Rebérioux mobilise collective structures to achieve her political aims? What does the thematic focus of Rebérioux's militancy – anti-torture, anti-imperialism, public memory, *laïcité* and citizenship to name but a few causes – reveal about her activism? Finally,

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<sup>1</sup> Michelle Perrot, 'Madeleine Rebérioux (1920-2005)', *Clio*, 21 1 (2005), p.5.

<sup>2</sup> Gilles Candar and Vincent Duclert, *Jean Jaurès* (Paris: Arthème Fayard, 2014), p.517.

<sup>3</sup> Although a Gallicism, I use 'militancy' in my research as a more apposite term than 'activism' or 'engagement' as 'militancy' (and by extension Rebérioux's work as a 'militant') gives a more accurate picture of Rebérioux's commitment to politics and social justice which other labels do not convey. See discussion in chapter two.

<sup>4</sup> Emile Chabal, 'French politics in an age of uncertainty', in *France Since the 1970s: History, Politics and Memory in an Age of Uncertainty*, ed. Emile Chabal (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), p.2.

what new insights can a study of her historical militancy to scholarly understanding of the broader 'culture of the left' in France?<sup>5</sup>

Despite the multiplicity of Rebérioux's engagement as an historian, militant and teacher, little objective, critical work has been published on this remarkable individual. In 1999 her former students and colleagues Vincent Duclert, Rémi Fabre and Patrick Fridenson published an edited volume in honour of Rebérioux, which offers a useful indication of the wide range of historical spheres in which Rebérioux intervened.<sup>6</sup> The volume included 26 contributions from Rebérioux's colleagues, students and friends covering the diverse themes of citizenship and history, the role of women, the study of labour and socialism and the relationship between ethics and politics. Following her death in 2005, many complimentary works were published. Texts ranged from obituaries, homages and tributes to the contributions of family and École normale supérieure (ÉNS) graduates.<sup>7</sup> Before her death Rebérioux was one of only 40 female entries to be included in Jacques Julliard and Michel Winock's *Dictionnaire des intellectuels français*, which gives an indication of her status within the academic establishment.<sup>8</sup> However these works tend to cast Rebérioux in a positive light and they shy away from a critical appraisal of her life, research and militancy.

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<sup>5</sup> Tony Judt, *Marxism and the French Left: Studies on Labour and Politics in France, 1830-1981* (NY: New York University Press, 2011), p.1.

<sup>6</sup> Vincent Duclert, Rémi Fabre and Patrick Fridenson (eds.), *Avenirs et avant-gardes en France, XIX<sup>e</sup>-XX<sup>e</sup> siècles : hommage à Madeleine Rebérioux* (Paris: Découverte, 1999).

<sup>7</sup> Jacques Julliard and Christophe Prochasson, 'Madeleine Rebérioux (1920-2005)', *Mil neuf cent Revue d'histoire intellectuelle*, 23 1 (2005); Perrot, 'Madeleine Rebérioux (1920-2005)'; Patrick Fridenson, 'Madeleine Rebérioux entre histoire, culture et politique', *Le Mouvement social*, 219-220 2-3 (2007). Three special issues of *Cahiers Jaurès* were dedicated to Madeleine Rebérioux, 174 (2004), 179 (2006) and 183-184 (2007) along with one special issue of *Le Mouvement social*, 219-220 (2007). These editions included articles by Maurice Agulhon, Jean-Jacques Becker, Françoise Blum, Gilles Candar, Vincent Duclert, Vincent Löwy, Jean-Pierre Rioux and Italian colleagues David Bidussa, Patrizia Dogliani, Maria Grazia Meriggi and Rossana Vaccaro. Of these works, Candar's article has been particularly invaluable: 'Pourquoi Jaurès?', *Cahiers Jaurès*, 183-184 1-2 (2007). See also François Amoudruz, 'Madé', *Cahiers Jaurès*, 179 1 (2006); Jacqueline Saulai-Viltard, Pierrette Destables-Coulet and Marie-Thérèse Bigand-Benoît, 'Amoudruz (Madeleine, épouse Rebérioux), née le 8 septembre 1920 à Chambéry, décédée le 7 février 2005 à Paris. - Promotion de 1941 L.', *L'Archicube*, Numéro spécial (2007).

<sup>8</sup> Alain Monchablon, 'Rebérioux (Madeleine)', in *Dictionnaire des intellectuels français : les personnes, les lieux, les moments*, eds. Jacques Julliard and Michel Winock (Paris: Seuil, 1996), pp.946-947. Imogen Long has highlighted the marginalisation of women in the *Dictionnaire* (40 women out of 550 entries). See *Women Intellectuals in Post-68 France: Petitions and Polemics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p.11.

The process of historically interrogating and contextualising Rebérioux's work as an historian began in 2009, when the Fondation Jean Jaurès organised 'Qu'est devenue l'histoire du socialisme ? Hommage à Madeleine Rebérioux' at the Assemblée Nationale.<sup>9</sup> The symposium discussed trends in the historiography of socialism, from the work of Rebérioux to that of her students and even their students: 'Un bilan historiographique du socialisme démocratique dans les quarante dernières années, avec une perspective internationale and comparée'.<sup>10</sup> Rebérioux's entry in *Le Maitron*, completed in 2014, developed the symposium's work.<sup>11</sup> Written by her close friend, colleague and former student Patrick Fridenson, it is the most comprehensive work to engage with Rebérioux's diverse range of intellectual activities. The entry indirectly references the notion of a 'Rebérioux continent', by stating that Rebérioux was 'une femme de plusieurs vies, successives ou simultanées mais interconnectées'.<sup>12</sup> Fridenson's account is also a starting point for serious consideration of Rebérioux's militancy from a critical perspective, as he suggested that 'cette notice n'est qu'une préface'. My thesis moves beyond an outline of Rebérioux's biography to scrutinise the essence and broader implications of her militancy during the key polemical moments of the Fourth and Fifth Republics.

## 1.2 The multiple lives of Madeleine Rebérioux

Who was Madeleine Rebérioux? Although she never wrote her autobiography, a picture of Madeleine's early years can be gleaned from her family archives and interviews she gave during her lifetime. Madeleine Amoudruz was born on 8 September 1920 in Albertville, Chambéry (Savoie). Her father Pierre was a civil servant, an *inspecteur des contributions directes* whilst her mother Elise (née Thonon) was a *professeur de lettres*. Madeleine was the eldest of three: her younger sister Paulette was born in 1922 and her

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<sup>9</sup> The seminar was held on 5-6 February 2009. In addition to leading French labour historians, participants demonstrated the international reach of Rebérioux's legacy: Patrizia Dogliani, Sudhir Hazareesingh, Jeremy Jennings and Siân Reynolds all took part.

<sup>10</sup> The symposium also led to publications. In addition to a special issue of *Cahiers Jaurès* (191) the *Fondation Jean Jaurès* published two short books: Jean-François Chanet, *Une laïcité socialiste* (Paris: Fondation Jean Jaurès, 2009); Christophe Prochasson, *Le socialisme, une culture* (Paris: Fondation Jean Jaurès, 2009).

<sup>11</sup> Fridenson was Rebérioux's student at the lycée Marcelin Berthelot in the 1950s. Patrick Fridenson, 'Rebérioux, Madeleine [née Amoudruz]', in *Le Maitron : Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier et du mouvement social (tome 10)*, eds. Claude Pennetier and Paul Boulland (Ivry-sur-Seine: Atelier, 2014).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p.381.

brother François was born in 1926 after the family moved to Clermont-Ferrand. Madeleine was educated at home by her mother until the *sixième*; she started school knowing, in her words, relatively little but having read widely including Hugo, Racine and Corneille.<sup>13</sup> At school, Madeleine's interest in history was encouraged by her history teacher Madeleine Schnerb, wife of the historian of the revolution Robert.<sup>14</sup> Madame Schnerb's unique approach to teaching history – in the *première* year students were asked to defend various members of the Convention including Robespierre, Danton and Marat – made an impression on the young student.<sup>15</sup> In 1937 Madeleine won the *Concours général* in History, the first time a female had been awarded the accolade. A photograph of a young Madeleine receiving her prize from Albert Lebrun, President of the Third Republic, was featured on the front cover of several newspapers.<sup>16</sup> Madeleine won first prize despite the fact that in her essay, which examined the role of the press during 1815-1848, she had misspelt 'journaux' with an 'e'.<sup>17</sup>

The Amoudruz family was not particularly politically active. Although Pierre Amoudruz was a supporter of Pierre Cot and the progressive left, it was Madeleine and Paulette who debated political questions around the dinner table. Paulette later married Serge Fischer, a communist librarian from Strasbourg, which implicated the family during the Occupation. The family's experiences of deportation were recounted in Elise Amoudruz's memoirs, published in 1972 under the pseudonym of Reine Cormand.<sup>18</sup> The work – avowed as an accurate record of a mother's experiences of the Occupation – recounted the deportation of Elise's son-in-law Serge in November 1943. When the family refused to turn in their daughter Paulette, the Gestapo arrested and deported their son François, then aged 17. Although both men eventually returned to Clermont-Ferrand after the Liberation, the experiences of family deportation influenced Madeleine, and could help

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<sup>13</sup> Rebérioux interview, *Paroles d'historiens* (2001), available at <http://entretiens.ina.fr/consulter/Histoire/Rebérioux> [accessed 28/03/2013]. All quotations in the thesis are taken from the transcript of this interview available on the same webpage. Part I : Le choix de l'histoire, Chap. 1 : Savoyarde de tradition laïque.

<sup>14</sup> Her diaries are preserved in Rebérioux's archives, AN 647AP/106-107.

<sup>15</sup> *Paroles d'historiens*, Part I : Le choix de l'histoire, Chap. 2 : Normalienne. See also extracts from Madeleine Schnerb, *Mémoires pour deux* (1973) (p.47-48) <http://madeleineschnerb.blogspot.co.uk/2012/03/madeleine-amoudruz-reberieux-1935.html> [accessed 10/02/2014].

<sup>16</sup> AN 647AP/2. Newspapers which reported Madeleine's prize included *L'Écho de Paris*, *Excelsior*, *Minerva*, *Le Journal*, *Le Temps* and *L'Époque*. The prize included a copy of Ernest Lavisse's *Histoire de France* [1894].

<sup>17</sup> Amoudruz, 'Madé', p.18.

<sup>18</sup> Reine Cormand, *La vie d'une famille face à la Gestapo dans la France occupée, novembre 1943-juin 1945, témoignage* (Montreux, Suisse: 1972). The work included a preface by Henri Guillemin.



to explain her passionate anticolonialism and defence of the oppressed throughout her career. During the war Madeleine was in Paris studying History and Philosophy at ÉNS Sèvres.<sup>19</sup> In 1945 she passed the *agrégation* in History and took up a teaching position at the Lycée de Mulhouse, thus suspending her academic research. It was around this point that Madeleine published her first works: a collection of romantic poems and a version of her thesis on Proudhon and Europe, prefaced by Georges Lefebvre.<sup>20</sup>

Whilst in Mulhouse Madeleine met her future husband Jean Rebérioux; they had four children: Jean-François (b. 1947), Pierre-Yves (b. 1948), Fabienne (b. 1950) and Vincent (b. 1954). Rebérioux later recounted a conversation with her *licence* supervisor Lefebvre concerning the difficulties of balancing family life with academia:

Il m'avait dit : « Vous partez, vous allez vous marier. » Je dis: « Comment ? Vous allez me mar... Je vais me marier ? Vous ne savez pas, monsieur, vous n'en... » « Je sais. Telle que vous êtes, vous allez vous marier, vous aurez des enfants, vous allez aimer enseigner, fini la recherche », me disait Georges Lefebvre. « C'est désespérant d'avoir des élèves filles », qu'il disait. Il était très misogyne. « C'est désespérant ! » Et il avait à la fois tort et pas tort.<sup>21</sup>

Jean Rebérioux (1903-1992) played a significant role in shaping his wife's militancy and supporting her professional career. A *surveillant général* ('superintendent' or head of school discipline) and an avowed trade unionist, Jean joined the Parti communiste français (PCF) shortly after the Congress of Tours.<sup>22</sup> Madeleine described her husband's form of communism as the following: 'Il n'avait pas du communisme une vision sectaire : pour lui, les communistes étaient des gens qui avaient une pensée droite même si celle-ci n'était pas nécessairement conforme à la pensée du Parti'.<sup>23</sup> Jean had a long personal history of activism. During the interwar years he acted as secretary for the Haut-Rhin Comité de vigilance des intellectuels antifascistes. Mobilised in 1939, Jean was captured in June 1940 before being released on medical grounds twelve months later.<sup>24</sup> In 1942, whilst working as a teacher in Lyon, Jean entered the resistance through the Mouvement

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<sup>19</sup> Saulai-Viltard, Destables-Coulet and Bigand-Benoît, 'Amoudruz (Madeleine, épouse Rebérioux)'.

<sup>20</sup> Madeleine Amoudruz, *Poèmes* (Paris: Presses Mathey, 1946); Madeleine Amoudruz, *Proudhon et l'Europe : les idées de Proudhon en politique étrangère* (Paris: Domat-Montchrestien, 1945).

<sup>21</sup> *Paroles d'historiens*, Part I : Le choix de l'histoire, Chap. 8 : La question coloniale.

<sup>22</sup> See Claude Pannetier, 'Rebérioux, Jean, Baptiste, Marie, Joseph', in *Le Maitron : Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier et du mouvement social (tome 10)*, eds. Claude Pannetier and Paul Boulland (Ivry-sur-Seine: Atelier, 2014), pp.380-381.

<sup>23</sup> Vincent Löwy, 'Madeleine Rebérioux : militantisme et recherche historique', *Questions de communication*, 4 (2003), p.280.

<sup>24</sup> AN 647AP/1 contains Jean's war record and correspondence.

national contre le racisme (MNCR). After the war, Jean worked at the Lycée des garçons at Mulhouse, where he met Madeleine. The pair married on 10 August 1946. Shortly before their marriage, Madeleine joined the PCF, a decision which party files suggest came as a shock to her family, despite Paulette and Serge's prior association with the organisation.<sup>25</sup>

Rebérioux maintained that she joined the PCF for two reasons: to express her anticolonialism and to support the plight of the working-classes. The latter had been brought to her attention by the *cités ouvrières* in Mulhouse:

La cité Dolfuss a été créée par la bourgeoisie alsacienne et, à l'époque, elle était d'avant-garde. Cent ans après sa création, elle est l'incarnation du malheur ouvrier. En côtoyant ce milieu, je me suis dit que je serai à côté de ces gens toute ma vie. Il y a mille manières d'être à côté des ouvriers, mais, à l'époque, la plus simple était de rentrer au PCF.<sup>26</sup>

Anticolonialism and the interests of the working-class guided her life's work as an historian and militant. In 1948 Rebérioux served as a PCF *conseillère municipale* in Mulhouse, where she campaigned for better living conditions and treatment of Algerian immigrants working in the town.<sup>27</sup> Her PCF membership would come to define yet equally complicate Rebérioux's militancy and inform her historical research for the rest of her life. Along with Jacques Julliard, Michelle Perrot, Annie Kriegel and Collette Chambelland, Rebérioux was part of a generation of young historians to place an interest in proletarian concerns at the heart of academic research.<sup>28</sup> According to her close friend Pierre Vidal-Naquet, Rebérioux valued her party membership 'parce que là était la classe ouvrière à la libération de laquelle elle entendait travailler'.<sup>29</sup> For two decades Rebérioux engaged in a wide range of anticolonial and militant activities which frequently challenged the party line. On 3 September 1959, the centenary of Jaurès's birth, she published her first book on Jaurès, an edited version of *Contre la guerre et la politique coloniale* with PCF-sponsored publishing house Éditions Sociales. The publication nearly caused her expulsion due to her inclusion of reference from

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<sup>25</sup> PCF archives, Colonel Fabien. 62/883 Dossier biographique Madeleine Rebérioux; Löwy, 'Madeleine Rebérioux : militantisme et recherche historique', p.280.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Yves Frey, 'Être Algérien à Mulhouse en 1950', *Annuaire Historique de Mulhouse*, 20 (2009), p.84. I am grateful to Pierre-Yves Rebérioux for bringing this article to my attention.

<sup>28</sup> Löwy, 'Madeleine Rebérioux : militantisme et recherche historique', p.280.

<sup>29</sup> Pierre Vidal-Naquet, 'Notes pour un portrait de la citoyenne', in *Avenirs et avant-gardes en France, XIX<sup>e</sup>-XX<sup>e</sup> siècles : hommage à Madeleine Rebérioux*, eds. Vincent Duclert, Rémi Fabre and Patrick Fridenson (Paris: Découverte, 1999), p.20.

Trotsky.<sup>30</sup> Vidal-Naquet noted her political independence in his memoirs: 'Si elle avait dans son discours quelques tics du langage du Parti, elle n'était aucune façon une femme d'appareil ; elle avait trop d'amis trotskistes pour être sectaire'.<sup>31</sup> It was not until 1969 that Rebérioux was excluded from the PCF, ostensibly for her involvement in gauchiste revue *Politique aujourd'hui* but in reality for her long history of challenging the official party line (see chapter six). In the week following her expulsion she received no fewer than three requests for her memoirs explaining how she had suffered at the hands of the party: 'J'ai répondu que si j'avais souffert à ce point, je serais partie de mon propre chef !'.<sup>32</sup> Despite her expulsion Rebérioux remained attached to her principles, avowing on multiple occasions her status as a 'communiste non-repentie'. Rebérioux asserted that 'J'étais en désaccord sur de nombreux points mais je ne serais pas partie, parce qu'il y avait trop de travail à faire'.<sup>33</sup>

In addition to these personal histories, explained here as a form of introduction to Rebérioux's biography, Rebérioux had three 'lives': as an historian, militant and teacher.<sup>34</sup> For Madeleine, teaching was a 'bonheur absolu', first discovered during a work experience placement as part of her preparations for the *agrégation*.<sup>35</sup> Rebérioux later recalled how her teaching opened her students' eyes to the world. In her classes she openly discussed then controversial topics including the Commune, Trotsky and colonialism. Yet in turn her interactions with her pupils offered Rebérioux new perspectives on her own contemporary world, including the revelation of the poor conditions in the *cités ouvrières* on the edge of Mulhouse. Rebérioux would spend a decade and a half as a *lycée* teacher (1946–1962). Although she originally planned to return to complete her *classe préparatoire* at ÉNS, her return to academia was blocked after Rebérioux was sanctioned for her political actions. In response to the violent suppression of the miners' strike, on 18 December 1948 Rebérioux described Interior Minister Jules Moch as an 'assassin' in *L'Humanité d'Alsace Lorraine*. As Rebérioux recounted: 'Vous êtes trop impulsive, observe le recteur qui lui notifie un blâme.'

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<sup>30</sup> Madeleine Rebérioux (ed.), *Jean Jaurès. Textes choisis (tome I) : contre la guerre et la politique coloniale* (Paris: Sociales, 1959). Rebérioux discusses the publication in Löwy, 'Madeleine Rebérioux : militantisme et recherche historique', p.282.

<sup>31</sup> Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Mémoires t.2 : le trouble et la lumière, 1955-1998* (Paris: Découverte, 1998), p.67.

<sup>32</sup> Löwy, 'Madeleine Rebérioux : militantisme et recherche historique', p.283.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Preface, Madeleine Rebérioux, Gilles Candar and Vincent Duclert (eds.), *Vive la République ! : histoire, droits et combats de 1789 à la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Demopolis, 2009), p.5.

<sup>35</sup> Rebérioux interview, *Paroles d'historiens*, Part I : Le choix de l'histoire, Chap. 5 : Le bonheur d'enseigner.

Pourquoi avez-vous écrit que Jules Moch était un assassin ? Il vous suffisait de mentionner qu'il avait donné l'ordre de tirer sur les grévistes...'<sup>36</sup> Rebérioux was exceptionally proud of her sanction, noting in 1997 that 'le résultat, dix années de lycée de plus ; je ne les regrette pas'.<sup>37</sup> Upon her eventual return to academia in the early 1960s teaching remained a central occupation, alongside research. She taught continuously throughout her career: as an *assistante* at the Sorbonne, pioneering new forms of Higher Education courses at Vincennes (now Paris-VIII) and leading seminars at the École des hautes études en sciences sociales (ÉHÉSS). For Rebérioux, teaching at any level from the *lycée* to the academic seminar fostered spontaneity of debate, thinking and discussion. Her vocation as a teacher also led to her close engagement with trade unionism, notably through her various roles in the Syndicat national de l'enseignement supérieur (SNÉSup).

Rebérioux is best known as an historian, as the leading expert of her time on Jean Jaurès (1859-1914) and French socialism during the Third Republic. As explored in chapter two, her choice of Jaurès as a subject of study was motivated by her own experiences of socialist government in the 1950s, and her hostility towards the politics of Guy Mollet (see chapter three). Rebérioux began her research on Jaurès during the heyday of the *Annales*, seen by many as a golden age for historical research in France.<sup>38</sup> She was supervised by the famous Ernest Labrousse (1895-1988), who succeeded Marc Bloch as the chair of economic history at the Sorbonne. Labrousse's emphasis on fusing economic and social history had an influence upon a generation of French historians including Maurice Agulhon, Annie Kriegel, François Furet and Michelle Perrot. Rebérioux was part of this ground-breaking generation of young historians who were in search of new approaches to social history. A founding member of the Société d'études jaurésiennes (SÉJ, 1959) and the innovative revue *Le Mouvement social* (1960) Rebérioux was also involved in Jean Maitron's labour history dictionary. Rebérioux became so closely

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<sup>36</sup> Hervé Hamon and Patrick Rotman, *Les porteurs de valises : la résistance française à la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1979), p.70.

<sup>37</sup> Private correspondence, Rebérioux to Christophe Prochasson (1 July 1997). Her sanction was also noted in her official PCF file.

<sup>38</sup> Jacques Revel, 'Introduction', in *Histories: French Constructions of the Past*, eds. Jacques Revel and Lynn Hunt (New York: New Press, 1998), p.15.

identified with her historical subject Jaurès that her own passing was described by some as the second death of Jaurès.<sup>39</sup>

Although he remained her passion, Jaurès was not the sole historical interest of Rebérioux. She pioneered new approaches to cultural history, gender history and championed the importance of history for contemporary society. In terms of output, her preference was for journal articles over monographs, as this form allowed one to take a problem, address and resolve it.<sup>40</sup> Her published monographs included *La République radicale ? 1898-1914* (1975), her only work to be translated into English (1984), to favourable reviews.<sup>41</sup> Rebérioux authored or contributed to a wide range of work on Jaurès.<sup>42</sup> In addition, the past 15 years has seen the publication of edited volumes of Rebérioux's articles: *Parcours engagés* in 1999 and *Vive La République !* in 2009, edited by her former students Gilles Candar and Vincent Duclert.<sup>43</sup> Yet Rebérioux's historical interests were not restricted to the academy and her work epitomised a wider, public engagement with the discipline. Her position as Vice-President of the Musée d'Orsay in the 1980s gave the opportunity for history to be represented in a public space, although as the only historian on the museum staff Rebérioux battled with the curators' more traditional outlook.<sup>44</sup> Rebérioux infamously campaigned for a locomotive to be exhibited in the museum as both a symbol of industry but also a piece of 'art' in its own right, causing a media furore.

Alongside Rebérioux's vocations as an historian and teacher, Rebérioux's role as a life-long political activist is the most intriguing, and thus the area which this thesis examines. Rebérioux was a militant in many ways: as a member of a political party she

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<sup>39</sup> Julliard and Prochasson, 'Madeleine Rebérioux (1920-2005)', p.4.

<sup>40</sup> Preface, Rebérioux, Candar and Duclert (eds.), *Vive la République !*, p.5.

<sup>41</sup> Madeleine Rebérioux, *La République radicale ? 1898-1914* (Paris: Seuil, 1975); Jean Marie Mayeur and Madeleine Rebérioux, *The Third Republic from its Origins to the Great War, 1871-1914*, trans. JR Foster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Patrick Fridenson, 'La République radicale ? (1898-1914) by Madeleine Rebérioux', *Le Mouvement social*, 101 (1977); Allan Mitchell, 'The Third Republic from its origins to the Great War (1871-1914) by Jean-Marie Mayeur; Madeleine Rebérioux', *The Journal of Modern History*, 58 1 (1986).

<sup>42</sup> Notably Madeleine Rebérioux, *Jaurès : la parole et l'acte* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994); Madeleine Rebérioux and Gilles Candar (eds.), *Jaurès et les intellectuels* (Paris: Atelier/Ouvrières, 1994).

<sup>43</sup> Madeleine Rebérioux, *Parcours engagés dans la France contemporaine* (Paris: Belin, 1999); Rebérioux, Candar and Duclert (eds.), *Vive la République !*

<sup>44</sup> AN 647AP/98 contains her papers relating to the Orsay. See Ellen Dew, 'The Militant in the Museum: Madeleine Rebérioux and the Musée d'Orsay' (MA dissertation, Durham University, 2012).

engaged in *la politique* (politics) however *le politique* (the political) arguably occupied a more important function in her militant outlook.<sup>45</sup> Rebérioux actively participated in and led a wide range of organisations during her lifetime, supporting causes as diverse as anticolonialism, anti-imperialism, human rights, *laïcité* and new definitions of citizenship, all within the framework of Republican ideals. As subsequent chapters reveal, collective action sat at the centre of her militancy. Her archives testify to her involvement in many groups and organisations, from the ephemeral, grass-roots activism of anticolonial pressure groups during the Algerian war to the national platform offered by her presidency of the Ligue des droits de l'homme (LDH) in the 1990s. Substantial source material documents Rebérioux's militancy and historical work. Her archival repositories at the Archives Nationales and the Musée de l'histoire vivante are discussed at length in the next chapter. In addition to her published works as an historian, Rebérioux also engaged in various academic and press interviews during her lifetime. The longest and most comprehensive is her filmed conversation for *Paroles d'historiens*, examined in the next chapter. Significant print interviews include her discussion with Geneviève Dreyfus-Armand reflecting on the two decades after May '68, ruminations on the PCF with Aurélien Rousseau (2001) and her thoughts on the connection between militancy and history with her student Vincent Löwy (2003).<sup>46</sup>

### 1.3 Structuring militancy

Rebérioux's roles as a militant, academic and teacher offer a valuable opportunity to examine how an individual academic shaped wider political, social and cultural debates of the Fourth and Fifth Republics. The archival presentation of Rebérioux's militancy demonstrates how historians acted as critical voices of state actions, at both a local and global level. The first chapter addresses the problems of how to define Rebérioux's militancy, set against the backdrop of three areas: studying an historian as a subject of

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<sup>45</sup> See Chris Waters and Gérard Noiriel, 'Is there still a place for social history?', in *Writing Contemporary History*, eds. Robert Gildea and Anne Simonin (London: Hodder Education, 2008).

<sup>46</sup> Geneviève Dreyfus-Armand, 'La Sorbonne occupée. Entretien avec Madeleine Rebérioux', *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps*, 11 1 (1988), pp.154-159; Aurélien Rousseau, 'Art et monde social. Entretien entre Madeleine Rebérioux, Henri Malberg, Alain Georges Leduc', in *Une collection politique ? Fonds d'art moderne et contemporain de la Fédération de Paris du Parti communiste français, 1954-1978 échos 2002* (Paris: Cercle d'art, 2002), pp.105-142; Löwy, 'Madeleine Rebérioux : militantisme et recherche historique', pp.279-287.

history, defining historical militancy as a form of enquiry and the issues associated with investigating Rebérioux's archives from a theoretical and practical perspective. The thesis focuses very specifically on Rebérioux's militancy in political spheres, using three case studies to explore her engagement across a range of chronological, thematic and organisational examples. The political and intellectual context varies for each case study, and so a short review of the scholarly literature is included at the start of each chapter.

The first case study problematizes Rebérioux's anticolonial engagement, the guiding principle of her militancy. Chapter three begins with a study of her activism during the Algerian war (1954-1962), whilst chapter four offers a diachronic comparison by examining her role in the public memory battles at the turn of the millennium. The chapters trace how Rebérioux evolved from working at the grass-roots of political engagement via small ephemeral committees in the 1950s, to the national media campaign *Appel des Douze* (2000) which sought the French government's recognition of its role in authorising the use of torture during the war. As a member of the 'Algerian generation', anticolonialism played a formative role in constructing Rebérioux's personal and professional networks, which were significant for her later militancy and developing her intellectual status, as subsequent case studies indicate. The first case study argues that Rebérioux's experiences of the Algerian war, specifically the behaviour of political parties on the left, nurtured her desire to research the genesis of socialism, and to better understand how, according to her, contemporary leaders like Guy Mollet had lost their way. Her interventions during this period indicate the classic dispute between PCF and Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière (SFIO) concerning socialists in government. The figure of Jean Jaurès – himself a critic of colonialism – proved the ideal vehicle for Rebérioux's fusion of history and militancy. As Rebérioux asserted, anticolonialism and anti-imperialism were intrinsic to both her world view and her conception of communism, expressed through her engagement to defend 'the oppressed' in Algeria, Vietnam and the Middle East.<sup>47</sup>

The anticolonial theme is further developed in the second case study, which questions Rebérioux's 'communist' activism during the 1960s and explores a key turning point in

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<sup>47</sup> Madeleine Rebérioux, 'Pierre Vidal-Naquet et nos guerres', in *Pierre Vidal-Naquet, un historien dans la cité*, eds. François Hartog, Pauline Schmitt-Pantel and Alain Schnapp (Paris: Découverte, 2007), p.20.

Rebérioux's militancy. Chapter five investigates the anti-imperialism of the Collectif intersyndical universitaire, which Rebérioux founded in 1965 to organise practical assistance for academic colleagues in Vietnam affected by American bombardments. Chapter six assesses Rebérioux's participation in academic protest during May '68 at the Sorbonne and her expulsion from the PCF in 1969. Focussing upon Rebérioux's role in trade unions, the two chapters argue that even before her expulsion, Rebérioux had broadened her intellectual and militant horizons beyond the confines of party orthodoxy. The analysis shows how Rebérioux's militancy illustrated the rise in importance of humanitarianism in structuring French left-wing political thought and action during the 1960s, before the anti-totalitarian moment of the mid-1970s. The final case study (chapter seven) moves ahead two decades to explore Rebérioux's experiences as leader of national civil rights organisation the Ligue des droits de l'homme. Rebérioux's presidency represented a rupture in the history of the League. She was the first female, first 'communist' and first professional historian to lead the LDH, which was founded in 1898 by Dreyfusard Ludovic Trarieux in order to defend civil liberties in the Republic. The chapter argues that the tension between Rebérioux's personal opinions and the bureaucratic structure of the League led to problems in defending Republican ideals. Rebérioux used her presidency to address issues close to her heart, from her opposition to the Gayssot law, her belief in *laïcité* as a pillar of the Republic to her development of social citizenship as a potential cure for the social and economic malaise in France. The difficulties Rebérioux faced are examined through the prism of the Republican motto *liberté, égalité et fraternité* to show how Rebérioux sought to innovatively resolve the political and social problems facing contemporary France at the end of the millennium.

#### **1.4 Running against the grain**

Taken together, the three case studies demonstrate the evolution of Rebérioux's historical militancy. During the 1950s Rebérioux ran ephemeral, single-interest committees; in the 1960s she founded an anti-war collective; by the 1990s Rebérioux presided over France's oldest human rights organisation. What is the difference between her activism in these distinct organisational structures: committees, collectives and leagues? The case studies equally chart Rebérioux's professional development: from



*lycée* teacher, to Sorbonne *assistante* and ultimately emeritus professor at Paris-VIII. Thinking in political terms, these studies coincide with broader narratives. 1954-75 was a period when 'the periphery became the centre of interest to European, and particularly French, intellectuals'.<sup>48</sup> Rebérioux's generation were forced to re-evaluate their intellectual horizons in order to encompass international issues, which in turn had huge implications for how intellectual figures engaged with the Republic. How did Rebérioux, a PCF member for over twenty years, navigate such a transformative period in French history and politics, from Marxist consensus to a post-communist world? The three studies equally explore traditional French universal Republican values: the anticolonialism study explores the *dreyfusiste* concept of truth, the anti-imperial and communist study questions post-war notions of solidarity and the citizenship debate of the 1990s returns to *dreyfusiste* concerns of justice. Taken together, the three case studies illustrate a general shift in French militancy, from forms such as strikes and sit-ins to more abstract discussions concerning attempts to control history and memory in the public sphere. Rebérioux's trajectory demonstrates how debates concerning history and memory can be just as 'politically potent' as a strike or sit-in.<sup>49</sup> The return of the grand public petition in the form of the *Appel des Douze* in 2000 suggests continuity within the *longue durée* of Rebérioux's militancy.

Historical militancy is a starting point for academic work on Rebérioux's life. The thesis focuses very specifically on Rebérioux's political militancy which leaves other areas for future investigation, such as her wide-ranging research on Jean Jaurès and origins of French socialism. My detailed analysis of her anticolonial, anti-imperial and human rights engagement forecloses rigorous attention to other areas of Rebérioux's engagement in the thesis, such as her role in constructing a new kind of university at Vincennes in the 1970s; her role in the Front de Solidarité Indochine; forms of scholarly leadership including revue *Le Mouvement social*, the SÉJ and her work on *Le Maitron*; and her involvement in organising historical commemoration, from the bicentenary of the French Revolution in 1989 to events to mark the centenary of the Dreyfus affair.

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<sup>48</sup> Kristin Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p.82.

<sup>49</sup> Chabal, 'French politics in an age of uncertainty', p.10.

Rebérioux's militancy merits historical analysis in its own right, for its depth, the richness of its material traces and its significant implications for understanding the professional and public role of the historian in contemporary France. My research offers an original way of thinking about leftist engagement from the critical standpoint of over ten years since Rebérioux's passing. Such chronological distance is matched by my own geographical and cultural detachment from Rebérioux as a subject of enquiry, allowing a fresh approach, understood from archival analysis rather than my own personal encounters with Rebérioux.<sup>50</sup> Through an exploration of three diverse examples of engagement, my thesis reveals how Rebérioux was able to use her academic expertise to intervene in public, political crises and shape successful action in the parapolitical sphere. Her causes varied from international conflicts, both in a francophone and more global context, to domestic issues such as modern citizenship and crafting a Republic fit for the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Although Rebérioux was by no means the only historian to engage in militancy, her example illustrates how an individual worked against the grain. Not least, Rebérioux operated at a time when women in Higher Education remained the exception. Along with remarkable female historians Michelle Perrot, Rolande Trespé, Annie Kriegel and Collette Chambelland Rebérioux carved out a new model for women both in and outside of academia. As this thesis reveals, Rebérioux offers a rich example of a militant figure on the left who offered sustained engagement during half a century of intellectual, ideological and political turmoil. Rebérioux found new ways to speak and act out during a period in which many, from Tony Judt to Émile Chabal, have conceived of as a period of decline, not just in the culture of the left but as an era of wider political uncertainty in France.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Douglas Johnson argued in 1969 that considering 'French history in French terms, with an insight and an understanding can only come to a [wo]man who has a double identity'. 'The historian as Frenchman', *New Society*, 14 (1969), p.223.

<sup>51</sup> Tony Judt and Timothy Snyder, *Thinking the Twentieth Century* (London: Vintage Books, 2013); Chabal, 'French politics in an age of uncertainty', pp.1-22.

## Chapter 2. Tracing Rebérioux's Historical Militancy

*Donc ma manière de voir à moi consiste à regarder l'histoire comme une historienne mais en lui posant des questions qui sont celles de notre temps, de mon militantisme, et à essayer de faire passer le maximum de réflexion, de prise de distance, de dimension historique dans le militantisme des organisations.*

**Madeleine Rebérioux<sup>1</sup>**

### 2.1 Introduction

Researching a figure like Rebérioux poses many questions for the historian.<sup>2</sup> Rebérioux engaged in a plethora of projects and organisations during her long life.<sup>3</sup> Such multiplicity of action means that there are choices to be made, in terms of scholarly framework, typology, source-selection and context. This chapter explores these issues by examining how Rebérioux's example speaks to broader research contexts: of the historian as a subject of study, debates concerning the place of militancy in intellectual engagement and at a more practical level, academic understandings of the archive as a physical and ideological space.

As a figure who remains within living memory, both oral and archive-based histories of Rebérioux are possible. Both methodologies have their advantages and their drawbacks. Plenty of sources are available for either approach. In addition to her copious paper archives Rebérioux published widely and many of her colleagues, family, friends and former students are willing to discuss their memories of Madeleine.<sup>4</sup> Charles-Victor

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<sup>1</sup> *Paroles d'historiens*, Part. 2 : Le choix de Jaurès, Chap. 11 : Harmoniser recherche historique et militantisme.

<sup>2</sup> Parts of this chapter have been published in Ellen Crabtree, 'Madeleine Rebérioux dans les archives', *Cahiers Jaurès*, 217 3 (2015), pp.21-33.

<sup>3</sup> The abbreviation list for this thesis offers some indication of the wide range of associations in which Rebérioux was involved.

<sup>4</sup> I am extremely grateful to colleagues and family who were willing to share their memories of Rebérioux, notably Gilles Candar, Yolande Cohen, Rémi Fabre, Patrick Fridenson, Éric Lafon, Michelle Perrot, Christophe Prochasson, Danielle Tartakowsky, Marie-Noëlle Thibault and Madeleine's two sons Pierre-Yves and Vincent Rebérioux. Bibliographies of Rebérioux's published works can be found in Philippe

Langlois and Charles Seignobos, whom Rebérioux admired as the fathers of the modern discipline of history, maintained that 'l'histoire se fait avec des documents'.<sup>5</sup> The wealth of Rebérioux's archives, and the selective nature of oral testimony has led to the prioritisation of written traces over oral portraits in this thesis, although of course conversations with those close to Rebérioux are invaluable to corroborate, explain and enrich readings of archival documentation.<sup>6</sup> This chapter will examine three key theoretical frameworks for researching Madeleine Rebérioux. We begin with biography, specifically looking at historians as subjects of history in their own right. How can Rebérioux be approached as an individual subject of study? More broadly, what does an examination of an historian offer to the discipline of history? Secondly, attention turns to the problem of defining Rebérioux's historical militancy. What is the relationship between history and militancy, in Rebérioux's engagement and more broadly in France since 1945? To what extent did Rebérioux challenge the notion of the 'intellectual'? The last section focuses explicitly on Rebérioux's archives. Drawing upon work by Carolyn Steedman and Arlette Farge on demythologising the archive as an historical and temporal space, this section explores practical and theoretical ways to read these documents.<sup>7</sup>

## **2.2 An historian as a subject of history**

### **2.2.1 *Historians, generations and autobiographies***

In his essay *What is History?* EH Carr famously cautioned students to 'study the historian before you begin to study the facts'.<sup>8</sup> What happens when historians are moved from the historiographical side-lines to become the central focus of research? Historians' lives, when approached from a critical, intellectual perspective can offer fresh insights both on previously-studied events but equally on the nature of writing history itself. Moreover,

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Rygiel, 'Les publications de Madeleine Rebérioux dans *Le Mouvement social*', *Le Mouvement social*, 219-220 2 (2007); Duclert, Fabre and Fridenson (eds.), *Avenirs et avant-gardes en France*, pp.395-432.

<sup>5</sup> Charles-Victor Langlois and Charles Seignobos, *Introduction aux études historiques [1898]. Préface de Madeleine Rebérioux* (Paris: Kimé, 1992), p.19.

<sup>6</sup> Hanna Diamond described this process as offering 'considerable insight into parts of the puzzle'. 'Oral history: an assessment', in *Voices of France: Social, Political, and Cultural Identity*, eds. Sheila Perry and Maire Cross (London: Pinter, 1997), p.69.

<sup>7</sup> Carolyn Steedman, *Dust* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001); Arlette Farge, *Le goût de l'archive* (Paris: Seuil, 1989).

<sup>8</sup> Edward Hallett Carr, *What is History?* (London: Macmillan, 1961), p.17.

'historians' do not constitute a homogenous group, but their identities and experiences vary according to historical specialism, gender, institutional affiliation, historiographical approach, ideological preference and socio-economic background.<sup>9</sup> Examining individual trajectories within this profession can reveal more about the discipline and the place of academics in society as a whole. JF Maifflet and Damien Richard recently suggested that 'l'histoire n'est pas qu'un métier c'est aussi un plaisir, une vision du monde et de la société, un engagement'.<sup>10</sup> By their training and vocation, historians have an ability to unpick the relationship between the past and the present, but beyond a historiographical framework. Focussing on historians as individuals brings an interesting set of questions to the fore. At what point does the private individual and the professional historian cross over? Is there something unique about the status and experience of French historians in the post-war period? More importantly, what new insights can be offered by viewing history through the eyes of historians? This section will explore why historians such as Rebérioux and her post-war cohort merit further examination as subjects of individual study in their own right and how biographical methods can be applied in order to critically evaluate their lives.

The exceptional post-war generation of French historians offers a rich terrain for unravelling the relationship between historian, history and politics. Hungarian sociologist Karl Mannheim's concept of 'generational units' can be used to understand the place of individuals within the larger structure of social and intellectual movements.<sup>11</sup> Mannheim posited that the typical lifespan of a generational unit was between 15 and 30 years, the average period of time taken for the older generation to be replaced by a younger cohort in public life. His reasoning was based on the assumption that for the first 30 years an individual is still learning; by the age of 60 'man' quits public life.<sup>12</sup> The unifying agent between each cohort was quantified by Mannheim as 'entelechy', the vital guiding principle of a generation: whether that was constant factors such as civilisation, nation or family or more transient elements such as politics, art,

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<sup>9</sup> Jacques Revel, 'L'historien, l'événement', in *Le mai 68 des historiens : entre identités narratives et histoire orale*, ed. Agnès Callu (Villeneuve-d'Ascq: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2010), p.17.

<sup>10</sup> JF Maifflet and Damien Richard, 'Qu'est-ce qu'un historien ? Essais typologiques et imaginaires sociaux', in *Le mai 68 des historiens : entre identités narratives et histoire orale*, ed. Agnès Callu (Villeneuve-d'Ascq: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2010), p.89.

<sup>11</sup> Karl Mannheim, 'The problem of generations [1923]', in *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, ed. Paul Kecskemeti (London: Routledge, 1952), pp.276-320.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p.278.

language or style.<sup>13</sup> Whilst Rebérioux's place and self-identification as a member of the 'Algerian generation' is discussed further in the next chapter, it is worth observing the limitations in using Mannheim's theory to understand the cycles of Rebérioux's engagement. Rebérioux was active in the public sphere from the ages of 26 (when she joined the PCF) until her death aged 84, a period which stretches well beyond Mannheim's prescribed thirty years. Nevertheless, the concept remains useful for recognising how the political environment of the Fourth and Fifth Republics shaped Rebérioux's outlook, career and militancy. Indeed, other sociologists have suggested how the theory of generations can explain the intersection between individuals and history.<sup>14</sup>

Rebérioux and her 'generation' of historians had a unique trajectory. Born in the shadow of the First World War, Rebérioux and her colleagues grew up during the last decades of the Third Republic, were university-educated during the Second World War and their early careers as academics were shaped by the colonial wars of Indochina, Algeria and Vietnam. Politically-charged events of the twentieth century were coupled with significant developments in the historical discipline itself: the rise of the *Annales*, challenges to Marxist orthodoxy and postmodern linguistic, cultural and autobiographical turns. Such an accelerated political environment, which was often highly traumatic for the individuals involved, created a specific working environment for Rebérioux's generational unit. Philip Daileader and Philip Whalen contended that French historians 'reached their apogee' during the period 1975-1990.<sup>15</sup> It was a time where, for a significant number within the historical profession, to be an 'historian' meant something far more than simply researching, writing and teaching history. For Jacques Revel, during this period 'History enjoyed the combined prestige of both intellectual commitment and ideological engagement'.<sup>16</sup> Such a personal reading is corroborated by sociological research which suggests that activism has a 'strong and

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p.284.

<sup>14</sup> Jane Pilcher, 'Mannheim's sociology of generations: an undervalued legacy', *British Journal of Sociology*, 45 3 (1994), p.482. Jean-François Sirinelli has explored Communist *normaliens* from the rue d'Ulm using the concept of generations from an historical perspective. 'Les normaliens de la rue d'Ulm après 1945 : une génération communiste?', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 33 4 (1986), pp.569-588. See also Jean-François Sirinelli, 'Le hasard ou la nécessité ? Une histoire en chantier : l'histoire des intellectuels', *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, 9 1 (1986), pp.105-107.

<sup>15</sup> Philip Daileader and Philip Whalen (eds.), *French Historians, 1900-2000: New Historical Writing in Twentieth-Century France* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), p.xxii.

<sup>16</sup> Revel, 'Introduction', p.15.

durable impact' on the political and personal lives of participants.<sup>17</sup> It is no surprise that Rebérioux's generational unit included a significant number of politically-active historians, the majority on the left and many connected with the PCF at some point in their career: Maurice Agulhon, Pierre Chaunu, François Furet, Annie Kriegel, Jacques Le Goff, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, Jean Maitron, Mona Ozouf, Michelle and Jean-Claude Perrot, Denis Richet, Rolande Trespé and Pierre Vidal-Naquet to name but a few.<sup>18</sup> Many were protégés of Ernest Labrousse, the eminent Sorbonne scholar of economic and social history.<sup>19</sup> This generation of historians were characterised by their political *arrière-pensée*, a professional quality this thesis argues is in demise since the passing of Rebérioux's generation.<sup>20</sup>

Analysing historians' individual agency is not without precedence. Much has been written about the relationship between historians and their autobiographies in France.<sup>21</sup> The *ego-histoire* movement led by Pierre Nora in the late 1980s highlighted the connection between individuals' experiences and their professional work.<sup>22</sup> *Essais d'ego-histoire* was a pioneering project which presented the personal reflections of seven historians on their own professional and personal trajectories: Maurice Agulhon, Pierre Chaunu, Georges Duby, Raoul Giradet, Jacques le Goff, Michelle Perrot and René Remond all participated. In the words of its architect Nora, *ego-histoire* aimed to create 'un genre nouveau, pour un nouvel âge de la conscience historique'.<sup>23</sup> Nora's methodology was equally clear. Participants were instructed to 'expliciter, en historien, le lien entre l'histoire qu'on a faite et l'histoire qui vous a fait'.<sup>24</sup> However Nora later decried the initiative as a failure, both in publishing and intellectual terms, questioning if *ego-*

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<sup>17</sup> Marco Giugni, 'Personal and biographical consequences', in *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, eds. David Snow, Sarah Soule and Hanspeter Kriesi (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), p.491.

<sup>18</sup> Mona Ozouf was not on the left. It is worth noting that the majority of PCF members in this list broke with the party following the repression of the Hungarian revolution (1956). Furet later criticised the illusion of communism in *Le passé d'une illusion : essai sur l'idée communiste au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1995).

<sup>19</sup> Madeleine Rebérioux, 'Ernest Labrousse, historien jaurésien', *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, 276 (1989), pp.144-150.

<sup>20</sup> Julian Wright, 'The state and the left in modern France', *French History*, 21 4 (2007), p.454.

<sup>21</sup> Jeremy Popkin, *History, Historians, & Autobiography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Jaume Aurell, 'Autobiographical texts as historiographical sources: rereading Fernand Braudel and Annie Kriegel', *Biography*, 29 3 (2006); Richard Vinen, 'The poisoned madeleine: the autobiographical turn in historical writing', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 46 3 (2011).

<sup>22</sup> Pierre Nora (ed.), *Essais d'ego-histoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p.5.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7.

*histoire* was even possible.<sup>25</sup> Most recently, Françoise Thébaud has rejuvenated Nora's research premise by calling upon historians to examine their own 'intellectual journey' in order to better understand the relationship between historian and history.<sup>26</sup>

### 2.2.2 *Paroles d'historiens*

The *ego-histoire* movement underwent an audio-visual turn at the end of the twentieth century. The *Paroles d'historiens* series, an initiative run by the Institut national d'audiovisuel (INA) consisted of ten comprehensive, filmed interviews with leading historians reflecting on their professional lives.<sup>27</sup> The interviews aimed to apply an historical, objective approach to historians' own lives, drawing inspiration from Nora's earlier project. Participants were connected with the *Annales* in some way. Whilst the roll-call included three of the original *ego-histoire* seven (Maurice Agulhon, Pierre Chaunu, René Rémond) the series also interviewed antiquity specialist Claude Nicolet, historian of Napoleon Jean Tulard, American specialist of Vichy France Robert Paxton, and Israeli national and historian of fascism Zeev Sternhell. Some, such as Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, had already written their autobiographies; Nora himself was also featured.<sup>28</sup> The tenth historian – and only female subject – was Madeleine Rebérioux.

Rebérioux did not, for the most part, engage in historical introspection. She never wrote her own autobiography, on the basis that memory and history, to her, were separate processes: 'Je ne saurais pour ma part dépasser le témoignage, fragile, peu vérifié sinon par confrontation avec d'autres'.<sup>29</sup> Rebérioux felt unable to apply her skills as an historian to her own present, unlike her historical subject Jaurès who, as a parliamentarian and journalist, frequently fused historical investigation with political

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<sup>25</sup> Pierre Nora, 'L'ego-histoire est-elle possible?', *Histoirein*, 3 (2001), pp.1-8.

<sup>26</sup> Françoise Thébaud, 'Entre parcours intellectuel et essai d'ego-histoire. Le poids du genre', *Genre & Histoire* 4 <https://genrehistoire.revues.org/697>, (2009) [accessed 02/11/2012].

<sup>27</sup> The series was a subsection of *Grands entretiens* (<http://grands-entretiens.ina.fr/>), ten collections which covered interviews with individuals grouped into topics as diverse as Africa, dance, theatre, the Holocaust, cinema and TV history. *Paroles d'historiens* (2001), available at <http://entretiens.ina.fr/consulter/Histoire/> [accessed 28/03/2013].

<sup>28</sup> Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Paris-Montpellier PC-PSU 1945-1963* (Paris: Gallimard, 1982).

<sup>29</sup> Rebérioux, 'Pierre Vidal-Naquet et nos guerres', p.13. For the same reason Rebérioux refused to act as an 'expert' in trials involving history, only as a historical witness.



polemic.<sup>30</sup> Rebérioux's closest piece of self-writing was her contribution to an edited volume dedicated to her close friend Pierre Vidal-Naquet, which recounted 'our wars', the anti-colonialist battles of the 1950s.<sup>31</sup> Rebérioux made a clear distinction between written and spoken word, which she conceived of as entirely separate thought processes. Whilst the written word was important for disseminating historical research, for her the spoken word was more responsive: 'Parler, pour moi, ça relève de l'enseignement, de la discussion, du débat, de tout ce que vous voulez, de réponse à des interviews'.<sup>32</sup> Her *Paroles d'historiens* interview arguably functions as the closest approximation of her autobiography, although as an interview the structure and nature of the medium is less self-reflective than a written autobiography.

Rebérioux's interview was conducted by historian-journalist Marc Riglet and has a total running time of 5 hours and 38 minutes. The interview was filmed in 2001 and broadcast on the French TV channel *Histoire* on 5 March 2002. At the time of filming Rebérioux was 81: an age where she could reflect on the full breadth of her varied career and the connections between different aspects of her life, although not without some nostalgia. Her interview is divided into four sections, each of which focuses on a specific theme within her personal history of engagement: *le choix de l'histoire*, *le choix de Jaurès*, *le choix du social* and finally *le choix de la liberté*. The questions were chosen by Marc Riglet, who attempted to guide the interview. In reality however, Rebérioux controlled the direction of their conversation and frequently challenged Riglet's questions or his assertions. The interview is crucial for understanding how Rebérioux conceptualised her own engagement as an historian and militant and how she viewed her authority and influence. The film is equally valuable for its audio-visual record of Rebérioux's life. It offers a snapshot of a living, breathing Rebérioux, evoking the force of her personality and an impression of her body language, tone, mannerisms and revealing her physiognomy. To give two examples: first, the interview indicates how Rebérioux suffered from arthritis in her fingers later on her life. Details like these help to explain why her handwriting changed and thus enrich my reading of her archives. Secondly, the

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<sup>30</sup> The most famous example is *Les Preuves* [1898] which examined the forgeries of the Dreyfus Affair. See Eric Cahm and Madeleine Rebérioux (eds.), *Oeuvres de Jean Jaurès. Tome 6 et 7. Les temps de l'affaire Dreyfus (1897-1899)* (Paris: Fayard, 2001).

<sup>31</sup> Rebérioux, 'Pierre Vidal-Naquet et nos guerres', pp.13-23.

<sup>32</sup> *Paroles d'historiens*, Part II : Le choix de Jaurès, Chap. 11 : Harmoniser recherche historique et militantisme.

interview reveals Rebérioux's unguarded moments, such as her emotion when discussing her expulsion from the PCF, her anger at Guy Mollet, and her enthusiasm for new developments in historical research. The interview takes place in her flat on Boulevard Arago in the fourteenth arrondissement. Rebérioux is filmed in front of heavily-laden book shelves, a piano with framed pictures of her family, or at a desk covered in papers with a bust of Jaurès.<sup>33</sup> The interview thus offers a visual representation of her archives in their natural environment of Rebérioux's home rather than in the Archives Nationales.<sup>34</sup>

### 2.2.3 *A new intellectual biography?*

In the decade and a half since the filming of *Paroles d'historiens*, academic discussion concerning the role of French historians has evolved from the autobiographical to a more critical, dispassionate perspective. Such an approach forms part of a resurgence of historical interest in biography as a way of unpicking national and even global narratives.<sup>35</sup> The long historical tradition of biography stretches back to antiquity and the earliest forms of historical writing. Yet in the post-war era biography fell out of fashion as an epistemological form of enquiry. The promotion of studying 'mentalités' across the *longue durée* by the *Annales* undoubtedly contributed to this decline, compounded by traditional biography's focus on using 'great men' as a model for the present. Pierre Bourdieu's critique *L'illusion biographique*, which famously argued that biography created a false coherence of a persona, pushed biography further aside.<sup>36</sup> As early as 1976 Josef Konvitz lamented the decline of biography in French History: 'Biography is not just a form of inquiry for the historian interested in a single personality; it is also suitable for the historian who starts out with a problem, and it can

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<sup>33</sup> A gift from her children, Rebérioux always worked with this bust on her desk. Candar, 'Pourquoi Jaurès?', p.43.

<sup>34</sup> Work on Agulhon's library explores the importance of archival texts in their original environment: Jonathan Barbier and Natalie Petiteau, 'La bibliothèque de Maurice Agulhon : cadre de travail, coulisses de l'écriture et patrimoine scientifique', *Revue d'histoire du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 47 2 (2013), pp.95-112.

<sup>35</sup> In terms of work on French historians, generalist texts have been weaker than studies of the individual: *New historical writing in twentieth-century France* took a schematic view of leading historians and only included two women (Michelle Perrot and Mona Ozouf) in its canon of French historians. Daileader and Whalen (eds.), *French Historians, 1900-2000: New Historical Writing in Twentieth-Century France*.

<sup>36</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, 'L'illusion biographique', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 62 1 (1986), pp.69-72.

demonstrate the ways in which a society's cultural, economic, social and political fabric alter'.<sup>37</sup>

Thirty years later, biographical methods, led by theoretical work by François Dosse, have returned to the fore of historical investigation after several decades in the epistemological wilderness.<sup>38</sup> The return was partly prompted by the need for a wider understanding of new social groups, notably women, with the agency of these groups put in a rigorous historical context. The 'new biography' pioneered by Jo Burr Margadant among others sought to place gender at the forefront of biographical study whilst acknowledging the fluid nature of individuals' identities during their lifetimes.<sup>39</sup> Although a gender-based approach is not the most apposite way of approaching Rebérioux's life, the notion of multiplicity is extremely helpful for conceptualising the many layers of her militancy, and also for accounting for the contradictions within her lifetime, such as her expulsion from the PCF in 1969 but her refusal to distance herself from the party.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, Rebérioux's colleague Michelle Perrot addressed her friend in 1968 as 'multiple Madeleine', demonstrating the layers in her engagement.<sup>41</sup> Rebérioux's militancy as an activist and an historian is therefore the theme that weaves through this thesis, as discussed below. In order to prevent this research from simply reiterating the chronological facts of Rebérioux's life or offering a simple narration of her militancy, the thesis is structured into a series of three case studies which explore three aspects of her political engagement through various associations and organisations.

Appraising Rebérioux as a subject in her own right builds upon recent analyses of post-war historians. Among others, these have included studies of François Furet's

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<sup>37</sup> Josef Konvitz, 'Biography: the missing form in French Historical Studies', *European Studies Review*, 6 (1976), p.14.

<sup>38</sup> Dosse explored how biography sat at the juncture between literature and science in *Le pari biographique : écrire une vie* (Paris: Découverte, 2005). Biography has remained prevalent in the popular press, as Dosse observes. See also Malachi Hacoen, 'Rediscovering intellectual biography and its limits', *History of Political Economy*, 39 1 (2007), pp.9-29.

<sup>39</sup> Jo Burr Margadant (ed.), *The New Biography: Performing Femininity in Nineteenth-Century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

<sup>40</sup> Rebérioux did not conceive of herself as a feminist, believing the cause of the working-class as a whole to be more important.

<sup>41</sup> See chapter six.

intellectual life along with Maurice Agulhon's library.<sup>42</sup> These works draw upon historians' material legacy (published works, private papers, audio-visual archives) rather than personal autobiographies or oral histories. Whilst the benefits of an oral-based approach are manifold, the methodology is limited by its reliance on living testimony, which as time marches on, becomes increasingly selective, especially for the post-war generation. As the authors of *Becoming Historians* noted, oral history was limited by its nature: 'Partial, shaped by the purposes of recall, and inherently egocentric'.<sup>43</sup> Rather than relying on individuals' memories to construct a history of historians, material records such as private archives and published works offer an alternative route to analysing historians' individual and collective agency in politics, society and culture. Such an approach allows scholarly understanding to move beyond idealised histories of historians to, in the words of Antoine Lilti, 'analyse how history is made'.<sup>44</sup>

Whilst this thesis is not a biography per se, it does draw on some of the key tenets of intellectual biography in order to ground Rebérioux's activism within a political, social and intellectual context.<sup>45</sup> Christophe Prochasson began his intellectual biography of Furet with the disclaimer that 'la biographie est moins une fin en soi qu'une méthode'.<sup>46</sup> He was adamant that his analysis of Furet was more about the political and intellectual history of the post-war period and examining the connection between Furet as an individual and his different temporalities than creating a new manifesto for biography. Drawing upon Prochasson's approach, my thesis seeks to analyse the connections within Rebérioux's militancy and the environment in which she operated, rather than rewrite approaches to the biographical genre. The research seeks to further validate the role of historians as subjects of study in their own right. Biography is present insofar as Labrousse's contention 'jamais l'homme, jamais l'homme tout seul, mais l'homme en

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<sup>42</sup> Michael Scott Christofferson, 'François Furet between history and journalism, 1958-1965', *French History*, 15 4 (2001), pp.421-447; Christophe Prochasson, *François Furet : les chemins de la mélancolie* (Paris: Stock, 2013); Barbier and Petiteau, 'La bibliothèque de Maurice Agulhon', pp.95-112.

<sup>43</sup> James Banner and John Gillis (eds.), *Becoming Historians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), p.viii.

<sup>44</sup> Antoine Lilti, 'Does intellectual history exist in France? The chronicle of a renaissance foretold', in *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History*, eds. Darrin McMahon and Samuel Moyn (Oxford: OUP, 2014), p.65.

<sup>45</sup> Brian Cowan's work on ways of writing intellectual history, significantly the social history of ideas, has been invaluable: 'Ideas in context: from the social to the cultural history of ideas', in *Palgrave Advances in Intellectual History*, eds. Richard Whatmore and Brian Young (Houndmills: 2006), pp.171-188.

<sup>46</sup> Prochasson, *François Furet : les chemins de la mélancolie*, p.16.

société'.<sup>47</sup> Rebérioux herself built upon her supervisor's approach, asserting that 'les individus ne sont pas seuls au monde. À travers chacun d'eux circulent non seulement son métier, mais sa famille, ses rencontres, ses lectures, ses choix de jeunesse, son milieu et sa classe'.<sup>48</sup> Jacques Le Goff, another contemporary of Rebérioux and eminent biographer of Louis IX, argued, 'quel objet, plus et mieux qu'un personnage, cristallise autour de lui l'ensemble de son environnement et l'ensemble des domaines qui découpe l'historien dans le champ du savoir historique ?'<sup>49</sup> Like Le Goff's subject Louis IX, Rebérioux helped to shape her political age almost to the same extent that her era was formative in creating her militancy.

Work on Rebérioux takes the legacy of the *ego-histoire* project to a new level.<sup>50</sup> An examination of her life from a critical perspective can tell us much about the relationship between historians and politics, their place in society and the changing nature of the historical discipline itself, using biography to introduce themes of intellectual history. As Herman Lebovics suggested, 'sometimes an historian gets lucky and he or she can discover a historical actor, or actors, whose life, or loves are a microcosm of the macrocosm we are trying to find'.<sup>51</sup> Such reasoning is also applicable to Rebérioux. In studying her agency as an individual much is also revealed about the political and historical environment of anticolonial and humanitarian debates of the Fifth Republic. Her life offers a useful tool for analysing the interplay between the different micro and macro scales of history, from biography to national events and global social changes. Rebérioux herself advocated a similar approach in her own historical research. When prefacing work on Victor Basch she argued that 'nous savons bien que l'individu n'est ni premier, ni dernier : il prend existence dans maints réseaux de relations sociales et dans les discours qu'ils expriment'.<sup>52</sup> A study of Rebérioux's militancy, grounded in her social and intellectual context, offers history many new understandings: an example of a successful woman in higher education at a time when the discipline was largely male-dominated; the role of history in militancy and (female) agency and an invaluable

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<sup>47</sup> Quoted in Candar, 'Pourquoi Jaurès ?', p.46.

<sup>48</sup> Rebérioux, 'Pierre Vidal-Naquet et nos guerres', p.23.

<sup>49</sup> Jacques Le Goff, *Saint-Louis* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), p.16.

<sup>50</sup> Rebérioux was never asked to participate in Pierre Nora's project, likely due to personal differences.

<sup>51</sup> Herman Lebovics, *Bringing the Empire Back Home: France in the Global Age* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), p.78.

<sup>52</sup> Madeleine Rebérioux, 'En guise de préface', in *Victor Basch (1863-1944) : un intellectuel cosmopolite*, eds. Françoise Basch, Liliane Crips and Pascale Gruson (Paris: Berg International, 2000), p.13.

depiction of how diverse anticolonial and human rights groups operated during the shifting political landscapes of the Fourth and Fifth Republics.

## 2.3 Historical militancy

### 2.3.1 *The problem of definition*

Great debate surrounds the definition, role and status of the 'intellectual' in France. Any attempt to grapple with the notion of the French intellectual, as Stefan Collini noted, 'needs to recognise the existence of this great slag-heap of recycled cliché and indestructible prejudice'.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, Rebérioux considered the practice of defining the intellectual as an art in itself: 'Toute définition de l'intellectuel peut devenir le gibier de l'historien'.<sup>54</sup> Commonly-accepted classifications tend to emphasise the background and social function of the intellectual as an individual, whilst also reflecting differences between the universal and the specific intellectual. Pascal Ory and Jean-François Sirinelli's definition is often taken as the starting point for debates concerning definitions of the 'intellectual': 'Un homme du culturel, créateur ou médiateur, mis en situation d'homme du politique, producteur ou consommateur d'idéologie'.<sup>55</sup> Jacques Julliard and Michel Winock largely agreed in their comprehensive *Dictionnaire des intellectuels français*, labelling an intellectual as 'un homme ou une femme [...] qui applique à l'ordre politique une notoriété acquise ailleurs'.<sup>56</sup> In her work on French communism Jeannine Verdès-Leroux observed the public function of the intellectual, emphasizing their role as someone 'qui intervient dans la vie publique par des œuvres, des écrits, des prises de position'.<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, the notion of the intellectual has been expanded to encompass broader notions of engagement. Sudhir Hazareesingh contended that 'any person engaging consistently in abstract reflection about questions

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<sup>53</sup> Stefan Collini, *Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain* (Oxford: OUP, 2006), p.248.

<sup>54</sup> Rebérioux and Candar (eds.), *Jaurès et les intellectuels*, p.7.

<sup>55</sup> Jean-François Sirinelli and Pascal Ory, *Les intellectuels en France, de l'affaire Dreyfus à nos jours* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1992), p.10.

<sup>56</sup> Jacques Julliard and Michel Winock, 'Introduction', in *Dictionnaire des intellectuels français : les personnes, les lieux, les moments*, eds. Jacques Julliard and Michel Winock (Paris: Seuil, 1996), p.12.

<sup>57</sup> Jeannine Verdès-Leroux, *Au service du parti : le parti communiste, les intellectuels et la culture (1944-1956)* (Paris: Fayard/Minuit, 1983), p.21.

of truth or morality' qualified as an intellectual whilst Sunil Khilnani highlighted the importance of intelligence in claiming authority.<sup>58</sup>

From the works of Julien Benda to Christophe Charle and Tony Judt, epistemological debates illustrate the rich scholarship on the concept of 'engagement' and the various, equally valid, interpretations of intellectual engagement.<sup>59</sup> However, there remains a gap in our knowledge concerning the inner transactions of intellectual involvement at grass-roots level. It seems clear Rebérioux's model of engagement stretched beyond existing definitions of the 'intellectual' and the examples of prototypical public intellectuals such as Raymond Aron, Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir. In reading Rebérioux's papers it is her broad spectrum of militancy, seen through her proactive engagement and intellectual curiosity which comes to the fore, rather than her status as a detached figure or an individual whose interests were limited to a narrow set of concerns. Jean-François Sirinelli's methodological discussion of approaches to studying intellectuals is useful for considering Rebérioux's militancy as an historian: a study of her trajectory, social structures of militancy and generational identity exposes the inner mechanics of her engagement.<sup>60</sup> Rebérioux was a militant, in the French sense of the word: an 'adhérent d'une organisation politique, syndicale, sociale, qui participe activement à la vie de cette organisation'; 'personne qui agit pour une cause'.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, unlike many well-known intellectuals, Rebérioux did not theorise on her position in society in an abstract or philosophical sense but instead she pursued specific political, social and cultural goals.<sup>62</sup> Her engagement was grounded in pragmatism and a need to act or speak out rather than a theory of social status. It is probable that Prochasson had Rebérioux's example in mind when he wrote that 'militier, c'est donner, c'est se dépenser

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<sup>58</sup> Sudhir Hazareesingh, *Political Traditions in Modern France* (Oxford: OUP, 1994), p.35; Sunil Khilnani, *Arguing Revolution: the Intellectual Left in Postwar France* (London: Yale University Press, 1993), pp.11-13.

<sup>59</sup> Julien Benda, *La trahison des clercs* (Paris: Grasset, 1927); Christophe Charle, *Naissance des « intellectuels » : 1880-1900* (Paris: Minuit, 1990); Tony Judt, *Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals, 1944-1956* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

<sup>60</sup> Sirinelli, 'Le hasard ou la nécessité?', p.98.

<sup>61</sup> <http://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/militant/51436?q=militant#51318> [accessed 20 August 2013]. The OED defines 'militant' as 'aggressively active in pursuing a political or social cause, and often favouring extreme, violent, or confrontational methods'. OED Online, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/118418> [accessed 20 August 2013].

<sup>62</sup> In some ways Rebérioux's activities conformed to the specific intellectual as defined by Michel Foucault, however her example went beyond the narrow framework of intervention of the specific intellectual to address a broader spectrum of causes. Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972/1977*, ed. and trans. by Colin Gordon (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980), pp.127-133.

sans compter au profit des autres, c'est accepter les tâches parfois ingrates, sans attendre d'autre récompense que celle d'avoir contribué à l'accouchement hypothétique d'une société meilleure'.<sup>63</sup>

### 2.3.2 *Rebérioux's militancy*

Militants of Rebérioux's generation were defined by their attachment to a political cause, often expressed through membership of a specific political party.<sup>64</sup> Yet Rebérioux differed from many of her generational cohort in that her militancy was not just about words and the expression of an opinion, but about taking action, by showing, doing and bringing people together for a wide range of causes.<sup>65</sup> Hazareesingh ruminated that 'the true spirit of intellectual militancy in the 1960s and 1970s was embodied in individuals and groups which operated outside the framework of conventional institutions'.<sup>66</sup> Rebérioux's chosen intellectual terrain was the parapolitical sphere, the space between government and citizens, where the public interests of the state and the private interests of individuals were negotiated.<sup>67</sup> Rebérioux's militancy illustrated the history of political activity outside the spheres of parliament or party.<sup>68</sup> In this way Rebérioux was an outsider to the political establishment, especially following her expulsion from the PCF. Yet even before her expulsion she chose to work with a broad cross-section of figures from the left which frequently went against Communist party wishes. Political factions meant very little to her in practice: 'Radical, radical-socialiste, socialiste, ce ne sont que des prénoms. Le nom de la famille est républicain'.<sup>69</sup> This thesis demonstrates how Rebérioux mobilised various parapolitical groups across separate political factions – from ephemeral anticolonial committees to long-standing activist networks such as the LDH – in order to support a wide range of specific political, social or cultural causes. To a

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<sup>63</sup> Christophe Prochasson, *La gauche, est-elle morale ?* (Paris: Flammarion, 2010), p.94.

<sup>64</sup> Hazareesingh, *Political Traditions in Modern France*, p.54.

<sup>65</sup> Militant and historian Marie-Noëlle Thibault (better known as crime fiction writer Dominique Manotti) explored the connections between militancy and writing in her keynote discussion at the conference 'Engagement in the 21st century: countering crises in the French-speaking world', Hull, 17 September 2014. Thibault taught History with Rebérioux at Vincennes in the 1970s.

<sup>66</sup> Hazareesingh, *Political Traditions in Modern France*, p.55.

<sup>67</sup> Janet Horne, *A Social Laboratory for Modern France: the Musée Social and the Rise of the Welfare State* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), p.5. Christine Bard also uses the notion of 'le secteur parapolitique' to describe the militancy of disenfranchised women who engaged in politics outside of party or government before 1945. *Les filles de Marianne : histoire des féminismes, 1914-1940* (Paris: Fayard, 1995), p.83.

<sup>68</sup> Wright, 'The state and the left in modern France', p.458.

<sup>69</sup> *Paroles d'historiens*, Part III : Le choix du Social, Chap. 27 : L'église, l'armée et l'État.



certain extent the form of parapolitical militancy epitomised by Rebérioux no longer exists today. Twenty-first-century social movements such as ‘Occupy’, anti-austerity groups and ‘blacktivism’ have ushered in new forms of engagement which are structured around grass-roots social media rather than being led by a individual, militant figureheads or via a bureaucratic sociological structure.<sup>70</sup>

Rebérioux’s militancy operated on many levels. She thrived on managing organisations with an emphasis on collective action and rose to lead many socio-political as well as academic organisations, from local school interest-groups to national media campaigns such as the *Appel des Douze* (see chapter four). She campaigned for and against a diverse range of causes, notably criticising the use of torture during the Algerian War and advocating a more universal definition of citizenship to include the social during the 1990s. Exploring the multiplicity of her agency and actions presents her as far more intricate individual than a simple biography would allow. As this study of Rebérioux demonstrates, a new epistemology is needed to unpick the relationship between writing history and the political, social and cultural engagement of an individual. Definitions of intellectuals in France are crowded, often relying on single-dimension stereotypes which do not allow room to examine the full depths of political commitment across a wider range of thematic and temporal spheres. Moreover, although Rebérioux conformed to many of the criteria for self-identifying as an ‘intellectual’ – namely her educational background and status as an academic – her example offers much more than stereotyped notions of the disinterested intellectual aloof from political militancy. My examination of Rebérioux can be quantified as a social history of her militancy, an analysis of her modes of engagement during three key themes in her life: her anti-colonialism, her ‘communism’ and her passion for human rights.

### **2.3.3 *Engaging as an historian***

Rebérioux’s engagement went beyond the confines of simply being a militant. First and foremost, Rebérioux was an historian, a profession which throughout her life, whether

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<sup>70</sup> See Razmig Keucheyan, ‘How to break the stranglehold of academics on critical thinking’, *The Guardian* (2 January 2014) <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jan/02/academics-critical-thinking-occupy-intellectuals> [accessed 07/09/2015]. For a critical perspective see Paolo Gerbaudo, *Tweets and the Streets: Social Media and Contemporary Activism* (London: Pluto, 2012).

as a schoolteacher or academic, functioned as her full-time 'day job' to which she was wholly committed. It was a profession in which her gender made her the exception rather than the norm. When Rebérioux finished her degree at ÉNS in 1945 only 6.5% of Higher Education teaching staff were female.<sup>71</sup> After she returned to academia following 15 years as a *lycée* teacher this figure has increased to 18.7%; however such figures belie the slim proportion of women who reached the ranks of *maître-conférence* or even *professeur* rather than teaching assistant. In the majority of her interventions in the public sphere, such as interviews, articles and public lectures Rebérioux consistently identified herself as an historian first and foremost, followed in later years by her status as *Présidente* (later *émérite*) of the LDH. Rebérioux belonged to a generation of women for whom having a profession and full-time job was very important but rarely articulated as such.<sup>72</sup> Rebérioux conceptualised being an historian as a vocation rather than a 'métier': its function was to disrupt traditional ways of thinking.<sup>73</sup> Rebérioux used historical reflection and understanding to corroborate her engagement with political, social and cultural debates, answering her colleague François Bédarida's call that historians 'respond to the needs of society (in the highest sense) and to make their work as fertile as it is scientific'.<sup>74</sup> The fusion between militancy, which Rebérioux understood as 'un acte du présent complètement tourné vers l'avenir' and history, an analysis of the past from the standpoint of the present, offered a rounded temporal understanding of the ligatures between past, present and future.<sup>75</sup> Although she was far from the only historian to engage with society outside of academia, the way in which her historical vocation directed and informed her militancy, demonstrated in the three case studies, makes her worthy of study.

Archives reveal how militancy and history were two sides of the same coin for Rebérioux. As cited at the beginning of this chapter, Rebérioux admitted that 'ma manière de voir à moi consiste à regarder l'histoire comme une historienne mais en lui

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<sup>71</sup> Christophe Charle, 'Les femmes dans l'enseignement supérieur. Dynamiques et freins d'une présence, 1946-1992', in *Avenirs et avant-gardes en France, XIX<sup>e</sup>-XX<sup>e</sup> siècles : hommage à Madeleine Rebérioux*, eds. Vincent Duclert, Rémi Fabre and Patrick Fridenson (Paris: Découverte, 1999), p.95.

<sup>72</sup> Women's professional roles during the Third Republic is analysed in Siân Reynolds, *France Between the Wars: Gender and Politics* (London: Routledge, 1996), p.97.

<sup>73</sup> *Paroles d'historiens*, Part IV : Le choix de la liberté, Chap. 33 : Les sens de l'histoire.

<sup>74</sup> François Bédarida, 'The modern historian's dilemma: conflicting pressures from science and society', *Economic History Review*, 40 3 (1987), p.335.

<sup>75</sup> *Paroles d'historiens*, Part IV : Le choix de la liberté, Chap. 33 : Les sens de l'histoire.

posant des questions qui sont celles de notre temps, de mon militantisme'.<sup>76</sup> Whilst history and militancy were separate entities they were connected by their shared cerebral qualities of asking questions, being analytical and practising synthesis. 'L'histoire est fondamentale', she argued, 'si on lui pose des questions, variées, intelligentes, fondées, judicieuses, on arrive à comprendre pourquoi certains aspects de la vie sociale contemporaine fonctionnent mal'.<sup>77</sup> Whilst the historical profession and militant engagement were in some ways connected, Rebérioux claimed that they were separate when it came to her professional work: 'C'est un principe absolu, je n'écris rien sur les périodes pendant lesquelles j'ai été militante [...] un demi-siècle sur lequel je n'écris pas !'.<sup>78</sup> In other interviews she revealed her insecurities in writing on her own historical period: 'Je ne suis pas sûre que mon regard soit le meilleur sur les années que j'ai traversées'.<sup>79</sup> Rebérioux's choice of historical subject and approach was significant. She was part of a generation who turned their historical focus to the working classes: not just a history of parties, trade unions, congresses and newspapers but 'une histoire de la classe', 'une histoire des hommes évoluant à la base'.<sup>80</sup> Yet this historical specialism went beyond Rebérioux, to encompass her generational unit. As she stated, 'nous appartenions tous à la même génération et placions au centre de notre travail, une réflexion du prolétariat'.<sup>81</sup>

Rebérioux's decision to research Jaurès was an abstract form of political militancy in its own right. Her former students Candar and Duclert formulated that 'le type d'histoire que choisit Madeleine Rebérioux éclaire sa trajectoire militante tout autant qu'il la façonna'.<sup>82</sup> Jaurès engaged himself in a multiplicity of disciplines and professions. Beyond his work as a parliamentarian, he was also a philosopher, teacher, historian, journalist and to a lesser extent, an intellectual.<sup>83</sup> Rebérioux chose to work on Jaurès in order to understand the problems of her own contemporary political world. As she

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<sup>76</sup> *Paroles d'historiens*, Part II : Le choix de Jaurès, Chap. 11 : Harmoniser recherche historique et militantisme.

<sup>77</sup> Löwy, 'Madeleine Rebérioux : militantisme et recherche historique', p.281.

<sup>78</sup> *Paroles d'historiens*, Part II : Le choix de Jaurès, Chap. 11 : Harmoniser recherche historique et militantisme.

<sup>79</sup> Löwy, 'Madeleine Rebérioux : militantisme et recherche historique', p.281.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.280-282.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p.280.

<sup>82</sup> Preface, Rebérioux, Candar and Duclert (eds.), *Vive la République !*, p.7.

<sup>83</sup> The most recent biography of Jaurès is dedicated to Rebérioux's memory. Candar and Duclert, *Jean Jaurès*.

reflected in 1994, 'J'ai commencé à travailler sur Jaurès pendant la guerre d'Algérie pour comprendre les points aveugles de Guy Mollet et de ses amis'.<sup>84</sup> Rebérioux was outraged at the SFIO's policy concerning Algeria, directed by Mollet's cabinet. The voting of special powers in March 1956, supported by the PCF no less, led to an escalation in the scale and violence of the conflict in Algeria, the extension of French military service from 18 to 27 months and caused the budget deficit to spiral out of control from 650 billion francs in 1955 to 1,100 billion francs in 1957.<sup>85</sup> Rebérioux's research – her life's work – was a direct response to the mistakes she deemed the left to have made in this period. She wanted to confront and understand the historical origins of her own period's political landscape.

To a certain extent Rebérioux was also in the right place at the right time. She returned to academia at a moment when the memory and legacy of Jaurès was evolving from political totem to an object of academic study in his own right. It is no coincidence that around the same time four institutions of social and political history were founded, all of which Rebérioux was involved with or presided over during her career: the Société d'études jaurésiennes (1959 was the centenary of Jaurès's birth), the revue *Le Mouvement social*, the foundation of the Centre d'histoire du syndicalisme and the creation of Jean Maitron's *Dictionnaire biographique*.<sup>86</sup> Rebérioux's epithet for Jaurès, 'un homme de parole et d'acte', should equally be applied to her own desire to act and speak out.<sup>87</sup> Rebérioux's close study of Jaurès led her to view her own present through a Jaurésian prism. Using his example was a useful tool for considering a range of important facets of both contemporary society and historical problems, including Republican ideals, socialism, *laïcité* and religion, anti-Semitism, and the 'Arabic question' (colonialism).<sup>88</sup> However, academic interest in Jaurès during this period was a shift in scholarly attention rather than a comprehensive rework of socialist historiography.

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<sup>84</sup> MHV 6MR6 'Un entretien avec Madeleine Rebérioux', *Le Monde* (1 November 1994). Rebérioux's disgust at Mollet's actions in government during the Fourth Republic was a typical illustration of the classic debate concerning socialists in government. See DL Hanley, AP Kerr and NH Waites, *Contemporary France: Politics and Society Since 1945* (London: Routledge, 1984), pp.172-175.

<sup>85</sup> Martin Evans, *Algeria: France's Undeclared War* (Oxford: OUP, 2012), p.155, p.215; Maurice Larkin, *France Since the Popular Front: Government and People, 1936-1996* (Oxford: OUP, 1997), p.257.

<sup>86</sup> Rebérioux's archives document her role in the origins of the SÉJ. AN 647AP/76 contains Ernest Labrousse's correspondence and personal archives. See also *Paroles d'historiens*, Part II : Le choix de Jaurès, Chap. 16 : L'engagement Jaurès.

<sup>87</sup> Rebérioux, *Jaurès : la parole et l'acte*.

<sup>88</sup> Rebérioux, *Parcours engagés*, p.11.

What were the identifying features of Rebérioux's historical militancy? Across her diverse range of interventions, certain patterns and structures can be identified, notably the emphasis on collective action, the importance of communication and the place of culture. Rebérioux frequently stressed her preference for working as a collective: 'Le militantisme compris, [c'est] inscrit dans une organisation'; 'en quelque sorte, je suis « collectiviste » car je pense que nos vies sont collectives'.<sup>89</sup> Organisational structures ranged from ephemeral groups such as school committees, founded to tackle specific political issues, to large-scale supra-national associations which transcended language and cultural barriers in order to tackle global issues such as American imperialism in South-East Asia. Within these structures Rebérioux preferred to occupy leadership roles: frequently founding associations or working her way to the top, as editor, president or director. The bare mechanics of her militancy centred on the importance of communication and education, through asking questions and reflecting upon events with critical distance. As she later explained, 'la culture historique, ça n'existe que si on pose des questions'.<sup>90</sup> Rebérioux's distinction between the written and spoken word as two separate types of thinking can also be seen in her militancy. The initiatives organised by the Collectif intersyndical which Rebérioux founded in 1965 (see chapter five) reveal the typology of her historical militancy. Firstly, the spoken word: communication, debate and the dissemination of information, often through public meetings, where open discussion could take place. Secondly, the written word, preserved in various forms of print culture in her archives: posters advertising meetings, initiatives or marches, hand-written letters inviting guests to attend meetings or adverts placed in trade-union and party newsletters or newspapers. Information was disseminated containing statistics and facts, usually in leaflets, dossiers and pamphlets in order to allow the target audience to educate themselves. Rebérioux wrote very few opinion pieces for newspapers because she was not interested in personal interventions, preferring 'de faire collectivement changer les choses'.<sup>91</sup> The media was used mainly through press releases, especially during her LDH presidency.

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<sup>89</sup> *Paroles d'historiens*, Part II : Le choix de Jaurès, Chap. 11 : Harmoniser recherche historique et militantisme; Löwy, 'Madeleine Rebérioux : militantisme et recherche historique', p.286.

<sup>90</sup> *Paroles d'historiens*, Part II : Le choix de Jaurès, Chap. 13 : La question algérienne.

<sup>91</sup> Löwy, 'Madeleine Rebérioux : militantisme et recherche historique', p.284.

In terms of communication with individuals, the epistolary form played a key role. Rebérioux was constantly writing to her contemporaries, to inform, debate and unpick current events. The large scale of her letter-writing can be seen by her archives, which often contain responses from recipients but unfortunately not the original letters from Rebérioux. The sole exception is the LDH papers. A large proportion of these documents preserve both sides of correspondence thanks to the fax culture of the early 1990s. Rebérioux would handwrite her letter, keeping the original after it had been faxed to the recipient.

Lastly, culture played a significant role in Rebérioux's militancy, from film and photography to art and theatre. The importance of culture in militancy can be traced throughout her diverse engagements, from her involvement in the documentary film *Octobre à Paris* during the Algerian war (see chapter three) to her contribution to the Collective-commissioned play *V comme Vietnam* (see chapter five). The largest manifestation of the practical role culture could play in society was seen by her interventions at the *Musée d'Orsay* during the 1980s, which illustrated her fusion of history and militancy. Indeed, Rebérioux was aware of the historical precedence of using cultural initiatives for militant ends, penning several articles on the subject for *Le Mouvement social* on the topic.<sup>92</sup>

The most disputed area of Rebérioux's militancy was the role of petitions. As an historian, Rebérioux valued the petitions of the Third Republic as a useful tool to estimate the public's 'general will' and as a supplementary political apparatus to elections.<sup>93</sup> As a militant, her archives demonstrate a wide-ranging use of petitions throughout her lifetime, from local petitions in the 1950s at her school in St Maur des Fossés against war in Algeria to full-blown national campaigns, such as the *Appel des Douze* in 2000. In addition to those petitions Rebérioux led, she also signed a considerable number throughout her life, the majority of which are recorded by Jean-François Sirinelli in his work on manifestos and petitions as a political passion.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Madeleine Rebérioux, 'Culture et militantisme', *Le Mouvement social*, 91 (1975).

<sup>93</sup> Rebérioux, Candar and Duclert (eds.), *Vive la République !*, p.55. See also Madeleine Rebérioux, 'Pétitionner', *Le Mouvement social*, 181 (1997), pp.127-132.

<sup>94</sup> Jean-François Sirinelli, *Intellectuels et passions françaises : manifestes et pétitions au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 1990), pp.383, 388, 410, 421, 501, 518.

Rebérioux participated in many epoch-making petitions, notably the *Manifeste des 121* in 1960 and in 1974 when she joined 'big name' intellectuals and historians including Sartre, Derrida, Jacques Le Goff, Michel Winock and Pierre Vidal-Naquet in petitioning against Alexander Solzhenitsyn's expulsion from the USSR following the publication of *Gulag Archipelago*.<sup>95</sup> She remained engaged in this manner until her later years, leading the *Trop, c'est trop* in 2001 against the Israel-Palestine conflict, a petition which attracted over 3,500 signatures in its first month (see chapter four).<sup>96</sup> To an outside observer, it seems clear from the archives that Rebérioux consistently prioritized the use of petitions as a form of civic participation. According to her son Pierre-Yves, however, Rebérioux disliked petitions and she was a reluctant signatory of the *Manifeste des 121*.<sup>97</sup> Retracing Rebérioux's personal biography helps explain the inconsistency between family memory and the archival record. Pierre-Yves was born in 1948 when the family lived in Mulhouse, Alsace. His memories of the 1950s are thus shaped by his perspective as a child or adolescent. Furthermore, whilst Rebérioux was reluctant to use the medium of petitions in this early period the rupture following her expulsion from the PCF in 1969 led her to pursue alternative forms of engagement.<sup>98</sup>

If Rebérioux's status and modes of engagement conformed to that of a militant rather than an intellectual, then what of her causes? Can a single ideology be identified within her militancy? As outlined in the introduction, anticolonialism played a central role in connecting the various campaigns in which Rebérioux was involved, from the anti-torture movement of the 1950s to academic solidarity with Vietnamese colleagues struggling under the conditions caused by American bombardments in the 1960s. Fighting against modern forms of colonial oppression can also be seen in her interest in other conflicts, such as in the Middle East, South Africa, the Balkans and the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>99</sup> These international campaigns were matched by an interest for domestic concerns within the French Republic, specifically traditionally Republican notions of *laïcité*, equality, freedom of speech and redefining concepts of citizenship to make them

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<sup>95</sup> Michael Scott Christofferson, *French Intellectuals Against the Left: the Antitotalitarian Moment of the 1970s* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2004), p.109.

<sup>96</sup> AN 647AP/62 Dossier 3: Palestine.

<sup>97</sup> Interview with Pierre-Yves Rebérioux (12 March 2015).

<sup>98</sup> Private communication with Gilles Candar (31 March 2015).

<sup>99</sup> 647AP/40 contains documentation from the Comité anti-Apartheid and the Collectif intersyndical (Vietnam); 647AP/62 contains documentation concerning conflict in Yugoslavia, Serbia, Kosovo, Iraq, Kuwait and the Middle East. It is important to note that anticolonialism is not a political ideology in its own right but a feature of wider ideologies: in Rebérioux's case, Marxism.

fit for twenty-first century purpose. In this way, Rebérioux combined her moral and civic responsibilities. Taken broadly, Rebérioux acted for humanity, in many ways following in the footsteps of her historical subject Jaurès. Left-wing notions of solidarity and justice pervaded the majority of her historical work and militancy.<sup>100</sup> She used her skills as an historian to interrogate and pose broader, difficult questions of society, offering a reasoned critical voice to state actions.

## 2.4 Rebérioux's archives

Having examined the theoretical approaches to conceptualising Rebérioux's historical militancy, the material traces of her engagement must now be explored. After her death in February 2005, Rebérioux left behind a vast documentary corpus, which is now split between three institutions: the Archives Nationales (AN), the Musée de l'histoire vivante (MHV) and the ÉNS Bibliothèque Jourdan.<sup>101</sup> Whilst these immense repositories tell their own story of Rebérioux's militancy, it is a fragmented narrative which must be reassembled by the researcher in the archive. The vastness of her papers – their physical dimensions and thematic scope – poses many challenges. How can these archives be read and understood, both physically and critically? How do gaps in the archival record shape the history of Rebérioux's engagement? Rebérioux's generation will likely be one of the last cohorts to leave such comprehensive material traces, as individuals living in the digital age leave online rather than paper traces.<sup>102</sup> Archival research speaks to broader issues than the engagement of an individual. Rebérioux's papers also reveal much about the changing social and cultural practices of the post-war period, for example the shift from writing papers, letters and articles by hand to using typewriters and later faxes, computers and emails towards the end of her lifetime.

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<sup>100</sup> Julliard and Prochasson, 'Madeleine Rebérioux (1920-2005)', pp.3-4.

<sup>101</sup> According to Gilles Candar, Rebérioux expressed a desire that all her papers should be destroyed after her death. Interview (26 May 2014).

<sup>102</sup> Marlene Manoff, 'Theories of the archive from across the disciplines', *Libraries and the Academy*, 4 1 (2004), p.10.



### 2.4.1 *Navigating Rebérioux's archives*

The majority of Rebérioux's personal papers were donated to the Archives Nationales and are now kept at the new centre at Pierrefitte, where her 109 boxes run to over twelve linear metres.<sup>103</sup> In addition to this collection, a significant portion of Rebérioux's personal library is held by her alma mater, the ÉNS. According to their catalogue, 1,325 of her books are listed under 'provenance Rebérioux'. When these texts were initially donated the majority of volumes included a sheaf of Rebérioux's notes, usually handwritten on scraps of A5 and inserted loose-leaf in each book.<sup>104</sup> The final third of Rebérioux's archives are held by the Musée de l'histoire vivante in Montreuil, where the collection continues to grow as Rebérioux's colleagues including Gilles Candar and Christophe Prochasson have donated their correspondence. As of May 2014, the MHV archive contains 20 catalogued boxes covering Rebérioux's roles in various associations including the Ligue des droits de l'homme, the Société d'études jaurésiennes, the journal *Le Mouvement social* and a range of papers pertaining to Jaurès.<sup>105</sup> The MHV collection also contains papers from after Rebérioux's death, which allows an understanding of her historical legacy since 2005. In addition to its content value, the collection is significant because of the MHV's own history. Founded in 1939 by three communists – Montreuil mayor Fernand Soupé, Jacques Duclos and Daniel Renoult – the MHV's original aim was to emphasise the role of class conflict in France's history. After all, the museum opened during the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the French Revolution.<sup>106</sup> Today the MHV focuses on contemporary issues such as immigration and decolonisation whilst communism has become an object of study in itself. Researchers are accorded greater freedom to explore MHV archives than at national institutions like the Archives Nationales. Rebérioux's archives are stored in the main reading room allowing open access; photography is also permitted. Such freedom gives a very different research experience to the process-driven nature of national institutions with high levels of bureaucracy.

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<sup>103</sup> AN (Pierrefitte), 647AP Fonds Madeleine Rebérioux: instrument de recherche (2007).

<sup>104</sup> At my last visit (July 2012), the librarians were in the process of cataloguing and preserving these notes separately to their volumes, so that the books could be included in their library and available to students.

<sup>105</sup> Rebérioux's thesis research and the Labrousse correspondence is held by the Archives Nationales (647AP 13-23, 71-78).

<sup>106</sup> Éric Lafon, 'Le Musée de l'histoire vivante de Montreuil', *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, 106 (2010), p.240. The MHV holds a copy of Rebérioux's edited edition of Jaurès's *Contre la guerre et la politique coloniale* with the handwritten dedication 'au camarade Jacques Duclos ce texte en partie inspiré par Montreuil'.

What kinds of sources do Rebérioux's archives contain? The AN and MHV collections are testament to the print culture of the post-war world of the historian and militant. Starting at a young age, Rebérioux collected documentation from almost every aspect of her political and professional career, as demonstrated by the *Concours général* clippings, explored in the introduction chapter. A large proportion of her archives are handwritten notes: for research, political movements and militant organisations. As Rebérioux's career progressed, she kept notes for academic papers, public talks, interviews and correspondence relating to her academic positions. Each archive box contains traces of Rebérioux's unique system of note-taking. She worked by hand on scraps of A5, often without a title, date or other identifying paratext. Her papers illustrate the problems of understanding archival sources which, unlike printed sources, are not written and designed for reader consumption. As Arlette Farge observed, 'l'imprimé est un texte, intentionnellement livré au public. Il est organisé pour être lu et compris de nombreuses personnes [...] rien à voir avec l'archive ; trace brute de vies qui ne demandaient aucunement à se raconter ainsi'.<sup>107</sup>

Rebérioux's method of writing and recording her ideas presents problems for the researcher in the archive. How does one construct meaningful academic references when the majority of the papers are defined as 'untitled, undated'? As a result, archival references in the thesis are as descriptive as possible to aid further research. Furthermore, Rebérioux had a distinctive cursive script which, depending on her age and circumstances of writing (for example on the move as she often was, to conferences, meetings and seminars across France) poses various challenges to the reader. In a way such complex stenography constitutes a 'code' to fathom Rebérioux's modes of thought and her ideas.<sup>108</sup> In order to overcome this issue it was necessary to develop a 'Rebérioux dictionary' (see Appendix). Whilst in the archives a note was made of distinctive problematic shorthand, symbols and pen marks. If archivists were unable to help decipher her handwriting I would also retrace her pen marks myself, which often helped to decode her meaning. Becoming familiar with Rebérioux's handwriting was a process which could only occur in the archive when faced with sources first-hand,

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<sup>107</sup> Farge, *Le goût de l'archive*, p.12.

<sup>108</sup> For more on languages of the archive see *ibid.*, pp.145-146.

although photocopies of correspondence were used to develop expertise beforehand.<sup>109</sup> Rebérioux's scrap paper notes can, however, also be read in other ways to reveal new dimensions to her militancy. Notes for her thesis bibliography, for example, were jotted on the reverse of flyers campaigning against the public funding of private schools and in support of *laïcité* in education, posters advertising events to mark the return of those deported during the Occupation and slogans calling for peace in Algeria.<sup>110</sup> Writing on the reverse of militant ephemera is a physical representation of how Rebérioux's agency as a militant was inseparable from her work as an historian.

In addition to her own handwritten notes, traces of Rebérioux's militancy can be seen in the copious number of annotated newspaper and magazine ephemera which she kept throughout her life. Rebérioux accumulated an impressive number of clippings which record her own interventions in the public sphere, often accompanied with Rebérioux's spelling or grammatical corrections in red pen. Any factual errors were marked by exclamation marks in the margin. These press cuttings equally trace the history of the French media in the post-war period, charting typographical shifts and the development from printing in black and white to colour. In addition Rebérioux collected journal articles, magazine pieces, interviews and book reviews from the many academic and political spheres in which she was interested. These clippings are kept alongside her own notes in each archival box, and offer thematic context for understanding her own notes and frequently help to date her own writings.

#### **2.4.2      647AP: Fonds Rebérioux**

Of all Rebérioux's rich archival holdings, it is the two collections of Rebérioux's papers at the Archives Nationales which form the backbone of evidence for this thesis, for several reasons.<sup>111</sup> Firstly, these papers are the single most comprehensive record of Rebérioux's academic and activist lives. Secondly they have never been examined critically since their deposition and cataloguing in 2007. In total, the AN collections pertaining to Rebérioux run to 117 boxes, varying from thinner cartons (647AP/97 on

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<sup>109</sup> I am grateful to Prof. Siân Reynolds for access to her correspondence from Rebérioux.

<sup>110</sup> 647AP/13 Bibliographie de thèse, various undated, untitled handwritten notes.

<sup>111</sup> AN Fonds Rebérioux (647AP, 109 boxes) and the Collectif intersyndical papers (20000529, 8 boxes).

May 1968 is approximately 10cm deep) to larger cardboard boxes which are three or four times larger. Thirdly, the nature of these archives means that their content remains fixed. Unlike the MHV, the AN collection is unlikely to grow, supporting Derrida's theory that the process of donating private papers to national institutions turns the past into a fixed event.<sup>112</sup> The location of the main corpus of Rebérioux's papers is also significant. Founded during the French Revolution to record proceedings at the Assemblée Nationale, the Archives Nationales became the French state's central archives in 1794.<sup>113</sup> All national institutions face the huge issue of appraisal. With storage space at a premium, the selection of what should be preserved and what should be discarded inevitably shapes societal memory.<sup>114</sup> The fact that Rebérioux's private papers are not only held but protected by this national institution reinforces her importance to French national memory. Yet her papers' final resting place equally complicates their access and use. The conditions of using AN papers illustrate how issues of power, surveillance and control play out in the archive.<sup>115</sup>

Papers marked 647AP are designated as 'private archives', a category which has several practical ramifications for research. The collection is under *dérogation*, meaning that the archives are not open access. Written permission is required from the head of collections, which can take up to two months to be granted. Such a process reinforces the power of the archive as an agent for shaping historical narratives.<sup>116</sup> One refusal of access could make or break a chapter, yet any complaints from the researcher risks ostracism from one's peers and potential banishment from the archives.<sup>117</sup> The reading room at Pierrefitte is modern, temperature-controlled, light and airy yet the surveillance issue creates a certain atmosphere. Private archives still require close supervision and thus the reader is deliberately placed under the panopticon gaze of the *président de salle*. Furthermore, as a result of their 'private' status, no photographs or photocopies of

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<sup>112</sup> 'The archiving produces as much as it records the event.' Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: a Freudian Impression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p.17.

<sup>113</sup> Ernst Posner, 'Some aspects of archival development since the French Revolution', *The American Archivist*, 3 (1940), p.161.

<sup>114</sup> Tomas Lidman, *Libraries and Archives: a Comparative Study* (Witney: Chandos, 2012), p.82.

<sup>115</sup> Eric Ketelaar, 'Archival temples, archival prisons: modes of power and protection', *Archival Science*, 2 (2002), p.235. All my requests to access Rebérioux's papers were granted apart from one *dérogation*, for 647AP/103. No reason was given for the refusal, despite repeated requests for access.

<sup>116</sup> Terry Cook and Joan Schwartz, 'Archives, records and power: the making of modern memory', *Archival Science*, 2 (2002), pp.1-19.

<sup>117</sup> Ketelaar, 'Archival temples, archival prisons', p.236.

Rebérioux's archives are permitted, despite the fact many of the papers were personal copies of publications and newspaper articles already in the public domain.<sup>118</sup> Such restrictions have a peculiar impact on the praxis of research in the archive. All notes on Rebérioux's papers had to be completed in the archive rather than photographing and postponing a longer, post-trip examination. Such constraints undoubtedly added to the time pressures of completing everything during each research trip, an anxiety Carolyn Steedman defined as a symptom of a modern archive fever: 'You know you will not finish, that there will be something left unread, unnoted, untranscribed'.<sup>119</sup>

Nevertheless this method of research has unanticipated advantages. Although more time-consuming, AN constraints meant that Rebérioux's papers were scrutinised together, permitting references to other sources (letters, newspaper clippings) to be unpicked and evaluated within the context of their archival box, ultimately leading to a richer analysis. Farge described her archival research process as thus: 'L'archive recopiée à la main, sur une page blanche, est un morceau de temps apprivoisé ; plus tard, on découpera les thèmes, on formulera des interprétations'.<sup>120</sup> Why is this physical experience of the archive and Rebérioux's papers relevant? As Steedman argued, it is not the content of the archive which is important (which of course it is) but the process of engaging with primary materials which gives the historian their perceived authority. It is the process of visiting and being in the archive – 'the train to the distant city, the call number, the bundle opened, the dust...' – which gives the narrative offered by the historian its authority to the reader.<sup>121</sup> An open discussion concerning how research has been completed gives an insight into the process of unpicking and understanding Rebérioux's militancy, as presented in her paper archives.

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<sup>118</sup> An exception was 20000529/1-8 which were not classified as *archives privées*, being donated separately to Rebérioux's private papers in 2000.

<sup>119</sup> Steedman, *Dust*, p.18.

<sup>120</sup> Farge, *Le goût de l'archive*, p.26.

<sup>121</sup> Steedman, *Dust*, p.145.

**Table 1: Rebérioux's papers at the Archives Nationales**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Sub-theme</b>	<b>Boxes</b>	<b>Total number</b>
<b>Personal</b>	Family papers	647/AP1-2	2
	Correspondence	647AP/103*	1
<b>Academic and research</b>	Academic politics and teaching (Vincennes, students' work)	647AP/3-4, 104-105	4
	Research (Jaurès, French socialism)	647AP/13-27, 71, 73-75, 77-78, 96	22
	Research ( <i>Fédération du livre</i> , Dreyfus Affair, academic conferences attended)	647AP/5-12, 28-29, 32-36, 86-92, 95, 99-102	27
<b>Militant activities</b>	Anticolonialism/anti-imperialism (Comité Audin, Collectif intersyndical <sup>°</sup> )	647AP/30-31,37-40, 58-62	11
	Ligue des droits de l'homme	647AP/41-56, 63-67, 93-94	23
	Société d'études jaurésiennes (includes Ernest Labrousse's papers)	647AP/72, 76	2
	May 1968	647AP/97	1
	National commemorations and cultural initiatives (Oradour, Musée de l'immigration, Musée d'Orsay, Centre George Sand, Bicentenary of the French Revolution)	647AP/57, 68-70, 79-85, 98	12
<b>Other</b>	Other individuals' archives (Madeleine Schnerb, Yvette-Marthe Lebas-Guyot)	647AP/106-109	4
<b>Total</b>			<b>109 (117)</b>

\*still under *dérogation* (access denied, March 2015).

<sup>°</sup> there are also 8 boxes catalogued under 20000529 which contain the Collectif intersyndical papers, donated in 2000 by Rebérioux and Nicole Simon. These are included in the 117 total.

Rebérioux's papers were catalogued in 2007 and their inventory is freely available. A consideration of their thematic structure and distribution is necessary in order to understand the choice of case studies in the thesis. The table above categorises Rebérioux's papers by theme, to demonstrate the wide range of areas in which she engaged, both as a militant and as an historian. It is clear that this rich collection contains a huge amount of documentation from Rebérioux's life: as an academic, militant, colleague, friend and acquaintance. Facing such an immense amount of information brings Tocqueville's miner's analogy to mind. Writing in 1853, he claimed that: 'I was like the gold miner when the mine caved in on his head: I was crushed under the weight of my notes and I did not know how to get out of there with my treasure'.<sup>122</sup> Whilst I have personally examined almost all of Rebérioux's 117 boxes, for the purposes of this thesis and to escape with my archival 'treasure' intact I have chosen to focus very specifically on Rebérioux's militancy through associations, for several reasons. Firstly, her work on Jaurès has been widely discussed in France, although it still requires greater discussion in an international scholarly context.<sup>123</sup> Secondly, examining her multiple engagements as an academic is interesting but lacks a certain intellectual originality if removed from her political involvement. Lastly, her wide range of cultural initiatives was touched on in my MA dissertation, *Madeleine Rebérioux: the Militant in the Museum* which focused on Rebérioux's agency (or lack of) in establishing the *Musée d'Orsay* during the 1980s. Scrutinising Rebérioux's political choices, especially in the 1950s, is essential in order to explain her return to academia and the choice of Jaurès in a way which a simple analysis of her academic trajectory would obfuscate.

Consequently, this study centres on three case studies, which follow three sub-sections from Rebérioux's 'militant activities': the Comité Audin and the Collectif intersyndical, May '68, and the Ligue des droits de l'homme. These examples are organised thematically and chronologically, beginning with an assessment of Rebérioux's nascent anticolonialism and her involvement in the Comité Audin and other ephemeral anticolonialist groups in the 1950s and 1960s (11 boxes). The study then moves forward

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<sup>122</sup> Quoted in David Schalk, *War and the Ivory Tower: Algeria and Vietnam* (Oxford: OUP, 1991), p.8.

<sup>123</sup> One of the few English-language works to engage directly with Rebérioux's historical research is Donald Wileman, 'Not the radical republic: liberal ideology and central blandishment in France, 1901-1914', *The Historical Journal*, 37 3 (1994).

to question the nature of her 'communist' engagement, through an examination of her role in the Collectif intersyndical (8 boxes) and trade-union groups during May '68 (1 box). The final case study focuses on her leadership of the Ligue des droits de l'homme (23 boxes) in the early 1990s, which offers a clever counter-point to her campaign-led engagements of the 1950s and 1960s. Whilst initially this selection may appear a narrow range, it in fact covers a considerable amount of intellectual and political ground and draws on a significant range of archival material, supported by a raft of secondary literature.

Despite the vastness of Rebérioux's archival depositories, these documents only tell a partial history of life and her engagement as an historian and militant. Rebérioux's papers at the Archives Nationales are by no means comprehensive and there are significant gaps in the archival record. For example, there is almost no mention of her membership or expulsion from the PCF in her papers. It is possible that Rebérioux – either consciously or involuntarily – removed traces of her PCF membership from her personal papers following what was a painful rejection. Either way, acknowledging silences in the archive is just as important as understanding what is included: 'Records are not only a reflection of realities as perceived by the "archiver". They constitute these realities. And they exclude other realities'.<sup>124</sup> To overcome limitations in the Archives Nationales, where appropriate, these sources have been complemented by further research elsewhere. The MHV collection was extremely useful for research on the LDH. The PCF's own archives at Place Colonel Fabien have been used to explain Rebérioux's exclusion from the party in 1969. The PCF documents also offer a counter-narrative to Rebérioux's own constructed archive (see chapter six). In addition to written documents, informal discussions with those who knew and worked with Rebérioux are a helpful way of testing the archival representation of her militancy, although of course this method can throw up conflict rather than resolving problems. Challenges have arisen in reconciling written archives with the more nebulous 'memory' of an individual, which inevitably shifts over time.

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<sup>124</sup> Ketelaar, 'Archival temples, archival prisons', p.222.



## 2.5 Conclusion

As this chapter has shown, Rebérioux's engagement sits at a complex juncture between several overlapping fields: her status and interest as a professional historian, her wide range of political activities as a militant, and how these two fields play out in her complex personal archives. Private papers reveal Rebérioux's engagement as an anticolonialist, an advocate of human rights and cultural specialist, in the process illuminating the connections with her historical work on Jean Jaurès and French socialism during the Third Republic. What follows is an exploration of three diverse yet complementary case studies which explore her historical militancy within the broader context of the culture of the political left in France. The three case studies scrutinise multiple parapolitical networks across a broad chronological span and thematic range. These examples reveal continuities within Rebérioux's militancy whilst equally demonstrating how her engagement shifted according to changes in the political, social and intellectual landscape.

## Chapter 3. Anticolonial Engagement during the Algerian War

*Je suis une anticolonialiste. C'est probablement  
la seule idée qui m'a [sic] toujours guidée.*

**Madeleine Rebérioux<sup>1</sup>**

### 3.1 Introduction

Anticolonialism was the driving force behind Rebérioux's engagement. Anticolonial ideals shaped Rebérioux's view of the world and led her to join the PCF in 1946 and later to engage in political and militant networks, especially during the Algerian war (1954-62).<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Rebérioux's identification as a member of the 'Algerian generation' went on to inform her political, academic and militant engagement throughout her life. Private papers record Rebérioux's contribution to the anti-torture movement both during the Algerian war and later during the public memory battles of the early 2000s, allowing a diachronic comparison of her militancy during two key moments. Rebérioux's role in nascent anticolonial movements during the 1950s and 1960s provided her with the intellectual capital, that is, the public profile, for further interventions in other humanitarian areas later in her career. Yet the importance of anticolonialism stretched beyond Rebérioux's militant life to direct her work as an historian. Motivated by the failings of Guy Mollet and the SFIO to resolve conflict in Algeria, at the end of the 1950s Rebérioux left her position as a school history teacher to return to academia in order to research the origins of the French left.

My first topic explores and compares two periods of Rebérioux's anticolonialism, focussing on the anti-torture campaign led by French intellectuals and militants during the Algerian war. This chapter will analyse Rebérioux's anticolonialism during the

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<sup>1</sup> *Paroles d'historiens*, I : Le choix de l'histoire, Chap. 8 : La question coloniale.

<sup>2</sup> Patrick Eveno and Jean Planchais, *La guerre d'Algérie : dossier et témoignages* (Paris: Découverte, 1989), p.201. Rebérioux does not specify whether her anticolonial motivation was inspired by conflict in Algeria or Indochina in the early post-war years.

conflict, comparing her immersion in grass-roots militancy within local initiatives with her actions at a national level, including the Comité Audin and the *Manifeste des 121*. The following chapter and second half of the first case study moves on to consider Rebérioux's leadership of the *Appel des Douze* in autumn 2000. The media-based petition sought to shift public perceptions of the war and to force the French state to accept responsibility for its role in legitimising torture during the conflict. Juxtaposing these two periods cuts to the core of Rebérioux's historical militancy and the transaction between being a professional historian and a social movement activist. What do Rebérioux's archives and interviews reveal about her anticolonial activism at both local and national levels? How did anti-torture engagement affect her trajectory as a militant and historian? Comparing these two periods from a diachronic perspective poses wider questions concerning the form of intellectual non-government participation in the parapolitical sphere, through protests, petitions, films, letter-writing and newspaper appeals.

Not all scholars agree on the Algerian war's importance in shaping French intellectual conscience. Whilst James Le Sueur defined the conflict as 'one of the most important moments of the twentieth century' for French intellectuals, Tony Judt argued that other global narratives were more crucial in the two decades following the Second World War.<sup>3</sup> For Rebérioux and the other individuals who campaigned against the conflict, militancy expressed during the Algerian war was formative in shaping their identity and status in the activist and academic worlds. Whilst anti-war campaigning was a significant part of many intellectuals' life stories, for Rebérioux the period of 1954-62 was particularly significant. During this time Rebérioux cut her teeth as an historian, communist and militant. Yet her engagement was problematic. In campaigning alongside a wide range of groups on the left (broadly defined) Rebérioux directly challenged the PCF's emphasis on intellectual autonomy. Although her roles in various local and national committees allowed Rebérioux to intervene in areas where she felt the PCF's action was insufficient, her engagement transgressed the party line, leading to serious personal ramifications.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> James Le Sueur, *Uncivil War: Intellectuals and Identity Politics During the Decolonization of Algeria* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), p.4; Judt, *Past Imperfect*, p.286.

<sup>4</sup> During the war the PCF did not clearly advocate Algerian independence, instead focussing attention on the issue of German rearmament.

### 3.1.1 *Anticolonial traces in the archives*

Within the significant corpus of literature on intellectual engagement during the Algerian war, the story of Rebérioux's militancy remains piecemeal, especially from a critical perspective.<sup>5</sup> Participants on all sides of the battle-lines published works recounting their experiences, from witnesses of torture like Henri Alleg to public anticolonialists Laurent Schwartz and Pierre Vidal-Naquet.<sup>6</sup> Rebérioux never penned her own autobiography, but traces of her involvement can be found in various chapters and interviews published since 1962.<sup>7</sup> In contrast, her archives preserve a wealth of mostly unpublished material on one of her earliest periods of engagement, with three boxes dating from the war and a further two on the *Appel des Douze*.<sup>8</sup> The types of material preserved reveals much about the nature of her militancy: petitions, newspaper clippings, local bulletins, flyers and notes for public lectures. Studying these traces of militancy enriches scholarly knowledge concerning the praxis of anticolonial engagement. Her archives also contain a significant series of first-hand testimony from Algerians – in Algeria but also in France – who testified to torture and abuse by the police and army.<sup>9</sup> Rebérioux's archives offer a paper trail which transcends the memories of participants, testimonies which can change as time passes.

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<sup>5</sup> Notable works include: Hamon and Rotman, *Les porteurs de valises*; Jean-Pierre Rioux and Jean-François Sirinelli (eds.), *La guerre d'Algérie et les intellectuels français* (Brussels: Complexe, 1991); Benjamin Stora, *La gangrène et l'oubli : la mémoire de la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Découverte, 1991); Schalk, *War and the Ivory Tower*; Raphaëlle Branche, *La torture et l'armée pendant la guerre d'Algérie, 1954-1962* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001); Le Sueur, *Uncivil War*; Jim House and Neil MacMaster, *Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror, and Memory* (Oxford: OUP, 2006). The recent Masters thesis by Francois-René Julliard has significantly furthered research on opposition to the war: 'Le Comité Maurice Audin. Des intellectuels en lutte contre la torture pendant la guerre d'Algérie' (Master 1 d'Histoire contemporaine, ÉNS Lyon, 2014).

<sup>6</sup> Henri Alleg, *La Question [1958]* (Paris: Minuit, 2008); *La Gangrène [1959]* (Paris: Minuit, 2012). See also Laurent Schwartz, *Un mathématicien aux prises avec le siècle* (Paris: O. Jacob, 1997); Vidal-Naquet, *Mémoires t.2*.

<sup>7</sup> Hamon and Rotman interviewed Rebérioux in October 1978; Eveno and Planchais on 6 June 1988. Hamon and Rotman, *Les porteurs de valises*, pp.70-71; Eveno and Planchais, *La guerre d'Algérie*, pp.200-201. For personal reminiscences of early anticolonial engagement see Rebérioux, 'Pierre Vidal-Naquet et nos guerres'. Rebérioux's INA interview also details her engagement during the Algerian war.

<sup>8</sup> 647AP/37-9 contains papers from the Algerian war; 60-1 from the *Appel des Douze*. In addition 30-1, 40, 58-9 and 62 offer supporting documentation on Rebérioux's wider anticolonialism in Vietnam, Yugoslavia, the Middle East and South Africa.

<sup>9</sup> 647AP/39 Dossiers I and II contain first-hand testimony from Algerians (including Henri Alleg) who were tortured or given undue prison sentences, both in France and Algeria (1955-1961).

During the Algerian war Rebérioux described her experiences of anticolonialism as 'le monde des comités, et c'est pas [sic] le monde des grands intellectuels'.<sup>10</sup> Archives testify to her belief in action as a collective exercise, documenting a raft of local and national organisations. Action was plural and rapid; Rebérioux later quipped that 'les comités poussaient alors comme [des] champignons'.<sup>11</sup> The multiplication of committees was a response to the perceived inaction of mainstream leftist parties, including the SFIO and PCF. Nevertheless, the cross-pollination between political parties, groups and associations is problematic for tracing their activities in Rebérioux's archives.

Anticolonial committees were fluid in nature, often merging with other groups over time or changing names and titles in between each petition or publication, which was a marked contrast to the visibility of mainstream political parties. However, the merging of group identities and titles equally indicated the dynamism of the militant scene at this time. Individuals, especially Rebérioux, were often active in many groups and across multiple initiatives. Shared aims took priority over loyalty to a specific group or committee, especially at a local level. Collective action as presented in her papers can be categorised into two groups: local, ephemeral initiatives such as those at Rebérioux's school, and larger-scale national organisations like the Comité Audin. Both categories faced similar problems, including the lack of finances, state censorship and the difficulty of influencing public opinion. The fact that both ephemeral and national groups are preserved in Rebérioux's archives reinforces the importance of her papers for understanding activism in this period.

### **3.1.2      *The Algerian generation***

For Rebérioux, the Algerian war was 'le moment où je suis entrée dans la vie civique et politique d'une façon autonome'.<sup>12</sup> She saw the war as 'un moment fondateur pour toute une génération'.<sup>13</sup> Throughout her life, Rebérioux self-identified as a member of the Algerian generation. This cohort of academics, intellectuals and militants cut their teeth as public figures during the Algerian war and later used their participation in the anti-

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<sup>10</sup> *Paroles d'historiens*, II : Le choix de Jaurès, Chap. 12 : Avec Pierre Vidal-Naquet.

<sup>11</sup> 647AP/61 Rebérioux, 'La France, la torture et la guerre d'Algérie', *Hommes et Libertés* 111 (September-November 2000), p.17.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Chanut, *Une laïcité socialiste*, p.12.

<sup>13</sup> Rebérioux, 'Pierre Vidal-Naquet et nos guerres', p.13. Rebérioux also argued that Vietnam and the Six Day war (1967) created similar generations.

war movement as a source of intellectual authority.<sup>14</sup> In the broadest sense, their shared opposition to the conflict and their criticism of the way in which politicians were handling the crisis provided the common 'entelechy' (spirit of the age, which unified the cohort's inner aim according to Mannheim) for their unification and identification as a cohort.<sup>15</sup> For many, the most common manifestation of opposition to war was demonstrated through engagement in the anti-torture movement. The diversity of action within the generational unit has led to the suggestion of the presence of several simultaneous Algerian generations within the context of the *trentes glorieuses*; others have suggested an Algerian 'effect' rather than the formation of a precise cohort.<sup>16</sup> This chapter explores the connections between Rebérioux and her generation(s): their intertwined personal histories of activism, knitted together by a shared opposition to the French army's behaviour in Algeria but complicated by their individual political beliefs and affiliations. One of the most important figures in Rebérioux's anticolonial narrative was undoubtedly Pierre Vidal-Naquet, historian of Antiquity and a close personal friend. Although the pair sometimes clashed over politics (Vidal-Naquet stated that Rebérioux was his 'communist conscience' whilst he was her 'anti-communist conscience') the two were very close, later spending hours daily on the telephone discussing contemporary political developments and arguing over the situation in the Middle East.<sup>17</sup> Rebérioux met Vidal-Naquet in late 1958 or early 1959 via the informal anticolonial network of activists. They also shared an interest in Jaurès.

As James Le Sueur has posited, the Algerian war acted as a 'crucible' for intellectuals, who were 'compelled to return to the workshop of identity to refashion their self-definitions of intellectual legitimacy'.<sup>18</sup> The Algerian generation(s) were characterised by their complicated relationships with the PCF, which differed for each individual. The 1950s was a 'golden age' for communist intellectuals. Cohort members aged between

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<sup>14</sup> Hervé Hamon and Patrick Rotman, *Génération*, vol t1 : Les années de rêve, t2 : Les années de poudre (Paris: Seuil, 1988); Khilnani, *Arguing Revolution*, p.13.

<sup>15</sup> Mannheim, 'The problem of generations [1923]', p.284.

<sup>16</sup> Alain Monchablon, 'Syndicalisme étudiant et génération algérienne', in *La guerre d'Algérie et les intellectuels français*, eds. Jean-Pierre Rioux and Jean-François Sirinelli (Brussels: Complexe, 1991), p.182; Paul Thibaud, 'Génération algérienne ?', *Esprit*, 161 (1990), pp.46-60.

<sup>17</sup> Vidal-Naquet was from a Jewish family and his parents were killed in the Holocaust; Rebérioux was an advocate for Palestine. Interview with Vincent Rebérioux (16 January 2014). Unfortunately these lengthy telephone conversations leave no archival trace in Rebérioux's private papers. Vidal-Naquet, *Mémoires t.2*, p.161.

<sup>18</sup> Le Sueur, *Uncivil War*, p.3.

twenty and thirty, some former members of the resistance, were drawn to the PCF in this period, until their convictions were shaken by the crises of 1956.<sup>19</sup> Within the Algerian generation(s) of militants Vidal-Naquet identified three distinct groups: Dreyfusards, Bolsheviks and Third-Worldists.<sup>20</sup> It would be easy to label Rebérioux a 'Dreyfusard'. However, her historical interest in Jaurès and the affair should not be confused with her personal forms of militancy. Rebérioux would later distance herself from the Dreyfusard model, arguing that

On a tendance, actuellement, à revenir au modèle de l' « intellectuel dreyfusard », que l'on a retrouvé, tout au long de la guerre d'Algérie, et dont Pierre Vidal-Naquet demeure l'exemple le plus emblématique. Pour ma part, à l'instar de Jaurès, et tout en affirmant à chaque instant ma part de liberté, ce style d'engagement n'est pas exactement le mien.<sup>21</sup>

Although Rebérioux refused the label of 'Dreyfusard' her actions conformed to the practice of 'dreyfusisme'. She later maintained (1993) that the anti-torture committees of the Algerian war continued the dreyfusiste 'fight for truth and justice' in new places and new networks.<sup>22</sup> Rebérioux believed that the institutionalisation of torture, which she considered to be 'corruption' ('pourriture') rendered the Fourth Republic beyond defence.<sup>23</sup> As this chapter argues, Rebérioux's engagement crossed political, factional and associational boundaries. The Algerian war undoubtedly marked a generation of intellectuals, thinkers and academics, conferring these individuals with a principled identity.

### 3.1.3 *Forms of Republican protest*

Intellectual debates concerning the relationship between France and Algeria tapped into a longer tradition of Republican protest. In the preface to her monograph on the Dreyfus affair Ruth Harris stated that

The unsullied reputation of the Dreyfusards remained an inspiration, especially among 'intellectuals', for mobilising the left during the 1930s, the Algerian war in the 1950s and the *événements* of 1968. Families, professions and political

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<sup>19</sup> Sirinelli, *Intellectuels et passions françaises*, p.273.

<sup>20</sup> Pierre Vidal-Naquet, 'Une fidélité têtue. La Résistance française à la guerre d'Algérie', *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, 10 (1986), p.11.

<sup>21</sup> 'Un entretien avec Madeleine Rebérioux [...]', *Le Monde* (1 November 1994).

<sup>22</sup> Christophe Prochasson, *Les intellectuels, le socialisme et la guerre 1900-1938. Préface de Madeleine Rebérioux* (Paris: Seuil, 1993), p.13.

<sup>23</sup> Rebérioux, 'Pierre Vidal-Naquet et nos guerres', p.19.

groupings all continued to see themselves within a tradition of Republican protest that traces its roots back to the defence of Alfred Dreyfus.<sup>24</sup>

Whilst Rebérioux was not a Dreyfusard in thought or act, it was in the tradition of Republican protest that Rebérioux located herself, beginning with her opposition to the Algerian war but equally in other protest movements, such as May '68 and the Ligue des droits de l'homme.<sup>25</sup> During the Algerian war specific examples of atrocity and the abuse of human rights motivated individuals within the French left to speak and act out. Reported cases of torture in Algeria were even more shocking given France's long tradition of defending human rights; torture was outlawed by the 1789 *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen*, used as the model for the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

The most infamous case which highlighted army misconduct was that of Maurice Audin. On 11 June 1957 the pied-noir mathematician, member of the clandestine Parti communiste algérien (PCA) was 'disappeared' by the 1<sup>er</sup> régiment étranger de parachutistes in Algiers. Henri Alleg was arrested the following day and later recounted his experiences in *La Question*. Although the military claimed that Audin escaped the detention centre where he was being held, many of Audin's academic colleagues, family and other public figures suspected foul play. Parallels have been drawn between the Audin and Dreyfus affairs, both at the time of the Algerian war and the period since.<sup>26</sup> More important was the way in which the collective memory of the Dreyfus affair informed intellectual responses to Audin's disappearance and the issue of torture more broadly.<sup>27</sup> The Audin affair was not necessarily another 'Dreyfus', but a new page in the longer history of intellectual mobilisation and one of the first moments in the post-war era when individuals such as Rebérioux acted in the intellectual sphere autonomously from political parties, on the broad premise of defending human rights.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ruth Harris, *The Man on Devil's Island: Alfred Dreyfus and the Affair that Divided France* (London: Allen Lane, 2010), p.xvii.

<sup>25</sup> See the third case study.

<sup>26</sup> Comparisons were first made by François Mauriac in a January 1955 article for *l'Express*. See also Michel Winock, 'Les affaires Dreyfus', *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, 5 (1985), pp.19-37; Jean-Pierre Rioux, 'La guerre d'Algérie dans l'histoire des intellectuels français', in *La guerre d'Algérie et les intellectuels français*, eds. Jean-Pierre Rioux and Jean-François Sirinelli (Brussels: Complexe, 1991), pp.33-55; Schalk, *War and the Ivory Tower*, pp.61-111.

<sup>27</sup> Éric Agrikoliansky, 'Réédition ou réinvention ? Le modèle du combat dreyfusard dans la guerre d'Algérie', in *Être dreyfusard, hier et aujourd'hui*, eds. Gilles Manceron and Emmanuel Naquet (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2009), p.460.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p.461.



Reminiscent of fin-de-siècle intellectual engagement, historical methodologies played a crucial role in the polemic of the Algerian war. The emphasis on sources, documents and evidence as a way of influencing public opinion drew on the positivist approach developed by Dreyfusard historians Charles-Victor Langlois and Charles Seignobos in their *Introduction aux études historiques* (1898). The work was infamous for its opening lines: 'L'histoire se fait avec des documents. Les documents sont les traces qu'ont laissées les pensées et les actes des hommes d'autrefois [...] rien ne supplée aux documents : pas de documents, pas d'histoire.'<sup>29</sup> In 1992 a new edition of the *Introduction* was published, including a preface by Rebérioux, in which she argued:

Cette capacité de l'historien à s'investir comme savant dans ce type de combat n'a pas fini de nous charmer. Pierre Vidal-Naquet et le Comité Maurice Audin s'appuyèrent sur les mêmes méthodes éprouvées pour démontrer, pendant la guerre d'Algérie, que ce jeune mathématicien avait bien été assassiné. Il y a comme une vocation à l'éternité, et non seulement à l'universalité, qui fonde, depuis un siècle, l'être du métier de l'historien, son éthos, et, sauf crise d'une extrême violence, assure une relative unité au milieu professionnel.'<sup>30</sup>

Here, Rebérioux elucidated the close relationship between the methods of anticolonial protesters during the Algerian war and the place of historians within a longer genesis of French Republican protest. A similar longer perspective is required when looking at Rebérioux's militancy, as her actions were informed by a deeper understanding of the broad sweep of French political history. For Rebérioux, the questionable morals and behaviour of the French state and army mobilised her to act. Whilst the figure of Maurice Audin would become central to her engagement towards the end of the war, it was the apparent 'suicide' of Ali Boumendjel in 1957, explored below, which initially rallied Rebérioux. Boumendjel's death led to the foundation of the Comité de vigilance universitaire pour la défense des libertés et la paix en Algérie with three female teachers. Rebérioux's mobilisation was important as it was rare to find French intellectual figures intervening on behalf of Algerian victims like Boumendjel at this time.

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<sup>29</sup> Langlois and Seignobos, *Introduction aux études historiques* [1898], p.26.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p.13. It is interesting to note that the positivism of Langlois and Seignobos was an attack on and attacked by Marxist historiography, led in the early twentieth century by Jaurès. Robert Gildea, *The Past in French History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), pp.2-3.

This chapter will chart Rebérioux's rise from local activism at grass-roots level, focussing on her engagement in schools and local groups, to her role in national organisations and initiatives, including the Comité Audin, the documentary *Octobre à Paris* and the problem of the *Manifeste des 121*. Bertrand Hamelin, among other historians, has criticised the academic focus on Paris-based intellectuals during the Algerian war.<sup>31</sup> Whilst the history of regional protest during the conflict is yet to be fully appraised, an analysis of how the war shaped Rebérioux's engagement and career as an historian can renew the debate surrounding the role of historians as public figures in the Fourth and Fifth Republics. My research takes much inspiration from the work of American historian James Le Sueur, who articulated that 'to ignore the importance of biography would be to miss the relationship between intellectuals, their personal trajectories throughout the conflict, and the mutations the [Algerian] war forces within the careers of many'.<sup>32</sup>

## 3.2 Grass-roots anticolonialism (1945-1960)

### 3.2.1 *Early PCF engagement*

Rebérioux's anticolonialism during the Algerian war did not emerge from a vacuum. Whilst her private and published papers contain little trace of her activism before 1956, a picture of Rebérioux's militancy before this date can be gleaned from her husband's PCF file.<sup>33</sup> Following problems with party bureaucracy which led to the temporary suspension of his membership in 1952, Jean was forced to defend his loyalty and commitment in a series of letters to the PCF Fédération de la Seine. Jean's correspondence reveals the couple's personal history of activism whilst they were living in Mulhouse (1946-1952), a hitherto undocumented history of his wife's early militant activities. The couple occupied a central position in Mulhouse's PCF community:

Nos relations avec tous les camarades de Mulhouse étaient cordiales, notre porte ouverte à tous, ouvriers ou intellectuels, Alsaciens ou Français « de l'intérieur » comme on dit en Alsace, Arabes, Suisses, etc. Nous avons logé chez

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<sup>31</sup> 'Une mobilisation d'intellectuels inédite : le milieu caennais', in *La France en guerre, 1954-1962 : Expériences métropolitaines de la guerre d'indépendance algérienne*, eds. Raphaëlle Branche and Sylvie Thénault (Paris: Autrement, 2008), p.143.

<sup>32</sup> Le Sueur, *Uncivil War*, p.330.

<sup>33</sup> PCF archives, Colonel Fabien. 62/882 Dossier biographique Jean Rebérioux. A full discussion of the PCF archives can be found in chapter six.

nous, reçu à notre table tous ceux qui se présentaient, aidé les copains dans le besoin, envoyé des colis à ceux qui étaient soldats ou même en prison ou à l'hôpital.<sup>34</sup>

Jean's record is corroborated by other sources. Madeleine served as a PCF *conseillère municipale* and in 1950 was recorded as having pressed the authorities on the living conditions of migrant workers in Mulhouse. She argued at a council meeting that 'il est clair qu'on ne peut laisser les Nord-Africains passer la nuit dans la salle d'attente de la gare, parce qu'ils risquent d'être arrêtés et conduits à la police pour vagabondage'.<sup>35</sup> Rebérioux's longstanding record of defending the rights of the oppressed began at a local level.

Jean's correspondence also stressed his wife's central role in communist networks. He revealed how Madeleine undertook multiple engagements from the beginning of her career as a *lycée* teacher:

Nous avons et ma femme plus que moi, participé à la vie du parti sous toutes ses formes, distribution des tracts aux portes d'usine ou dans la rue, collage d'affiches, vente de *L'Huma* (c'est même à ce sujet que j'ai eu quelque coups de gueule avec les camarades, je n'admettais pas que l'on charge ma femme de tels travaux alors qu'elle était déjà surchargée par ses tâches de professeur, mère de 3 enfants, conseillère municipale, secrétaire de cellule, membre d'abord du bureau fédéral, puis à ma demande, du bureau de section seulement).<sup>36</sup>

Here we see early forms of Rebérioux's militancy: collective in nature, plural in her engagements with a variety of groups and subcommittees, whilst equally committed to her profession as a history teacher and to her family responsibilities. The PCF was central to her militancy: officially through her work as a *conseillère municipale* (1948-50) but also informally through the distribution of *L'Humanité* and practically through offering pastoral support and care for those in the community. In 1952, following the Rebérioux family's move to Saint-Maur-des-Fossés on the outskirts of Paris, Madeleine took part in the infamous PCF protest against General Ridgway's visit to France. Banned by the Prefect of Paris, the march resulted in the death of one protester and the arrest of 718.<sup>37</sup> Following the protest, which was viewed as a rally of the PCF's most faithful, Rebérioux became secondary education secretary for the Comité pour la défense des

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<sup>34</sup> 62/882 Letter, Jean Rebérioux to [Jean] Poperen (2 May 1952).

<sup>35</sup> Frey, 'Être Algérien à Mulhouse en 1950', p.84.

<sup>36</sup> 62/882 Letter, Jean Rebérioux to Poperen (2 May 1952).

<sup>37</sup> George Ross, *Workers and Communists in France: from Popular Front to Eurocommunism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), pp.69-70.

libertés, proposed to the role by her former *professeur de khâgne* Maurice Lacroix. Rebérioux's early position initiated, in her words 'une large part de ma vie civique'.<sup>38</sup>

### 3.2.2 *Grass-roots militancy in and around Paris*

Of the many individuals who opposed the Algerian war Rebérioux's case is rare due to the archival preservation of her activities, even in ephemeral, local, grass-roots initiatives. These documents allow us to chart her rise from local activism to operating at a national level, in the process revealing much about the nature of protest during the pivotal turning-point between Fourth and Fifth Republics. This chapter shows how engaged, educated individuals like Rebérioux reacted to political power transgressions, when the Republic, supposedly the agent of the people, failed to represent its citizens' interests. Could France really be 'free' when the state oppressed the freedom of another nation? Rebérioux's papers highlight the paradox between Republican emphasis on human rights and realities of decolonisation.

Rebérioux's archives bring to life the plethora of anticolonial, anti-torture associations which sprang up during the post-war conflicts of decolonisation. The presentation of these organisations in her archives exposes the connection between structures of engagement and their impact on society.<sup>39</sup> For Michel Winock these groups constituted a 'synergie de gauche'; Rebérioux would later describe them as 'le maquis des comités'.<sup>40</sup> To a certain extent intellectual opposition to both the conflict and military conduct was inevitable, given the belief in a French Republican tradition of a 'liberal conscience and instinct for humanity'.<sup>41</sup> In 2000, Rebérioux charted the shifting landscape of committees and trade unions during the war:

La période de 1955 à 1958 est celle du temps des comités contre la guerre : comités locaux, comités nationaux. Ces comités vont notamment sceller la rencontre entre communistes et catholiques. Une seconde période s'ouvre avec le retour de De Gaulle au pouvoir en 1958. C'est alors le temps des partis

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<sup>38</sup> Rebérioux, 'Pierre Vidal-Naquet et nos guerres', p.15.

<sup>39</sup> Jean-François Sirinelli, 'Les intellectuels français en guerre d'Algérie', in *La guerre d'Algérie et les intellectuels français*, eds. Jean-Pierre Rioux and Jean-François Sirinelli (Brussels: Complexe, 1991), p.23.

<sup>40</sup> Michel Winock, *Le siècle des intellectuels* (Paris: Seuil, 1997), p.518; Rebérioux, 'Pierre Vidal-Naquet et nos guerres', p.19.

<sup>41</sup> Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria, 1954-1962* (New York: NY Review Books, 2006), p.203.

politiques avec une mobilisation des forces de gauche contre De Gaulle, qui est [l'] ennemi numéro un. Enfin, le début des années 1960 marque le temps des syndicats. Avec les barricades d'Algérie et les exactions de l'OAS [Organisation de l'armée secrète], les rassemblements de masse se multiplient et les syndicats essaient de capter ces grands mouvements d'action commune.<sup>42</sup>

These three stages of activism identified by Rebérioux can be used to frame her own militancy during the Algerian war.<sup>43</sup> The first period (1955-8) saw Rebérioux engage whilst she was a history teacher at the Lycée Marcelin Berthelot in Saint-Maur-des-Fossés.<sup>44</sup> The second and third stages are scrutinised later in this chapter, in my examination of her role in the Comité Audin and producing the film *Octobre à Paris*. The school was a hotbed of anticolonial fervour, with an inter-school Comité contre la guerre d'Algérie established by Rebérioux and her teaching colleagues as early as September 1956. The education sector played an important role in political activism during the 1950s and 1960s, especially as teachers tended to have socioeconomic *milieux* which fostered democratic participation. Within Rebérioux's specific circumstances individuals such as Gilberte Alleg also played a key role in consolidating her anticolonialism. The wife of Henri Alleg, Gilberte came to work at the school after her expulsion from Algeria. Such a personal encounter had an effect upon Rebérioux, who remarked that Gilberte's presence 'conféra à notre cellule et à mon (notre) interprétation du drame algérien une dimension nouvelle'.<sup>45</sup>

During the early post-war years the PCF played a central role in Rebérioux's engagement. Rebérioux later described herself as the 'pasionaria de la cellule du PCF au lycée'.<sup>46</sup> The cell was 'une puissance d'influence', with 30 or so members out of a total staff of 250. In addition to communists the school committee brought together Syndicat national des enseignements de second degré (SNES) members, pacifists, Protestants and Catholics, along with members of the Saint-Maur SFIO.<sup>47</sup> The group discussed events in Algeria at great length, especially within the problematic contemporary context of the Khrushchev report. Rebérioux equally recorded the 'tempest' Guy Mollet caused by

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<sup>42</sup> 647AP/61 Rebérioux, 'Le rôle des syndicats dans la mobilisation', *L'Union, CGT : numéro spéciale Algérie* 83 (December 2000), p.8.

<sup>43</sup> A similar chronological frame of analysis is used by Julliard, 'Le Comité Maurice Audin'.

<sup>44</sup> The *lycée* founded by the Front Populaire and was one of the first mixed gender schools in France.

<sup>45</sup> Rebérioux, 'Pierre Vidal-Naquet et nos guerres', p.18.

<sup>46</sup> Eveno and Planchais, *La guerre d'Algérie*, p.200.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

granting special powers in 1956.<sup>48</sup> However the PCF connection was not straightforward: crises such as the voting of special powers, repression of revolt in Budapest and the Suez crisis led to significant introspection. Why did Rebérioux not leave the PCF then, like so many of her historian-generation, including Annie Kriegel, François Furet and Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie? In Rebérioux's words, 'la guerre d'Algérie dictait l'urgence. Quitter le parti dans ces conditions ? Inimaginable'.<sup>49</sup>

Ali Boumendjel's death on 23 March 1957 constituted a defining moment in Rebérioux's personal narrative of anticolonial protest. Boumendjel's defenestration, presented as suicide, was a tipping point for Rebérioux whilst simultaneously strengthening collective opposition to the Algerian war.<sup>50</sup> René Capitant, the Gaullist professor of law who had taught Boumendjel, suspended his classes at the Sorbonne in protest. In later years Rebérioux framed 1957 in personal terms, tracing back the crystallisation of the anticolonial movement to that point in time: 'J'ai eu, ce jour-là, l'impression que quelque chose débordait. La situation devenait intolérable.'<sup>51</sup> Rebérioux highlighted the domestic implications of torture taking place in Algeria, which was part of the French Republic: 'Nous étions bouleversés : la torture, l'assassinat, c'était en France désormais'.<sup>52</sup> A few days after the news of the 'suicide', teachers and academics from the aforementioned 1952 committees and the Comité des lycées joined SNES and Syndicat général de l'Éducation nationale (SGEN) members in the Latin Quarter to show their collective outrage. Rebérioux expected 30 or so; protesters numbered between 100 and 150.<sup>53</sup>

From the outpouring of indignation at Boumendjel's death, treated as murder by protesters, was born the Comité de vigilance universitaire pour la défense des libertés et la paix en Algérie, a group which sought to educate school teachers about the nature of the conflict in Algeria.<sup>54</sup> Unusually for the time, the group was led exclusively by women.

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<sup>48</sup> Martin Evans, among others, has suggested the PCF supported special powers in the hope of a Popular Front. *Algeria: France's Undeclared War*, p.155.

<sup>49</sup> Rebérioux, 'Pierre Vidal-Naquet et nos guerres', p.16.

<sup>50</sup> Later that month Général Pâris de Bollardièrè resigned from the army in protest at the use of torture. In April 1957 Mollet created the Commission de sauvegarde des droits et libertés individuels to investigate torture accusations.

<sup>51</sup> Hamon and Rotman, *Les porteurs de valises*, p.79.

<sup>52</sup> Eveno and Planchais, *La guerre d'Algérie*, p.201.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Due to the informal nature of its creation, the committee was referred to by several different titles, notably the Comité de liaison de l'enseignement secondaire pour la paix en Algérie and the Comité

Rebérioux remarked that 'c'est la première fois qu'une organisation extrêmement militante, sur un sujet aussi difficile que l'indépendance de l'Algérie, était dirigé par quatre femmes, toutes profs de lycée'.<sup>55</sup> Relations within the committee were difficult, due to the political divergences of its founders. Bianca Lamblin had spent 1948-1954 teaching in Algiers and was close to Sartre and de Beauvoir; leftist Christian Andrée Tournès was a representative for the Fédération des ciné-clubs; Geneviève Trémouille was a member of SGEN; Rebérioux was an active member of the PCF and believed Lamblin suspected her of being a party mole.<sup>56</sup> Lamblin's memoirs reveal the complexities of running the Comité de vigilance:

En plus de notre enseignement et de notre vie familiale, nous avons la lourde tâche de coordonner, d'organiser l'action, mais nous étions désespérés de voir tous les partis politiques accepter la poursuite de cette guerre que l'on ne voulait même pas nommer guerre. La plupart des Français s'en moquaient comme d'une guigne ; leur indifférence soutenait notre colère.<sup>57</sup>

Rebérioux concurred with Lamblin's interpretation, later describing how activism became part of her daily routine during this period.<sup>58</sup>

The Comité de vigilance continued campaigning into the 1960s, eventually merging with the Comité Audin. The group offered support to their colleague Micheline Pouteau at the Jeanson network trial in September 1960.<sup>59</sup> Rebérioux's archives contain a committee appeal launched on 1 November 1961, the seventh anniversary of the outbreak of war, which called for the French government to recognise Algerian independence in order to bring an end to the state's conspiracy to torture and kill in Algeria.<sup>60</sup> The appeal was signed by fifty academics, school teachers and intellectuals including Jean Chesneaux, Jean Dresch, Jacques Panijel, Évry Schatzman, Laurent Schwartz, Trémouille and Rebérioux (misspelt Rébérioux).<sup>61</sup> The collaboration of heavy-weight intellectual figures

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interlycées contre la guerre d'Algérie. It has also been confused with the Comité pour la défense des libertés et la paix en Algérie, which was established in 1952. For brevity I refer to it as Comité de vigilance.

<sup>55</sup> *Paroles d'historiens*, II : Le choix de Jaurès, Chap. 12 : Avec Pierre Vidal-Naquet.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*; Rebérioux, 'Pierre Vidal-Naquet et nos guerres', p.17.

<sup>57</sup> Bianca Lamblin, *Mémoires d'une jeune fille dérangée* (Paris: Balland, 1993), p.176.

<sup>58</sup> Madeleine Rebérioux, 'Jean Dresch et le Comité Audin', *Hérodote*, 11 (1978), p.65.

<sup>59</sup> Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *L'affaire Audin (1957-1978)* (Paris: Minuit, 2012), p.121.

<sup>60</sup> 647AP/37 Comité de vigilance universitaire pour la défense des libertés et la paix en Algérie, Appel lancé hier (1 November 1961).

<sup>61</sup> Intellectuals, categorised as 'personnalités', included Aragon, de Beauvoir, Aimé Césaire, Duras, Sartre and Pierre Daix.

demonstrated how Rebérioux built up a successful network during the Algerian war, through academic, militant and anticolonial connections.

Rebérioux's actions at Marcelin Berthelot emphasized the importance of working as a collective, often across political boundaries although remaining broadly on the left. As she described:

Nous étions nombreux. C'était un comité [au lycée] unitaire et vivant. On a fait un travail de masse, notamment auprès des instituteurs et des directeurs d'écoles pour qui l'Algérie c'était la France : il fallait informer, diffuser des nouvelles exactes ; on allait chez Maspero ou aux Éditions de Minuit prendre des livres avant qu'il ne soient saisis. Nous intervenions aussi dans nos syndicats respectifs.<sup>62</sup>

The school staff's aims were three-fold: to inform themselves, their school colleagues and the wider regional teaching population about Algeria. Rebérioux recognised the necessity of working in coalition with other groups in order to achieve their common goal. In the above quotation she made an explicit reference to the role of education trade unions, which would later become a significant medium for her militancy in the 1960s (see chapter five). Nevertheless, in the early years of the conflict there was little sense of cohesion or organisation outside of PCF action, which was a tight unit. Often initiatives or committees sprang up due to the convictions of individuals.

Local-level activism worked across organisations, as Rebérioux's handwritten note entitled 'Saint-Maur organisations' demonstrated. The document listed some 21 local associations and their contact telephone numbers.<sup>63</sup> Along with eight other teachers, Rebérioux founded the Comité antifasciste du lycée Marcelin Berthelot on 1 February 1960, which was established as part of a teachers' strike.<sup>64</sup> The founding statement stressed links and overlap with similar campaign movements, listing the group's connections with six education trade unions in order to add credence to their cause.<sup>65</sup> Language used by the Comité antifasciste mirrored the lexicon and style of national organisations such as the Comité Audin, referencing the importance of revealing 'truth' and demanding 'justice'. In the school committee's pamphlet *Pour la paix en Algérie*

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<sup>62</sup> Eveno and Planchais, *La guerre d'Algérie*, pp.200-201.

<sup>63</sup> 647AP/38 Rebérioux handwritten note, 'Saint-Maur organisations' (undated).

<sup>64</sup> Other teachers involved at the Lycée were Mme Baffert, M Besson, Mme Chiche, M Czarnecki, M Margolin, M Migeon, M Porquet and M Verlhac.

<sup>65</sup> 647AP/38 *Motion Maurice Audin* (7 June 1960).



which was produced by Rebérioux and eight other teachers, statistics were included to prove beyond doubt the grave situation in Algeria. 'La guerre continue' the pamphlet announced, accompanied by the statistic that between 25 January and 1 February 1960, 693 people had been killed in the war, including 43 French soldiers.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, the tract targeted fiscal as well as emotional sensibilities. During the previous twelve months the war had cost the French state 800 billion francs, which equated to 20,000 francs per citizen.<sup>67</sup> The pamphlet concluded with a plea for open debate amongst the school community: 'Nous serions heureux de connaître, sur ces différents points, votre appréciation, et d'en discuter avec vous'.<sup>68</sup>

The Comité antifasciste petitioned the school's teachers, gaining the support of 71 of the school's 192 academic staff.<sup>69</sup> Petitions, as explored in chapter two, occupied a contentious place in Rebérioux's militancy. However, her leadership of such initiatives at a local level demonstrated her confidence in them as a democratic tool for testing public opinion in her workplace. Interestingly, petition sheets were not blank sheets left for staff members to sign of their own free will, but included all staff listed by department. Staff members (teachers, administration staff and support staff) were asked to sign by their name if they supported the committee's aims. Participation was high amongst humanities and arts subjects whereas take-up was lower in the sciences. Rebérioux's own section, History-Geography, saw eight out of fifteen staff support the petition. Action by the Comité antifasciste demonstrated localised engagement in national and transnational debate. In line with this, Rebérioux was not just a history teacher acting at a local level in her workplace but a militant with growing national connections, ready to take a more central role in political militancy.

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<sup>66</sup> 647AP/38 Pamphlet *Pour la paix en Algérie*, 1960, p.2. The pamphlet does not indicate whether these were civilian or military casualties on the Algerian side.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p.2.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p.4.

<sup>69</sup> 647AP/38 Signatures (undated).

### 3.3 Anticolonialism on a national scale (1960-3)

#### 3.3.1 *Organising: the Comité Audin*

The fluid and ephemeral nature of anticolonial committees allowed Rebérioux to rapidly ascend from working at the grass-roots to a national level of militancy. The Comité Audin, founded in November 1957 by Paris-based academics, was the most well-known of the era's anticolonial pressure groups.<sup>70</sup> Although initially aimed at holding the Republic to account regarding Maurice Audin's disappearance in June 1957, the committee quickly evolved into a rallying point for moral opposition to the Algerian war.<sup>71</sup> In June 1958, after a meeting with LDH president Daniel Mayer, the committee broadened their remit to campaigning against all forms of torture in France and Algeria.<sup>72</sup> The decision meant opposing torture committed not just by the French army against Algerian Muslims but also protesting against the OAS and the atrocities committed by Algerian nationalists against the Harkis. In October 1960 the committee became an official entity in line with the 1901 law of association, in order to take up a defamation law suit against regional newspaper *La Voix du Nord*.<sup>73</sup>

The Comité Audin worked in conjunction with similar organisations, including the LDH, Résistance Spirituelle and two of Rebérioux's groups, the Comité de défense des droits et des libertés and the Comité de vigilance.<sup>74</sup> It was as a representative for the latter that Rebérioux first came into contact with the Comité Audin in autumn 1958:

Nous avons eu connaissance du comité, et puis le SGEN avait connaissance du comité, le SNES avait connaissance du comité, le parti communiste avait connaissance du comité, donc on s'est rencontrés, la liaison entre nous s'est

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<sup>70</sup> Whilst Michel Crouzet and Luc Montagnier launched a national petition, Jacques-Fernand Cahen first suggested the idea of a national Comité Audin although took no part in the group. Gérard Boëldieu, 'À l'origine du Comité Audin : Jacques-Fernand Cahen', in *La France en guerre, 1954-1962 : Expériences métropolitaines de la guerre d'indépendance algérienne*, eds. Raphaëlle Branche and Sylvie Thénault (Paris: Autrement, 2008), p.265.

<sup>71</sup> Branche, *La torture et l'armée pendant la guerre d'Algérie, 1954-1962*, p.384. The Audin affair has recently resurfaced in French public consciousness after the publication of journalist Jean-Charles Deniau's book *La vérité sur la mort de Maurice Audin* (Paris: Équateurs, 2014).

<sup>72</sup> Laurent Schwartz, 'L'engagement de Pierre Vidal-Naquet dans la guerre d'Algérie', in *Pierre Vidal-Naquet, un historien dans la cité*, eds. François Hartog, Pauline Schmitt-Pantel and Alain Schnapp (Paris: Découverte, 2007), p.31.

<sup>73</sup> Julliard, 'Le Comité Maurice Audin', p.70; pp.160-161.

<sup>74</sup> 647AP/38 Comité Audin open letter (February 1960).

faite en 58 [...] surtout de l'année 59, il y a eu comme une espèce de fusion, enfin... en tout cas en 59, entre le Comité Audin et celui que nous avons créé.<sup>75</sup>

Rebérioux did not become a secretary of the Comité Audin until mid-1960: in the intervening years Rebérioux was more concerned with the grass-roots, localised elements of the anticolonial movement.<sup>76</sup> During her second wave of anticolonial action at the turn of the millennium, Rebérioux capitalised on her reputation and label as 'secretary' of the Comité Audin, even though her direct involvement in campaigns and clandestine publications occurred towards the end of the war. Rebérioux's involvement in the Audin campaign had led to her return to historical research and a successful career as an historian.<sup>77</sup> The connection enabled Rebérioux to transpose and veil her historical authority in terms of her militancy. Indeed, by the mid-1990s Rebérioux had established herself as one of the great militant anticolonial figures of the Fifth Republic. Martin Evans used her perspective as a yardstick for his own research on the Jeanson network, arguing that historians should go beyond 'the well-known views of prominent Parisian anti-war intellectuals Pierre Vidal-Naquet and Madeleine Rebérioux'.<sup>78</sup>

The anticolonial left of the 1950s and 1960s was not a bloc, but an uneasy coalition between individuals on the left with radically different political views, temporarily brought together with the shared goal of opposing torture.<sup>79</sup> Individuals did not agree on a common vision for the future of Algeria, whether total independence or reconciliation with France. Within this contested political landscape, the Comité Audin was unusual in bringing together often-conflicting leftist political factions to oppose torture in an organisation which was ideologically and financially independent of any political party, academic institution or trade union. Members were almost exclusively academics, from both arts and sciences. Whilst a committee membership list was never drawn up, recent research by François-René Julliard has distinguished between initiators within the committee and episodic affiliates who played a less central role but

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<sup>75</sup> *Paroles d'historiens*, II : Le choix de Jaurès, Chap. 12: Avec Pierre Vidal-Naquet.

<sup>76</sup> 647AP/37 does contain committee correspondence dating from 1959, which was presumably passed onto Rebérioux at a later date.

<sup>77</sup> Rebérioux asserted that 'Je suis rentrée dans Jaurès comme ça, tombée dans Jaurès comme on dit, hein... par horreur de Guy Mollet et pour comprendre quelque chose aux origines du socialisme français, origines communes au socialisme et au communisme'. *Paroles d'historiens*, Part. 2 : Le choix de Jaurès, Chap. 16 : L'engagement Jaurès.

<sup>78</sup> Martin Evans, *The Memory of Resistance: French Opposition to the Algerian War (1954-1962)* (Oxford: Berg, 1997), p.4.

<sup>79</sup> Agrikoliansky defined the anti-torture movement as 'un champ multisectoriel complexe'. 'Réédition ou réinvention?', p.465.

whose names were evoked to add prestige.<sup>80</sup> The four key 'initiator' members (later five with Rebérioux) comprised Vidal-Naquet, PCF critic Michel Crouzet (excluded from the party in 1958), orthodox communist Luc Montagnier and rebellious leftist Jacques Panijel. Other associated figures included Trotskyist Schwartz, orthodox communist Jean Dresch, left-wing Catholic Henri-Irénée Marrou and Protestant-leaning critic Élisabeth Labrousse.<sup>81</sup> Thus a diverse range of individuals temporarily suspended political differences to unite and oppose state-endorsed torture. For Rebérioux, working with the committee to oppose torture in Algeria compensated for the PCF's silence on the issue.<sup>82</sup> Opposition to the Algerian war highlighted inconsistencies in the PCF's moral stance. As individuals, members were willing to speak out against torture in Algeria but not against the repression of the Hungarian uprising in 1956. To further complicate matters, the PCF was hostile towards the Comité Audin because it was an independent group operating outside of the party's control. The PCF sought to claim Audin as one of their own, requesting that every mention of his name be coupled with a reference to the party.<sup>83</sup>

Of the plethora of militant committees from the Algerian war, the Comité Audin was remarkable for coupling theory with praxis, an issue which had undermined the success of other contemporary groups.<sup>84</sup> The committee used relatively traditional methods – petitions, printed documentation, subscription lists to raise money and later films – to garner support. Swaying public opinion in France was viewed as an achievable way of influencing the situation in Algeria, especially as many French figures were reluctant to engage with Algerian nationalists directly.<sup>85</sup> The committee published a range of documents, pamphlets and books to support their cause. However, the majority of publications were seized by the state in one of the greatest abuses of the free press during the post-war period. Copies of Comité Audin texts in Rebérioux's archives include *Un homme a disparu* and *Algérie 1959* (1959), *L'affaire Audin* (1960), *Le problème de la torture dans la France d'aujourd'hui* (1961) and a committee version of the Guillaume

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<sup>80</sup> 'Le Comité Maurice Audin', pp.23-28.

<sup>81</sup> Vidal-Naquet, *L'affaire Audin (1957-1978)*, p.35.

<sup>82</sup> Danièle Joly, *The French Communist Party and the Algerian War* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991), p.102; Judt, *Past Imperfect*, p.139.

<sup>83</sup> Le Sueur, *Uncivil War*, p.362.

<sup>84</sup> The Comité d'action des intellectuels contre la poursuite de la guerre en Afrique du Nord folded within a year of existence (1956). James Le Sueur, 'Decolonising 'French universalism': reconsidering the impact of the Algerian war on French intellectuals', *The Journal of North African Studies*, 6 1 (2001), p.176.

<sup>85</sup> Le Sueur, *Uncivil War*, p.221.

report.<sup>86</sup> Her papers also contain several editions of the committee's *Bulletin de liaison*.<sup>87</sup> Although the authors of *Un homme a disparu* were not listed, archives suggest Rebérioux was involved in the production and editing of the pamphlet, as the originals of several of the photographs featuring tortured men in Algeria are preserved amongst her papers.<sup>88</sup> The photographs' presence in the archives highlights the difficulty of deducing individual agency within collective militancy. *Un homme a disparu* also underscored the comparison between French torture in Algeria and the torture committed by the Gestapo during the Second World War, still very much in living memory.<sup>89</sup> Rebérioux was engaged in committee work at all levels, from speaking publicly to clerical duties. Marianne Debouzy recalled how Rebérioux was always ready to help with stuffing envelopes and other administrative tasks.<sup>90</sup>

After Rebérioux became Comité Audin secretary her archives record a more public aspect to her individual engagement. For example, she travelled across France to speak about the anti-torture campaign. In December 1961 Rebérioux presented on 'De la torture à l'OAS', a poignant moment given that Lieutenant Charbonnier, accused of Audin's torture, had recently been decorated with the Légion d'honneur for services to the French army.<sup>91</sup> In her paper Rebérioux emphasised that torture was not a remote issue taking place in Algeria 'mais c'est en France, même sous nos yeux, dans les rues de Paris, les bidonvilles de Nanterre qu'on torture et qu'on assassine'.<sup>92</sup> Another example was her paper 'Le gaullisme et la torture' given to the Grande manifestation à Albi du Comité d'action républicaine et antifasciste du Tarn, a region well-known for its association with Jaurès. A report of the meeting recorded how Rebérioux passionately denounced Audin's assassination, believed to have been carried out by Lieutenant Charbonnier. Rebérioux argued that 'Maurice Audin est un symbole des dizaines de

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<sup>86</sup> 647AP/37 *Un homme a disparu : Maurice Audin* (1960), *L'affaire Audin* (1960); 647AP/38 *Algérie 1959* (1959), *Le problème de la torture dans la France d'aujourd'hui (1954 - 1961)* (1961).

<sup>87</sup> 647AP/38 *Bulletins de liaison* (1 April 1960, Nov-Dec 1960, Jan-Feb 1961 and Nov 1961). Copies of a further six *Bulletins* are held by the BNF under 8-LC2-6991. Rebérioux also subscribed to *Vérités Anticolonialistes* (1960-1).

<sup>88</sup> 647AP/38 'Photos Alg', envelope with four black and white photographs depicting men being tortured and in prison (undated).

<sup>89</sup> 'La torture [est] une méthode héritée de la guerre d'Indochine et de la Gestapo'. 647AP/37 *Un homme a disparu: Maurice Audin* (1960), p.4.

<sup>90</sup> Julliard, 'Le Comité Maurice Audin', p.170.

<sup>91</sup> 647AP/37 Comité Audin 'Réunion privée' (8 December 1961). The Comité Audin also launched a petition denouncing Charbonnier's promotion.

<sup>92</sup> 647AP/37 Rebérioux handwritten notes for the above meeting.

milliers torturés des 3,024 « disparus », c'est-à-dire morts sous la torture en 1957'.<sup>93</sup> Rebérioux condemned the lack of official response to the Wullaume report in March 1955, a document which had implicitly supported the use of torture in Algeria. Rebérioux argued that 'loin de supprimer ces procédés, la torture est maintenant officialisée quant à ses méthodes et aux organismes qui la pratiqueront systématiquement, en décorant au besoin les tortionnaires, pour en relever le moral !'. For these talks Rebérioux was billed as 'agrégée de l'université, ancienne élève de l'ÉNS, secrétaire nationale du Comité Maurice Audin', demonstrating the growing interplay between her academic and anticolonialist statuses.

Despite the difficult internal politics within the Comité Audin, Rebérioux was open about her communist membership, the tension it caused and the PCF's impact on her identity.<sup>94</sup> The committee was her 'communist conscience', useful for highlighting the internal flaws within the PCF: the party's inability to mobilise the working classes and its moral paralysis regarding the denunciation of colonial infractions, ranging from massacres in Constantinople in 1945 to the Budapest crisis in 1956.<sup>95</sup> Rebérioux was however personally criticised by the party for diverting the attention of the masses to the Comité Audin rather than supporting the PCF's own initiatives.<sup>96</sup> Gender also marked Rebérioux out, as the Comité Audin was largely male-dominated. Rebérioux transgressed what Bertrand Hamelin has identified as women's prescribed 'role' within anticolonial engagement during this period. Hamelin observed how society imagined women would intervene in the public sphere as mothers, wives or fiancées of soldiers, not as anticolonial activists.<sup>97</sup> Fellow historian and militant Michelle Perrot was asked to knit vests for Algerians by the local representative of the Union des femmes françaises rather than engage in direct protest through committees.<sup>98</sup> Both Rebérioux and Perrot refused to conform to these societal modes of behaviour. The two women not only

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<sup>93</sup> 647AP/37 Grande manifestation à Albi du Comité d'action républicaine et antifasciste du Tarn (undated).

<sup>94</sup> In 2002 Rebérioux defended herself against accusations of being a Communist mole within the Comité Audin: 'Non, le rôle du flic qui vous semble sans doute naturel pour quelqu'un qui n'est pas 'un juste' ne fut jamais le mien. Et j'ai toujours manifesté une parfaite loyauté et indépendance dans mon combat'. 647AP/60 Letter, Rebérioux to *Le Nouvel Observateur* (21-27 June 2001), p.41.

<sup>95</sup> Eveno and Planchais, *La guerre d'Algérie*, p.201.

<sup>96</sup> Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Le choix de l'histoire : pourquoi and comment je suis devenu historien* (Paris: Arléa, 2007), p.97.

<sup>97</sup> Hamelin, 'Une mobilisation d'intellectuels inédite', p.148.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

carved out new roles in the parapolitical landscape, but did so by virtue of their academic credentials.

Rebérioux's papers indicate how the Comité Audin regularly worked alongside sister organisations. In these alliances, often the glue was the LDH, an organisation Rebérioux would later preside, although she did not join the League until 1964 (see chapter seven). One key example of the interplay between the League and anticolonial committees was the *Appel en faveur des condamnés*. It was a joint initiative between the Comité Audin and the LDH, represented by Rebérioux and Daniel Mayer respectively. The appeal called for the release of nine young French 'democrats', including Robert Bonneau and Micheline Pouteau, who were imprisoned during the conflict but who had not been freed following the Evian accords.<sup>99</sup> As with Maurice Audin, the appeal emphasized the injustice of the case and how these individuals were deprived of their civic rights. The front page of the LDH National Bulletin in January 1963 was used to promote the appeal, signed jointly by Rebérioux and Daniel Mayer, highlighting Rebérioux's growing public status as an important anticolonial figure.<sup>100</sup>

### 3.3.2 *Petitioning: the Manifeste des 121*

The escalation of opposition to the Algerian conflict into a 'war of petitions' in the autumn of 1960 played a significant role in the transformation of Rebérioux's personal militancy.<sup>101</sup> The most notorious petition, the *Manifeste des 121 (Déclaration sur le droit à l'insoumission dans la guerre d'Algérie)*, saw the brief public convergence of an intellectual left-wing avant-garde to controversially advocate the right to insubordination and draft resistance.<sup>102</sup> The manifesto responded to the trial of the Jeanson network, a faction of militants who moved beyond verbal, non-violent

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<sup>99</sup> 647AP/37 'Un appel en faveur des condamnés, qui n'ont pas bénéficié de l'amnistie du 22 mars 1962' (8 January 1963).

<sup>100</sup> 647AP/37 LDH Bulletin National (January 1963). The same edition also carried an advert for *Octobre à Paris*.

<sup>101</sup> Sirinelli, *Intellectuels et passions françaises*, p.342.

<sup>102</sup> Rieffel argued the Manifesto was the last moment of consensus on the left, aside from the debates concerning Solzhenitsyn in the mid-1970s. Rémy Rieffel, 'L'empreinte de la guerre d'Algérie sur quelques figures intellectuels « de gauche »', in *La guerre d'Algérie et les intellectuels français*, eds. Jean-Pierre Rioux and Jean-François Sirinelli (Brussels: Complexe, 1991), p.212.

opposition of war in Algeria (epitomised by Rebérioux's militancy) to the practical subsidisation of Algerian nationalist movements, including the Front de libération nationale (FLN). The clandestine network carried suitcases stuffed with money, thus earning the nickname *porteurs de valises*.<sup>103</sup> In the period since, the manifesto has taken on legendary qualities within the intellectual history of the French left.

Rebérioux had a complicated relationship with the manifesto. She had a personal connection with the Jeanson network through Janine Cahen, one of the 24 members on trial, who was a former pupil of Rebérioux from her time in Mulhouse.<sup>104</sup> The declaration was initially published in Paul Thibaud's *Vérité-liberté*, a review which Rebérioux had been invited to join in the spring of 1960.<sup>105</sup> Nevertheless, despite being an active member, Rebérioux was never publicly named on the editorial board due to conflicts with her PCF membership. For Vidal-Naquet Rebérioux's role on the journal demonstrated her complete freedom of speech and action, independent from the party.<sup>106</sup> Rebérioux's reticence to be publicly associated with *Vérité-liberté* can be contrasted with her willingness to be openly listed on the editorial board of gauchiste revue *Politique aujourd'hui* a decade later (see chapter six). Rebérioux did eventually sign the manifesto as a second-wave signatory, however according to her son Pierre-Yves signing the protest was a controversial decision, not taken lightly and after much hesitation.<sup>107</sup> Almost forty years later Rebérioux confirmed the difficulties she faced in committing her signature.<sup>108</sup>

Signing the manifesto had severe personal consequences for Rebérioux. Endorsing the petition was a way of deliberately criticising the PCF line, which would later be significant for Rebérioux. Her PCF file listed her signature of the manifesto as a direct

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<sup>103</sup> Evans, *The Memory of Resistance*, p.xi. Schalk stated that by 1961 80% of FLN funds came from Algerian workers in France. Schalk, *War and the Ivory Tower*, p.98.

<sup>104</sup> Yves Frey, 'Une anticolonialiste pendant la guerre d'Algérie', *Annuaire Historique de Mulhouse*, 22 (2011).

<sup>105</sup> Rebérioux, 'Pierre Vidal-Naquet et nos guerres', p.20. *Le Monde* never printed the manifesto, and *Le Temps Modernes* left the allocated pages for publication blank.

<sup>106</sup> Vidal-Naquet, *Mémoires t.2*, p.126.

<sup>107</sup> Interview with Pierre-Yves Rebérioux (12 March 2015).

<sup>108</sup> 'Et si j'avais eu quelque mal à signer – mais je l'avais signé – le *Manifeste des 121*'. Rebérioux, 'Pierre Vidal-Naquet et nos guerres', p.20.



transgression of party loyalty.<sup>109</sup> Françoise Blum noted how her signature indicated Rebérioux's ability to distinguish her personal politics from those of the party.<sup>110</sup> In total the manifesto was signed by 246 academics, writers, intellectuals and militants, including Comité Audin members Vidal-Naquet, Panijel, Jean Czarnecki and Schwartz. Not all Comité Audin members agreed with advocating insubordination. A more moderate counter-petition, the *Manifeste des intellectuels français*, was published the following month, demonstrating an increasing schism within the left between those who supported Algerian independence at all costs and those who prioritised peace.<sup>111</sup> Irrespective of her personal hesitations, the *Manifeste des 121* increased Rebérioux's public profile, inadvertently putting her family in danger. Leading figures of the anticolonial left became the target of OAS terrorism, including Comité Audin members Schwartz, Roger Godement and Louis Lalande. The OAS letter-bombing campaign had some high-profile victims. Delphine Renard, the daughter of André Malraux's concierge was blinded by an attack. Schwartz's son Marc-André was kidnapped; he later suffered a mental breakdown and committed suicide in 1971.<sup>112</sup> Rebérioux's second son Pierre-Yves remembers being instructed by his parents not to collect post from the family letterbox during the war, for fear of being a target.<sup>113</sup>

At a professional level, several of Rebérioux's anticolonialist colleagues were suspended from their academic posts for signing the petition, including Vidal-Naquet and Schwartz.<sup>114</sup> Rebérioux empathised with the schoolteachers who were suspended from their positions, arguing that pupils would suffer from the interruption to their studies for the state's political agenda.<sup>115</sup> To help, Rebérioux solicited support for the creation of a 'Solidarity fund' for suspended Higher Education staff. In an undated open letter Rebérioux asserted that 'il est de l'intérêt de la collectivité française que chaque membre de l'Université puisse poursuivre des travaux sans avoir le souci du pain quotidien pour sa famille, et sans être obligé de chercher un autre métier'.<sup>116</sup> The letter called for fund

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<sup>109</sup> Jeannine Verdès-Leroux, 'La guerre d'Algérie dans la trajectoire des intellectuels communistes', in *La guerre d'Algérie et les intellectuels français*, eds. Jean-Pierre Rioux and Jean-François Sirinelli (Brussels: Complexe, 1991), p.315. PCF 62/883 typed report, 'Madeleine Rebeyrioux' [sic] (1964), p.1.

<sup>110</sup> Françoise Blum, 'Portrait de groupe avec Dame', *Cahiers Jaurès*, 183-184 1 (2007), p.57.

<sup>111</sup> Le Sueur, *Uncivil War*, p.235.

<sup>112</sup> Schwartz, *Un mathématicien aux prises avec le siècle*, pp.408-417.

<sup>113</sup> Interview with Pierre-Yves Rebérioux (12 March 2015).

<sup>114</sup> 647AP/38 Rebérioux handwritten note, 'Après le *Manifeste des 121*' (undated), p.1.

<sup>115</sup> 647AP/38 Rebérioux, handwritten note, 'Les élèves dont les nous suivent' (undated).

<sup>116</sup> 647AP/38 Open letter (undated).

members to donate one two-hundredth of their monthly wage to subsidise suspended colleagues at schools and universities. In a handwritten note, Rebérioux reflected on the wide-ranging ramifications of the manifesto and called for others to refuse to accept the serious sanctions imposed by the state, advocating solidarity between academics from all fields and the development of transnational solidarities.<sup>117</sup> She concluded that the war in Algeria could only be ended by increasing support for suspended colleagues, across disciplines and trade unions.<sup>118</sup> The promotion of academic and transnational solidarities was an early example of the approach taken by the Collectif intersyndical (see chapter five).

The *Manifeste des 121* was a significant moment for Rebérioux's personal narrative of anticolonialism. The appeal pushed her into the public eye whilst further jeopardising her standing within the PCF. However the petition was pivotal for forging links between disparate committees and political groups. The Comité de vigilance backed the manifesto, issuing a petition which supported the opportunity to focus public attention on the situation in Algeria, especially with students, who showed intellectual curiosity about the political state of affairs.<sup>119</sup> The committee's petition was signed by representatives from schools around the Île-de-France region, including Rebérioux on behalf of the Lycée Marcelin Berthelot. The list of signatures demonstrated the intellectual composition of the committee; although it referenced 'university' in the title, in reality it was more university-educated members who were now teachers in schools, the classic trajectory for French academics of Rebérioux's generation.

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<sup>117</sup> 647AP/38 Rebérioux, handwritten note, 'Après *Manifeste des 121*' (undated), p.3. Rebérioux noted the transnational solidarity between Italian, Swedish, Danish, Finnish, British and more recently American individuals. Also included in 647AP/38 is correspondence from Lise Herken (Stockholm) forwarding translated newspaper clippings which called for the French Embassy in Stockholm to pressure the French government to review their treatment of intellectuals implicated in the protest. Rebérioux's central role as mediator between the Comité de vigilance and Swedish intellectuals is also noted in Marie-Pierre Ulloa, *Francis Jeanson: a Dissident Intellectual from the French Resistance to the Algerian War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), p.219.

<sup>118</sup> 647AP/38 Rebérioux handwritten note, 'Après le *Manifeste des 121*' (undated), p.4.

<sup>119</sup> 647AP/38 Draft statement, Comité de vigilance universitaire (undated).

### 3.3.3 Documenting: *Octobre à Paris*

17 October 1961 triggered a new, final stage in anticolonial protest during the Algerian war and a new 'cultural' phase in Rebérioux's own militancy. On this autumn evening 30,000 Algerians demonstrated in Paris to oppose the government's curfew against them. Protesters targeted specific sites with an association with the Republican tradition of public marches: the Grands Boulevards, Champs-Élysées, boulevards Saint-Michel and Saint-Germain.<sup>120</sup> The subsequent violent police repression, authorised by Maurice Papon, led to many innocent deaths, the number of which is still under debate today.<sup>121</sup> Until recently the violence had been largely 'forgotten' by mainstream historical narratives.<sup>122</sup> The documentary film *Octobre à Paris* (1962) aimed to uncover police brutality committed against Algerians in the name of the Republic.<sup>123</sup> Directed by Jacques Panijel, the documentary was funded, filmed, produced and distributed by the Comité Audin and the newspaper *Vérité-liberté*.<sup>124</sup> The film announced that 'les lieux, les faits, les personnages sont tous vrais'.<sup>125</sup> Rebérioux played a key role in the clandestine distribution and financial management of the film, further illustrating how her anticolonial engagement grew from a local-level to operating on a national scale. The committee's decision to support the film was however, controversial. As the organisation could not afford the estimated filming costs of six million francs, the Fédération de France du FLN eventually covered these costs, although no mention was made in any publicity. Their involvement divided the committee, many of whom would

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<sup>120</sup> Danielle Tartakowsky, *Manifestes à Paris : 1880-2010* (Seysssel: Champ Vallon, 2010), p.144.

<sup>121</sup> Between 31 and 200 died. See the debate between House and MacMaster and JP Brunet. House and MacMaster, *Paris 1961*, pp.11-15; JP Brunet, 'Police violence in Paris, October 1961: Historical sources, methods, and conclusions', *The Historical Journal*, 51 1 (2008), pp.195-204. Comité Audin documents from the time claimed 250 were killed. Nine died at Charonne on 8 February 1962 (eight at the protest and one later in hospital from wounds sustained).

<sup>122</sup> Einaudi brought historical attention with his work, published on the thirtieth anniversary of 1961: *La bataille de Paris : 17 octobre 1961* (Paris: Seuil, 1991). The memory of 17 October 1961 is also discussed in Joshua Cole, 'Entering history: the memory of police violence in Paris, October 1961', in *Algeria & France, 1800-2000: Identity, Memory, Nostalgia*, ed. Patricia Lorcin (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2006), pp.117-134; Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), pp.231-236. The recent film by Yasmina Adi also revived attention: Yasmina Adi, 'Ici on noie les Algériens : 17 octobre 1961', (2011).

<sup>123</sup> Jacques Panijel, 'Octobre à Paris', (Les Films de l'Atalante - Comité Maurice Audin, 1962).

<sup>124</sup> Originally the committee only agreed to support the documentary if it were directed by a well-known filmmaker. No established directors agreed so Panijel took on the role. Jean-Philippe Renouard and Isabelle Saint-Saëns, 'Festivals d'un film maudit : entretien avec Jacques Panijel', *Vacarme*, 13 (2000), p.20.

<sup>125</sup> 647AP/37 'Le Comité Maurice Audin et Vérité-liberté présentent *Octobre à Paris*' (undated).

not support the FLN either explicitly or implicitly.<sup>126</sup> Documentation concealed the FLN role, and stated that members' subscriptions financed the film, which was produced in clandestine conditions by a group of militant cinematographers. The film portrayed a tragedy in five acts: the situation of Algerians living in France, subject to arrest, torture and deprivation of human rights; the curfew; the departure of Algerians for the protest; the injuries inflicted upon protesters; and finally the epilogue, the Charonne protest of 8 February 1962.<sup>127</sup>

Publicity declared that '*Octobre à Paris* est un film de témoignage et de dénonciation. Un film politique, au sens plein du terme, par son sujet autant que par ces conditions de production'.<sup>128</sup> Filmed between October 1961 and March 1962 the documentary reconstructed the events of 17 October. Four teams of technicians (23 people in total) worked on the production in rotation two to three days a week. The relay system was necessary to protect workers' mental wellbeing but also to avoid detection by state surveillance. Filmed reconstructions were interspersed with interviews with Algerians who had marched on 17 October and still images by Élie Kagan of the protest.<sup>129</sup> The use of non-digetic commentary, which placed the emphasis on the testimony of individuals rather than the director, was unusual for the time although would later become a key feature of the *cinéma vérité* genre.<sup>130</sup> The FLN allowed reconstructions of the protest to be filmed in the real-life shantytowns of Gennevilliers and Nanterre, reinforcing how Algerian immigrants were physically and politically marginalised in contemporary French society. During filming the sounds of helicopters circling the shantytowns could be heard.<sup>131</sup> Rebérioux's youngest son Vincent, aged seven at the time, also remembers those involved in the film staying with the Rebérioux household.<sup>132</sup> The film was political twice-over: not only did it include representations of the protest but the final film also included images from the tragedy at Charonne, where on 8 February 1962 nine

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<sup>126</sup> Panijel argued that 'nous n'étions pas des porteurs de valises, mais des militants républicains français exempts de souvenirs algériens et n'obéissant à aucun patriotisme.' Renouard and Saint-Saëns, 'Festivals d'un film maudit', p.21.

<sup>127</sup> 647AP/37 'Le Comité Maurice Audin et Vérité-liberté présentent *Octobre à Paris*' (undated).

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Renouard and Saint-Saëns, 'Festivals d'un film maudit', p.22.

<sup>130</sup> I am grateful to Mani Sharpe for his thoughts on *Octobre à Paris* from a Film studies perspective.

<sup>131</sup> 647AP/37 'Le Comité Maurice Audin et Vérité-liberté présentent *Octobre à Paris*' (undated).

<sup>132</sup> Interview with Vincent Rebérioux (16 January 2014).

French communists died when police suppressed a peaceful protest against the OAS terrorist campaign.

In addition to its provocative content, *Octobre à Paris* gained its notoriety as the first full-length film to be seized by Police, as early as its first screening on 9 October 1962.<sup>133</sup> State censure followed, as no promoters would take on the risk of public distribution.<sup>134</sup> The film eventually received its screening visa in 1973 and was only shown in cinemas after Papon's trial in 1997.<sup>135</sup> Yet even censorship was twisted by the committee into a further prop for their cause: 'Cette saisie, effectuée dès la première projection en France, le 9 octobre 1962, était un « honneur » jusque-là réservé aux films pornographiques'.<sup>136</sup> The film thus became a symbol of the Comité Audin's resistance to the state: '*Octobre à Paris* se situe résolument hors de ce système, contre ce système!'. In order to circumnavigate state censorship of the film, Rebérioux took on the responsibility of organising a series of clandestine showings across France. Such organisational acts demonstrated her rapid rise in status and responsibility within the Comité Audin. Distributing film reels for underground screenings was no mean feat. Her archives contain a distribution guide drawn up by Rebérioux in order to avoid the seizure of film reels, which were expensive to make. Rebérioux stressed the very real threat of seizure, along with details of how to avoid detection. Showings should be organised within private organisations such as film-clubs or other democratic organisations with a closed guest list (for example the LDH, Parti socialiste unifié [PSU] or SFIO); the film should not be discussed over the telephone; and the screening location and projectionist should be vetted beforehand.<sup>137</sup> The sale, rather than hire, of film reels was encouraged as it was more profitable for the committee but also reduced the risk of seizure during transportation.

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<sup>133</sup> The first public screening, held at the Ciné-Club Action in Saint-Ouen, was attended by Sartre and de Beauvoir. Julliard, 'Le Comité Maurice Audin', p.128.

<sup>134</sup> 647AP/37 contains newspaper clippings which mention the film, notably from *Lettres Françaises*, *France Observateur*, *L'Express*, *France Nouvelle*, *Témoignage-Chrétien*, *Libération*, *L'Humanité* and *Le Canard Enchaîné*.

<sup>135</sup> Antoine de Baecque, 'Rejouer le 17 octobre 1961', *L'Histoire*, 368 (2011), p.26.

<sup>136</sup> 647AP/37 Pamphlet, *Octobre à Paris* (1962).

<sup>137</sup> 647AP/37 Rebérioux, typed document, 'Quelques renseignements sur le film *Octobre à Paris*' (undated).

All of these operations were directed from Rebérioux's house on rue André Bollier, Saint-Maur-des-Fossés and thus her activism inevitably became intertwined with her day-to-day life as a teacher, wife and mother.<sup>138</sup> Yet the distribution of the film was not without problems. Pierre Bonnoure reported the many difficulties he faced in organising screenings in the Seine-Nord area. Showings were banned by the police at Drancy and Bagnolet; at the latter the screening was only banned thirty minutes before the film was due to begin, by which point between 400 and 500 people had already arrived. Bonnoure concluded somewhat optimistically that 'dans les deux cas le seul risque était la saisie de la copie, risque purement financier et entièrement supporté par le Comité'.<sup>139</sup> Other letters demonstrated that Rebérioux's advice had been heeded. Georges Bensaïd confided that 'Je préfère prendre tous sous mon bonnet, veuillez donc me répondre à mon adresse personnelle'.<sup>140</sup> Bensaïd also confided his satisfaction in sidestepping the censorship ordered by the Minister of the Interior, demonstrating how clandestine screenings simultaneously raised awareness about the practice of torture as well as subverting the wishes of the French government regarding censorship. Some correspondents added their own caveats to the conditions for discussing their planned film screenings. Roger Gascon, a teacher from the Loire valley asked Rebérioux to label her correspondence 'PERSONNEL' in order to avoid details falling into the wrong hands.<sup>141</sup> Many screenings took place in universities and thus students constituted a large percentage of the average audience. Indeed, some cineastes acknowledged the role Rebérioux played in offering encouragement and support for young people to protest.<sup>142</sup> Other screenings, such as the one at Nantes, brought together many young people who were not students, demonstrating the film's power to cut across educational boundaries.<sup>143</sup> Showings were organised across France and beyond: in Nantes, Grenoble, Bordeaux, Besançon, Strasbourg, Pau, Lyon, Rennes, Montpellier and in Belgium, Algeria and Tunisia.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Some offered to collect film reels from her house. 647AP/37 Letter, J Marintabouret to Rebérioux (31 May 1963).

<sup>139</sup> 647AP/37 Letter, Pierre Bonnoure to Rebérioux (13 May 1963).

<sup>140</sup> 647AP/37 Letter, Georges Bensaïd to Rebérioux (15 December 1962).

<sup>141</sup> 647AP/37 Letter, Roger Gascon to Rebérioux (14 February 1962).

<sup>142</sup> 647AP/37 Letter, Dominique Daute to Rebérioux (13 March 1963).

<sup>143</sup> 'Public composé en majeure partie de jeunes, et pas seulement des étudiants'. 647AP/37 Letter, Daniel Sauvaget to Rebérioux (27 March 1963).

<sup>144</sup> The showing in Brussels coincided with the move to establish a Belgian Comité Audin. 647AP/37 Letter, Marc Dalain to Rebérioux (26 January 1963).

Rebérioux's archives show that *Octobre à Paris* was a costly venture. Whilst the largest expense, the cost of filming, was covertly covered by the Fédération de France du FLN, other expenditures were paid for by the Comité Audin. These included expenses for clandestine distribution and for film screenings at Cannes and Venice festivals. By autumn 1963 income from ticket sales, hire and sale of film reels and Algerian film rights totalled 70,567 francs.<sup>145</sup> Rebérioux's archives demonstrate that the political, intellectual and social value of the film outstripped its commercial value. *Octobre à Paris* illustrated the Comité Audin's innovation in their attempts to sway public opinion, using cinema to educate and raise awareness of the situation both in Algeria and metropolitan France. The decision to produce and distribute a film alongside printed documentation was a conscious choice to agitate popular feeling in a way literature could not. However the film was controversial; representations of the Algerian war were considered 'taboo' in French cinema.<sup>146</sup> In addition to offering a visual 'window' on France during the Algerian war, films such as *Octobre à Paris* can be understood as a form of militant cultural practice in their own right, and demonstrate Rebérioux's long-standing belief in cultural activities as an effective method of political engagement and a way to influence public opinion.<sup>147</sup>

### 3.4 Conclusion

Anti-torture committees of the Algerian war were instrumental in forging Rebérioux's intellectual and academic identity as a leader and cemented her life-long concern for human rights. As this chapter has argued, Rebérioux's intellectual interventions during the conflict centred on the use of collective engagement through committees as a way of bridging the gap between anticolonial ideals and the position of the established left. Her rich archive gives historians access to ephemeral yet important committees like the Comité de vigilance and local school committees which otherwise might have escaped historical scrutiny, alongside her involvement in more well-known organisations like the

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<sup>145</sup> 647AP/37 Letter from Panijel to Rebérioux (15 November 1963).

<sup>146</sup> Guy Austin, 'Seeing and listening from the site of trauma': the Algerian War in contemporary French cinema', *Yale French Studies*, 115 (2009), p.115.

<sup>147</sup> Alison Murray, 'Teaching colonial history through film', *French Historical Studies*, 25 1 (2002), p.41.

Comité Audin.<sup>148</sup> Rebérioux played a central role in producing paper propaganda at the grass-roots (petitions, flyers, and manifestos), speaking and organising meetings and also risked physical danger by taking to the streets to protest.<sup>149</sup> A study of these structures illuminates Rebérioux's early life, before her status grew as a professional historian and academic, and in the process exposes the inner mechanics of French militancy during the Algerian war. Focussing on her activism during the conflict also allows a deeper understanding of Rebérioux's anti-imperialism in the 1960s. Her sustained contact with the LDH through various anticolonial groups also indirectly led to her presidency of the association (see chapter six).<sup>150</sup>

Rebérioux's roles in the anti-torture campaign at local and national levels sought to heal the fracture between electorate and mainstream left-wing politics in the late 1950s and early 1960s. It was in this parapolitical space that figures like Rebérioux were able to agitate and shift public opinion. Rebérioux's intellectual and cultural battles from the period demonstrate how figures on the left called the state into question in a radical way, using their opposition to atrocities committed during the war to call for new forms of politics.<sup>151</sup> In the words of Rebérioux's colleague Marianne Debouzy, anticolonial activists did not just have a symbolic function but 'on était quand même une voix politique critique'.<sup>152</sup> Rebérioux's critical voice may not have fully resonated during the war but would be resurrected forty years later during the memory battles of the early 2000s, as explored in the next chapter.

The Algerian war was pivotal for Rebérioux's professional career as well as her militancy. Her involvement in anticolonial campaign groups inspired her return to academic history after fifteen years as a history teacher. Gilles Candar maintained that

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<sup>148</sup> Some committees are not documented in Rebérioux's papers, such as the Ligue d'action pour le rassemblement antifasciste, founded in December 1961. Hamon and Rotman, *Les porteurs de valises*, p.375.

<sup>149</sup> Schwartz recalled how Rebérioux was hit by police at the banned UNÉF march on 27 September 1960. *Un mathématicien aux prises avec le siècle*, p.402. Vincent Rebérioux also remembers his mother returning home from one protest with blood on her face, likely the same event.

<sup>150</sup> Agrikoliansky made the connection between Rebérioux's anticolonialism and her LDH presidency in *La Ligue française des droits de l'homme et du citoyen depuis 1945 : sociologie d'un engagement civique* (Paris: Harmattan, 2002), p.93.

<sup>151</sup> Schalk, *War and the Ivory Tower*, p.vi.

<sup>152</sup> Julliard, 'Le Comité Maurice Audin', p.171.



Rebérioux chose to work on Jaurès due to 'deux fées, une bonne et une mauvaise'.<sup>153</sup> The good was close friend Vidal-Naquet, who shared a life-long interest in Jaurès; the bad was Guy Mollet, whom she considered had betrayed the socialist movement with his actions in Algeria.<sup>154</sup> As Candar explained: 'Chacun de ceux qui ont approché Madeleine sait à quel point elle ne départit jamais de son exécution pour l'homme et sa politique'.<sup>155</sup> Rebérioux's hatred of Mollet, shared more broadly with the PCF at this time, was for many reasons: primarily for his actions in Algeria and his ostracism of the PCF but also his broader colonial attitude, the Suez crisis and his western arrogance. Rebérioux's visceral reaction to the actions of Mollet's socialist government would lead to a life-long dedication to Jaurésian studies. As she reflected in 1999: 'C'est par lui que j'étais allée, si j'ose dire, chercher Jaurès : aurait-il pu être le père de Guy Mollet ?'<sup>156</sup> In the immediate aftermath of the Algerian war Rebérioux wrote a series of journal articles for *Le Mouvement social* on colonialism in the Third Republic, demonstrating the fundamental importance of her personal anticolonial engagement in directing her professional work.<sup>157</sup> Rebérioux stated in the preface to *Parcours engagés* that the main motivation for researching Jaurès and the Dreyfus affair was that in the 1950s and 1960s 'nous cherchions comment décrypter ces façons de changer le monde'.<sup>158</sup> The following chapter explores how her experiences of anticolonialism during the Algerian war and the prestige offered by her status as emeritus professor of history enabled Rebérioux to effect such political changes in her own present, forty years later.

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<sup>153</sup> Candar, 'Pourquoi Jaurès ?', p.45.

<sup>154</sup> Vidal Naquet's thesis for the diplôme d'études supérieures was entitled *Jaurès, député de Carmaux* (1953); his wife Geneviève also authored *Jaurès, historien de la révolution française* (1956).

<sup>155</sup> Candar, 'Pourquoi Jaurès ?', p.45.

<sup>156</sup> Rebérioux, *Parcours engagés*, p.10.

<sup>157</sup> Madeleine Rebérioux, 'La gauche socialiste française : « La Guerre sociale » et « Le Mouvement socialiste » face au problème colonial', *Le Mouvement social*, 46 (1964).

<sup>158</sup> Rebérioux, *Parcours engagés*, p.6.

## Chapter 4. Second-Wave Anticolonialism: the *Appel des Douze*

*Pour nous, citoyens français auxquels importe le destin partagé des deux peuples et le sens universel de la justice, pour nous qui avons combattu la torture sans être aveugles aux autres pratiques, il revient à la France, eu égard à ses responsabilités, de condamner la torture qui a été entreprise en son nom durant la guerre d'Algérie.*  
**Appel des Douze, 31 October 2000**

### 4.1 Introduction

Although the Evian accords brought a technical end to the Algerian war on paper, the use of amnesty to end the conflict silenced open debate on the Algerian war in the public domain.<sup>1</sup> In 1962 Charles De Gaulle amnestied not only Algerians involved in the fight for independence but all French members of the police, administration and army involved in Algeria (*porteurs de valises* were notably exempt), silencing public debate and halting legal cases against the state by Josette Audin and Djamila Boupacha. The suppression of memory has amplified the conflict's long-lasting implications for both Algeria and France, constituting a 'syndrome' similar to Vichy or Vietnam. It took until June 1999 for the state to officially recognise that 1954-62 was in fact a 'war' rather than the previously-named 'opérations de maintien de l'ordre en Afrique du Nord'.<sup>2</sup> Nothing typified the unsolved issues surrounding the Algerian war more than the explosion of memory-battles in the public sphere at the turn of the millennium, described as the 'torture controversy' and another 'sterile *guerre franco-française*'.<sup>3</sup> The *Appel des Douze*, launched by Rebérioux and eleven other anticolonialists on 31 October 2000, demanded the state condemnation of torture committed during the Algerian war. Evocation of the

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<sup>1</sup> William Cohen, 'The Algerian war, the French state and official memory', *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques*, 28 2 (2002), pp.222-224.

<sup>2</sup> Raphaëlle Branche, *La guerre d'Algérie : une histoire apaisée ?* (Paris: Seuil, 2005), p.42.

<sup>3</sup> Neil Macmaster, 'The torture controversy (1998-2002): towards a 'new history' of the Algerian war?', *Modern & Contemporary France*, 10 4 (2002), p.450; David Prochaska, 'The return of the repressed: war, trauma, memory in Algeria and beyond', in *Algeria & France, 1800-2000: Identity, Memory, Nostalgia*, ed. Patricia Lorcin (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2006), pp.257-276.

memory of 1954-62 remains extremely divided on both sides of the Mediterranean. The appeal and its associated initiatives opened the way to victims of torture sharing their testimonies in the public sphere. The process of sharing was a starting point for fulfilling David Schalk's plea, made in 1991, for a structure for remembering the conflict.<sup>4</sup> Moving on from an analysis of Rebérioux's engagement during the Algerian war, this chapter scrutinises her role in unlocking disputed memories of the conflict forty years later. The chapter asks the following questions: how did Rebérioux capitalise on her academic and militant status to intervene in the public memory-battles of the Algerian war? Was her action a continuation of anticolonial engagement during the Algerian war or a new form of militancy? How successful was the *Appel des Douze* from a longer perspective?

The *Appel des Douze* did not reveal the human rights abuses committed by the French army during the Algerian war for the first time.<sup>5</sup> After all, 'in spite of some censorship, anyone who wanted to know about what was going on in Algeria could acquire knowledge about it'.<sup>6</sup> The Wuillaume report in 1955 and the establishment of the Commission de sauvegarde des droits et libertés individuelles in 1957 had already revealed the state's acknowledgement of abuses being committed in the name of the French Republic in Algeria. Furthermore, various opinion polls demonstrated public awareness of torture in the intervening years. A 1992 survey indicated 55% of 17-30 year-olds polled knew about the Algerians killed on 17 October 1961.<sup>7</sup> So why did it take until 2000, thirty-eight years after the Evian Accords, for the memory of the Algerian war to be publicly debated? William Cohen suggested that there were three main reasons for the surge in the 'sudden memory' of torture: state nomenclature, political time and Maurice Papon's trial.<sup>8</sup> Firstly, the conflict was not officially recognised as a 'war' until 1999. Secondly, many contemporary Fifth Republic politicians, including François Mitterrand, had held responsibilities during the conflict; it was not in the

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<sup>4</sup> Schalk, *War and the Ivory Tower*, p.174.

<sup>5</sup> For a linguistic analysis of the press silence on torture see Paola Paissa, 'Le silence sur la torture pendant la guerre d'Algérie. Analyse d'un corpus de presse française (1957 et 2000)', *Mots Les langages du politique*, 103 (2013), pp.39-54.

<sup>6</sup> William Cohen, 'The sudden memory of torture. The Algerian war in French discourse, 2000-2001', *French Politics, Culture & Society*, 19 3 (2001), p.83.

<sup>7</sup> Cole, 'Entering history', p.128.

<sup>8</sup> Cohen, 'The sudden memory of torture'. The lack of memory is also discussed in Antoine Prost, *Republican Identities in War and Peace: Representations of France in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, trans. Jay

McPhail Winter, Helen (London: Berg, 2002), pp.107-124.

Socialists' electoral interests to reignite such a controversial debate. Lastly, until Papon's trial in 1997-8, France was more concerned with the Vichy syndrome.<sup>9</sup> The memory and legacy of the Second World War obfuscated the national trauma of the Algerian conflict in France. Papon's trial illustrated the connection between the state deportation of Jews during the Second World War with the state authorisation of torture in Algeria and violent repression of protesters in October 1961 and February 1962.<sup>10</sup> The *Appel des Douze* thus solidified the intellectual, media, social and to a lesser extent political motivations to begin the memorialisation process.

This chapter draws upon Rebérioux's private papers to explore her second wave of anticolonial engagement four decades after the Algerian war, centring on the media campaign at the heart of the 'torture controversy'. Her archives detail an untold story: they reveal the inner mechanics of the *Appel des Douze* through the preservation of personal notes, correspondence with members of the public and other anticolonialist figures, and a corpus of press cuttings. Studying these papers explains how Rebérioux's militancy developed between the 1950s and the turn of the millennium. Importantly, her archives contain a portion of the 3,000 letters sent to Rebérioux in response to the petition. This valuable body of evidence, never before examined by historians, offers a distinctive insight into the contemporary French public reaction to the reactivation of the memory of the Algerian war forty years after the amnesty. Such research is sorely needed, especially as academic attention to the appeal has been limited to the five years following the torture controversy.<sup>11</sup> The decade and a half since the appeal has brought new global political significance to the petition. Post-9/11 debates about the legitimacy and use of torture in combatting terrorism has cast the actions of Rebérioux and her fellow anticolonialists in a new light. Furthermore, the *Appel des Douze* has yet to receive a satisfactory response from the French political establishment, despite multiple reiterations (in 2002, 2004 and 2014), which speaks to the enduring value of the anticolonial message Rebérioux sought to impart. The chapter begins with an exploration of the mechanics, the intellectual context and the public response to the

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<sup>9</sup> Henry Rousso, *Le syndrome de Vichy : de 1944 à nos jours* (Paris: Seuil, 1990).

<sup>10</sup> Cohen, 'The sudden memory of torture', p.85.

<sup>11</sup> In addition to the previously-cited works by Cohen and Macmaster, see Tramor Quemeneur, 'La mémoire mise à la question : le débat sur les tortures dans la guerre d'Algérie, juin 2000-septembre 2001', *Regards sur l'actualité*, 276 (2001); Charles Silvestre (ed.), *La torture aux aveux. Guerre d'Algérie : l'Appel à la reconnaissance du crime d'état* (Vauvert: Au Diable Vauvert, 2004); Le Sueur, *Uncivil War*, pp.286-322.

appeal, before moving on to evaluate the political, historiographical and pedagogical legacies of the petition.

## 4.2 The *Appel des Douze*

### 4.2.1 *Precursors*

Rebérioux's archives document her sustained interest in Algeria and the memory of the Algerian war beyond the 1962 amnesty. Two boxes contain documents pertaining to Algeria; another two cover the genesis, praxis and associated correspondence from the *Appel des Douze*.<sup>12</sup> Between the end of the conflict and the launch of the petition Rebérioux engaged in a diverse range of academic and militant activities: lecturing and researching, at the Sorbonne, Vincennes and the ÉHÉSS; cultural interventions at the Musée d'Orsay and during the French Revolution Bicentenary; and her presidency of the LDH. The Rebérioux of 2000 was inexorably different to the Rebérioux of 1962. Yet anticolonial issues had continuously directed Rebérioux's attention in the intervening years, occupying a central place in her defence of the oppressed and marginalised. Nevertheless, Rebérioux's position on independent Algeria was not straightforward:

À l'égard de l'Algérie, j'ai eu une position très compliquée. Je n'attendais rien de la révolution algérienne, sauf son indépendance. C'était le plus important. Je n'avais pas d'hypothèse sur ce que l'Algérie pouvait devenir une fois indépendante.<sup>13</sup>

Here, Rebérioux illustrated the divergence between broadly criticizing France's conduct in Algeria and individuals' personal expectations of post-war relations between France and Algeria, positions which varied between individual militants within her anticolonial generation.<sup>14</sup>

Rebérioux's presidency of the LDH, studied in depth in chapter seven, not only bolstered her public profile but placed her at the fore of public commemoration of the Algerian war during the 1990s. In 1995 Rebérioux was a founding member of the Comité pour la

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<sup>12</sup> 647AP/30-1 cover Rebérioux's interest in Algeria; 60-1 examine the *Appel des Douze*.

<sup>13</sup> 647AP/60 'Portraits les douze et l'Algérie', *Faits & Documents* 103 (15-30 January 2001), p.6, quoting Rebérioux from an interview on 21 May 1992.

<sup>14</sup> Le Sueur discusses divergences in anticolonialists' expectations for post-war Algeria in *Uncivil War*, pp.18-21.

paix et la démocratie en Algérie, a group which supported the autonomous establishment of peace in Algeria.<sup>15</sup> The committee suggested a series of measures by which France could help achieve independent peace in Algeria, including improved facilities for refugees, economic aid, suspending military action and opening up a democratic dialogue with the Algerian government. Rebérioux edited her personal copy of the committee's founding text to include the addition 'considérer en particulier que le combat des femmes mérite une mention exceptionnelle dans une société où le code de la famille de 1984 leur fait une position minorée et où elles figurent parmi les toutes premières victimes'.<sup>16</sup> The amendment to include women is significant, as alongside other texts in her papers campaigning to improve women's rights in Algeria it demonstrated Rebérioux's growing interest in gender issues since the Algerian war. Rebérioux had also corrected grammatical mistakes on her copy of the document, a habit repeated throughout her archives.

Private papers document how during the 1990s Rebérioux spoke publicly at marches and meetings – organised by non-state actors – to commemorate turning-points in the Algerian war.<sup>17</sup> One notable example was her presidency of *Une journée pour l'Algérie*. Founded in 1997 the group used peaceful marches, cultural initiatives and petitions to campaign for solidarity between France and Algeria. The association sought the creation of a Commission d'enquête internationale to 'cast light' on atrocities committed during the Algerian war, a proposal which would later be picked up by the PCF.<sup>18</sup> Postcards with pre-written formulas were used to garner public support, a tactic which repeated methods Rebérioux used for petition sheets at the Lycée Marcelin Berthelot during the war.<sup>19</sup> The strategy worked. By March 1998 70,000 signatures had been received, some of which are preserved amongst Rebérioux's papers.<sup>20</sup> Two *Journées pour l'Algérie* were held in November 1997 and April 1998. Programmes included human rights discussions, a march and cultural events at the Bouffes du Nord, Cité des Sciences and l'Opéra de

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<sup>15</sup> 647AP/59 Letter, François Gèze to Rebérioux (24 February 1995); 647AP/59 Typed text, 'Pour la paix et la démocratie en Algérie' by Pierre Bourdieu, François Maspero, Rebérioux, Maxime Rodinson, Jean-Pierre Vernant and Vidal-Naquet (March 1995).

<sup>16</sup> 647AP/59 'Pour la paix et la démocratie en Algérie' (March 1995).

<sup>17</sup> Her archives also preserve witness testimonies from those forced to flee Algeria for political reasons. 647AP/59 Témoignages (1993-4).

<sup>18</sup> 647AP/58 Association pour une journée pour l'Algérie : programme (1997). Participants were invited to bring torches to the march to help 'cast light'.

<sup>19</sup> 647AP/58 Association pour une journée pour l'Algérie : carte postale (1997).

<sup>20</sup> 647AP/58 Rebérioux, handwritten note, 'Conf. presse le 4 avril' (30 March 1998), p.4.

Paris. Parallels can be drawn between the format of the *Journée pour l'Algérie* and the *Six heures pour le Vietnam* during the 1960s (see chapter five), indicating a consistency in Rebérioux's preferred methods of militancy. On 30 March 1998 Rebérioux spoke at a press conference, claiming that even if the impact of the *Journée pour l'Algérie* was not long-lasting it was important because 'l'exigence de solidarité est là'.<sup>21</sup> The emphasis on solidarity illustrated Rebérioux's sustained belief in the power of collective engagement, four decades after her leadership of collective committees during the war itself. Initiatives like the *Journée pour l'Algérie* reinforced the contemporary need for non-government collective action to break state silence and the amnesia of the conflict in official spaces, especially given the reticence of the established political parties.

#### 4.2.2 *The earthquake*

Following a period of amnesia where, with some exceptions, the Algerian war was not acknowledged by public institutions, the summer of 2000 was an 'earthquake' for media debate of the memory of the conflict.<sup>22</sup> On 20 June 2000, *Le Monde* published a pivotal interview with Louise Ighilahriz, a member of the Armée de libération nationale (ALN).<sup>23</sup> Ighilahriz detailed the torture and rape she had endured as a prisoner of General Massu's parachutists for three months during 1957. She now sought to find Francis Richaud, the military doctor who had saved her life.<sup>24</sup> Unlike other witness testimonies, Louise named some of the highest French military officials in Algeria as being present during her torture, including Generals Massu and Bigeard.<sup>25</sup> Ighilahriz's revelations led to a media 're-discovery' of the reality of torture during the Algerian war, a memory which had been suppressed in French collective consciousness in the years since the Amnesty.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, as Rebérioux's activities during the war demonstrated, the institutionalisation of torture was discussed in the public domain: *La Question, L'affaire Audin, La Gangrène* and texts by Robert Bonnaud and Pierre-Henri Simon revealed the

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p.1.

<sup>22</sup> *Le Monde* article (15 June 2001) cited in Cohen, 'The sudden memory of torture', p.86. Benjamin Stora's work charted the history of institutional silence in *La gangrène et l'oubli*.

<sup>23</sup> Florence Beaugé, 'Torturée par l'armée française en Algérie, « Lila » recherche l'homme qui l'a sauvée', *Le Monde* (20 June 2000).

<sup>24</sup> Louise Ighilahriz and Anne Nivat, *Algérienne* (Paris: Fayard/Calmann-Lévy, 2001).

<sup>25</sup> Cohen, 'The sudden memory of torture', p.86.

<sup>26</sup> Ulloa, *Francis Jeanson: a Dissident Intellectual*, p.2.

reality of what was happening in Algeria.<sup>27</sup> Pierre Vidal-Naquet's *La torture dans la République* (1972) added to these wartime texts although it was held for a decade before a publisher could be found. Like Maurice Audin, Ighilahriz was a symbol with whom the French public could easily identify: she was a westernised, professional woman, whose purpose in the media spotlight was to find and thank her doctor, rather than accuse.<sup>28</sup> On 16 September 2000 Ighilahriz publicly recounted her experiences of torture in front of an audience of over 400 people as part of the *Fête de l'Humanité*, a public testimony which amplified the impact of her written words.<sup>29</sup>

The army's refusal to apologise to Ighilahriz exacerbated the media response. General Massu staunchly defended the army whereas General Bigéard dismissed Ighilahriz's accusations as a 'web of lies'.<sup>30</sup> In interviews Bigéard maintained that he had never participated in torture: 'Je n'avais même pas pu regarder ça'. Rebérioux was frustrated at Bigéard's account, describing him as 'toujours arrogant et toujours plastronnant tel les rois de France, il parle de lui-même à la troisième personne'.<sup>31</sup> General Aussaresses admitted the use of torture but refused to apologise; he published a controversial memoir of his experiences in 2001.<sup>32</sup> Aussaresses was later removed from the *Légion d'honneur* and prosecuted, not for committing torture but for mentioning war crimes in the public sphere, which had been made illegal by the 1962 amnesty.<sup>33</sup> The LDH's legal case against Aussaresses for 'complicité d'apologie de crimes de guerre' resulted in the general and his publishers being fined 100,000 francs.<sup>34</sup> Ighilahriz's witness account of torture prompted journalist Charles Silvestre to write to Rebérioux in the autumn of 2000 to solicit her support for a national petition. Silvestre argued that the issues raised by the Ighilahriz interview 'devrait être traité comme une affaire nationale et qu'il y fallait donc un appel de grands témoins. On peut se réjouir que le journal fondé par Jaurès [*L'Humanité*] s'illustre dans la défense d'une telle cause'.<sup>35</sup> The petition was the

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<sup>27</sup> Alleg, *La Question* [1958]; Vidal-Naquet, *L'affaire Audin (1957-1978)*; *La Gangrène* [1959].

<sup>28</sup> Cohen, 'The sudden memory of torture', p.86.

<sup>29</sup> Silvestre (ed.), *La torture aux aveux*, p. 12.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p.11.

<sup>31</sup> 647AP/61 Rebérioux, 'La France, la torture et la guerre d'Algérie', *Hommes et Libertés* 111 (Sept-Nov 2000), p.17.

<sup>32</sup> Paul Aussaresses, *Services spéciaux : Algérie, 1955-1957* (Paris: Perrin, 2001).

<sup>33</sup> Journalist Deniau's interviews with Aussaresses (then on his death-bed) led to the Appel des 171 in March 2014. Deniau, *La vérité sur la mort de Maurice Audin*.

<sup>34</sup> Quemeneur, 'La mémoire mise à la question', p.38.

<sup>35</sup> 647AP/60 Letter, Charles Silvestre to Rebérioux (27 October 2000).



*Appel des Douze*, initially published on 31 October 2000 in *L'Humanité* and reprinted on 5 November in *Le Monde*. The petition signalled Rebérioux's 'second-wave' of formal anticolonialism in the public sphere. Signed by a dozen intellectuals and public figures who had either campaigned against or suffered during the conflict, the appeal introduced the events from the 1950s and 1960s to a new, younger French generation, in the process transmitting a previously suppressed collective memory from one generation to another.

The appeal candidly called upon President Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister Lionel Jospin to acknowledge and publicly condemn the institutionalised torture of the Algerian war. The group sought a public recognition similar to the one made by Chirac in 1995 which recognised France's complicity in the deportation and murder of Jews during the Second World War.<sup>36</sup> The full text, including the status of signatories, merits quoting in full:

Des deux côtés de la Méditerranée, la mémoire française et la mémoire algérienne resteront hantées par les horreurs qui ont marqué la guerre d'Algérie tant que la vérité n'aura pas été dite et reconnue.

Ce travail de mémoire appartient à chacun des deux peuples et aux communautés, de quelle qu'origine que ce soit, qui ont cruellement souffert de cette tragédie dont les autorités françaises portent la responsabilité essentielle en raison de leur obstination à refuser aux Algériens leur émancipation.

Aujourd'hui, il est possible de promouvoir une démarche de vérité qui ne laisse rien dans l'ombre. En France, le nouveau témoignage d'une Algérienne, publié dans la presse, qui met en accusation la torture, ne peut rester sans suite ni sanction. Le silence officiel serait ajouter au crime de l'époque une faute d'aujourd'hui. En Algérie, se dessine la mise en cause de pratiques condamnables datant de la guerre et surtout lui ayant survécu commises au nom de situations où « tout serait permis ». Il reste que la torture, mal absolu, pratiquée de façon systématique par une « armée de la République » et couverte en haut lieu à Paris, a été le fruit empoisonné de la colonisation et de la guerre, l'expression de la volonté du dominateur de réduire par tous les moyens la résistance du dominé.

Avec cette mise à jour il ne s'agit pas seulement de vérité historique, mais aussi de l'avenir des générations issues des diverses communautés qui vivent avec ce poids, cette culpabilité et ce non-dit.

Pour nous, citoyens français auxquels importe le destin partagé des deux peuples et le sens universel de la justice, pour nous qui avons combattu la torture sans être aveugles aux autres pratiques, il revient à la France, eu égard à

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<sup>36</sup> Cohen, 'The Algerian war, the French state and official memory', p.236. Rebérioux kept a personal copy of Chirac's speech, held in 647AP/49.

ses responsabilités, de condamner la torture qui a été entreprise en son nom durant la guerre d'Algérie. Il en va du devoir de mémoire auquel la France se dit justement attachée et qui ne devrait connaître aucune discrimination d'époque et de lieu.

Dans cet esprit, et dans cet esprit seulement, tourné vers un rapprochement des personnes et des communautés et non vers l'exacerbation de leurs antagonismes, nous demandons à Monsieur Jacques Chirac, président de la République et, à Monsieur Lionel Jospin, premier ministre, de condamner ces pratiques par une déclaration publique. Et, nous invitons les témoins, les citoyens à s'exprimer sur cette question qui met en jeu leur humanité.

Henri Alleg, ancien directeur d'*Alger républicain*, auteur de *la Question* ;  
Josette Audin, épouse de Maurice Audin assassiné par ses tortionnaires ;  
Simone de Bollardière, veuve du général Pâris de Bollardière, opposé à la torture et condamné à deux mois de forteresse ;  
Nicole Dreyfus, avocate de Baya Hocine et Djohor Akrou ;  
Noël Favrelière, rappelé, déserteur ;  
Gisèle Halimi, avocate de Djamila Boupacha ;  
Alban Liechti, rappelé, insoumis ;  
Madeleine Rebérioux, historienne, secrétaire du Comité Audin ;  
Laurent Schwartz, mathématicien, président du Comité Audin ;  
Germaine Tillion, ethnographe, résistante, auteur de *l'Afrique bascule vers l'avenir* ;  
Jean-Pierre Vernant, historien, résistant ;  
Pierre Vidal-Naquet, historien, auteur de *la Torture dans la République*.<sup>37</sup>

The appeal demanded five things: the urgent condemnation of torture; that the truth about the war be established; a special day for schools to teach about colonialism; reconciliation between France and Algeria; and that a delegation representing the Twelve meet with Chirac and Jospin.<sup>38</sup> Themes were repeated for effect. Whilst the notion of 'truth' was repeated three times, there were eleven references to 'justice' and four to 'memory'.<sup>39</sup> Truth was coupled with history to indicate the *longue durée* of the anti-torture protest. The link with the past reinforced the need for Chirac's government to act in order to secure the future of French politics and the Republic for the next generation. In interviews for the appeal, Rebérioux repeated her desire for truth: 'Dès le départ, [les Douze] n'ont réclamé ni vengeance ni punition, mais l'établissement de la vérité'; 'Il faut faire toute la lumière sur cette période et ces agissements'.<sup>40</sup> Rebérioux

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<sup>37</sup> *L'Appel des Douze* contre la torture, *L'Humanité* (31 October 2000).

<sup>38</sup> Le Sueur, *Uncivil War*, p.293.

<sup>39</sup> Quemeneur, 'La mémoire mise à la question', p.32.

<sup>40</sup> 647AP/ Lucien Degoy, 'Torture : et les politiques ? Entretien avec Madeleine Rebérioux', *L'Humanité* (3 July 2001), p.12; 647AP/60 'La torture, une pratique qui ne porte pas de nom', *Centre Presse* (10 October 2001).

acknowledged that the references to 'truth' were also a deliberate allusion to Jaurès's infamous maxim 'le courage, c'est de chercher la vérité et de la dire'.<sup>41</sup>

The Twelve capitalised on their position as French citizens with personal histories of holding the Republic to account during the Algerian war in order to call on the government to act and speak out. The choice of the Twelve was significant. Six male and six female signatories subtly reinforced the recent political parity legislation passed by the Assemblée Nationale.<sup>42</sup> The Twelve were a symbolic representation of Rebérioux's 'Algerian generation', a cohort which was key to understanding Rebérioux's intellectual identity and the construction of her activist networks. Each signatory had first-hand experience of opposing the war: either through draft resistance or desertion (Alban Liechti, Noël Favrelière), victims of torture or their relations (Henri Alleg, Josette Audin), the legal defence of victims (Nicole Dreyfus, Gisèle Halimi) or longer personal histories of protest stretching back to the Resistance during the Occupation (Germaine Tillion, Jean-Pierre Vernant). Rebérioux and Vidal-Naquet were involved as two 'historiens accomplis et artisans inlassables du Comité Audin'.<sup>43</sup> They were joined by their committee colleague, the mathematician Laurent Schwartz. Simone de Bollardière was the wife of the only French officer to be punished for criticizing torture during the war: General de Bollardière's public denunciation of torture in *L'Express* in 1957 led to sixty days imprisonment.<sup>44</sup> The *Appel des Douze* offered a point of political reconciliation and consensus across political factions, in a similar manner to the Comité Audin. For example, Germaine Tillion and Henri Alleg overcame their political differences to support the appeal.<sup>45</sup>

Inevitable parallels can be drawn between the *Appel des Douze* and the *Manifeste des 121* forty years previous. Both petitions were crucial turning points; in 1960 in highlighting intellectual support for draft resistance and in 2000 for reactivating the memory of the

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<sup>41</sup> 647AP/61 'Les Douze persistent et re(signent)', Numéro spécial guerre d'Algérie : toute *L'Humanité* contre la torture (January 2001), p.82.

<sup>42</sup> Yvette Roudy, 'L'Assemblée des femmes et les chemins de la parité', *Nouvelles Questions Féministes*, 26 3 (2007), p.153. It is worth noting the presence of two women listed as wives or widows rather than anticolonialists in their own right.

<sup>43</sup> Silvestre (ed.), *La torture aux aveux*, p.13.

<sup>44</sup> Rebérioux's copy of *Bollardière : compagnon de toutes les libérations, le général qui a refusé la torture en Algérie* (Éditions Non-Violence Actualité, Montargis, 2002) is preserved in 647AP/61.

<sup>45</sup> Silvestre (ed.), *La torture aux aveux*, p.13.

conflict. The public reception to the *Appel des Douze* reinforced shifts in intellectuals' use of media since 1960 in order to intervene in society. On the day the appeal was published, Rebérioux appeared on *France-Inter* with Stéphane Paoli, responding to the immediate public reaction to the petition. In many ways, the campaign was more mediated and less spontaneous than the *Manifeste des 121*, which was a direct reaction to the Jeanson network trial, rather than the beginnings of an orchestrated media campaign. Nevertheless, the medium chosen for contacting Rebérioux (letters) and the presence of traditional petition sheets for supporting the appeal revealed that the methods used by the Comité Audin and other groups during the Algerian war endured and were yet to be surpassed by the internet as a vehicle for democratic protest.

Rebérioux's archives contain a range of petition sheets from the appeal. Many were collected at cinema screenings from across the Île-de-France, including showings of André Gazut's *Tous contre la torture* and Laurent Heynemann's *La Question* in Pointoise and Quimperlé. The forty years between the conflict and such public debate did not go unnoticed. One signatory wrote above the petition 'c'est trop tard, mais bon...'.<sup>46</sup> The Twelve also engaged in a series of public events to publicise the campaign. On 6 December 2000 the Twelve (minus Favrelière, Tillion and Vernant) met at the *Café du Croissant* to publicise their appeal and to call upon Chirac and Jospin to go further in their condemnation.<sup>47</sup> The location – significant as the site where Jaurès was assassinated in 1914 – inserted the appeal into a longer history of left-wing defence of the Republic. Yet the Twelve's activity was not just Paris-centric. Rebérioux travelled the length and breadth of the country to participate in debates and meetings around the themes of torture, memory and Algeria, prompting *L'Humanité* to remark that 'ses nuits sont de plus en plus courtes', especially for an octogenarian.<sup>48</sup> In the month following the petition's publication, Rebérioux visited Chambéry, Grenoble, Longwy and Nîmes as well as appearing on *France-Culture*, writing articles and responding to the mass of correspondence sent to her personal address. Even a year after the appeal, Rebérioux

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<sup>46</sup> 647AP/60 Letter and petition sheets, Jean Présent to Rebérioux (5 December 2001).

<sup>47</sup> 'Les signataires de l'*Appel des Douze* invitent Jacques Chirac à se manifester et Lionel Jospin à aller plus loin', *Le Monde* (7 December 2000).

<sup>48</sup> 647AP/61 'Les Douze persistent et re(signent)', Numéro spécial guerre d'Algérie : toute *L'Humanité* contre la torture (January 2001), p. 104.

was still touring France offering lectures and seminars to support the anti-torture movement.

### 4.2.3 *Letters to Rebérioux*

Rebérioux's role as the main contact point for correspondence relating to the *Appel des Douze* cemented her status as the public face of the campaign. Her personal residence at 104, Boulevard Arago in the fourteenth arrondissement was advertised as the address for signatures and correspondence. In the initial weeks over 12,000 individuals signed the petition. In addition, Rebérioux received over 3,000 letters during the course of the campaign. The scale of the public response indicated the fulfilment of Ighilahriz's wish that her act of speaking out would provoke others to do the same.<sup>49</sup> Letters came from all walks of life, from the retired to ex-servicemen and even women who, in the words of Rebérioux, 'écrivent que leur mari ou leur père est mort, ou a vécu à côté d'elle pendant des décennies sans jamais évoquer le sujet, alors qu'il s'était à l'évidence passé à quelque chose d'important'.<sup>50</sup> The flood of testimonies was not unsurprising, given that some 2.3 million men served in North Africa during the conflict. Estimates suggest that around 350,000 veterans suffer(ed) psychiatric disorders, symptoms of which often appeared around retirement age.<sup>51</sup>

A significant proportion of this correspondence is preserved in Rebérioux's archives.<sup>52</sup> A close analysis of the letters' content reveals the public response to the appeal and as such, the impact the petition had at a grass-roots level. In a much-quoted soundbite, Rebérioux explained how the types of correspondance varied as the campaign progressed: 'D'abord, les premiers jours, l'acte de signature ; ensuite, des témoignages, de plus en plus nombreux, de ceux qui avaient vu, su ou fait ; aujourd'hui beaucoup de lettres qui posent la question de savoir comment tout cela a pu être possible'.<sup>53</sup> These three categories can be used to map the public response to the petition, as presented in

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<sup>49</sup> Ighilahriz and Nivat, *Algérienne*, p.259.

<sup>50</sup> 647AP/60 Lucien Degoy, 'L'effet civique de l'*Appel des Douze*', *L'Humanité Hebdo* (13-14 January 2001), p.12.

<sup>51</sup> Macmaster, 'The torture controversy (1998-2002)', p.451.

<sup>52</sup> It is not known what happened to the rest of the letters sent to Rebérioux.

<sup>53</sup> 647AP/61 'Les Douze persistent et re(signent)', Numéro spécial guerre d'Algérie : toute *L'Humanité* contre la torture (January 2001), p.82.

Rebérioux's archives. Firstly the act of signing the petition, followed by witness statements and finally letters questioning historical understandings. A fourth category explores negative responses to the campaign. Relatively few letters preserved in Rebérioux's papers fell into the first category, likely because they were short declarations of support with no other detail. One example came from Jean-Pierre Kaminker, a veteran from the war who simply wrote that 'Je m'associe à l'*Appel des Douze* publié dans *L'Humanité* du 31 octobre 2000'.<sup>54</sup> Other letters demonstrated a more complex response to the petition. André Simon explained that he had not signed the petition due to the insignificance his signature carried.<sup>55</sup> He felt that writing letters to mayors, deputies and ministers was a more purposeful use of his time.

The second category – witness statements – was the most abundant in Rebérioux's archives. A significant number of individuals wrote to share their memories or experiences of torture during the war. One letter, representative of many of the examples amongst her papers, included an entire dossier of witness-statements from French soldiers who had observed or perpetrated torture in Algeria.<sup>56</sup> One testimony from the dossier recounted how in August 1956 Muslim suspects had been thrown, fully clothed, into the swimming pool before being beaten. Mohamed Seddik Lalouani recounted the tortured he had suffered as a twelve-year-old in February 1961. The use of simulated drowning in a salt-and-soap solution had forced him to denounce his entire family.<sup>57</sup> Lalouani equally testified to the treatment of women during the conflict, describing how a female relative had been thrown down a well, brought to the surface to regain consciousness only to be thrown back down again. Whilst this kind of testimony cannot fail to be emotive, Rebérioux recognised the value of such accounts for the campaign, writing 'enfin un torturé !' across the top of the letter. Unresolved disappearances from the conflict were recounted in letters from those who had lost family in Algeria and were still looking for their loved ones. Larbi Haddad's father Maohammed Ouahsène was kidnapped from his house in Algiers on 25 August 1957.<sup>58</sup> Haddad hoped that the opening of archives would resolve his father's disappearance. He

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<sup>54</sup> 647AP/60 Letter, Jean-Pierre Kaminker to Rebérioux (12 January 2001). Others used similar simple declarations of support.

<sup>55</sup> 647AP/60 Letter, André Simon to Rebérioux (15 January 2001).

<sup>56</sup> 647AP/60 'Dossier: Groupement des rappelés protestant contre les méthodes arbitraires', Letter, Lise Jamati to Rebérioux (17 January 2001).

<sup>57</sup> 647AP/60 Letter, Mohamed Seddik Lalouani to Rebérioux (20 January 2001).

<sup>58</sup> 647AP/60 Letter, Larbi Haddad to Rebérioux (14 July 2001).

even enclosed a photograph in the event that Rebérioux knew anything about his whereabouts, indicating Rebérioux's public image as someone who could help to resolve mysterious disappearances.

Receiving these letters had a profound effect upon Rebérioux, who compared the flow of letters to a psychiatrist's couch.<sup>59</sup> She expressed surprise that such trauma could be tucked away in the conscience for so long after an event. Her fellow campaigners agreed; Vidal-Naquet considered September-November 2000 as a period of public catharsis. Many who had witnessed or even perpetrated torture during the Algerian war had repressed their feelings about what they saw and their sense of complicity had been internalised into guilt.<sup>60</sup> Étienne Boulanger offers one such example from Rebérioux's archives. He explained how during the conflict his unit had involuntarily assisted in an interrogation: 'C'est parce que je n'ai pas eu le courage ce jour-là de dénoncer la torture que pendant 30 ans j'ai volontairement « oublié » cet épisode'.<sup>61</sup> These letters constitute important historical documents, demonstrating the psychological consequences of ignoring traumatic memories. Indeed, Rebérioux asserted that 'le témoignage est aujourd'hui le genre le mieux placé, le plus émouvant, celui qui s'inscrit le plus aisément dans le champ, fortement labouré de la mémoire'.<sup>62</sup>

Correspondents from Rebérioux's own cohort also wrote to express relief at the final public acknowledgement of the conflict, including a former UNÉF militant and individuals from Rebérioux's own anticolonialist circle.<sup>63</sup> A Christmas card from Josette Audin urged Rebérioux to 'continuer pendant longtemps encore votre combat pour les droits de l'homme et la liberté des peuples'.<sup>64</sup> Rebérioux's papers equally contain correspondence with Henri Pouillot, an army veteran, president of *Sortir du colonialisme* and key member of MRAP and the Association républicaine des anciens combattants.<sup>65</sup> Rebérioux was sent a draft of Pouillot's manuscript which outlined his experiences in

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<sup>59</sup> 647AP/60 Lucien Degoy, 'L'effet civique de l'*Appel des Douze*', *L'Humanité Hebdo* (13-14 January 2001), p.13.

<sup>60</sup> Cohen also explored veterans who had repressed their memories. 'The sudden memory of torture', p.87.

<sup>61</sup> 647AP/60 Letter, Étienne Boulanger to Madeleine Rebérioux (undated).

<sup>62</sup> 647AP/61 Typed document, 'Ma guerre d'Algérie dans les livres' (undated, probably 2002), pp.1-2.

<sup>63</sup> 647AP/60 Letter, Claude Latta to Rebérioux (31 December 2000).

<sup>64</sup> 647AP/60 Christmas card, Josette Audin to Rebérioux (December 2000).

<sup>65</sup> Gilles Manceron and Henri Pouillot (eds.), *Le 17 octobre 1961, par les textes de l'époque* (Paris: Les Petits matins, 2011), p. 107.

Algeria.<sup>66</sup> The account was one of the few letters in Rebérioux's archives which explicitly dealt with the question of gender and torture. Pouillot recounted how the treatment of women prisoners transgressed both their human rights and contravened their Muslim beliefs, leading to social ostracism if they survived detention to be released. Women were often held in the same cells as male prisoners, and were interrogated naked. Rape was commonplace. Pouillot laid responsibility for this torture at the door of the French government: 'Pour un pays qui se targue d'être celui des droits de l'homme il n'est pas possible de se montrer en donneur de leçons tant que l'on couvre, de fait, cette horrible période et qu'il n'y aura pas eu condamnation officielle de tels agissements'.<sup>67</sup> Other commentators reinforced the irony of France's self-identification as the natural home of human rights with the state's conduct in Algeria, quoting article five of the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*: 'Nul ne sera soumis à la torture, ni à des peines ou traitements cruels, inhumains ou dégradants'.<sup>68</sup> Pouillot continues to write to French Presidents in order to finish the task set by Rebérioux and the Twelve.<sup>69</sup>

The third category of correspondence questioned why torture had been allowed to take place. Importantly, the *Appel des Douze* sparked the interest of a new, younger generation of activists. 27-year-old Hélène Sabis thanked Rebérioux for opening her eyes and conscience to French Algeria: 'Heureusement, votre engagement, vos démarches (Les Douze, les témoins anonymes...) raniment mes espérances, même si j'ai l'impression que votre parole n'atteint pas toujours les jeunes générations, ou plutôt de manière tellement isolé'.<sup>70</sup> Letters like Hélène's were corroborated by a CSA/BVA survey in November 2000 which indicated that 18-24 year olds were the age group most likely to be repulsed by the practice of torture. This age group was also the most favourable to government acknowledgement of torture during the war.<sup>71</sup> Clearly, despite her increasing years Rebérioux was still able to appeal to the younger generation by using

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<sup>66</sup> 647AP/60 Henri Pouillot, 'Pour le respect de la vérité historique. La torture en Algérie : une horreur, une honte pour la France' (31 March 2001).

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p.6.

<sup>68</sup> 647AP/60 'Le MRAP s'associe à l'initiative', *L'Humanité* (2 November 2000), p.10.

<sup>69</sup> Pouillot wrote to François Hollande to criticize the president's response to Alleg's death in July 2013: 'À ce jour, déjà plus de la moitié de ces témoins [de l'*Appel des Douze*] sont décédés, faudra-t-il attendre qu'ils disparaissent tous pour que leur appel soit enfin entendu ?'. Pouillot, 'Lettre ouverte à François Hollande' (22 July 2013) <http://www.anticolonial.net/spip.php?article2901> [accessed 25/11/2013].

<sup>70</sup> 647AP/60 Letter, Hélène Sabis to Rebérioux (April 2001).

<sup>71</sup> 647AP/61 Laurent Plandre, 'À la Sorbonne avec des historiens en herbe', *L'Humanité* (5 December 2000), p.10



traditional forms of militancy (newspaper petitions, letter writing).<sup>72</sup> Rebérioux's persona also motivated some correspondence: as a former teacher and emerita professor she had a considerable network of former students. Jean-Claude Macé wrote a series of letters to his former teacher – whom he described as 'si passionnante' – initially to add his signature to the appeal, but also to update Rebérioux in what he had achieved since leaving her classroom in the 1950s.<sup>73</sup> A final, fourth section of appeal correspondence expressed disbelief or criticism of the appeal. The few letters from this category emphasised that not all of the French army were clandestine torturers. Ch To, a history teacher from Paris criticized the appeal's communist background and blindness to human rights abuse in other countries. He concluded his four-page letter to Rebérioux by arguing that 'il est trop facile pour un parti de faire un devoir de mémoire sur les crimes des autres ! Chacun doit d'abord commencer par soi-même'.<sup>74</sup> There is no record of Rebérioux's response.

The letters which Rebérioux received are important for several reasons. Not only do they reveal, for the first time, the grass-roots response to the resuscitation of the conflict's memory, but such public reaction was a 'triumphant vindication' of Rebérioux and her generation's longstanding opposition to state violence.<sup>75</sup> In addition to letters, Rebérioux doggedly collected and annotated newspaper cuttings from the appeal, held in a separate dossier within her archives. Cuttings included first-hand testimony from the conflict, media responses to the appeal and profiles of the Twelve along with reports of Rebérioux's various public interventions across France. One notable inclusion was Jacques Julliard's testimony of his experiences during his ÉNS military service in Algeria.<sup>76</sup> Julliard recounted how he discovered the body of an old woman he had refused to 'interrogate', leading to his realisation that the 'true murderers' were Mollet and the SFIO. Unlike Rebérioux, whose engagement in anti-torture movement strengthened her political resolve and desire to work across the left, Julliard distanced

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<sup>72</sup> Rebérioux did have an email address. Her archives contain a few emails (printed and subsequently annotated) although she preferred the epistolary form and was a great letter-writer throughout her life.

<sup>73</sup> 647AP/60 Letter, Jean-Claude Macé to Rebérioux (undated).

<sup>74</sup> 647AP/60 Letter, Ch To to Rebérioux (24 February 2001).

<sup>75</sup> Macmaster, 'The torture controversy (1998-2002)', p.452.

<sup>76</sup> 647AP/60 Jacques Julliard, 'Torture, ce que j'ai vu en Algérie', *Le Nouvel Observateur* (undated), p.26.

himself from his socialist friends: 'Je ne serai jamais en paix avec leur parti ni avec François Mitterrand'.<sup>77</sup>

#### 4.2.4 *Trop, c'est trop*

The *Appel des Douze* was not a petition in an intellectual vacuum but was contextualised by Rebérioux's other activist movements. An important concurrent campaign was the *Trop, c'est trop* movement which demanded an end to the Israeli bombardment of Palestine. Led by Rebérioux, the campaign launched on 13 December 2001. *Trop, c'est trop* shared many similarities with the *Appel des Douze*, in terms of the praxis of engagement and the anticolonial milieu of historians who supported the campaign. The key difference was temporality: the petition targeted the current political situation in the Middle East rather than the *Appel des Douze's* focus on the enduring memory of a past conflict. The petition played on the French humanitarian conscience:

Les dirigeants palestiniens, Yasser Arafat en tête, qui serra naguère la main d'Itzhak Rabin, sont aujourd'hui cernés à Ramallah par des tanks israéliens.

Les bombes pleuvent sur le territoire où vit encore une partie du peuple palestinien. Rien, nous disons bien, rien – y compris les attentats inacceptables commis par des kamikazes – ne peut justifier de tels actes.

Le peuple palestinien a le droit de vivre libre. Il a droit à un État véritable. Il est temps, il est plus que temps, que le peuple israélien, que tous les peuples du monde en prennent conscience et agissent.

Nous aurions honte de ne pas le crier : « Trop, c'est trop ! »

Georges Labica, André Mandouze, Michelle Perrot, Madeleine Rebérioux, Laurent Schwartz, Bernard Sobel, Pierre Vidal-Naquet.<sup>78</sup>

Assessing the petition's wider impact is difficult due to the relatively few archival or secondary sources.<sup>79</sup> However, the appeal had a smaller impact upon public opinion than the Twelve, as it was a small-scale initiative on a highly emotive and controversial topic. During the initial weeks after publication the appeal received around 3,000

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p.28.

<sup>78</sup> 'Trop, c'est trop, un appel contre la guerre au Proche-Orient', *Le Monde* (17 December 2001). The inclusion of Vidal-Naquet is significant, as he and Rebérioux famously disagreed on the politics of the Middle East.

<sup>79</sup> There is one dossier in the Archives Nationales (647AP/62 Dossier 3: Palestine) containing flyers, limited correspondence and print-outs of emails organising protests in 2004.

signatures, 2,000 of which were published in *Le Monde* on 31 December 2001 and 13 January 2002. Rebérioux's archives preserve correspondence from Madrid, demonstrating a limited transnational resonance.<sup>80</sup> Whilst promoting the petition to the LDH Rebérioux asserted that defenders of human rights, intellectuals and the media should know 'qu'ils ne sont pas isolés dans les initiatives qu'ils prennent en solidarité avec le peuple palestinien'.<sup>81</sup> Her position was controversial and further complicated the existing tensions between the competing 'four sisters' of French anti-racist human rights organisations: the LDH, LICRA, MRAP and SOS-Racisme.<sup>82</sup> Rebérioux was criticised for prioritising Algerian memory over the situation in the Middle East and individuals wrote to express their dissatisfaction at the limited media response to *Trop, c'est trop*.<sup>83</sup> Whilst it is not clear whether Rebérioux consciously prioritised the *Appel des Douze* over *Trop, c'est trop*, from a historical perspective the strong public reception to the reactivation of the memory of the Algerian war has overshadowed contemporary responses to her interventions concerning Israel-Palestinian politics.

#### 4.3 Consequences of the appeal

The significance of the *Appel des Douze* was not limited to reactivating memories of the war at an individual or collective level. The petition brought political, historiographical and pedagogical questions to the fore of public debate. In these areas Rebérioux was able to use her academic and militant expertise to agitate responses, ensuring that the appeal had an impact which went beyond ephemeral press coverage of the petition. Analysing the consequences of the petition offers a new perspective on the impact of the war on contemporary society.

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<sup>80</sup> 647AP/62 Printed email, François Richard to Rebérioux (17 December 2001).

<sup>81</sup> 647AP/60 Handwritten note, 'Fax à LDH de Madeleine Rebérioux' (24 January 2002).

<sup>82</sup> Daniel Gordon, 'Is there a split in the French antiracist movement? A historical analysis', in *Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Europe*, eds. James Renton and Ben Gidley (Basingstoke: Palgrave, Forthcoming).

<sup>83</sup> 647AP/62 Letter, Anne Abbès to Rebérioux (31 January 2002).

### 4.3.1 *Political undercurrents*

A complex set of political currents underpinned the appeal, especially concerning the PCF's role in shaping the petition. The campaign placed issues of guilt and responsibility in the media spotlight. At least half of the Twelve were (former) PCF members, which was problematic because communists had a vested interest in wanting France to acknowledge its guilt in Algeria. The PCF had voted for special powers in 1956 and waited until 1961 before formally declaring support for Algerian independence.<sup>84</sup> The party's delay in condemning the war was thus problematic for their interventions in memory debates four decades later. Moreover, the PCF had been accused of attempting to 'whitewash' torture during the war.<sup>85</sup> During the 2000s criticisms were levelled at *L'Humanité's* attempt to 'co-opt the debate'; the newspaper, also the official news organ of the PCF, carried near-daily pieces on behalf of the Twelve.<sup>86</sup> Marie-Pierre Ulloa has asserted that by only referring to 'the press' rather than naming newspapers, the appeal deliberately tried to erase *Le Monde's* role in placing the memory of torture in the public sphere.<sup>87</sup> But was the petition really an exercise in communist exculpation? To a certain extent the PCF's association with the *Appel des Douze* was one way of reconciling their record during the Algerian war. For Rebérioux however, *L'Humanité* was the chosen vehicle for the petition because of its association with Jaurès, rather than its PCF connection: 'Le journal fondé par Jean Jaurès a le courage [de dire la vérité]'.<sup>88</sup>

In interviews Rebérioux stated that although 'aujourd'hui il est clair que la torture est massivement, systématiquement organisée par l'armée française' because France was not a 'banana republic' politicians could be held accountable for the state's behaviour in Algeria.<sup>89</sup> Yet motivating contemporary politicians to take responsibility for the actions of their forebears was extremely problematic. Many of the political leaders who oversaw the practice of torture in Algeria had since passed away, including Guy Mollet, Robert

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<sup>84</sup> Cohen, 'The Algerian war, the French state and official memory', p.236.

<sup>85</sup> Joly, *The French Communist Party and the Algerian War*, p.102.

<sup>86</sup> Ulloa, *Francis Jeanson: a Dissident Intellectual*, p.3.

<sup>87</sup> *Le Monde* originally published Ighilahriz's interview.

<sup>88</sup> 647AP/61 Jean Chatain, 'On ne peut pas accepter que la torture soit venue de la République [entretien avec Rebérioux]', *L'Humanité* (1 November 2000), p.9.

<sup>89</sup> 647AP/60 Julien Brés, 'Torture en Algérie : une responsabilité politique, entretien avec Madeleine Rebérioux', *Hérault/La Marseillaise* (27 April 2001).

Lacoste and Maurice Bourguès-Maunoury.<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, no single party was wholly to blame for the army's actions. During the war some SFIO members had challenged the government line, for example Gaston Defferre, Christian Pineau and François Mitterrand defended General de Bollardière after his imprisonment for criticizing the army's use of torture.<sup>91</sup> Consequently, many political responses to the appeal focussed on the notion of repentance to avoid the political ramifications of openly discussing the past. Rebérioux expressed her disagreement with the religious connotations of repentance: 'Il est hors de question d'utiliser un concept catholique dans une République laïque, même si, à titre individuel, les individus peuvent se repentir'.<sup>92</sup> Rebérioux's secular position was reinforced by the fact that the army had tortured in the name of the French Republic. Rebérioux reasserted her anti-clerical stance in the draft of the group's follow-up letter to Lionel Jospin six months after the appeal was published: 'Il ne s'agit pas de repentance mais d'un acte politique'.<sup>93</sup> Rebérioux's central belief in *laïcité* as the foundation of the Republic had already been established by her interventions in the controversial veil debates during the 1990s (see chapter seven).

Given the political complications, the lacklustre presidential and prime ministerial response to the *Appel des Douze* was unsurprising. Both leaders had personal experience of the conflict: whilst Chirac had been a participant, Jospin had opposed the war.<sup>94</sup> In early November the Prime Minister initially hinted his support for the manifesto, however, in his Prime Minister's questions a month later Jospin suggested that the appeal was exaggerating the scale of the problem.<sup>95</sup> Jospin argued that 'ces dévoiements qui étaient minoritaires n'étaient pas ignorés, notamment de ma génération'.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, Jospin's PS candidacy for the 2002 presidential elections compelled him to remain silent in order to attract middle-ground voters. The political response from

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<sup>90</sup> 647AP/60 Lucien Degoy, 'Torture : et les politiques ? Entretien avec Madeleine Rebérioux', *L'Humanité* (3 July 2001), p.12. Mitterrand's hesitancy over condemning torture during the war was highlighted during the torture controversy, casting doubt on his actions as Minister of the Interior during the conflict.

<sup>91</sup> Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria, 1954-1962*, p.233.

<sup>92</sup> 647AP/60 Jean-Sébastien Stehli, 'Les voies judiciaires sont nulles : entretien avec Madeleine Rebérioux', *L'Express* (11 January 2001), p.64.

<sup>93</sup> 647AP/60 Draft letter to Lionel Jospin (undated, likely April 2001).

<sup>94</sup> Jan Jansen, 'Politics of remembrance, colonialism and the Algerian war of independence in France', in *A European memory? Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance*, eds. Małgorzata Pakier and Bo Stråth (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), p.280.

<sup>95</sup> 'M. Jospin soutient l'appel pour condamner la torture lors de la guerre d'Algérie', *Le Monde* (7 November 2000).

<sup>96</sup> 647AP/60 'Intervention de M Lionel Jospin, Premier Ministre lors de questions d'actualité à l'Assemblée Nationale' (28 November 2000). Rebérioux's underlining.

outside those in government varied hugely between right and left. Within three weeks of the appeal the PCF had demanded a parliamentary commission to investigate conduct during the Algerian war, which the PS opposed, reasoning that working on the memory of the war was a task for historians, not politicians.<sup>97</sup> A group of PCF members also campaigned for a street to be named after Maurice Audin in the twentieth arrondissement.<sup>98</sup> On the opposite side of the political spectrum, the centre-right questioned how far historical responsibility went. Should twenty-first century politicians atone for the 1419 murder of the Duke of Burgundy or the invasion of the Palatinate under Louis XIV?<sup>99</sup> Moving further right, Charles Pasqua argued that France has no lesson to learn from the *porteurs de valises*.<sup>100</sup> Such flattening – none of the Twelve were involved in the Jeanson network – reinforced the complex nature of memorialising the Algerian war and the conflict's enduring implications for twenty-first-century French politics and society.

The Twelve took advantage of the 2002 presidential elections to reignite their campaign. On 18 March 2002 the group published a piece in *L'Humanité* which demanded all candidates to denounce the state's use of torture during the war. Rebérioux's archives contain responses from four presidential candidates (RPR, PS, MDC and PCF). The Twelve excluded far-right party the Front national. Despite accusations that Jean-Marie Le Pen had tortured during the war, the FN later reached the second round of the elections, reinforcing the need for wider public understanding of responsibility for atrocities committed during the conflict. Unsurprisingly, the PCF candidate Robert Hue was the most supportive of the appeal. Hue attempted to use the petition to prop up his party's falling popularity, arguing that he supported the Twelve because the PCF 'a été le premier et longtemps seul à dénoncer le caractère colonial de la guerre d'Algérie'.<sup>101</sup> The three other candidates were more obtuse in their responses. President Chirac had remained largely silent on the issue until his official response in 2002. In a private letter to the Twelve, Chirac emphasized that atrocities had been committed on both sides. Although such violence was 'unjustifiable' he refused to go any further in accepting

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<sup>97</sup> 647AP/61 Letter from PCF deputy Alain Bocquet to Rebérioux (24 November 2000).

<sup>98</sup> 647AP/61 Letter to Rebérioux (30 November 2001). A street was renamed after Audin in 2004.

<sup>99</sup> *Le Figaro* (28 November 2000), quoted in Cohen, 'The Algerian war, the French state and official memory', p.237.

<sup>100</sup> Quoted in Ulloa, *Francis Jeanson: a Dissident Intellectual*, p.5.

<sup>101</sup> 647AP/60 Letter, Robert Hue to Charles Silvestre (23 March 2002).

political responsibility.<sup>102</sup> A few days later Chirac confirmed his position in the press, condemning atrocity but stressing that millions of Frenchmen had served in Algeria without resorting to torture.<sup>103</sup> Both Jospin and Jean-Pierre Chevènement repeated the historical need for discussion, with the PS candidate demanding more historical work to be completed in order for greater public reflection.<sup>104</sup>

### 4.3.2 *Encouraging historicisation*

Rebérioux was extremely conscious of her own position as an historian within the anti-torture movement. As Algeria fell outside her research specialism, Rebérioux exempted herself from commenting on the conflict from an historical perspective, a position which was central to her research ethics: 'C'est un principe absolu, je n'écris rien sur les périodes pendant lesquelles j'ai été militante'.<sup>105</sup> When invited to speak publicly about her anticolonial engagement, Rebérioux often provided a disclaimer. At an LDH event in 2001 Rebérioux began by stating that 'je n'écris pas quand je ne suis pas sûre de ma compétence'.<sup>106</sup> The conscious separation between the two aspects of her life was worn as a badge of honour in the rhetoric of her engagement. *L'Humanité* commented that 'Rebérioux a toujours mené de front une activité d'historienne et de militante, sans jamais chercher à croiser nécessairement l'une et l'autre'.<sup>107</sup> Nevertheless, by the turn of the millennium Rebérioux had realised the desperate need to put the Algerian war in historical context. Historians, she argued, should be given access to police and state archives from the period in order to write an accurate history of the conflict.<sup>108</sup> Due to the enforced separation between her historical work and her militancy Rebérioux refused to start the process of historicisation herself, stating that 'trop politique, n'ayant

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<sup>102</sup> 647AP/60 Letter, Jacques Chirac to Charles Silvestre (14 April 2002).

<sup>103</sup> 'Jacques Chirac : « Des deux côtés »', *L'Humanité* (19 April 2002).

<sup>104</sup> 647AP/60 Letter, Jean-Pierre Chevènement to Charles Silvestre (18 March 2002); Letter, Lionel Jospin to Charles Silvestre (18 April 2002).

<sup>105</sup> *Paroles d'historiens*, II : Le choix de Jaurès, Chap. 11 : Harmoniser recherche historique et militantisme.

<sup>106</sup> 647AP/60 Rebérioux, handwritten note, 'Intervention au séminaire LDH' (27 June 2001), p.1.

<sup>107</sup> 647AP/61 Numéro spécial guerre d'Algérie : toute *L'Humanité* contre la torture (January 2001), p.6.

<sup>108</sup> 647AP/39 Claude Liauzu (Professor of Contemporary History at Paris-VIII and specialist of the Maghreb) wrote to the Director General of the Archives Nationales on many occasions to request access to police and state archives. He copied Rebérioux into all his correspondence which suggests her involvement.

jus renoncé, je considère n'avoir pas la distance suffisante pour interroger mon propre passé'.<sup>109</sup>

The legacy of the war meant that the conflict was almost impossible to remember 'in a way that integrated happily with French history'.<sup>110</sup> Moving forward, Rebérioux used her reputation as one of France's leading social historians to encourage the historicisation of the Algerian conflict.<sup>111</sup> Historical analysis was especially needed in order to combat the French tendency towards litigiousness, where political crimes were pursued through the courts rather than via the political system (see discussion of Rebérioux's position on negationism in chapter seven).<sup>112</sup> The technical difficulty of legally prosecuting crimes committed during the war risked diverting public attention away from dealing with the memory of atrocity. Moreover pursuing torturers through the courts pushed the burden of writing history on the judge, rather than professional historians.<sup>113</sup> Establishing an accurate account of what happened in the war was more useful to society than targeting individuals. Rebérioux highlighted the need for historical context in understanding the Algerian war: 'On ne peut pas isoler tel ou tel événement comme le 17 octobre 1961 de l'ensemble de la guerre d'Algérie'.<sup>114</sup> Le Sueur agreed, underscoring the importance of historical scholarship in order for the conflict to become part of French history rather than mythology.<sup>115</sup> Although unwilling to research the conflict herself, the main historical focus, Rebérioux argued, should be on the state legitimisation of torture. Despite the slow development of historical attention to the Algerian war, the chronological distance amnesia had inadvertently afforded was not necessarily negative. As Rebérioux argued, 'il faut cinquante ans pour qu'on fasse l'histoire'.<sup>116</sup> Elsewhere she insisted that 'pour l'historien, aucune page n'est jamais

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<sup>109</sup> 647AP/61 Rebérioux, handwritten note, 'Résister à la guerre d'Algérie' (May 1999).

<sup>110</sup> Robert Gildea, *France Since 1945* (Oxford: OUP, 1996), p.28.

<sup>111</sup> In the intervening years between 1962 and the 2000 petition, Rebérioux developed her reputation as an eminent scholar in both academic and public spheres; editing LMS, presiding over the SÉJ and shaping the Musée d'Orsay amongst many other activities.

<sup>112</sup> Macmaster, 'The torture controversy (1998-2002)', p.453.

<sup>113</sup> Quemeneur, 'La mémoire mise à la question', p.39.

<sup>114</sup> 647AP/60 Rebérioux, 'Exposé historique', Compte-rendu du séminaire 'Colonisation et crimes commis au nom de la France pendant la guerre d'Algérie' (27 June 2001), p.2.

<sup>115</sup> Le Sueur, 'Decolonising 'French universalism'', p.167.

<sup>116</sup> 647AP/61 Jean Chatain, 'On ne peut pas accepter que la torture soit venue de la République [entretien avec Rebérioux]', *L'Humanité* (1 November 2000), p.9.



ournée. Tout problème d'importance majeure fait l'objet de réévaluations au cours de l'histoire : nous n'interrogeons pas le passé aujourd'hui comme il y a quarante ans'.<sup>117</sup>

The process of historicisation had two elements: archives and historians' desire to research the conflict. Conditions of archival access meant that the Algerian war as a historical topic was (or more importantly, was *perceived* to be) out of bounds due to a lack of primary documentation. A 1979 law severely limited access to state papers, although the military archives at Vincennes had been opened in 1992.<sup>118</sup> The conflict was examined by two round tables organised by the Institut d'histoire du temps présent (IHTP) in 1988, discussions which proved that a history of the Algerian war was possible.<sup>119</sup> Rebérioux tackled the archival problem on two fronts, arguing that 'le discours sur la fermeture des archives cache parfois la paresse de chercher'.<sup>120</sup> Rebérioux believed historians should act as the democratic gatekeepers of sources and documents; she disagreed with the opening of archives for everyone, stressing the need for data protection of army personnel identity in archival papers.<sup>121</sup> The archives problem therefore centred on the need to develop a feasible access policy which allowed 'bonafide' historians access to documentation in order to do their work. André Mandouze and Pierre Vidal-Naquet agreed. On behalf of six historians they petitioned the government to unblock the 'obstacle course' posed by the complex *dérogation* system which prevented open historical research on the war.<sup>122</sup>

Given the difficulty in accessing state papers, Rebérioux called upon the next generation of historians to find alternative archival sources.<sup>123</sup> Rebérioux compelled researchers to 'n'exclure aucun objet de recherche. L'histoire c'est d'abord de poser des questions à

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<sup>117</sup> 647AP/60 Jean-Sébastien Stehli, 'Les voies judiciaires sont nulles : entretien avec Madeleine Rebérioux', *L'Express* (11 January 2001), p.64.

<sup>118</sup> Jo McCormack, *Collective Memory: France and the Algerian War (1954-1962)* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2007), p.30. Jean-Luc Einaudi used alternative sources to state papers for his research *La bataille de Paris : 17 octobre 1961*.

<sup>119</sup> McCormack, *Collective Memory*, p.29.

<sup>120</sup> 647AP/60 Rebérioux, 'Exposé historique', Compte-rendu du séminaire 'Colonisation et crimes commis au nom de la France pendant la guerre d'Algérie' (27 June 2001), p.2.

<sup>121</sup> 647AP/60 Rebérioux, handwritten paper, 'Intervention au séminaire LDH' (27 June 2001), p.15.

<sup>122</sup> André Mandouze and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, 'Les historiens et la guerre d'Algérie', *Le Monde* (11 June 2001).

<sup>123</sup> The Commission de sauvegarde des droits et libertés individuels' dossier on Audin's case is now open (without derogation) at AN F/60/3165 « Affaires graves » Maurice Audin.

l'histoire'.<sup>124</sup> Rebérioux estimated that around 80% of archives were open concerning Algeria, including the Service historique de l'armée du terre (SHAT) along with civil political archives.<sup>125</sup> Alternatively, historians could use witness testimony to write oral histories. The last method was especially important for Rebérioux, as she argued that the testimonies of tortured Algerians were missing from the historical record.<sup>126</sup> Rebérioux maintained that the work of historians was crucial for tackling the complex issue of political responsibility. To this end Rebérioux highlighted the work of Sylvie Thénault and Raphaëlle Branche on torture during the war as leading a certain historical revolution.<sup>127</sup> Indeed, Branche's *soutenance de thèse* in December 2000 was considered a media event.<sup>128</sup> The publication of Branche's thesis marked the beginning of a cohesive answer to Rebérioux's calls for historicisation of the conflict. Research continues to this day, led by the next international generation of researchers (Tramor Quemeneur, Malika Rahal, Natalya Vince and Claire Eldridge, among many others) who possess less ideological baggage than Rebérioux's generation.<sup>129</sup> Macmaster has termed such shifts as a 'quiet revolution' in archive access and research.<sup>130</sup>

### 4.3.3 *Educational legacy*

One of the most enduring aspects of the *Appel des Douze* movement was the importance of transmitting memories of the Algerian war to the next generation of French and Algerian citizens. Ighilahriz feared that the next generation believed the official 'filtered and aseptic' narrative rather than having a more accurate understanding of the atrocities committed during the war.<sup>131</sup> Using her fifteen years' experience as a school history teacher, Rebérioux placed great personal emphasis on the conflict being taught in schools, reinforcing her Republican conception of the transformative power of education.<sup>132</sup> Rebérioux called for the inclusion of (post)colonialism and the study of the

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<sup>124</sup> 647AP/60 Rebérioux, handwritten paper: 'Intervention au séminaire LDH' (27 June 2001), p.3.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., p.8.

<sup>126</sup> Rebérioux had first-hand testimonies from victims of torture in her own archives but did not publish these during the torture controversy. 647AP/60 Rebérioux, handwritten paper: 'Intervention au séminaire LDH' (27 June 2001), p.12.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., p.15.

<sup>128</sup> Prochaska, 'The return of the repressed', p.262.

<sup>129</sup> Branche, *La torture et l'armée pendant la guerre d'Algérie, 1954-1962*.

<sup>130</sup> Macmaster, 'The torture controversy (1998-2002)', p.455.

<sup>131</sup> Ighilahriz and Nivat, *Algérienne*, p.258.

<sup>132</sup> McCormack, *Collective Memory*, p.57.

Algerian conflict as topics in the French school history syllabus. She contended that such integration would not only help France come to terms with its colonial past but also 'faire bouger les choses en Algérie aujourd'hui'.<sup>133</sup> When the Twelve repeated their appeal in May 2001, education was prioritised: 'L'enseignement de la guerre d'Algérie appelle à une mise en jour en particulier concernant la colonisation'.<sup>134</sup> Aside from the political legacy of torture, the opening up of debate within the public sphere had the potential for significant pedagogical impact. Michèle Bacholle-Bošković argued that education was one way to reconcile the status of Algeria as a taboo subject with the multicultural realities of modern France.<sup>135</sup> In her survey of the history curriculum and school textbooks, Bacholle-Bošković pointed to the emphasis on 'responsible citizenship' within the teaching of history in French *lycées*; an intrinsic part of an open democracy at a local level.<sup>136</sup> Elsewhere Jo McCormack has posited that history teaching is a valuable tool for the transmission of memory, operating at the intersection between memory, history, nation building and individual identity.<sup>137</sup>

The Twelve's emphasis on education resonated. Along with fellow historians Benjamin Stora and Jean-Pierre Rioux, Rebérioux was invited to speak at a *soirée-débat* organised by then Education minister Jack Lang on 16 October 2001.<sup>138</sup> The debate examined the legacy of 17 October 1961 and how the Algerian war should be taught in schools. As part of the campaign, Rebérioux and Nicole Dreyfus also engaged in a series of pedagogical events, including visiting the Lycée Polyvalent Jouy-le-Moutier to share their experiences of opposing the conflict with *première* and *terminale* students and their teachers. The poignancy of the visit was underlined by the fact some of the students had lost parents in the various Algerian conflicts since independence. Rebérioux's conceptualisation of public outreach work in schools revealed much about her approach

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<sup>133</sup> 647AP/60 Rebérioux, 'Exposé historique', *Compte-rendu du séminaire 'Colonisation et crimes commis au nom de la France pendant la guerre d'Algérie'* (27 June 2001), p.2.

<sup>134</sup> Michèle Bacholle-Bošković, 'La Guerre d'Algérie expliquée à nos enfants', *The French Review*, 76 5 (2003), p.968.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p.969.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, p.973.

<sup>137</sup> Jo McCormack, 'Memory in history, nation building and identity: teaching about the Algerian war in France', in *Algeria & France, 1800-2000: Identity, Memory, Nostalgia*, ed. Patricia Lorcin (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2006), p.136.

<sup>138</sup> 647AP/61 Invitation, 'La journée du 17 octobre 1961 et l'enseignement de la guerre d'Algérie' (16 October 2001). Rebérioux had previously worked with Jack Lang on the Musée d'Orsay project in the 1980s.

to the wider aims of the appeal, to encourage critical reflection. She was quoted as stating that 'la guerre n'est évidemment pas faite que de bons sentiments et de tortures. La mémoire, c'est important, mais ça ne fait pas l'histoire. Notre seul but, c'est que vous avez un sens critique, sur l'Algérie, sur la Palestine...'<sup>139</sup>

By the turn of the millennium, textbooks had started to address questions associated with the memory of the Algerian conflict. Whilst some examples failed to explain how torture continued into the Fifth Republic under De Gaulle, others included extracts from the *Manifeste des 121* for students to analyse.<sup>140</sup> Including Algeria in the history curriculum was important for developing a collective memory of the conflict and allowing the 'gangrene' of the past to become a 'scar'.<sup>141</sup> However, political interventions in education policy have undermined the efforts of the Twelve. A 2005 law, hotly contested by historians, mandated the teaching of the 'positive' elements of colonialism in schools.<sup>142</sup> Rebérioux did not live to see the law passed, but would have undoubtedly been horrified, doubly so by the lack of opposition to the act by the political left. Although reference to the 'positive role' of colonialism was eventually eliminated by the Conseil Constitutionnel in 2006, the voting of such legislation highlights the enduring importance of public education to critically interpret government agendas. However, Rebérioux's attempts at curriculum development have borne fruit in the period since her death. Today, the final year of the *lycée* contains a compulsory module entitled 'L'historien et les mémoires de la guerre d'Algérie'.<sup>143</sup>

#### 4.4 Conclusion

Public displays of anticolonial activism bookmarked both ends of Rebérioux's academic and militant career. Whilst her defence of torture victims during the 1950s and 1960s inspired her historical research, her status as a prominent public historian and emerita professor facilitated her leadership of a significant media campaign. For the first time,

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<sup>139</sup> 647AP/60 Eric Bureau, 'Les lycéens redécouvrent la guerre d'Algérie', *Le Parisien* (8 May 2002).

<sup>140</sup> Bacholle-Bošković, 'La Guerre d'Algérie expliquée à nos enfants', p.976.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p.980.

<sup>142</sup> Jansen, 'Politics of remembrance, colonialism and the Algerian war of independence in France', p.287.

<sup>143</sup> See Itay Lotem, 'A decade after the riots, France has rewritten its colonial history', *The Conversation* (25 January 2016) <https://theconversation.com/a-decade-after-the-riots-france-has-rewritten-its-colonial-history-50499>, (2016) [accessed 29/01/2016].

the *Appel des Douze* opened up the connection between official and popular memory and exposed the tensions between the 'official desire to forget' and the 'public's capacity to remember', specifically in relation to one of France's darkest historical chapters.<sup>144</sup> Whilst the petition could not rebalance all the ills of colonial legacies, the appeal led to a greater public awareness and media discussion of torture as commonplace during the Algerian war. Within the broader context of the global culture of remembrance, the appeal created the conditions for veterans to publicly explore the memory of the conflict, offering the first step towards the healing of trauma and opening up of historical debate.<sup>145</sup> This chapter has demonstrated how Rebérioux's status and voice as an historian and militant facilitated the process of allowing the Algerian war to belong to history, so that mourning and commemoration could proceed to an 'amnesty without amnesia'.<sup>146</sup>

How successful was the *Appel des Douze*? Although the appeal is yet to receive a satisfactory government response, the petition has had significant impact on the memory of the Algerian war. The appeal fed into contemporary debates leading to longer-term changes regarding the memory of the conflict. Rebérioux did not personally consider the appeal to be a failure. In 2002 she argued that in the previous two years 'la parole s'est libérée, les oreilles se sont tendues, les plumes se sont aiguisées et les éditeurs se sont empressés'.<sup>147</sup> The appeal led to resurgence in the discussion of torture within French media and the public sphere, opening up the events in Algeria to a new generation and leading to unrestricted debate surrounding the moral responsibilities of colonial history, as well as bringing to the fore debate concerning the relationship between Algeria and France in the twenty-first century. A survey conducted in March 2002 indicated that fifty per cent of the public now sought a public condemnation of torture by the state.<sup>148</sup> The *Appel des Douze* placed contemporary French policy under scrutiny. The appeal highlighted the paradox between France's condemnation of torture and genocide in Armenia and the state's failure to bring its own war criminals to account.<sup>149</sup> The French state has played and continues to occupy a central role in

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<sup>144</sup> Cohen, 'The Algerian war, the French state and official memory', p.239.

<sup>145</sup> Macmaster, 'The torture controversy (1998-2002)', p.452.

<sup>146</sup> Schalk, *War and the Ivory Tower*, pp.174-179.

<sup>147</sup> 647AP/61 Typed note, 'Ma guerre d'Algérie dans les livres' (undated, probably 2002), pp.1-2.

<sup>148</sup> Jansen, 'Politics of remembrance, colonialism and the Algerian war of independence in France', p.283.

<sup>149</sup> Macmaster, 'The torture controversy (1998-2002)', p.453.

'shaping, preserving and transmitting memory', through ceremonies, statues and monuments and school curricula.<sup>150</sup> On 25 September 2001 a *journée d'hommage aux harkis* was held; on 17 October 2001 a plaque commemorating Algerian victims of police repression forty years earlier was unveiled on the Pont Saint-Michel in Paris. Two years later a *journée nationale d'hommage aux 'morts pour la France' pendant la guerre d'Algérie et les combats du Maroc et de Tunisie* was held, on 5 December 2003.<sup>151</sup> Problems remain however. That Jean-Marie Le Pen, accused of torture during the war, could win 18% of the presidential vote in 2002 was telling of how far greater public discussion of the Algerian war is needed in contemporary France.<sup>152</sup>

The legacy of the Twelve stretched beyond the natural lives of its signatories. Although Rebérioux died in 2005, her LDH colleagues, along with *L'Humanité*, have continued to fight for the truth concerning Maurice Audin and for public state condemnation of army conduct in Algeria. In March 2014 historians and intellectuals, along with Maurice Audin's widow Josette launched the *Appel des 171*, which called upon President Hollande to acknowledge the French state's role in Audin's death and condemn the use of torture during the Algerian war. The petition argued: 'Nous demandons que les plus hautes autorités reconnaissent le crime d'État qu'a été l'assassinat de Maurice Audin, ainsi que la pratique de la torture et les violations massives des droits de l'homme commises par l'armée française durant la guerre d'Algérie'.<sup>153</sup> The renewed appeal illustrates the lasting legacy of Rebérioux's anticolonialism and fight for human rights. The fact the appeal has yet to be fulfilled reinforces the significance of the civic rights questions Rebérioux raised during her lifetime.

Rebérioux's personal journey through the history and memory of the Algerian war unquestionably offers a valuable insight into her unique brand of militancy. The *Appel des Douze* and its associated campaigns revealed the influence of Rebérioux's early anticolonial engagement on her militancy. She mobilised traditional methods such as petitions, films and letter writing in order to guide public opinion towards its moral and

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<sup>150</sup> Cohen, 'The Algerian war, the French state and official memory', p.220.

<sup>151</sup> Sylvie Thénault, *Histoire de la guerre d'indépendance algérienne* (Paris: Flammarion, 2005), p.10.

<sup>152</sup> Le Sueur, *Uncivil War*, p.320.

<sup>153</sup> 'Appel : nous demandons la vérité sur l'assassinat de Maurice Audin', *L'Humanité* (26 March 2014) <http://www.humanite.fr/monde/appel-nous-demandons-la-verite-sur-l-assassinat-de-562044> [accessed 26/03/2014].

political conscience. Rebérioux's anticolonialism was not however limited to the case of Algeria. It formed part of a broader commitment to defending the rights of the oppressed and action in defence of humanity, whether in France or overseas. Many of her later actions had their roots in lessons learned on the anticolonial battlefield, shaping her conception of politics and human rights. As Rebérioux stated, 'la notion de droits de l'homme n'est pas seulement juridique : c'est une vision, un guide pour l'action, une espérance'.<sup>154</sup> As explored in the next chapter, Rebérioux's founding of the Collectif intersyndical universitaire in 1965 took her anticolonial interests to a new, transnational level and global scale of action.

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<sup>154</sup> 647AP/60 Lucien Degoy, "Torture : et les politiques ? Entretien avec Madeleine Rebérioux", *L'Humanité* (3 July 2001), p.13.

## Chapter 5. The Collectif intersyndical universitaire d'action pour la paix au Vietnam

*Si je devais légitimer le va-et-vient un peu confus que j'ai tenté d'établir entre l'activité militante et le travail historique [...] je conclurais sur ce point : le je est de peu d'intérêt, nos vies sont collectives.*  
**Madeleine Rebérioux<sup>1</sup>**

### 5.1 Introduction

On 3 March 1969 the *comité de section* of the Sorbonne-Lettres PCF cell offered Rebérioux an ultimatum: either leave the editorial board of *Politique aujourd'hui*, a dissident publication which the PCF believed was 'harmful' to democracy, or be excluded from the party for a year.<sup>2</sup> Rebérioux refused the ultimatum. Prior to her exclusion, her militancy had been embedded in a network of loosely communist-affiliated groups, the most important being the trade union SNÉSup. Exclusion from the PCF in 1969 irrevocably altered the course of her militancy. Rebérioux lost her position as SNÉSup representative at the Sorbonne, and by extension, ceded her place at the centre of the Collectif intersyndical universitaire, the organisation which she had founded in 1965. No longer welcome at the Sorbonne, Rebérioux found an academic position at the new *centre expérimental de Vincennes*, which was created in response to the academic upheaval of May '68. Nevertheless, although her exclusion was the source of great personal hurt, Rebérioux remained attached to the PCF and would later class herself as 'une communiste non-repentie'.<sup>3</sup>

The second case study in this thesis examines Rebérioux's activism within an academic context, exploring how her militancy challenged PCF orthodoxy before her exclusion. Whilst this chapter investigates how Rebérioux organised university networks to oppose American military interventions in Vietnam during 1965-70, the next chapter

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<sup>1</sup> Rebérioux, *Parcours engagés*, p.15.

<sup>2</sup> Archives du Comité national du PCF, 62/883 dossier biographique Madeleine Rebérioux. Secrétariat CCCP n.2995 (4 March 1969).

<sup>3</sup> Rousseau, 'Art et monde social', p.106.



moves on to scrutinise Rebérioux's specific involvement in the large-scale political, social and cultural protest of May '68. As we have seen in the anticolonial case study, collective action sat at the heart of Rebérioux's militancy. She used committees, collectives and leagues to intervene in conflicts from Algeria to Vietnam and later in her career, the Middle East. Responding to the US escalation of military intervention in Vietnam, in the summer of 1965 Rebérioux played a fundamental role in establishing the Collectif intersyndical universitaire d'action pour la paix au Vietnam.<sup>4</sup> This cross-trade-union, political-pressure network had two functions: ideological and material. In addition to organising protests and petitions in France to oppose the conflict, the Collective also led a variety of practical initiatives. Sending physical aid to academics in Vietnam was a strong political statement which went further than public condemnation of the conflict.

The Collective fulfilled two functions for Rebérioux: it was a continuation of her commitment to the anticolonial – soon to be reframed as anti-imperialist – cause yet was also a way of engaging in the anti-war movement from a PCF-endorsed perspective. The Collective's practical initiatives were a considerable step-up from Rebérioux's previous involvement in the anti-torture campaign during the Algerian war, which stopped short of participating in direct counter-legal action such as the Jeanson network. Furthermore, anti-Vietnam war engagement was more nuanced in that it was a conflict which did not directly involve the French state, unlike Algeria as a *guerre franco-française*. Rebérioux's opposition to Vietnam occurred at a time when France was negotiating its place in a new postcolonial world and redefining its relation to the US's position as a global imperialist superpower. The Collective is a unique example which demonstrates how French intellectuals, including Rebérioux, mobilised against a non-Francophone conflict in the 1960s and forged transnational solidarities with their international academic counterparts. It is important to remember that France had first-hand experience of fighting a similar battle to the US, in the form of the First Indochina war (1945-54).<sup>5</sup> France's prior history in the region helps to explain why intellectual opposition was

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<sup>4</sup> For reasons of brevity I refer to the group as the 'Collective'.

<sup>5</sup> French historians distinguish between the conflict of 1946-54 as the *guerre d'Indochine* and the 1965-75 conflict as the *guerre américaine du Vietnam*. For clarity I will refer to the latter as the Vietnam war. This chapter focuses on the period of 1965-70, although a longer periodization of the conflict (1962-75) has also been suggested. Mark Atwood Lawrence, *The Vietnam War: a Concise International History* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), p.1.

quick to mobilise following the escalation in US involvement; recent French experiences in Algeria were fresh in intellectuals' minds.

Rebérioux's militancy within the Collective is difficult to place in one specific historiographical framework as it traversed multiple historical spheres. The Collective touched on many key issues during the 1960s, both within France and at a global level. Domestically it highlighted the academic (both students and staff) protest which fed into May '68, the inertia within the French Higher Education system, the place of trade unions in militant politics and the fractured state of the political left. At a micro-level the network symbolised Rebérioux's rise in the academic and intellectual establishment, especially in comparison with her engagement in the Comité Audin which was set within a francophone rather than international context. Thinking more globally, the Collective also illustrated transnational narratives including the politics of pacifism, international protest against American military intervention in Vietnam, the sociological structures of engagement, the semantic shifts between anticolonialist and anti-imperialist activism and the ideological role of communism in Western societies during the Cold war. Individually these are all gargantuan topics in their own right and yet one relatively ephemeral, largely-forgotten activist network synthesised them all, with Rebérioux at its centre. In addition to these thematic tangents, the French anti-Vietnam war movement was an echo of intellectual engagement against the war in Algeria. Comparisons can be drawn between Rebérioux's roles in the Comité Audin and the Collective, especially in terms of organisation, leadership and methods of activism. David Schalk ably demonstrated similar parallels and contrasts between intellectual opposition to both conflicts, setting his comparative study in a national and chronological framework. In his research Schalk identified three main universal stages of opposition: pedagogic, moral and counter-legal. These phases of activism are useful for measuring the development and success of the Collective against a theoretical model.<sup>6</sup>

Opposition to the Vietnam war was an intergenerational affair. The Algerian generation – Comité Audin alumni including Rebérioux, Laurent Schwartz, Jean Dresch and Pierre Vidal-Naquet – were joined by the next generation of activists, 'baby-boomers' or

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<sup>6</sup> Schalk, *War and the Ivory Tower*, pp.48-52.

'counter-cultural types' born during the post-war era.<sup>7</sup> However as with opposition to the Algerian conflict, the PCF complicated the relationship between the two cohorts. Although Rebérioux had joined the PCF in 1946 in order to express her anticolonialism, the PCF had a chequered record in meeting her expectations.<sup>8</sup> The PCF displayed contradictory attitudes towards conflict in Algeria and Vietnam and struggled to reconcile its commitment to internationalism with managing domestic public opinion.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, the party's denunciation of France's 'dirty war' in Indochina had attracted the support of many *compagnons de route* despite accusations of being Stalinist.<sup>10</sup> The Henri Martin Affair of 1950-3 provoked public criticism of France's war with Indochina by Jean-Marie Domenach, Jean Cocteau and Jean-Paul Sartre, demonstrating how the war was not just opposed by the PCF. As the anti-war movement grew during the 1960s, in a similar manner to the Algerian war, PCF affiliation or opposition became a way of self-defining groups' aims and identity. In this way, intellectual culture was further divided and this additional layer of politics distinguished the French anti-war movement from its counterparts in the US, UK, the Netherlands or Germany.<sup>11</sup>

The Collective was a unique group amongst wider French opposition to war in Vietnam in that along with its emphasis on peaceful opposition, it was also tacitly supported by most major parties of the left, including the PCF but excluding the SFIO. This was in sharp contrast to other more politically-marginalised groups, such as the Comité Vietnam national (CVN), Comités Vietnam de base (CVB) or Comités Vietnam lycéens (CVL), which all took great pride in opposing the PCF.<sup>12</sup> As Nicolas Pas observed, the groups outside PCF control reminded the party of its failures: 'L'inefficacité de l'anticolonialisme du PCF, son monolithisme momifié, sa vision et son comportement staliniens et ses malhonnêtes politiques flagrantes'.<sup>13</sup> In line with this, the PCF followed an active policy of excluding any members who participated in either the CVN or CVB,

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<sup>7</sup> Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*, p.100.

<sup>8</sup> Eveno and Planchais, *La guerre d'Algérie*, p.201.

<sup>9</sup> Marco Galeazzi, 'Le PCI, le PCF et les luttes anticoloniales (1955-1975)', *Cahiers d'histoire Revue d'histoire critique* 112-113 <https://chrhc.revues.org/2132>, (2010) [accessed 22/01/2016].

<sup>10</sup> Rod Kedward, *La vie en bleu: France and the French Since 1900* (London: Allen Lane, 2005), p.326.

<sup>11</sup> Nicolas Pas, '« Six Heures pour le Vietnam » : Histoire des Comités Vietnam français 1965-1968', *Revue Historique*, 302 613 (2000), p.160.

<sup>12</sup> Other PCF-supported political groups included the Mouvement de la paix, Secours populaire and the Association d'Amitié Franco-Vietnamienne. Rebérioux believed that the CVN, founded by Schwartz, was an ally to the Collective rather than a 'competitor'. Rebérioux, 'Pierre Vidal-Naquet et nos guerres', p.21.

<sup>13</sup> Pas, '« Six Heures pour le Vietnam »', p.162.

notably in 1966 when tens of members were purged for their dissidence.<sup>14</sup> Despite her PCF card-carrying status Rebérioux still felt able to challenge the party line and directly engaged with these 'banned' groups. For example, she was the invited speaker at an early CVL meeting on 15 December 1966.<sup>15</sup> In the face of all the weaknesses of the PCF and the exodus of many of her peers from the party in 1956 following the Hungarian uprising, Rebérioux retained her belief in the party as a valuable platform for militancy: 'On était quand même un certain nombre à rester dans le parti avec la ferme intention de ne pas se faire mettre à la porte tout en disant des choses sensées mais que le parti supportait mal'.<sup>16</sup> Although shocked by the denunciation of Stalinist crimes, Rebérioux was stubbornly determined to remain in the party. Close friend Patrick Fridenson maintained that Rebérioux 'readily' turned to Khrushchevism after 1956.<sup>17</sup> Whilst there is little empirical evidence concerning Rebérioux's personal communist beliefs, her actions in the Collective certainly support Fridenson's assertion.

The archival record demonstrates how Rebérioux played a key role in establishing the Collective and indicates that until 1969 she was integral to the day-to-day running of the network.<sup>18</sup> In 2000, Rebérioux along with fellow Collective members Nicole Simon and Henri van Regemorter donated their personal papers to the Archives Nationales. The collection comprises eight large cardboard boxes, as well as two additional classifications containing posters and photographs.<sup>19</sup> The thorough, well-considered process of creation, for example the authors' annotation of documents with dates, renders the Collective's archives invaluable for reconstructing the network's activities nearly fifty years later. Occasionally, Rebérioux annotated documents with dates which Simon later revised and vice versa.<sup>20</sup> This level of organisation is in sharp contrast to Rebérioux's own private archives, which were donated after her death and catalogued

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p.164.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p.175.

<sup>16</sup> Rousseau, 'Art et monde social', p.130.

<sup>17</sup> Fridenson, 'Rebérioux, Madeleine [née Amoudruz]', p.385.

<sup>18</sup> The archives contain invitations issued by Rebérioux to committee meetings and letters initiating many of the Collective's initiatives until 1969 (20000529/3). As the founding member Rebérioux kept documentation from the Collective even after she was side-lined out of the organisation following her PCF exclusion.

<sup>19</sup> 20000529/1-8. On average each box contains two or three large dossiers that would perhaps comprise one box if they had been catalogued as Rebérioux's private archives. In addition to 20000529 there are two additional classifications which contain photographs (20010173) and posters (20010244) from the anti-war campaign, mostly from Vietnam itself.

<sup>20</sup> Rebérioux originally dated the first draft of *Des livres pour le Vietnam* as March 1967; Simon later revised this to December 1966. 20000529/2 *Des livres pour le Vietnam* (December 1966).

by archivists. However, challenges remain in making sense of the Collective's archives. For example, the collection contains all of Rebérioux's minute books, up to 1971. Whilst Rebérioux's handwriting is notoriously difficult to read at the best of times, rough drafts of notes for minutes are virtually impossible to decode and consequently the majority of these sources have been discounted from this thesis.<sup>21</sup>

Very little academic work has been completed on the Collective. Indeed, the topic of French opposition to the Vietnam War is an emerging area of historical enquiry. The edited book dedicated to Henri van Regemorter contains a short section on the Collective with contributions by Rebérioux.<sup>22</sup> This work is significant as it is Rebérioux's only piece of retrospective reflection on the Collective, aside from the archival presentation to series 20000529 which Rebérioux was involved in drafting in 1999.<sup>23</sup> Remarkably, her 2001 five-hour interview for *Paroles d'historiens* made no reference whatsoever to either the Collective or to Rebérioux's opposition to war in Vietnam. This is surprising, given the depth and breadth of her role in the network and the comprehensive scope of the interview itself. Equally the Collective has been largely overlooked by historians working on 1960s protest, save a few exceptions. Nicolas Pas interviewed Rebérioux in April 1998 for his DÉA thesis and their meeting allowed Pas 'de mieux savoir l'esprit du temps'.<sup>24</sup> His subsequent scholarly work made passing references to Rebérioux's status within the network.<sup>25</sup> In addition Romain Bertrand highlighted the existence of the Collective's archives, although he did not use them for his own research.<sup>26</sup>

The wealth of organised archival information, coupled with the academic oversight of the Collective as an example of transnational opposition to the Vietnam War makes my analysis a valuable, highly-original case study from Rebérioux's intellectual and

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<sup>21</sup> 20000529/2-3 Rebérioux's minute books (up to 1971).

<sup>22</sup> Nicole Simon-Cortès and Alain Teissonnière (eds.), *Vietnam, une coopération exemplaire : Henri Van Regemorter (1925-2002), parcours d'un militant* (Paris: Harmattan, 2004).

<sup>23</sup> 647AP/40 Rebérioux, typed notes for Nicole Simon (17 October 1999). Her chapter on anti-war engagement in homage to Pierre Vidal-Naquet also discusses the Collective. Rebérioux, 'Pierre Vidal-Naquet et nos guerres', pp.20-22.

<sup>24</sup> 647AP/40 Letter, Pas to Rebérioux (14 December 1998).

<sup>25</sup> Pas, '« Six Heures pour le Vietnam »', pp.157-185.

<sup>26</sup> Romain Bertrand, 'Mai 68 et l'anticolonialisme', in *Mai-juin 68*, eds. Dominique Damamme, Boris Gobille, Frédérique Matonti and Bernard Pudal (Paris: Atelier, 2008), p.100.

historical trajectory. Exploring Rebérioux's role in the Collective can both help to fathom her problematic exclusion from the PCF (explored in the next chapter) as well as contributing towards the reconstruction of anti-Vietnam war activism in France during the 1960s and its importance for understanding May '68. This chapter will unpick the relationship between Rebérioux, the Collective and its wider aims and initiatives, within the context of her anti-imperialist yet 'communist' militancy. The first section examines the origins, genesis and organisation of the Collective during 1965, questioning to what extent the Collective was a new stage in Rebérioux's personal militancy. Secondly, I explore three key modes of engagement which Rebérioux mobilised within the Collective: physical protest, the Books for Vietnam appeal and artistic modes of anti-imperialism such as Armand Gatti's play *V comme Vietnam*. How did these initiatives fit within Schalk's categorisation of cycles of engagement? The analysis in this section complements and sets the stage for the next chapter, which moves from the mechanics of activism during a five-year period to appraise Rebérioux's 'accelerated' engagement during May '68. How did the Collective sit within Rebérioux's personal narrative of communist engagement, and how did this story shift with the explosion of May '68 and her exclusion from the PCF?

## 5.2 Creating the Collective

### 5.2.1 *Origins*

The historical profession occupied an important role in shaping opposition to the Vietnam war. The vocation of being an historian offered a valuable commitment to both assessing and providing nuanced understanding of evidence.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, Rebérioux viewed the synthesis between academia and militancy as rooted in the historical discipline during this period: 'Les relations, d'autre part, entre la recherche et le militantisme [sont] fortement renouvelées dans ma discipline, l'histoire, depuis le début des années soixante'.<sup>28</sup> Stemming from this synthesis between academia and activism, the Collective was a product of the dialogue between French and American historians in

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<sup>27</sup> Herbert Shapiro, 'The Vietnam war and the American historical profession', in *Vietnam and the Antiwar Movement: an International Perspective*, ed. John Dumbrell (Aldershot: Avebury, 1989), p.9.

<sup>28</sup> Simon-Cortès and Teissonnière (eds.), *Vietnam, une coopération exemplaire*, p.29.

the 1960s. US opposition to the conflict, such as the Berkeley protests (September – December 1964) and the Michigan ‘teach-in’ (March 1965) quickly snowballed into a transnational phenomenon. Sit-ins and teach-ins also took their lead from non-violent protests from the US civil rights campaign.<sup>29</sup> In the spring of 1965 Rebérioux received a late-night phone call from her historian colleague Harvey Goldberg. The same age as Rebérioux, the two shared a professional interest in Jean Jaurès. Goldberg was a socialist and academic at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. That night, Goldberg called for support from his French colleague, asking ‘que peut-on faire, Madeleine ?’.<sup>30</sup> Rebérioux took up his invitation, feeling strongly that ‘le pays de Jaurès’ should take action in solidarity with students protesting in the US. Yet a petition was not enough. Instead, Rebérioux sought to mobilise the network of trade unionists at the Sorbonne and elsewhere.

A trade unionist since 1945, Rebérioux became the Sorbonne union representative for the SNÉSup in 1964 and later acted as the international affairs representative to the SNÉSup board. During the mid-1960s SNÉSup was particularly strong at the Sorbonne and Rebérioux felt that the time was ripe to push the trade union towards more direct political action. As she reflected, ‘nous sommes nombreux, en cette année 1965, à faire confiance au mouvement syndical, à sa capacité à fixer lui-même ses objectifs et à les mettre en œuvre’.<sup>31</sup> The Collective presented a unique opportunity: to use trade unions to unite the left in order to collectively oppose conflict in Vietnam. In many ways this agenda continued the pacifism of the Second International, a subject upon which Rebérioux published a monograph in 1967.<sup>32</sup> As Rebérioux put it, ‘soutenir ceux qui militent dans le pays qui organise la guerre, c’est un vieux rêve du vieux syndicalisme français’. Rebérioux’s motivation allied directly with a long-term aspect of French syndicalism, to fight against ‘l’insolidarité’, a concept coined by the Communist Eugène Varlin.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> See Ronald Fraser, *1968: a Student Generation in Revolt* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1988), pp.89-92; Mark Boren, *Student Resistance: a History of the Unruly Subject* (New York: Routledge, 2001), p.140.

<sup>30</sup> Simon-Cortès and Teissonnière (eds.), *Vietnam, une coopération exemplaire*, p.30.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p.31.

<sup>32</sup> Madeleine Rebérioux and Georges Haupt, *La deuxième Internationale et l’Orient* (Paris: Éditions Cujas, 1967).

<sup>33</sup> René Mouriaux, *Les syndicats dans la société française* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1983), p.12.

In the words of fellow anticolonialist militant Laurent Schwartz, Rebérioux was the 'leading figure' within the Collective, the group which Schwartz considered to be at the forefront of opposing the Vietnam war in France.<sup>34</sup> The Collective was not a formal, independent association according to the 1901 *loi d'association*, but self-defined as a 'structure de travail': a network of left-wing academic trade unionists who all opposed war in Vietnam.<sup>35</sup> This 'structure' conformed to the definition of a social movement by sociologist Dieter Rucht: 'A network of groups and organisations which, based on a collective identity, seek to bring out (or resist) a fundamental social change by the primary use of collective and public protest'.<sup>36</sup> It was significant that the network's 'collective identity' was its members' status – for the most part – as academics rather than students. Historians have often synthesised opposition to the war in Vietnam with student movements, yet the Collective offers a distinct example of an education-based non-student movement. Gerard de Groot observed that often student-led initiatives failed due to the 'young, reckless and prone to immaturity' tendencies of student movements.<sup>37</sup> Rebérioux and other leading lights of the Collective were of an older generation than the 'baby-boomers' depicted on marches by the media. Rebérioux's previous experience of leadership during the Algerian war ensured that the Collective stood a better chance of longevity and success.

Various protest meetings in the spring of 1965 foreshadowed the official formation of the Collective in October 1965. A 'grand meeting' at the *Mutualité* on 21 May entitled 'l'université contre la guerre au Vietnam' outlined many of the themes upon which the Collective would campaign for the rest of the decade.<sup>38</sup> The poster for the event called for an end to hostilities in Vietnam, the end of American aggression in the Dominican Republic, and solicited support for the Vietnamese right to self-determination. On 1 June 1965 a significant letter was sent to French and international academics proposing a more cohesive opposition to the Vietnam war. Sent under the aegis of SNÉSup, the Syndicat national des chercheurs scientifiques (SNCS) and UNÉF, the letter was signed by 22 individuals including education trade-union leaders and Rebérioux's colleagues

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<sup>34</sup> Schwartz, *Un mathématicien aux prises avec le siècle*, p.433.

<sup>35</sup> 20000529/2 Document sur le Collectif intersyndical (December 1966), p.12.

<sup>36</sup> Dieter Rucht, 'Peace movements in context: a sociological perspective', in *Peace Movements in Western Europe, Japan and the USA During the Cold War*, ed. Benjamin Ziemann (Essen: Klartext, 2008), p.268.

<sup>37</sup> Gerard De Groot, 'The culture of protest: an introductory essay', in *Student Protest: the Sixties and After*, ed. Gerard De Groot (London: Longman, 1998), p.5.

<sup>38</sup> 20000529/2 L'université contre la guerre au Vietnam (21 May 1965).



from the Comité Audin.<sup>39</sup> The letter singled out the privileged place of academics as moral arbiters in the conflict: 'Les universitaires, en raison de l'objectivité qu'ils doivent au caractère scientifique de leurs études et de leurs responsabilités dans la formation de la jeunesse, ont le devoir moral d'intervenir pour que la paix se rétablisse au Vietnam'.<sup>40</sup> The letter included a copy of an appeal demanding an end to American intervention in both Vietnam and the Dominican Republic, demonstrating a broader anti-imperialist concern.<sup>41</sup> The letter is important for two reasons. Firstly, Rebérioux was the administrative lynchpin, the main organiser who held the initiative together. Her details, including her private address, were given at the bottom of the letter as a reference point for correspondence and she was also responsible for collating signatures for the appeal, demonstrating her key practical role at the centre of the campaign even before the Collective was formally created. Secondly, her archives contain copies of the extensive international response to the letter, allowing us to trace the impact of and academics' response to the idea of the Collective.

Copies of the letter were distributed widely. Rebérioux received favourable responses from Hannover, Munich, Vienna, Liege, Oslo, Stockholm, London and from across Northern America which cemented the transnational orientation of the Collective. The archives contain all the correspondence received from academics, grouped by Rebérioux according to nation and response, 'favourable' or 'not'. The majority of academics based in France were supportive, including historian Jacques le Goff and Vietnamese engineer Nguyen-Dang Tam (CNRS) to name but two.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless academics did not accept the Rebérioux's proposal wholesale. Many letters pointed out the grammatical mistake in the original letter; others advocated further action such as going on strike.<sup>43</sup> Not all academics approached were favourable to the appeal, however. Containment of communism and the protection of America's place as the defender of democracy were common themes amongst those who objected to the initiative. Professor Koller from

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<sup>39</sup> 20000529/2 Open letter (1 June 1965), signed by Dominique Lahalle (SNCS), Jean-Marie Legay (SNÉSup) and Jean-François Nallet (UNÉF). Other signatories connected to Rebérioux included Jean Chesneaux, Jean Dresch, Évry Schatzman and Laurent Schwartz.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> 20000529/2 Appel des universitaires français contre la guerre du Vietnam et l'intervention américaine à Saint-Domingue (21 May 1965).

<sup>42</sup> 20000529/2 Letters, Jacques le Goff to Rebérioux (28 July 1965); Nguyen-Dang Tam to Rebérioux (2 July 1965).

<sup>43</sup> 20000529/2 Signed copy of the appeal (illegible signature); Letter, Tréanton to Rebérioux (24 June 1965).

Basen countered the letter by arguing that academics 'ought to be grateful for [the US] intervention – which will – I hope – avoid a much more disastrous war in the future'.<sup>44</sup> Others went further in their condemnation of the proto-Collective. Professor Dr Cornelius van Steenis, a Dutch botanist, placed his analysis of contemporary international politics in a longer historical framework:

Cher Madame [...] I may remind you that France would still be Vichy-France, and Europe under the heel of Hitler, if it had not been for the Americans. Never forget that! Communism, whether Russian or Chinese, is exactly a replica of this sort of imperialism, camouflaged by the slogan of 'international communism' and obsolete Marxist ideals, which is merely kept within bounds by the power of America, for better or worse [...] America has no imperialistic ambitions.<sup>45</sup>

Aside from the perils of addressing Rebérioux (a known pedant for correct grammar) with the masculine form of address, Steenis's letter indicated the strength of anti-communist feeling at the height of the Cold War. Birger Kaada from Oslo asserted that the conflict in Vietnam was the fault of the communists rather than the Americans, as demonstrated by the USSR's contemporary involvement in Cuba, Hungary and Eastern Europe.<sup>46</sup> Others went further in their condemnation. One anonymous letter highlighted all the initial signatories on the original petition and scrawled alongside 'toutes les tapettes !'.<sup>47</sup> Anti-communist opposition did not abate with time. A 1973 petition supporting the Paris Peace Accords was returned to the group with the slogan: 'Ça ne prend pas ! Bas les masques ! Vous n'êtes que les agents de l'impérialisme communiste !'.<sup>48</sup> Such correspondence exposed the complex international political context in which Rebérioux and the Collective operated.

The early correspondence illustrated a key practical obstacle for the Collective: language. Transnational activism was all very good in theory, but in practice there were difficulties in communication and even in the choice of working language when addressing a multilingual audience. Michel Jéquier from Lausanne criticised the decision to send him an English-language version of the letter: 'J'ajoute que je ne comprends pas pourquoi ce texte d'universitaire français m'a été adressé en anglais – même si ce texte est parfaitement correct'.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, later correspondence demonstrated how errors in

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<sup>44</sup> 20000529/2 Letter, Koller to Rebérioux (16 July 1965).

<sup>45</sup> 20000529/2 Letter, van Steenis to Rebérioux (14 July 1965).

<sup>46</sup> 20000529/2 Letter, Kaada to Rebérioux (7 July 1965).

<sup>47</sup> 20000529/2 Anonymous letter (undated).

<sup>48</sup> 20000529/4 Annotated petition (1973).

<sup>49</sup> 20000529/2 Letter, Jéquier to Rebérioux (6 July 1965).

translated appeals and petitions damaged the Collective's cause instead of increasing support. Rebérioux, like many members, could read but not write in English. Subsequently letters were often poorly translated and sent to Anglophone colleagues without having been appropriately proof-read. One letter included over twenty spelling, grammar and typographical mistakes, including the misspelling of 'colleague' (colleague), 'actacks' (attacks) and confusion between 'there' and 'their'.<sup>50</sup>

### 5.2.2 *Organisation*

The formal creation of the Collective can be dated at 2 October 1965, when members of various trade unions met at Rebérioux's impetus. The Collective published its first *Bulletin* the same month. The Collective was initially an alliance between four major education trade unions. The three organisations who had signed the 1 June letter (SNCS, SNÉSup and UNÉF) were joined by the Syndicat national des bibliothèques du CNRS (SNB, affiliated to the CGT). Each of these unions had a representative who sat on the board. Rebérioux represented SNÉSup and Nicole Simon represented the SNB. As the decade wore on, increasing numbers of trade unions and political parties sought to associate themselves with the network, to take action but also to demonstrate their left-wing credentials. In addition to sending representatives to international events such as the Russell Tribunal, members of the Collective, including Henri van Regemorter regularly travelled to Vietnam to report back first-hand observations of the conflict.<sup>51</sup> Rebérioux's handwritten minutes from the first meeting in October 1965 offer a detailed picture, from the perspective of its founding member, of how the Collective came into being. The notes are relatively easy to read, which given Rebérioux's habitual handwriting style, suggests that they were re-drafted after the meeting. Rebérioux sought to encourage the Collective's role as a conduit between left-wing protest groups, as a 'sponsor' ('parrainage') for peace committees and anti-nuclear weapons groups.<sup>52</sup> As Rebérioux noted at the first meeting:

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<sup>50</sup> 20000529/5 Letter to Anglophone academics (16 March 1971).

<sup>51</sup> 20000529/2 Collective minutes (18 April 1967). There is no evidence to suggest Rebérioux herself travelled to Vietnam during this period.

<sup>52</sup> 20000529/2 Rebérioux handwritten note, 'CA du SNÉSup' (2 October 1965), p.8.

À mon sens en prenant cette initiative et encore plus en la réalisant nous faisons progresser le rayonnement international du syndicat, [...] nous manifestons notre solidarité à nos collègues américaines, [...] nous contribuons même au rétablissement de la paix chez un peuple qui depuis vingt ans et d'abord par notre faute, ne connaît que la guerre. Je pense que cela en vaut la peine.<sup>53</sup>

Here, Rebérioux revealed the political aims of the Collective. The network sought to establish peace in the region, display unity with both Vietnamese colleagues and fellow activists across the globe and promote the role of trade unions as an international solidarity network. Nevertheless there were difficulties, primarily in dealing with so many different trade unions. Problems concerning hierarchies of power and who held the final vote on decisions were left unresolved.<sup>54</sup> Personal difficulties equally pervaded the network, not least as Rebérioux's strong personality could make relations difficult. Nicole Simon recorded in minutes from an April 1967 meeting that Rebérioux had abstained from voting 'en raison de son opposition au principe du vote'.<sup>55</sup>

The Collective was self-financing and raised money through subscriptions, selling cards and other small initiatives. Archives testify that the board of the Collective met every Tuesday to discuss business throughout most of 1965-70. The Collective had eight commissions through which it organised its diverse range of activities. Much of its work focussed on documenting evidence: publishing the *Bulletin*, drafting publications for both France and abroad, and publicising the Collective's work. The emphasis on documentation, as seen with Rebérioux's work in both the Comité Audin and later in the Ligue des droits de l'homme (see chapters three and seven), aligned with François Maspero's belief in information as a form of militancy.<sup>56</sup> In addition to the *Bulletin*-Documentation groups, there were three commissions charged with geopolitical relations: with the US, internationally (especially with South East Asia) and a third with regional relations within France. These subsections sought to share information and embed their militancy in a broader web of activism.<sup>57</sup> Lastly the commissions for finance, culture and the *Bibliothèque scientifique* managed the Collective's manifold practical initiatives, the most important of which was the Books for Vietnam appeal.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p.12.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p.13.

<sup>55</sup> 20000529/2 Collective minutes (18 April 1967), p.3.

<sup>56</sup> Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*, p.85.

<sup>57</sup> 20000529/2 Document sur le Collectif intersyndical (December 1966), p.8.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p.2.

Archives indicate that the Collective remained active from 1965 until the mid-1970s, save for a brief hiatus in 1968 caused by the personal and professional disruption of the May protests. When the Collective met again in January 1969 it faced difficult choices. The Collective was divided between two objectives: material action, such as shipping books to Vietnam (discussed below) and the politics of solidarity, which were complicated by the shifting political landscape of post-1968 and Rebérioux's increasingly fraught relationship with the PCF. Minutes of meetings showed that the network was troubled by how to respond to external crises such as the situation in Czechoslovakia. Nicole Simon, now minute-taker, noted in January 1969 that '[l']action unitaire [est] plus difficile'.<sup>59</sup> Many suggestions were made to find common ground, from working more closely with Vietnamese colleagues, to opening up the *Bulletin* to anti-imperialists outside of the French syndicalist movement and expanding the Collective's action into new territories including Greece, Spain or Latin America. Rebérioux, somewhat inevitably, had strong views about the future of the Collective. Whilst she believed that the material campaign would not be affected by the shifting political situation, she felt the *Bulletin* could become an 'open forum'.<sup>60</sup> In addition, Rebérioux asserted that links with other former French colonies could be consolidated. Indeed, during the 1970s, beyond the chronological remit of this chapter, the Collective expanded its geographical focus to include not just Vietnam but Laos and Cambodia. The Collective managed a compromise regarding the tension between theory and praxis of anti-imperialism and agreed with Marianne Schaub's suggestion that in the next *Bulletin* 'chaque syndicat expliquerait ses motivations différentes, mais [on veut l'] unification de l'action'.<sup>61</sup> The next section explores how Rebérioux was able to overcome differences in motivations and the intricacies of militant politics in order to achieve such 'unification of action' in a range of practical initiatives. Many of these went beyond the standard militant model of protests and petitions to supply material support to academics in Vietnam.

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<sup>59</sup> 20000529/3 Collective minutes (20 January 1969), p.1.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p.2.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p.3.

### 5.3 Practical initiatives

Of all Rebérioux's collective organisations assessed in this thesis, the Collective is especially noteworthy because of its rich archival record. In particular, the group's archives carefully document the origins, development and implementation of a range of practical initiatives, unlike evidence for Comité Audin or Ligue des droits de l'homme projects which remain more piecemeal. Traditional forms of protest, such as petitions and street demonstrations, were a point of departure for more innovative ventures like transporting materials to Vietnam, theatre performances and art exhibitions. These endeavours aligned with Rebérioux's aims for the Collective which she clarified in 1966. Firstly, Rebérioux wanted the network to disseminate information about the nature of the conflict in Vietnam and share the practices of anti-war groups across the globe. Secondly, Rebérioux asserted that the Collective 'entend aider ainsi à la prise de conscience des réalités du conflit vietnamien et à la solidarité avec les universitaires américains et le peuple vietnamien en conformité avec l'orientation générale des syndicats dont il émane'.<sup>62</sup> Her objectives demonstrated the Collective's emphasis on peace and combatting American imperialistic ambitions rather than overt support for the Front national de libération du Sud-Vietnam (FNL), as the CVN sought. Through initiatives like *Six heures pour le Vietnam*, Books for Vietnam and the staging of the activist play *V comme Vietnam*, Collective members kept the pressure on the French government to seek diplomatic ways to end the conflict.

However activism in the Collective did not replace the trade unions' political agency. For example, Pierre Souffrin on behalf of the SNCS and Nicole Simon for SNB wrote to the American Ambassador in France to condemn, in the name of French scientists, the American research and use of chemical weapons, such as gas, napalm, defoliants and the experimental use of fragmentation bombs. Their letter conformed to Schalk's 'moral stage' of intellectual engagement.<sup>63</sup> The second half of this chapter will scrutinise three activist and cultural initiatives which Rebérioux and the Collective directed during

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<sup>62</sup> 20000529/2 Letter, Rebérioux to the *Bulletin* (29 September 1966).

<sup>63</sup> 20000529/2 Letter, Souffrin and Simon to US Ambassador to France (4 November 1966); Schalk, *War and the Ivory Tower*, p.49.

1965-70, all of which corresponded with Schalk's pedagogical and moral stages of engagement and at times, bordered on the counter-legal. How did Rebérioux innovate traditional militant methods to create a greater public impact? To what extent did these activities challenge the PCF line?

### 5.3.1 *Protests and petitions*

Traditional forms of intellectual protest, such as petitions and street demonstrations, formed a significant part of the Collective's early domestic activism. Petitions consolidated transnational links with international academics, as demonstrated by Rebérioux's 1 June 1965 letter. Parisian street protests during 1965-8 were also of historiographical importance. Danielle Tartakowsky has argued that such demonstrations reactivated, relayed and transposed history, especially as they occupied the same physical spaces as other historic demonstrations, from the Commune to the Front Populaire.<sup>64</sup> Rebérioux's activism thus conformed to a longer history of protest within the Republican tradition. The Collective equally repeated and developed campaign methods used by its American counterpart the Vietnam Day Committee (VDC), a coalition of left-wing political, student and labour groups. The first Vietnam Day, held on 21-22 May 1965 included a 35-hour teach-in at Berkeley, California which attracted around 35,000 protesters. Unlike the Collective, however, subsequent VDC action verged on the counter-legal side of protest. Events planned for October 1965 were prefaced by the warning that 'members of the VDC are planning these actions and in anticipation of large-scale arrests, are planning for political action within the jail and in court'.<sup>65</sup> By comparison the Collective was not explicitly a counter-legal organisation although individual members may have privately engaged in illegal activity in opposition to the conflict.<sup>66</sup> Despite this difference in approach, the Collective still translated the original English-language poster into French for distribution amongst its members.<sup>67</sup> Yet whilst the Collective had a relatively long life-span for a militant single-issue organisation, lasting just over a decade, the VDC imploded within twelve months of the May teach-in.

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<sup>64</sup> Tartakowsky, *Manifestes à Paris : 1880-2010*, p.149.

<sup>65</sup> 20000529/2 Vietnam Day Committee poster (October 1965).

<sup>66</sup> There is little evidence to suggest Rebérioux engaged in counter-legal activism.

<sup>67</sup> 20000529/2 Nouvelles du Vietnam Day Committee (1965).

The Committee became a victim of prioritising style over substance, preferring stunts to gain media coverage rather than building a stable, loyal movement as the Collective did in France and through its transnational networks.<sup>68</sup>

The majority of the Collective's domestic activities conformed to the pedagogic stage in Schalk's hierarchy of engagement. On 26 May 1966 the network, in collaboration with Jean Schalit (Union des étudiants communistes, UÉC) organised its first *Six heures pour le Vietnam*.<sup>69</sup> The programme of speakers included Mai Van Bo representing the République démocratique du Vietnam (RDV). Initially the PCF opposed *Six heures* but later begrudgingly supported the idea.<sup>70</sup> The meeting was the first large-scale gathering of anti-war activists in the Latin Quarter, later a key physical space for protest during May '68.<sup>71</sup> Notably, the *Six heures* format was later appropriated by the 'big five' of the CVN (Schwartz, Alfred Kastler, Henri Bartoli, Sartre and Vidal-Naquet) in the form of their *Six heures du monde pour le Vietnam* which took place at the Palais des sports on 28 November 1966. Laurent Schwartz wrote to the Collective to request support for the protest, reinforcing the shared links between different groups within the broader anti-war movement. Such correspondence equally reiterated the interconnected nature of militancy in France during this period. However the minutes of the Collective's meeting on 8 November 1966, penned by Nicole Simon, revealed concerns about the conflicting political agendas of the group:

Discussion passionnée. Au-dessous de tout cela il y a des conflits politiques entre les Cinq (socialisants) et le Parti communiste. Les cinq n'ayant pas obtenu l'appui de Garaudy, Madeleine Rebérioux pour le Collectif refuse le soutien de celui-ci. Elle évoque aussi les réticences des syndicats à une action politique. Seule la diffusion des tracts pour la manifestation est envisagée.<sup>72</sup>

The Collective's discussion indicated the difficulties in constructing alliances within the broader anti-war movement during the mid-1960s. Clearly Rebérioux and Roger

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<sup>68</sup> Gerard De Groot, 'The limits of moral protest and participatory democracy: the Vietnam Day Committee', *Pacific Historical Review*, 64 1 (1995), p.107.

<sup>69</sup> Schwartz, 'L'engagement de Pierre Vidal-Naquet dans la guerre d'Algérie', p.39.

<sup>70</sup> Pas, '« Six Heures pour le Vietnam »', p.167. Schwartz recounted the PCF's 'fierce' opposition to the initiative in Schwartz, *Un mathématicien aux prises avec le siècle*, p.434.

<sup>71</sup> AN (Pierrefitte) Fonds privés ; Collectif intersyndical universitaire d'action Vietnam Laos Cambodge. Répertoire : présentation générale (2000), p.9.

<sup>72</sup> 20000529/2 Collectif intersyndical Vietnam compte-rendu (8 November 1966), p.2.



Garaudy (later both expelled from the party) were hesitant to openly support counter-PCF initiatives at this point.<sup>73</sup>

The organisation and distribution of petitions became a regular feature of Collective activism throughout 1965-75. There was a direct correlation between escalations in military action and peaks in the Collective's public activism. Prior to 1968, the most popular Collective protest, on 21 October 1967, had attracted 35,000 people.<sup>74</sup> The international wave of demonstrations following the launch of the Tet offensive on 30 January 1968 marked a zenith in popular action and France witnessed huge protests during February and March 1968. This spike in activism was not restricted to France. In Britain between 10,000 and 25,000 marched on London in protest on 17 March 1968.<sup>75</sup> Despite their loose affiliation to the PCF through SNÉSup, the Collective was happy to support events arranged by other organisations, unlike the PCF which placed tight controls on which organisations and initiatives they supported. Hence in February 1968 the Collective sent out a memorandum to all members asking for their support for a protest organised outside the American Embassy and provincial consulates on 13 February.<sup>76</sup> In this way the network played on the size and power of the French university system. If academics and students joined together they could, in words of the Collective's publicity, 'faire le maximum pour assurer le succès de la manifestation'.<sup>77</sup> This protest was significant as it was a precursor to the infamous *trois jours pour le Vietnam* (19-21 February 1968), led by the CVN and CVL.

The *Trois jours pour le Vietnam* were notable for the symbolic revolutionary gestures made by student protesters, many of which were widely reported in the media. During the demonstrations, an RDV flag was flown over the Sorbonne, an effigy of Lyndon Johnson was burned in the Place de la Sorbonne and Boulevard St Michel was

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<sup>73</sup> Garaudy was expelled from the PCF a year after Rebérioux in 1970. He later turned to negationism, explored in chapter seven. Their two trajectories illustrate the diverse directions individuals could take following exclusion from the PCF.

<sup>74</sup> Laurent Jalabert, 'Aux origines de la génération 1968 : les étudiants français et la guerre du Vietnam', *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, 55 (1997), p.73.

<sup>75</sup> Sylvia Ellis, 'A demonstration of British good sense?': British student protest during the Vietnam war', in *Student Protest: the Sixties and After*, ed. Gerard De Groot (London: Longman, 1998), p.64.

<sup>76</sup> 20000529/2 Letter to Collective members (February 1968).

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

rechristened *Boulevard du Vietnam héroïque*.<sup>78</sup> A battered copy of the CVN's poster for the protest on 21 February is preserved in the Collective's archives, although whether it came from Simon, Regemorter or Rebérioux is difficult to tell.<sup>79</sup> It is likely that the Collective distanced itself from the more radical elements of the protest which openly supported the FNL. Rebérioux herself later reflected upon the difficulty of aiding Vietnamese academics within the context of the Cold war: 'Libre et fier, mais communiste : allait-on « les » aider, les Vietnamiens bien sûr, mais derrière eux, l'URSS, la Chine ?'<sup>80</sup> *Trois jours pour le Vietnam* was followed by an *Appel aux intellectuels* which explicitly supported the FNL: 'La paix ne peut s'établir sans la reconnaissance du dirigeant de la résistance, le Front national de libération, et sans le retrait des troupes américains'.<sup>81</sup> Headed by figures such as Louis Aragon, de Beauvoir, Vladimir Jankélévitch, Picasso and Sartre, there was no heavy Collective presence amongst the petition's signatories.<sup>82</sup> The connection between protests and petitions reflected a wider tendency in French militancy for intellectual protest, in the form of elite petitions, to be coupled with physical protest, in the form of public demonstrations which were open to all.

Ultimately Rebérioux and the Collective could not avoid the cross-fire between the PCF and explicitly anti-PCF political pressure groups which shared similar goals to the Collective. 'Demain...la gauche unie', a leaflet produced by the PCF section in Butte-aux-Cailles illustrated the political difficulties of opposing the Vietnam conflict. This tract denounced the 'adventurist politics' of Maoist groups like the CVB: 'Nous regrettons que certains jeunes gens honnêtes et enthousiastes se laissent encore trompés par ces groupes, animés par des exclus du PCF, qui se servent de la guerre au Vietnam comme d'un paravent, pour développer leurs thèses prochinoises, dirigées avant tout contre le PCF et la CGT'.<sup>83</sup> Plans for International Workers' Day (1 May) in 1968 emphasized the connection between oppressed workers in France and the oppressed people of Vietnam. As one CVB tract proclaimed: 'Aujourd'hui, l'ennemi commun de tous les peuples du monde, c'est l'impérialisme américain, vaste entreprise de pillage et l'exploitation

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<sup>78</sup> Jalabert, 'Aux origines de la génération 1968', p.74.

<sup>79</sup> 20000529/2 Poster, Manifestation pour la victoire du FNL (21 February 1968).

<sup>80</sup> Rebérioux, 'Pierre Vidal-Naquet et nos guerres', p.21.

<sup>81</sup> 20000529/2 Appel aux intellectuels (23 March 1968).

<sup>82</sup> 20000529/2 Je m'associe à l'appel des intellectuels pour le Vietnam (March 1968).

<sup>83</sup> 20000529/2 Demain...la gauche unie, Vietnam : mise au point (spring 1968), p.2.

internationale'.<sup>84</sup> For the CVB, the conflict was not just region-specific. Fighting for Vietnam's independence formed part of 'la lutte de tous les exploités'.<sup>85</sup> This kind of political discourse typified the idea of 'même combat' or 'united frontism': French workers and the North Vietnamese were all victims of imperialist capitalism.<sup>86</sup> It is significant that the Collective's archives contained documents from both sides of the PCF division, reiterating the notion that the Collective was a coalition network of left-wing actors rather than a prescriptive one-line party as typified by the PCF. Such a position equally aligned with Rebérioux's belief in the left as a 'shelter' for all, irrespective of political faction. Nevertheless, the Collective did not subscribe wholesale to the notion of 'même combat', choosing to support academics in South East Asia over direct aid to the rural Vietnamese population. These forms of direct aid became the most significant form of anti-imperialist militancy for Rebérioux and the Collective during the Vietnam war, as we shall explore in the next section.

### 5.3.2 *Books for Vietnam*

The *Appel des livres pour le Vietnam*, which organised the donation, collection and exportation of resources for academics in Vietnam, formed the Collective's most significant material undertaking. The Collective hoped to boost research in Vietnam in fields as diverse as tropical agronomics, tropical medicine and metallurgy by paying for a scientific library in Hanoi.<sup>87</sup> The initiative is of interest historically for understanding the issues Rebérioux and her academic colleagues faced in combining academic practice with political engagement: problems with translation, political factionalism and transnational academic politics. Recent historiography surrounding peace movements has tended to focus on the performative aspects of activism, for example how symbols bound activists together to create a shared identity.<sup>88</sup> The *Appel des livres* provided both

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<sup>84</sup> 20000529/2 1 Mai journée de luttes ouvrière, solidarité des travailleurs français et vietnamiens, Comités Vietnam de base du 13<sup>ème</sup> (1 May 1968), p.1.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p.2.

<sup>86</sup> Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*, p.80.

<sup>87</sup> 20000529/2 *Des livres pour le Vietnam* (December 1966).

<sup>88</sup> Benjamin Ziemann, 'Situating peace movements in the political culture of the cold war', in *Peace Movements in Western Europe, Japan and the USA During the Cold War*, ed. Benjamin Ziemann (Essen: Klartext, 2008), p.25.

a practical and ideological motif which all the trade unions affiliated to the Collective could support.

The text of the book appeal highlighted the strains war placed on RDV universities:

Dans des conditions très difficiles, dans un grand dénuement, professeurs et chercheurs de la République démocratique du Viêt-Nam poursuivent leurs travaux et forment les cadres techniques et scientifiques dont le pays a besoin. Aussi, en même temps que nous réclamons l'arrêt de l'intervention américaine contre tout un peuple qui n'aspire qu'à la paix, en même temps que nous condamnons l'entreprise de destruction menée par les USA en violation du droit des gens, nous appelons nos collègues, professeurs, chercheurs, étudiants, à collecter de l'argent pour offrir à l'Université de Hanoi une bibliothèque scientifique.<sup>89</sup>

The appeal was grounded in the reality of academics' situation in Vietnam. Over twenty universities were destroyed by American bombardments between 1965 and 1967.<sup>90</sup> The text of this appeal was quite bland in comparison to other Collective documentation. Perhaps the strong responses from the initial letter in June 1965 had forced Rebérioux and her colleagues to take a more moderate approach in order to appeal more broadly across the political left. Typographical mistakes persisted, however, and even Rebérioux's own name was misspelt on the appeal.<sup>91</sup> Rebérioux was joined by other figures from her anticolonial milieu: Chesneaux, Dresch, Panijel, Schatzman, Schwartz and Vidal-Naquet all subscribed to the initiative.<sup>92</sup> Leaflets called on French academics to 'soyez généreux et surtout n'hésitez pas à demander à vos collègues ou amis de collecter à leur tour'.<sup>93</sup> In this way, encouraging staff to publicise the appeal with their colleagues by word of mouth and personal recommendation turned the initiative into organic philanthropy. Seeking direct donations of books was also quicker and cheaper than raising money to buy them new. The Collective even supplied a letter template for members to send to their colleagues to ask for book donations.<sup>94</sup> The appeal was broken into disciplines but overseen by Nicole Simon, a librarian by profession, demonstrating how practical initiatives drew on Collective members' technical expertise.

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<sup>89</sup> 20000529/2 *Des livres pour le Vietnam* (December 1966).

<sup>90</sup> 20000529/2 *Une aide pratique dont le Vietnam a besoin* (1967).

<sup>91</sup> 20000529/2 *Appel : des livres pour le Vietnam* (1967).

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> 20000529/2 *Une aide pratique dont le Vietnam a besoin* (1967).

<sup>94</sup> 20000529/2 *Ce que vous pouvez faire pour la Bibliothèque scientifique de Hanoi* (November 1967).

The book appeal was greatly appreciated by academics in South East Asia. *Le Comité d'État pour la science et la technique de la RDV* wrote to thank the Collective for their support in April 1967, although their correspondence was delayed due to the difficulties in sending and receiving post in Vietnam. The committee wrote to inform to the Collective that 'nous considérons cette initiative comme une action importante de solidarité pour soutenir la lutte de notre peuple contre les agresseurs impérialistes américains, pour le Salut national'.<sup>95</sup> The first shipments of books and scientific equipment left France in August and September 1967 (1,500 books) and by November the appeal had raised 44,000 francs.<sup>96</sup> Yet the donation of so many books and articles had an unanticipated effect on Vietnamese academia. A report from the *Recteur* of Hanoi University stated that many books arrived with pre-existing dedications, including 'hommage de l'auteur au peuple vietnamien en lutte' and 'to the Vietnamese students and colleagues with deep admiration and friendship'.<sup>97</sup> Thus each time academics or students used the donated works they would be reminded of transnational solidarity from members of the Collective. In this way, militancy became embedded in academic practice. As the *Recteur* reflected, 'le souvenir en demeurera longtemps, aussi bien dans les pages de tous ces livres que dans la mémoire de ceux qui les lisent'.<sup>98</sup>

During the 1970s the *Livres pour le Vietnam* appeal diversified from the sciences into the arts and humanities. The English and American literature reading list as requested by Hanoi University included classical literature by Dickens, Brontë and Stevenson as well as science fiction by HG Wells.<sup>99</sup> Furthermore, appeal subscribers were asked to suggest monographs, journal titles or articles which they thought would be useful for their academic counterparts. In January 1967 the Collective had already asked members to inform them of the '100 livres indispensable pour faire de la recherche dans ma spécialité'.<sup>100</sup> Co-ordinator for the donation of history books, Rebérioux's influence and research interests can be seen in the book inventories, as well as revealing what was valued and read at the time. History lists, ordered by publisher, feature a diverse range

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<sup>95</sup> 20000529/2 Letter, Tran Dai Nghia to the Collective (8 April 1967), p.1

<sup>96</sup> 20000529/2 *Collectif intersyndical universitaire* (November 1967), p.8.

<sup>97</sup> 20000529/3 Nguy Nhu Kontum, 'Merci à nos amis d'Europe' (7 April 1969).

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Spelling and translation mistakes were still made in producing the lists. Hemingway's classic became *For whom the bell rolls*.

<sup>100</sup> 20000529/2 Une aide pratique au Vietnam à laquelle nous pouvons contribuer facilement (1 February 1967).

of British authors including Henry Brailsford, GDH Cole and EP Thompson to name just three. The archives also revealed the inclusion of the books *L'affaire Audin* and *La raison d'État*, both written by Rebérioux's close friend and colleague Pierre Vidal-Naquet. These two works criticised the French state for their actions and torture in Algeria and thus a broader narrative was embedded in the *Appel des livres* concerning how to resist capitalist imperialism. Interestingly, Rebérioux's work as an historian did not feature. There were two reasons for her absence from publication lists. Firstly, her best known monograph, *La République radicale ?* was not published until 1975.<sup>101</sup> Secondly, throughout her academic career Rebérioux favoured journal articles over writing monographs and her position on the editorial board of *Le Mouvement social* occupied much of her academic energies at this time. Indeed, the fact Rebérioux was able to divide her day between teaching, research, academic service and still have time to lead a transnational anti-imperialist network indicates much about the multiplicity of her engagement.

*Des livres pour le Vietnam* fed into similar initiatives organised by other political groups, such as the *Mouvement du Milliard pour le Vietnam*, which raised funds to support Vietnamese civilians who had been victims of American aerial bombardments.<sup>102</sup> The *Milliard* campaign demonstrated the cross-over, both between contemporary anti-Vietnam war campaigners but also with Rebérioux's Algerian generation, including Henri Marrou, Jean Dresch, René Capitant and Jean-Marie Domenach. Rebérioux's doctoral supervisor Ernest Labrousse was also a signatory to the *Milliard*, along with Daniel Mayer, then president of the Ligue des droits de l'homme, demonstrating the shared personal links across Rebérioux's militant and academic networks. The repetition of the same familiar names also reinforced the closed nature of academic and militant informal networks in the 1960s. Rather than detract from the Collective's own campaigns, the multitude of other petitions constituted a broader left-wing coalition of protest against Vietnam which transcended political party lines. Rebérioux supported the notion of communal activism rather than segregated groups competing for signatures and money. Indeed, the Collective actively publicised the *Milliard* amongst its own members in 1967. In November 1969 the *Milliard* was integrated into the more

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<sup>101</sup> Rebérioux, *La République radicale ? 1898-1914*.

<sup>102</sup> 20000529/2 Appel : *Mouvement du Milliard pour le Vietnam* (1966).

popular *Appel des livres* campaign.<sup>103</sup> In July 1967 the two groups jointly financed the staging of *V comme Vietnam* and its associated publicity, which is investigated below.<sup>104</sup>

In addition to the *Milliard*, the Collective equally supported other groups' practical initiatives, as part of their wider commitment to solidarity. Through the Association médicale franco-vietnamienne the Collective was able to send medical supplies and other equipment to Vietnam before organising its own direct shipments to South East Asia.<sup>105</sup> Broadly speaking, archives suggest the transfer of material goods to Vietnam was a success, for the Collective and for transnational activism more generally. Between March 1967 and March 1968 200,000 francs were raised across France, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Sweden.<sup>106</sup> Whilst the *Commission bibliothèque* of the Collective led practical administration for the appeal, the initiative was also supported by the larger American anti-war movement, including linguist and philosopher Noam Chomsky, based at MIT. Chomsky's involvement, solicited by van Regemorter, indicated how Rebérioux was not the only Collective leader to exploit personal academic networks in order to mobilise support for its initiatives. Chomsky's correspondence demonstrated the shared goals of the project across the Atlantic: 'I should say that we have a double aim in this project: first, to provide some useful materials for our Vietnamese friends; but second, to involve American students in constructive efforts to aid the Vietnamese, in direct opposition to the demands of the government'.<sup>107</sup> Chomsky's post-script reinforced the problem of language, however: 'If you would prefer to write in French, that is fine. I have no trouble reading French, though I cannot unfortunately express myself at all in French'.<sup>108</sup> The *Appel des livres* was successful because the campaign mobilised academic networks to support colleagues in South-East Asia, a cause with which university researchers and staff could easily empathise. Yet the campaign was also significant for Rebérioux's own militancy, as it was the first time an organisation she had founded – rather than later joined – devised, planned and delivered such a huge task on a transnational scale. Due to the organisation's emphasis on collective engagement the archives occasionally make it challenging to isolate Rebérioux's voice as an individual.

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<sup>103</sup> The majority of money donated to the *Milliard* came from SNÉSup. 20000529/2 Collective minutes (18 April 1967); 20000529/3 Collective letter to members (Autumn 1969).

<sup>104</sup> 20000529/2 *Collectif intersyndical universitaire* (November 1967), p.1.

<sup>105</sup> 20000529/2 Letter, André Roussel to Rebérioux (26 December 1967).

<sup>106</sup> 20000529/2 Aidez-nous à créer une bibliothèque pour l'université de Hanoi (March 1968), p.1.

<sup>107</sup> 20000529/5 Letter, Chomsky to van Regemorter (undated).

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

Nevertheless, Rebérioux's presence, physically inscribed in the archive through her handwriting in interventions and records of meetings indicated her place at the heart of the organisation.

### 5.3.3 *V comme Vietnam*

Throughout her life Rebérioux placed great value on the role of art and culture, not just for pleasure but as a form of militancy in its own right. Patrick Fridenson recounted how Rebérioux co-founded the *ciné-club* at the Lycée Marcelin Berthelot during the 1950s, where she organised projections of anything from English comedies to American westerns.<sup>109</sup> Rebérioux also used film, notably *Octobre à Paris*, in her anticolonial engagement during the Algerian war. Later on in her career she became Vice-President of the Établissement public du Musée d'Orsay where she conflicted with curators over the role of art in educating the public. That artistic forms of protest sat at the heart of the Collective's domestic engagement were no surprise given its founder's belief in the importance of art and culture to politics. The Collective used various forms of art as a pedagogical tool to educate French public opinion about the realities of what was happening in Vietnam, constituting a pedagogical stage of engagement. In addition, artistic enterprises helped to raise valuable funds for the Collective, as shall be analysed in this section.

In the spring of 1967 Rebérioux and the Collective decided to commission a piece of political theatre in order to strengthen local-level activism across France. As a Collective letter noted, 'le but recherché n'est pas seulement d'informer le public mais de lui faire prendre conscience de la gravité de cette guerre ; des conséquences que celle-ci risque d'entraîner et de l'amener à réfléchir sur sa propre position vis-à-vis elle'.<sup>110</sup> Armand Gatti was chosen as the playwright for the piece, which he entitled *V comme Vietnam*. An experimental 'nouveau' dramatist, his politically-aware plays were informed by a decade of direct experience of anticolonial conflict as a journalist for *Le Parisien Libéré* during

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<sup>109</sup> Fridenson, 'Rebérioux, Madeleine [née Amoudruz]', p.384.

<sup>110</sup> 20000529/2 Collective letter (January 1967).



the 1950s.<sup>111</sup> During the Second World War Gatti had been deported to a German labour camp for his role in the French Resistance, although he later escaped to England. For Gatti, the occupation of dramatist allowed him to 'actively participate in his times', an outlook which explained why Rebérioux and the Collective commissioned him to write the play.<sup>112</sup> Parallels can be drawn between *V comme Vietnam* and *Octobre à Paris* (see chapter three) as two of Rebérioux's crucial artistic initiatives which sought to alter public opinion of conflict overseas. Rebérioux played a key role in the administration for both productions, being responsible for the distribution of film reels for the Algerian war documentary and housing actors during filming. In the 1960s Rebérioux played a similar technical role for the theatre production, drafting the agreement between the theatre troupe Le Grenier de Toulouse and the Collective as the patron and financial backer.

*V comme Vietnam* depicted a full-scale rehearsal of a fictional invasion of Vietnam, set in an imaginary version of the Pentagon. Characters were thinly-veiled caricatures of contemporary political figures: Lyndon Johnson became the cowboy-figure of the 'Mégasherif', General McNamara was 'Quadrature' whilst ambassador to South Vietnam Henry Cabot Lodge was 'Ambassadeur Ventriloque'.<sup>113</sup> Although Gatti had no personal experience of the conflict in Vietnam, he 'voraciously devoured' primary documents from the conflict, including communiqués, despatches, films and photographs of the war, a process which aligned with the positivist value Rebérioux placed on sources and documents as evidence.<sup>114</sup> As a result of such careful research, critics have noted how the play reflected the senseless violence, systematic destruction of the war and successfully questioned America's motives: was the war to end conflict in Vietnam, or to contain communism?<sup>115</sup> *V comme Vietnam* painted a picture of the American technocratic war machine which had lost interest in the humanity of its military operation.

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<sup>111</sup> Les Essif, *American 'Unculture' in French Drama: Homo Americanus and the Post-1960 French Resistance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p.126. Armand Gatti and Joseph Long, *Armand Gatti, Three Plays* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), p.19.

<sup>112</sup> Dorothy Knowles, *Armand Gatti in the Theatre: Wild Duck Against the Wind* (London: Athlone, 1989), p.139.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p.140.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p.139.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p.142.

An analysis of the archival documentation relating to the play highlights an interesting contradiction. Whilst the Collective at the time felt itself to be at the centre of the play, by organising contracts and performances, subsequent theatre and cultural specialists' scholarly analysis of *V comme Vietnam* has tended to focus on Gatti's vision as the playwright. This emphasis has obfuscated the role of Rebérioux and the Collective in commissioning the piece.<sup>116</sup> Such a paradox underscores the tension between the value of cultural works as art in their own right and the militant function for which they were commissioned. A similar claim could be made about *Octobre à Paris*. Moreover, hardly any of the existing critical literature on Gatti or the play mentioned the correlation between the play and the Collective, instead focussing on how the piece fused experimental theatre with anti-war protest.<sup>117</sup> Only Gatti's retrospective (2000) clarified that *V comme Vietnam* was 'in co-production with an organisation militating for peace in Vietnam, an issue which was gaining support from the French left in the late sixties'.<sup>118</sup> When viewed as the joint product between both Gatti and the Collective, *V comme Vietnam* reveals how the French public dealt with the problem of Vietnam in the 1960s. Furthermore, a close examination of Rebérioux's papers concerning the play offers an indication of how unimportant public gratification was for her. There is little mention of Rebérioux's function as a militant within the play's papers, despite documentation written by her hand. The absence of public acknowledgement reinforced how Rebérioux was not interested in personal recognition for her contribution. As well as enjoying leadership roles, she was also content to work alongside others in order to achieve her militant ends.

The Collective's archives reveal the depth and extent of the network's involvement in the production. The first draft of the protocol, edited by Rebérioux's hand, set out the terms between the theatre company Le Grenier de Toulouse (a preferred partner of Gatti's) and the Collective.<sup>119</sup> Rebérioux was responsible for amending this draft document and ensuring that the contract fulfilled the Collective's political aims. Ever meticulous, her suggestions ran to three pages of amendments and additions.<sup>120</sup> Rebérioux stipulated

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<sup>116</sup> See for example Nora Alter, *Vietnam Protest Theatre: the Television War on Stage* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996).

<sup>117</sup> Bertrand, 'Mai 68 et l'anticolonialisme', p.94.

<sup>118</sup> Gatti and Long, *Armand Gatti*, p.13.

<sup>119</sup> 20000529/2 Protocole d'accord entre le Collectif intersyndical universitaire et le Grenier de Toulouse (March 1967).

<sup>120</sup> 20000529/2 Rebérioux 'Modifications nécessaires au Protocole d'accord' (March 1967).

that the names of the leaders of the three main trade unions were added and demanded that the Collective be accorded the intellectual rights to the play, as agreed with Gatti. Most importantly, the Collective upheld a clause ensuring that all publicity associated with the play – from programmes and posters to letters and other promotional materials – would make it clear that the production was commissioned by the Collective.<sup>121</sup> This amendment is particularly interesting given the subsequent scholarly amnesia concerning the Collective's role in commissioning the play. The Collective's sustained intellectual and financial support strengthened the play's status as a piece of protest theatre, as well as attracting new audiences to performances. *V comme Vietnam* replaced Le Grenier's planned production of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*.<sup>122</sup> The Collective suggested that Le Grenier de Toulouse would cover the costs of the production in line with their budget for *Twelfth Night*: sets, costumes and accessories along with the actors' wages. In return, the Collective agreed to pay for all other expenses. Archives contain receipts from Éditions du Seuil suggesting that not only did the Collective put up funds for promotional leaflets and programmes, but also arranged the practicalities of printing.<sup>123</sup> Archives reveal that the Collective agreed to pay Le Grenier de Toulouse 40,000 francs as an advance payment. Any profits from the production would be split pro-rata between the two groups.<sup>124</sup> The level of detail and specificity in Rebérioux's amendments to the contract reinforced her attention to detail and ability to turn her hand at legal documents outside her profession as an historian.

After the play's staging at one of André Malraux's first *Maisons de la culture* (founded in 1964) at the *Théâtre de l'Est Parisien* in June 1967, the Collective took the lead in deciding where else in France the play would be performed. A draft programme included 34 performances across France, from Montpellier to Grenoble, Dijon to Nantes as well as nine performances in the regions surrounding Paris.<sup>125</sup> The run was planned for May-June 1967. During this tour, the play was seen by more than 30,000 individuals and thus disseminated the Collective's message to a large audience.<sup>126</sup> After this success

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<sup>121</sup> The Collective underlined this clause on its copy of the contract. 20000529/2 Protocole d'accord entre le Collectif intersyndical universitaire et le Grenier de Toulouse (March 1967).

<sup>122</sup> Quoted in Essif, *American 'Unculture' in French Drama*, p.130.

<sup>123</sup> 20000529/2 Éditions du Seuil invoices (14 June 1967, 4 July 1967).

<sup>124</sup> 20000529/2 Protocole d'accord entre le Collectif intersyndical universitaire et le Grenier de Toulouse (March 1967).

<sup>125</sup> 20000529/2 *V comme Vietnam* (1967).

<sup>126</sup> 20000529/2 Letter, Marianne Schaub to Monsieur le coordinateur du FLN, sous couvert de Monsieur Benguettat, Mouvement de la paix algérien (10 July 1967).

a European tour was planned in Italy, Belgium, Switzerland and possibly Algeria, the latter of which was to be organised through contacts (not Rebérioux's!) within the FLN.<sup>127</sup> International performances demonstrated the close cross-pollination between campaigns regarding war in Algeria and anti-Vietnam war protests. As Rebérioux's case illustrated, often the same groups of militants engaged in the similar intellectual battles albeit concerning different conflicts.

Rebérioux's papers show how the Collective, which was self-financing, found the capital to cover the considerable expenditure of staging such a production. Other artistic forms of protest were used to finance the play, whilst simultaneously reinforcing the Collective's message of peace and solidarity. The exhibition *L'art pour la paix au Vietnam* was organised in June 1967 at the Galerie Greuze to raise funds for the book appeal, in conjunction with the *Milliard*, Mouvement de la Paix, CVN and the Russell Tribunal. This was a further example of projects which brought together separate organisations to form a broader anti-war coalition.<sup>128</sup> The exhibition featured works from 93 artists including Miró, Picasso, Poliakoff and Zadkine. 26 contemporary artists donated prints and lithographs for sale in Paris.<sup>129</sup> Works cost between 100 and 150 francs each and were sold in nine art galleries and bookshops across Paris. Consumers were advised that 'en achetant, vous agissez contre la guerre impérialiste américaine ; vous soutenez la lutte du peuple vietnamien'.<sup>130</sup> To a certain extent this was an ironic enterprise – consumerism to combat imperialism, two concepts which were in opposition. Subsequent art exhibitions and sales were organised in 1968 and 1969, again in conjunction with the CVN.<sup>131</sup> The minutes of a Collective meeting in November 1967 indicated that the Collective benefited financially from the sale of Picasso's art: 'Picasso vendu 17M, d'où pour Collectif 3,2M. Vente totale 10M. Presque tout *Milliard*-Collectif.'<sup>132</sup> Yet the same minutes reveal that the Collective's activities had overstretched their budget and that the network was 2,5M in debt, loaned by the Banque du Nord. Such a deficit suggested how the practicalities of transnational activism could not always match Rebérioux's anticolonial idealism.

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> 20000529/2 *Collectif intersyndical universitaire* (November 1967), p.2.

<sup>129</sup> 20000529/2 *L'art pour la paix au Vietnam* (June 1967).

<sup>130</sup> 20000529/2 *Achetez une œuvre d'art* (9 June 1967).

<sup>131</sup> 20000529/3 *Vietnam art exhibition* (6-12 March 1969).

<sup>132</sup> 20000529/2 *Collective minutes* (21 November 1967).

My archival analysis has shown how the Collective explored new forms of militancy – from art exhibitions to theatre tours – in order to adapt activism to a changing political and intellectual landscape. Sending books directly to Vietnamese academic counterparts was a practical yet political protest, a tangible example of ‘united frontism’.<sup>133</sup> The initiative was also largely successful. By October 1970 the Collective had sent over \$400,000 worth of books, scientific material and medical equipment to Vietnam.<sup>134</sup> Yet the Collective’s activism was not straightforward. Rebérioux had to overcome problems with translation, ideological obstacles relating to the place of communism and internal disputes following her own expulsion from the PCF in March 1969. In the case of *V comme Vietnam*, Rebérioux and the Collective’s role has effectively been overshadowed by subsequent literary critics’ focus on the play as an artistic product. Researching Rebérioux and other activists involved in these kinds of productions is therefore important not just for understanding political militancy in the Fifth Republic, but also for enriching our knowledge of cultural production in the same period.

#### 5.4 Conclusion

Prominent British anti-war activist and philosopher Bertrand Russell defined the Vietnam war as an ‘acid test for this generation of Western intellectuals’.<sup>135</sup> It was also a tipping point for Rebérioux’s militancy. Her opposition to conflicts of decolonisation, from Algeria to Vietnam, pushed the boundaries of the PCF and ultimately contributed to her exclusion from the party. This chapter has analysed how one historian and her protest organisation, the Collectif intersyndical universitaire, mobilised a transnational network of academics to oppose American involvement in Vietnam during the 1960s. The Collective merits wider historical attention as it disproves the myth that May ’68 exploded out of nowhere. The militant practices of Rebérioux, Simon, Regemorter et al demonstrated how the 1968 protests had a longer gestation – the formation of a ‘political subjectivity’ which stretched back to the Algerian war.<sup>136</sup> The Collective, along

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<sup>133</sup> Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*, p.89.

<sup>134</sup> 20000529/3 Letter, Schaub to Collective members (26 October 1970).

<sup>135</sup> Quoted in Schalk, *War and the Ivory Tower*, p.112.

<sup>136</sup> Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*, p.89.

with other opposition groups were one of the only exceptions to the culture of 'political lassitude' amongst the French intellectual left before May '68.<sup>137</sup> The contemporary context of problems within the French Higher Education system further highlighted the significance of the Collective's work. During this time, the majority of academics were increasingly occupied with university reform, leading to a dwindling sense of solidarity, a trend which the Collective opposed.<sup>138</sup> Solidarity was expressed not just with academic counterparts in Vietnam but with the international scholarly community who opposed the war. At a practical level this increased the success of initiatives like the Books for Vietnam appeal.

Throughout her long life, from her subscription to the PCF in 1946 to the founding of *Trop, c'est trop* in 2001, Rebérioux consistently demonstrated her commitment to engagement as a collective endeavour. Her involvement in the anti-Vietnam war movement formed an unbroken link between her anti-torture activism during the Algerian war and the open student-led dissidence of May '68. As Fridenson summarised, during the 1960s Rebérioux repeated and developed 'les méthodes d'information et de protestation inventées contre la guerre d'Algérie'.<sup>139</sup> Collective action thus became the basis of her personal brand of militancy upon which she would draw in later periods, such as the *Appel des Douze* in 2000 (see chapter four). Yet the form of engagement as espoused by the Collective – representative, hierarchical, organised – ran at odds with the general trend of organisational practices at the time. As Kristin Ross theorised, political groups (especially the CVN, CVB and CVL) in the run up to May '68 'sought to disengage themselves from a conventional politics of central apparatuses'.<sup>140</sup> At its very essence, the Collective was a central apparatus in its own right, an over-arching structure which brought together many autonomous trade unions in order to effect practical campaigns.

Nevertheless, Rebérioux's militancy was complicated by her PCF membership, which she viewed as a form of engagement for everyone, not just the intellectual elite: 'Être

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<sup>137</sup> Christofferson, *French Intellectuals against the Left*, p.50.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p.44.

<sup>139</sup> Fridenson, 'Rebérioux, Madeleine [née Amoudruz]', p.386.

<sup>140</sup> Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*, p.93.

communiste, c'est être militant. Et militant sur tous les plans, sans aucune exception'.<sup>141</sup> Rebérioux ultimately fell victim to the PCF's intolerance of freedom of politics, as she strove for autonomy within a political structure which demanded conformity.<sup>142</sup> Through a study of the Collective, we can understand Rebérioux's militancy as traditional in form but revolutionary in ideology: she tapped into a longer tradition of intellectual protest in France which stretched back to the Dreyfus affair, adapting modes of engagement – notably petitions but also more creative forms of protest – to transform her contemporary world. The anti-imperialist message which inflected all of the Collective's action can equally be traced back to Rebérioux's interpretation of Jaurès as an example of resistance against all forms of neo-capitalist oppression, whether colonial or imperialist in nature.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> *Paroles d'historiens* (2001), I : Le choix de l'histoire, Chap. 7 : Être communiste en Alsace.

<sup>142</sup> Verdès-Leroux, *Au service du parti*, p.19.

<sup>143</sup> Julliard and Prochasson, 'Madeleine Rebérioux (1920-2005)', p.4.

## Chapter 6. Accelerated Activism: May '68 and the PCF

*Amicalement à la multiple Madeleine.*

**Michelle Perrot**

### 6.1 Introduction

Hidden away between stacks of newspaper cuttings in box 647AP/97 in the Archives Nationales is an undated, enveloped package sent by Michelle Perrot – then based in Caen – to Rebérioux. Perrot signed off her letter ‘amicalement à la multiple Madeleine’.<sup>1</sup> Such a personal term of endearment was an indication of the depth and scale of Rebérioux’s involvement in academic politics during the 1960s: as an historian, academic, teaching assistant, trade unionist, PCF member and anticolonialist campaigner. Rebérioux’s archives from this period represent the experiences of one individual during a period of rapid political and intellectual change. May-June 1968 offers a brief but invaluable window on Rebérioux’s militancy during a period of accelerated engagement. Her papers cast new light on the inner mechanics of protest during May ‘68 as well as its importance for understanding shifts within Rebérioux’s modes of engagement, most notably her exclusion from the PCF in March 1969.

Many histories of May ‘68 have been written. Recent historiography has focussed on widening studies: geographically, by looking at experiences outside of Paris at a national and even pan-European perspective, chronologically in examining left-wing protest in the 1960s and 1970s as a whole (*les années 68*) and thematically by looking at protest outside of student and worker groups or from a social movement theory perspective.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 647AP/97 Letter, Perrot to Rebérioux (undated, likely May 1968). Perrot sent Rebérioux copies of various UNÉF and JCR flyers.

<sup>2</sup> Recent new approaches to (a French) May ‘68 include Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey, ‘May 1968 in France: the rise and fall of a new social movement’, in *1968: the World Transformed*, eds. Carole Fink, Philipp Gassert and Detlef Junker (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), pp.253-276; Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*; Michael Seidman, *The Imaginary Revolution: Parisian Students and Workers in 1968* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004); Agnès Callu (ed.), *Le mai 68 des historiens : entre identités narratives et histoire orale* (Villeneuve-d'Ascq: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2010); Christian Delporte, Denis Maréchal, Caroline Moine and Isabelle Veyrat-Masson (eds.), *Images et sons de mai 68 : 1968-2008* (Paris: Nouveau monde éditions, 2011); Julian Jackson, Anna-Louise Milne and James Williams (eds.), *May 68: Rethinking France's Last Revolution* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Chris Reynolds, *Memories of May '68: France's*



Scholarly attention to May '68 has often focussed on the production of an official history, a narrative which although contested, can be commemorated through the boom in the 'memory industry'.<sup>3</sup> Such historical analysis prioritises memory of the protest over evidence from the time, preferring post-event interviews with participants over contemporaneous sources. An alternative approach to May '68 is offered by Kristin Ross's work. Her thoughtful analysis of the afterlives of May '68 focussed on documentation from the public record rather than interviews, in order to reconstruct 'a collage of individual, sometimes ephemeral, subjectivities' which did not add up to any 'exemplary itineraries' or biographical life stories.<sup>4</sup> My close reading of Rebérioux's experiences, documented at the time, takes Ross's work to a new level.

The rupture posed by May '68 changed individual's trajectories. A close examination of biographical documentation from the time can reveal the internal mechanics of protest, escaping the pressures of choosing which narrative to commemorate. Recent collective academic work such as *Europe's 1968*, an example of widening studies of May '68, examined the protest from a prosopographic perspective, interviewing nearly 500 activists across 14 countries.<sup>5</sup> Whilst broadening the remit of a history of May '68, this ambitious work also returned the focus to the experience of the individual in post-war protest movements. Using oral testimony has its advantages for this kind of research, allowing historians to travel backwards and forwards in time, in both a political temporal space but also within the lifetime of an individual. However, as this chapter demonstrates, archives still have much to offer in this regard. Documents can be carefully analysed in order to reconstruct the protest experiences of an individual who is no longer able to participate in oral history, in the process offering a rich alternative perspective on the protest. What can archival records from 1968 tell us about how Rebérioux participated in and shaped the protest, a period of intense, accelerated activism and engagement at both personal and national levels? How does Rebérioux's involvement in 1968 sit within broader narratives of her militancy, specifically her

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*Convenient Consensus* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011); Robert Gildea, James Mark and Anette Warring (eds.), *Europe's 1968: Voices of Revolt* (Corby: OUP, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*, p.1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.17. Ross focuses her study on the public record: 'public and private archival documents, tracts, magazine and journal articles, documentary footage, memoirs [and] the press'.

<sup>5</sup> Gildea, Mark and Warring (eds.), *Europe's 1968*, p.7.

exclusion from the PCF? What is the wider significance of Rebérioux's May '68, both for this study and new approaches to the period?

Rebérioux lived through May '68 as an active participant. Whilst employed as a *maître-assistante* at the Sorbonne, her position as SNÉSup representative for the trade union's *bureau national* also placed her at the centre of academic politics. Rebérioux's multiple positions at the Sorbonne illustrated the machinations between the trade union, the student body and the PCF. Moreover, her vocation as an historian reinforced her appreciation of the value of archives and placed the magnitude of the protests within an historical framework. Rebérioux's case is an apt illustration of recent work led by Agnès Callu, whose thought-provoking edited volume poses many questions concerning the agency of historians in contemporary history.<sup>6</sup> Rebérioux's participation in May '68 is particularly noteworthy as she was not a typical student protester but a teaching assistant with two decades' experience of militancy. Unlike some of the 'baby-boomer' generation Rebérioux did not see the world in Manichean terms of black and white, but from a more complex viewpoint.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, scrutinising Rebérioux's actions during May '68 is crucial for understanding her activism as a whole. The May movement was the crystallisation of two decades of militancy prior to 1968, from her trade union and party activism to the work of committees at a grass-roots level.<sup>8</sup>

One slim box (647AP/97) of Rebérioux's archives is dedicated to May '68. Although catalogued by archivists at the AN, the box contains dossiers labelled by Rebérioux's hand, suggesting a certain level of self-selection in the preservation of papers. These documents offer an insight into a well-placed individual's subjectivity of the protest. Coupled with subsequent published interviews, the papers reveal how Rebérioux created meaning from her personal experience.<sup>9</sup> 647AP/97 mainly contains documents from 1968: article drafts, declarations of intent, press clippings and correspondence although there is also some commemorative literature from 1998, classified in a separate dossier entitled '30 ans après'. Rebérioux kept flyers from movements

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<sup>6</sup> Callu (ed.), *Le mai 68 des historiens*.

<sup>7</sup> Gildea, Mark and Warring (eds.), *Europe's 1968*, p.309.

<sup>8</sup> Agulhon discussed the notion of crystallisation in Agnès Callu, 'Conscience politique et conscience historienne : copénétration ou cohabitations ?', in *Le mai 68 des historiens : entre identités narratives et histoire orale*, ed. Agnès Callu (Villeneuve-d'Ascq: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2010), p.142.

<sup>9</sup> Gildea, Mark and Warring (eds.), *Europe's 1968*, p.11.

including the Union des groupes et clubs socialistes (UGCS), the JCR and UNÉF in addition to paper traces from SNÉSup and the PCF, demonstrating the nebulous nature of social and political groups at this time. Her archive also includes publications from the period, notably editions of *Combat* and *Les Lettres Françaises*. 647AP/97 preserves her voice as an individual remarkably well: in contrast to earlier periods of militancy where texts were produced collectively or anonymously, in this example Rebérioux's voice can, for the most part, be isolated as an individual. The framing of her engagement as an individual is an important turning point in her own intellectual trajectory. Comparisons can be drawn between this moment and her presidency of the LDH (see chapter seven), when she became the representative voice of a national human rights network.

Rebérioux's papers from 1968 are not in a chronological order and thus it is especially important to read them both forwards and backwards in order to construct a temporal reading of her activism. Consequently, I have examined Rebérioux's papers from May '68 on three separate research trips, allowing time for reflection and new questions on each visit<sup>10</sup> As Chris Reynolds has aptly observed, texts on May '68 have often placed the events in a strict narrative, defining three stages of the protest: firstly the student (3-13 May), the workers' (14-27 May) and lastly the political crisis (27-30 May).<sup>11</sup> Whilst a chronological understanding of the events is essential for a simple historical analysis, Rebérioux's papers from the period offer a more complex indication of how events were experienced by participants. Reading her archives thematically rather than chronologically offers a more insightful perspective on her engagement during this time. Political and student protest was not compartmentalised into separate weeks in the lived experience of participants; education issues fed into political discussions and vice-versa. Taking a non-chronological approach allows a more holistic understanding of Rebérioux's individual participation and of the protest itself.

In addition to her own private papers, Rebérioux also engaged in the memory industry of May '68, editing a special edition of *Le Mouvement social* with Michelle and Jean-

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<sup>10</sup> 647AP/97 was examined in September 2013, August 2014 and March 2015.

<sup>11</sup> Chris Reynolds, 'May 68: a contested history', *Sens Public* <http://www.sens-public.org/spip.php?article472&lang=fr>, (2007) [accessed 26 January 2015].

Claude Perrot and Jean Maitron.<sup>12</sup> The volume opened with tracts from the Collectif intersyndical before reproducing documents from various groups within the occupied Sorbonne and concluded with plans for university reform. In this way, Rebérioux and her colleagues participated in what Gilles Bousquet quantified as the rush to document experiences, the 'fièvre de témoigner, de raconter, de prophétiser'.<sup>13</sup> Although the LMS volume is a valuable publication, this chapter will focus more on evidence from Rebérioux's archives and interviews, as it is near impossible to isolate her voice as an individual in *La Sorbonne par elle-même*. Moreover, the edited volume is often cited as one of the main sources of primary documentation from the period and thus its contents have already been used by many other historians.<sup>14</sup> The second significant printed source is Rebérioux's 1988 interview with Geneviève Dreyfus-Armand.<sup>15</sup> Despite being relatively short, the exchange reveals much about how Rebérioux measured her position in relation to other political groups in the Sorbonne. Two decades after 1968, Rebérioux's answers to questions are inflected with a broader, post-event comprehension of events before and after the occupation of the Sorbonne rather than the immediacy of her own papers from the time.

This chapter, the second half of the case study which problematises Rebérioux's 'communist' engagement during the 1960s, focuses on what Rebérioux's paper traces can reveal about militancy during May '68, both for Rebérioux as an individual but also the internal mechanics of protest within the contested space of the Sorbonne. The focus is a much smaller chronological window than other examples (the five year focus of the Collective; her four years as LDH president). How did Rebérioux participate in this period of accelerated engagement? Why was it such a turning point in her trajectory? At a personal level, how did she understand her activism? The chapter will start by exploring the inner workings of May '68 at the Sorbonne ('being' a *soixante-huitard*), before moving on to consider the consequences of Rebérioux's actions: her exclusion from the PCF and her move from the Sorbonne to Vincennes. The chapter concludes with

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<sup>12</sup> Jean-Claude Perrot, Michelle Perrot, Madeleine Rebérioux and Jean Maitron, 'La Sorbonne par elle-même : mai-juin 1968', *Le Mouvement social*, 64 (1968).

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Reynolds, *Memories of May '68*, p.12.

<sup>14</sup> Including Keith Reader and Khursheed Wadia, *The May 1968 Events in France: Reproductions and Interpretations* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993); Seidman, *The Imaginary Revolution*; Philippe Artières and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel (eds.), *68, une histoire collective : 1962-1981* (Paris: Découverte, 2008).

<sup>15</sup> Dreyfus-Armand, 'La Sorbonne occupée', pp.154-159.

a brief analysis of how this engagement can be interpreted from the critical standpoint of almost half a century later.

## 6.2 Events: being a *soixante-huitard*

Christian Delporte recently contended that May '68 has become a delineated, singular symbol: 'Il suffit de prononcer Mai 68, d'évoquer les pavés, les barricades, des voitures incendiées, un slogan sur un mur, et le décor paraît planté'.<sup>16</sup> His argument, that scholarly analysis should go beyond motifs to seek the essence of the protest, is coterminous with the case for using private archives for such an investigation. Repositories such as Rebérioux's archives can be used to reconstruct the inner transactions of protest beyond the symbols of slogans and barricades. Her papers recreate the physically and intellectually contested spaces of the Sorbonne, which was occupied by students and staff for a month and a half in 1968. Agnès Callu has asserted that new things can be revealed about 1968 when viewed through the eyes of historians.<sup>17</sup> If the discipline is more than just 'un métier' and is also 'un plaisir, une vision du monde et de la société, un engagement' as JF Maifflet and Damien Richard have suggested, how did this historical vision inflect concerns and actions during May '68?<sup>18</sup> Rebérioux sat at the cross-section of a diverse set of networks, informal structures which can be understood as 'the fluid groups that served as vehicles for activists both to change the world and to change themselves'.<sup>19</sup> At the start of 1968 Rebérioux was *maître-assistante de l'histoire contemporaine* at the Sorbonne, whilst researching her doctoral thesis on Jaurès, the SFIO and French society under the supervision of Ernest Labrousse. In addition to her work in SNÉSup and her leadership of the Collectif intersyndical, Rebérioux straddled a number of projects. She was on the editorial board for *Le Mouvement social*, helped run the day-to-day business of the Société d'études jaurésiennes and was a member of the provocative PCF cell Sorbonne-Lettres. How significant were these overlapping networks for constructing her militancy during May '68?

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<sup>16</sup> Delporte, Maréchal, Moine and Veyrat-Masson (eds.), *Images et sons de mai 68 : 1968-2008*, p.8.

<sup>17</sup> Callu (ed.), *Le mai 68 des historiens*, p.27.

<sup>18</sup> Maifflet and Richard, 'Qu'est-ce qu'un historien ? Essais typologiques et imaginaires sociaux', p.89.

<sup>19</sup> Gildea, Mark and Warring (eds.), *Europe's 1968*, p.5.

### 6.2.1 *Pedagogical protest in the history department*

The crisis within the French Higher Education system is a 'downplayed element' of 1968 studies; analysing the political has tended to overshadow attention to attempts at pedagogical reform.<sup>20</sup> Although student energies were expended in opposing war in Algeria, independence in 1962 shifted the focus back to domestic issues, specifically problems within the university system. Rebérioux's papers from May '68 reveal how she strove to uphold her commitment to her students' education whilst navigating a period of rapid change as well as continuing to critique the PCF's direction and lack of support for the student movement. Contestation led to new questions: could the university become a space and model for a new kind of political organisation?<sup>21</sup> Such questions were compounded by debates over the 1967 Fouchet reform, which sought to modernise Higher Education to meet the needs of the economy, notably by introducing selection for university admission.

Christelle Dormoy-Rajramanan described the Sorbonne during May as 'an endless succession of debates and the setting up of innumerable consultative committees to discuss how to reshape Higher Education'.<sup>22</sup> Archives expose how Rebérioux played a key role in such committees, bridging relations between different Sorbonne networks. As Rebérioux later recounted in 1988, 'j'avais des activités politiques variées, j'assurais des liaisons syndicales et les rapports avec l'assemblée générale des enseignants, mais j'avais une vision tout à fait locale'.<sup>23</sup> Within the history department, Rebérioux worked closely with Jacques Julliard, Marie-Claire Ropars and Guy Bois. In 2008 Julliard recalled 'l'immense Madeleine Rebérioux, encore communiste, que je connais bien par *Le Mouvement social* et qui représente d'abord elle-même, mais aussi la sensibilité au diapason du mouvement. Je voyais Madeleine au moins quatre fois par jour'.<sup>24</sup> In many ways the history department facilitated negotiation, as an open space where different political factions could come together. Rebérioux would later state that 'ma première

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<sup>20</sup> Reynolds, *Memories of May '68*, p.79.

<sup>21</sup> Gildea, Mark and Warring (eds.), *Europe's 1968*, p.167.

<sup>22</sup> 'From dream to reality: the birth of "Vincennes"', in *May 68: Rethinking France's Last Revolution*, eds. Julian Jackson, Anna-Louise Milne and James S. Williams (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p.247.

<sup>23</sup> Dreyfus-Armand, 'La Sorbonne occupée', p.158.

<sup>24</sup> Jacques Julliard, 'Entretien avec Patrick Fridenson', *Le Mouvement social*, 223 (2008), p.21. See also Jacques Julliard, *Le choix de Pascal* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2003), pp.101-102.

souvenance, c'est une collaboration très étroite et amicale, vraiment fraternelle, entre les deux syndicats enseignants et la section histoire de l'UNÉF'.<sup>25</sup> Although there was always room for improvement, on the whole the history department had solid relationships, both with the students (via the UNÉF) and with trade unions including SGEN, SNÉSup and the Fédération des groupes d'études de lettres. Nevertheless, this positive working relationship was not forged during the May movement. Rather, it was consolidated by solidarities forged by anticolonial activism, starting in the Algerian war and continuing through the Vietnam conflict. Rebérioux also had the privileged position of having campaigned alongside many students before 1968 as part of her role in the Collective.

Many of the committees operating within the Sorbonne were cross-disciplinary and dominated by students and younger teaching assistants.<sup>26</sup> Flyers, minutes and informal notes reveal how *Commissions de travail* were established in order to push through educational reform and were comprised of both students and teachers. Striving for pedagogical reform was not always straightforward however. As explored below, the history department's demands for open discussion of education issues at the daily *assemblées générales* (held for a month and a half until 16 June) were always met with the same empty response: 'On est tout à fait favorable à une réflexion sur ce qui sera mis en place après le mouvement, mais faire voter sur ce qui est proposé par les commissions, ce serait une erreur, cela reviendrait à briser le dynamique du mouvement qui est politique'.<sup>27</sup> The bureaucratic retort revealed the limitations of the movement: an unwillingness to make concrete decisions, a desire to push protest further and a clear identification with the 'political' which excluded a consideration of education reform in the short-term. Rebérioux's response was equally illuminating:

J'étais assez « politique » moi-même pour comprendre cela mais, en même temps, j'étais assez universitaire pour souhaiter que les usagers prennent en considération le travail fait par les commissions [...] j'étais toujours membre du PC mais je comprenais que le rejet d'un débat sur les réformes avait un sens politique.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Dreyfus-Armand, 'La Sorbonne occupée', p.154.

<sup>26</sup> Dormoy-Rajramanan, 'From dream to reality: the birth of 'Vincennes'', p.247.

<sup>27</sup> Dreyfus-Armand, 'La Sorbonne occupée', p.155.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

This personal insight emphasized the duality of Rebérioux's identity as both a militant and an academic. Although university reform was discussed, no common position was agreed upon and without this official declaration no concrete progress was made. Nevertheless, the attempt to effect change was significant in itself, as Rebérioux recognised: 'Le mouvement faisait bouger l'assemblée générale des enseignants or, dans l'Université, elle était ce qu'il y a de plus difficile à bouger'.<sup>29</sup>

Rebérioux did not just focus on words: the praxis was important too. In her 1988 interview Rebérioux claimed to have been responsible for attempting to prevent an escalation of violence during the occupation as part of the *service d'ordre*. Her telling of the anecdote merits being quoted at length:

Je me souviens très bien qu'un soir, j'étais de service d'ordre avec le département d'histoire, et je faisais le tour des salles, toute seule et, tout à fait au dernier étage, je vis un groupe en train de fabriquer des cocktails Molotov avec la plus grande énergie ! Je leur demandai ce qu'ils voulaient en faire, et comme ils voulaient les jeter dans la rue St-Jacques, je leur dis « Vous ne pouvez pas faire cela ! C'est un soir de manifestation, il y a beaucoup de gens qui se sont réfugiés ici, vous savez très bien que la Sorbonne est un lieu reconnu par la police, par les hôpitaux, par tout le monde, et si vous jetez des cocktails Molotov sur la police, cette autonomie sera détruite, et vous en porterez la responsabilité ! » Alors ils me disent : « Au nom de quoi dis-tu cela ? ». Je leur dis : « Cette nuit, c'est moi qui est responsable au nom du service d'ordre ». Ils déclarent: « tu reviens dans trois quarts d'heure, on va délibérer ». Je reviens trois quarts d'heure plus tard, ils me disent : « Tu ne veux pas que les cocktails soient utilisés comme arme offensive à partir de la Sorbonne ! », « Ni comme arme offensive, ni à partir de la Sorbonne ! » « Nous ne les lancerons pas, mais tu vas sortir avec nous, dans la rue... ». <sup>30</sup>

This altercation reveals much about the protest's dynamics: the heightened risk of violence, the *tutoiement*, along with Rebérioux's broader concerns for peace, unity and the desire for individuals to work together rather than descending into factionalism. Her intervention illustrated Gabriel Séjournant's argument that the generations who had already experienced war (the Occupation, Algeria, Vietnam) rejected violence more severely than 'baby-boomers'.<sup>31</sup> Rebérioux's refusal to legitimise violence chimed with colleagues. Jacques Le Goff sought university reform but disagreed with the methods of

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p.157.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp.158-159.

<sup>31</sup> Gabriel Séjournant, 'Les étudiants vues par les historiens : histoire d'une représentation générationnelle', in *Le mai 68 des historiens : entre identités narratives et histoire orale*, ed. Agnès Callu (Villeneuve-d'Ascq: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2010), p.117.



groups like the *Katangais*, who threatened to burn down the Sorbonne library.<sup>32</sup> Exchanges such as these prompted Rebérioux to demand 'une parole libre et une pratique forcément contrainte, sans quoi l'on tombe dans l'individualisme libéral'.<sup>33</sup>

Teaching was suspended during the protest, which had a tangible impact upon Rebérioux's actions. Her archives preserve notes suggesting adaptations to the curriculum in order to cause the least disruption to students' education.<sup>34</sup> Modifications drafted by Rebérioux's hand included a potential repetition of missed classes, suspension of the written part of the course and modification of the oral exam to only include material covered before the suspension. In addition, an extra half-hour of preparation time was given for the geography element of the exam. As with SNÉSup papers from this period, the proposed changes also took the opportunity to criticise the system as a whole: 'Il va de soi que telles propositions ne sauraient mettre en cause la nécessaire discussion entre enseignants et étudiants sur la refaite indispensable du système des examens'.<sup>35</sup> These kinds of texts bring to light the nature of protest, but also demonstrate the genuine concern of teaching staff for their students. Sorbonne-Lettres members were equally critical of teaching methods, structure, module content and the general malaise amongst students, arguing that 'les enseignants communistes rappellent leur condamnation de la réforme Fouchet : sa mise en application souligne les carences d'une université qui ne dispose pas des moyens matériels de remplir sa tâche en assurant une formation scientifique solidement utile'.<sup>36</sup> The same tract criticised the media's attempts to turn public opinion against students. In line with this, Sorbonne-Lettres called upon staff and students to support trade unions, in the process strengthening the relationship between trade unions and the PCF.

Rebérioux's place in the complex web of political and syndical networks at the Sorbonne during May '68 reveals her accelerated engagement at the grass-roots of militancy. Her papers from the time indicate how concern for pedagogical reform was a driving force behind her engagement. For her, the 'university' was more than just a teaching and

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Dreyfus-Armand, 'La Sorbonne occupée', p.159.

<sup>34</sup> 647AP/97 Rebérioux handwritten untitled note (undated).

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p.2.

<sup>36</sup> 647AP/97 Sorbonne-Lettres tract, 'Les enseignants communistes de la Sorbonne donnent leur opinion' (6 May 1968), p.1.

research space. As she commented in October 1969: 'L'université peut avoir une fonction critique à l'égard du savoir qu'elle transmet, et cette fonction critique lui permet ou pourrait lui permettre de rejoindre le mouvement ouvrier'.<sup>37</sup> However, seeking reform was not easy and Rebérioux found it challenging to manage the objectives of disparate protest groups during 1968. Only the force of her personality and the strength of her political convictions allowed her to negotiate a space between competing political and student factions. Nevertheless her archives do reveal how pleasure ('joie', 'bonheur') could still be found in the protest. Rebérioux specifically recalled 'la joie de voir que sous l'œil paternel de Victor Hugo, il y avait Mao, Trotsky, Lénine, Che Guevara, le bonheur de voir présents tous les courants qui se réclamaient d'un changement fondamental ; c'était quelque chose d'absolument extraordinaire !'.<sup>38</sup> Initial elation was also shared by Daniel Cohn-Bendit who recalled the 'festive spirit' of the Latin Quarter.<sup>39</sup> In this way hope for a brighter future played an important function in threading links between the Sorbonne's disparate political factions.

### 6.2.2 *Experiencing protest*

Joy, however, was not omnipresent. On the evening of 10-11 May 1968, the *Recteur* of the *Académie de Paris* asked police to enter the Sorbonne, under the pretext of evacuating the hundred or so students who had organised their own barricades with paving stones and overturned cars. During the subsequent violence 367 people were hospitalised and 468 individuals were arrested.<sup>40</sup> Reports on the events were broadcast live on the radio. Rebérioux experienced the subsequently named 'night of the barricades' first-hand. It occurred whilst she was drafting an article for *Les Lettres Françaises*:

J'ai commencé cet article au début de la nuit du 10 au 11 mai. À 2h30 le gouvernement donnait l'ordre de « rétablir l'ordre ». L'ordre des grenades et des matraques, l'ordre du désordre fondamental. L'ordre d'un système social

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<sup>37</sup> Interview with Rebérioux (October 1969) in Madeleine Chapsal and Michèle Manceaux (eds.), *Les professeurs pour quoi faire ?* (Paris: Seuil, 1970), p.155.

<sup>38</sup> Dreyfus-Armand, 'La Sorbonne occupée', p.157.

<sup>39</sup> Matt Perry, 'May 1968 across the decades', *International Socialism* 118 <http://isj.org.uk/may-1968-across-the-decades/>, (2008) [accessed 19 May 2015].

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. Fraser offers a detailed, vivid description of the night of the barricades in *1968: a Student Generation in Revolt*, p.183-190.

qui s'américanise dans ses profondeurs. Les étudiants auront fait beaucoup pour aider la nation à le comprendre.<sup>41</sup>

Here we find Rebérioux engaging in what we might call intellectual militancy (writing) whilst caught in a moment of political excess, when passions 'boiled over' and the police resorted to violence.<sup>42</sup> The article itself displayed Rebérioux's attitudes towards the May movement and her conceptualisation of where the revolt came from and what it might achieve. She emphasised the 'colère gaie' of the students, even when faced with the violent aggression of the CRS. The reference to Americanisation is equally interesting. Kristin Ross has posited that in the decades prior to 1968 French society and culture underwent 'accelerated capitalist modernisation' which resulted in 'American-style mass-culture'.<sup>43</sup> 1968 was a partial reaction against the perception that there was a threat posed by American consumerism and materialism to the French way of life.

At the time, Rebérioux believed the protest was still focussed on educational reform. Higher Education could not respond to staff and students' needs: especially the content of courses, teaching methods or the format and organisation of examinations and assessment. Yet Rebérioux's analysis went further than just pedagogical criticisms. She asserted that each university should be a liberal rather than repressive institution and attacked the current status quo as 'l'héritage du despotisme napoléonien'.<sup>44</sup> For Rebérioux, Fouchet's reforms had achieved nothing. Gaullism's only legacy would be to transform universities into permanent spaces of contestation, where the only selection system was according to who failed. Material conditions played a significant role in transforming a passive student body into a force of protest during May, as Rebérioux contended:

Amphithéâtres surchargés, trop souvent encore équipés comme au milieu du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle ; groups de travaux dirigés où le mot même de travail devient illusoire lorsqu'on dépasse 25 étudiants – ils sont souvent près de la centaine – bibliothèques où l'introuvable n'est pas seulement à la place, mais, une fois celle-ci conquise de haute lutte, le livre, presque toujours absent ; examens préparés quasi sans préparation, comme ce fut le cas cette année, lorsque, pour

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<sup>41</sup> 647AP/97 Rebérioux, 'Malgré l'horreur de ce qui se passe cette nuit au Quartier', *Les Lettres Françaises* 1224 (15-21 May 1968), p.21.

<sup>42</sup> David Andress and Sophie Wahnich, 'How should historians deal with extreme political violence?', in *Writing Contemporary History*, eds. Robert Gildea and Anne Simonin (London: Hodder Education, 2008), p.134.

<sup>43</sup> See *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), pp.9-10.

<sup>44</sup> 647AP/97 Rebérioux, 'Malgré l'horreur de ce qui se passe cette nuit au Quartier', *Les Lettres Françaises* 1224 (15-21 May 1968), p.20.

la grandeur de régime, il fallut appliquer d'un coup la réforme, y compris dans ses parties évidemment inapplicables !<sup>45</sup>

Rebérioux's criticism of the current university system was prescient of many of the reforms implemented at Vincennes from 1969 onwards, such as small-group teaching, new forms of assessment, a focus on the interdisciplinary and a flexible teaching schedule to accommodate part-time students.

Matt Perry has observed how May '68 can be understood as a crisis point after a decade of moral corruption within state institutions as exemplified by police violence, torture in Algeria and the fear engendered by the OAS bombing campaign.<sup>46</sup> Such a thread can be outlined in Rebérioux's personal trajectory but also in her conceptualisation of the events as they occurred. 'La joie neuve et fraîche d'agir, de manifester, de défendre leurs camarades' was an experience which could be traced back to protest against the Algerian war.<sup>47</sup> Such an interpretation was reinforced by references to the recent past. Rebérioux anchored her analysis in a French rather than international context, 'dans le pays de Charonne'. As this conflict had been formative in Rebérioux's development as a militant, so would the current protest shape the intellectual trajectory of future militants and political leaders: 'Peut-être y a-t-il parmi eux de futurs Pompidou ou Giscard d'Estaing, de futurs Lacoste ?'.<sup>48</sup> Other historians have stated that the night of the barricades was 'inserted' into a longer tradition of protest, which May was then measured against, notably the strikes of the Front Populaire in 1936 and the Paris Commune of 1871.<sup>49</sup> It is important to acknowledge that Rebérioux had living experience of the former and historical expertise of the latter which provided a critical framework for her lived experiences.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Perry, 'May 1968 across the decades', *International Socialism* 118 <http://isj.org.uk/may-1968-across-the-decades/>, (2008) [accessed 19 May 2015].

<sup>47</sup> 647AP/97 Rebérioux, 'Malgré l'horreur de ce qui se passe cette nuit au Quartier', *Les Lettres Françaises* 1224 (15-21 May 1968), p.20.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Gildea, Mark and Warring (eds.), *Europe's 1968*, p.166; p.177.

### 6.2.3 *Challenging the PCF line*

In addition to pedagogical reform, for Rebérioux May '68 was equally concerned with freeing the relationship between individuals and organisations, which was somewhat ironic considering her own emphasis on collective engagement. As she later argued, 'la prise de conscience que l'on ne peut rien faire si on n'est pas organisé d'une manière ou d'une autre, et en même temps le problème de la lutte contre la bureaucratie des organisations'.<sup>50</sup> The most significant and complex of these organisations was undoubtedly the PCF. Throughout the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s Rebérioux created her own definition of being a 'communist' which went beyond simply holding a membership card, reading *L'Humanité* or voting PCF in elections.<sup>51</sup> Although membership offered, in the words of Tony Judt, the sense of 'moving in the direction of history', Rebérioux refused to accept the party line wholesale.<sup>52</sup> Instead she negotiated her own political position, from criticising Jules Moch in 1948 for shooting on striking workers to maintaining her own networks to campaign for peace in Algeria and Vietnam (explored in chapters three and five). One of Rebérioux's most open clashes with the party occurred two years prior to May 1968, when the PCF was reticent to support the Collective and initiatives like *Six heures pour le Vietnam*. Her belief in her own individual position was fortified academically by her doctoral supervisor, Ernest Labrousse. Maurice Agulhon, a fellow *Labroussien*, quantified their supervisor as 'un des rares socialistes qui aimaient bien les communistes'.<sup>53</sup> Working with such an individual reinforced Rebérioux's understanding of the left as a 'shelter' for all; this in turn took much from the Jaurésian model of socialism but was not a vision shared by the PCF.<sup>54</sup> Labrousse also encouraged students to think more broadly and to consider the Marxist, economic and social dimensions of their research which in turn widened Rebérioux's critical horizons.<sup>55</sup> In this way, Rebérioux's political position interlaced with her historical approach and vice versa.

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<sup>50</sup> Dreyfus-Armand, 'La Sorbonne occupée', p.159.

<sup>51</sup> David Bell and Byron Criddle, 'The decline of the French Communist Party', *British Journal of Political Science*, 19 4 (1989), p.518.

<sup>52</sup> Judt and Snyder, *Thinking the Twentieth Century*, p.97.

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in Callu, 'Conscience politique et conscience historique', p.140.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Christophe Prochasson (21 August 2015).

<sup>55</sup> Michelle Perrot, quoted in Callu, 'L'histoire du temps proche', p.270.

Rebérioux's choice of PCF cell membership was significant. During the post-war period Sorbonne-Lettres constantly challenged the party line: from objecting to the Khrushchev report and criticising the party line on Algeria to a full-scale party investigation following accusations of 'activité fractionnelle' in 1959.<sup>56</sup> Rebérioux herself recognised the cell's reputation in her 2001 interview:

La cellule de Sorbonne-Lettres était extrêmement autonome par rapport à... trop autonome du point de vue de la direction du parti, sans aucun doute, par rapport à la direction du parti, oui, oui... Y avait une tradition d'autonomie que nous avons tout à fait maintenue. On a eu de très longues... on a eu des discussions dans la cellule. Ces discussions associaient aussi des militants, dont j'étais, qui avaient des responsabilités syndicales.<sup>57</sup>

In this way Rebérioux's diverse roles interlinked, with her PCF militancy overlapping with syndicalism and her teaching and research responsibilities. However, such meshing exacerbated the personal and political ramifications after her exclusion.

A typed witness statement written by Rebérioux on 30 May 1968 is one of the most important archival documents to depict her political experience of May '68.<sup>58</sup> In it, Rebérioux disparaged the hierarchical relationship between party officials and members at grass-roots level. Although at meetings members were reassured that they had freedom of expression, their opinions were not being communicated up the party ranks. The lack of dialogue ran counter to the PCF statutes, which stated that 'la critique et l'autocritique s'exercent librement sans considération de personne dans toutes les organisations du parti'.<sup>59</sup> Rebérioux warned ominously that 'la direction du parti n'en retiendrait pas que le son de cloche qu'elle attendait'.<sup>60</sup> Unlike the PCF leaders, Sorbonne-Lettres played an active role in condemning the police brutality against student protesters. On 6 May the cell released a statement demanding the release of students held by the police and requesting the reopening of the Sorbonne.<sup>61</sup> Interestingly, the document acknowledged students' concern regarding their marks and

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<sup>56</sup> Archives départementales de la Seine-Saint-Denis, Bobigny. 261J6/9 Dossier de la commission centrale de contrôle politique relatif à la cellule Sorbonne-Lettres. There is only one mention of Rebérioux in this dossier, referring to a letter she had written to Claude Kastler in the winter of 1958.

<sup>57</sup> *Paroles d'historiens*, Part. 3, Chap. 31 : L'université de Vincennes.

<sup>58</sup> 647AP/97 Dossier Madeleine, typed statement, Rebérioux (30 May 1968), p.1.

<sup>59</sup> 647AP/26 *Statuts du PCF* (14-17 May 1964), p.13.

<sup>60</sup> 647AP/97 Dossier Madeleine, typed statement, Rebérioux (30 May 1968), p.1.

<sup>61</sup> 647AP/97 Typed document, Cellule Sorbonne-Lettres, 'Les enseignants communistes de la Sorbonne donnent leur opinion' (6 May 1968).

cell members' condemnation of the Fouchet reform.<sup>62</sup> Such documents thus reinforced the interlinked nature of objectives during the movement. Nevertheless, the same statement demonstrates how official communications and statements of intent could not keep up with the rapid pace of the political situation at the Sorbonne. On 4 May Sorbonne-Lettres met to prepare a text on the events of the preceding day. After six hours of discussion the group concluded that they were in solidarity with students, who were victims of repression.<sup>63</sup> However, as one (unnamed) comrade disagreed with the phrasing of a particular sentence, the public distribution of the text was delayed. Another meeting was held on 6 May; the text was published the following day, by which point Rebérioux observed that 'il était dépassé par les événements et même par l'appel des élus communistes de la Région parisienne'.<sup>64</sup> Incidents like these were frequent occurrences in the multiplicity of activism in the Sorbonne. The delayed dissemination of the cell's document offers a practical illustration of how militant politics – urgent in nature – were often hampered, both by slow PCF bureaucracy and the difficulty of establishing consensus within PCF cells.<sup>65</sup>

The student protest movement in 1968 sat largely outside the control of political parties, which were for the most part slow to engage with the student movement. Rebérioux's papers recount the PCF's hesitancy to embrace student protest. A statement from the PCF *bureau politique*, copied and distributed by the 5<sup>e</sup> section on 20 May, argued that although the conditions were right for ending Gaullism, such political changes would only be possible after considering the impact upon the working classes.<sup>66</sup> In her witness statement Rebérioux argued that the party rendered the actions of militants as static, archaic and closed to change: 'Nous [les universitaires syndiqués] sommes apparus dès lors comme des conservateurs, incapables de prendre la tête de l'action contre l'université napoléonienne et gaullienne'.<sup>67</sup> Rebérioux also explained how the PCF had missed a prime opportunity to reconnect with the youth: 'Dans le syndicat du SNÉSup, les communistes ont perdu l'occasion de prendre la tête du mouvement, apparaissent comme des conservateurs qui n'avaient pas compris la profondeur de ce mouvement'.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> 647AP/97 Dossier Madeleine, typed statement, Rebérioux (30 May 1968), p.2.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Rebérioux's archives do not record whether the document was ever published.

<sup>66</sup> 647AP/97 PCF 5<sup>e</sup>, Communiqué du bureau politique du PCF (20 May 1968), p.1.

<sup>67</sup> 647AP/97 Dossier Madeleine, typed statement, Rebérioux (30 May 1968), p.2.

<sup>68</sup> 647AP/97 Typed document, 'II : lundi 3 juin 1968', Madelaine Rebeyrioux [sic] (3 June 1968).

Despite the strength of the intellectual movement, change could only be effected through co-operating with the working-classes. Rebérioux's criticism of the PCF mirrored her disparagement of the SFIO line on Algeria two decades earlier and demonstrate a certain consistency in her critique of left-wing party politics. Archives also indicate how Rebérioux expressed a preference for working with the JCR over Maoists. She believed the former were more responsible as they did not lecture the workers and were prepared to support the CGT in order to effect social change.<sup>69</sup> As a result Rebérioux was happy to work with the CFDT, JCR and 'communistes ouverts' at the Sorbonne, a further illustration of her Jaurésian conception of left-wing politics as a shelter for all.

Rebérioux did attempt to expose the issue of visibility in the PCF. Along with Jean Chesneaux and Paul and Simone Rozenberg, Rebérioux wrote a damning letter to *L'Humanité* on 17 June 1968.<sup>70</sup> A copy of the typed letter signed by the four is preserved amongst Rebérioux's private papers from May '68, with the handwritten addition 'copie pour tes archives !', indicating Rebérioux's habit of documenting her militancy. The letter condemned an article published in *L'Humanité* entitled 'Incidents au Quartier Latin après l'entrée de la Police à la Sorbonne' which misrepresented events as experienced by Rebérioux et al. The four authors' response revealed much about the environment at the Sorbonne, the complex relationship between PCF members and the hierarchy of the party, and the importance of the protest's visibility in the media. The four had spent three hours in the streets around the Sorbonne 'par volonté de ne pas abandonner les étudiants' and had witnessed events. Rebérioux had even telephoned *L'Humanité* directly to report on what had happened, although this information was not published:

*L'Huma* n'a pas utilisé nos témoignages sur la présence symbolique dans la rue de la Sorbonne d'une délégation de dix universitaires syndicalistes, venus là malgré les risques pour essayer d'éviter les sévices contre les étudiants au moment où la police s'engouffra dans la porte, ou au moins pour pouvoir témoigner. [...] Les lecteurs ont l'impression que les étudiants sont « lâchés » par les profs que ceux-ci seraient « lassés » de leurs outrances. Rien n'est plus inexact. *L'Huma* pouvait avoir la primeur d'informations que nous avons transmises. Encore une fois, hélas ! *Le Monde* en a dit davantage...

[...] cette indifférence envers les informations fournies par des témoins directs ne relève pas seulement de la négligence journalistique. Elle met en question le

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<sup>69</sup> Dreyfus-Armand, 'La Sorbonne occupée', p.157.

<sup>70</sup> 647AP/97 Typed letter from Rebérioux, Chesneaux and the Rozenbergs to *L'Humanité* (Paris, 17 June 1968), p.1.



devoir de tout communiste, de porter en priorité ses informations à *L'Huma*. Elle constitue surtout une nouvelle étape dans la dégradation des rapports entre le Parti et les étudiants et universitaires de gauche. Car beaucoup de nos collègues, dès la soirée, savaient ce qui l'était réellement passé.<sup>71</sup>

The postscript indicated a copy of the letter was also sent to the PCF headquarters. The four authors stressed the importance of accurately reporting events, a perennial concern for historians, especially Rebérioux. The letter illustrated many of the reasons why Rebérioux was excluded from the PCF in March 1969. Rebérioux exhibited a public willingness to critique the party line and retain her independence of mind, especially with regard to individuals' rights. Paul Rozenberg was listed alongside Rebérioux on the editorial board of the first edition of *Politique aujourd'hui* in January 1969 which the PCF used as an official pretext for their exclusion.<sup>72</sup>

Gaining a voice in *L'Humanité* was an enduring problem. SNÉSup members had previously lamented the PCF failure to accurately report on events such as the night of the barricades or the expulsion of Cohn-Bendit. As Rebérioux explained in her witness statement:

Dans la nuit du 23 au 24 mai, le Congrès du SNÉSup décida à une écrasante majorité de se transporter au quartier latin où la bataille faisait rage, pour s'interposer entre les CRS et les étudiants, pour arrêter la répression. Pas un mot dans *L'Huma*.

Lors de l'expulsion de Cohn-Bendit, nous supplîames le Parti, tout en critiquant la ligne politique de ce militant, de condamner la mesure discriminatoire qui le frappait ; de rappeler que l'ennemi commun était le pouvoir et non pas Cohn-Bendit. En vain. Chaque matin pendant 8 jours nous ouvrons *L'Humanité* avec crainte et nous demandant comment nous allions remonter le courant comment nous démarquer sans attaquer le parti.<sup>73</sup>

Rebérioux stated the case for more open communication in the newspaper, to inform members and readers that debates were taking place and to encourage students not to be afraid. It is important to note here that Rebérioux specifically stressed the importance of critique without attacking the party per se. However she was also a signatory to an open letter which criticised the leadership and direction of the PCF on the student protests, a petition which simultaneously affirmed signatories' loyalty to

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., pp.1-2.

<sup>72</sup> *Politique aujourd'hui* 1 (January 1969).

<sup>73</sup> 647AP/97 Dossier Madeleine, Typed statement, Rebérioux (30 May 1968), p.2.

political solidarity with the students, workers and young protesters.<sup>74</sup> Rebérioux's analysis demonstrated her fear that the PCF would fail to keep up with proletarian interests, and would no longer be the party of the working classes, one of the key reasons Rebérioux had initially joined in 1946.<sup>75</sup>

### 6.3 1968 as a turning point

#### 6.3.1 *Expulsion from the PCF*

Rebérioux's exclusion from the party remains an enigma at the heart of this thesis. Unlike many of her historian contemporaries (Annie Kriegel, François Furet, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie) Rebérioux did not leave the party of her own accord, nor did she turn to anti-communism after her rupture with the PCF. The search for the 'truth' about how and why Rebérioux was excluded has been the subject of informal historical debate amongst her contemporaries and former colleagues.<sup>76</sup> Rebérioux treated her expulsion as a private matter which she did not discuss in interviews or in her numerous interventions in the public sphere. In the 108 boxes at Pierrefitte there is barely a mention of her involvement in the party.<sup>77</sup> This gap is important as often the absences in the archives are more revealing than what is included. On the one hand this was to be expected – her's was a painful and disruptive exclusion, which according to her family caused much personal grief.<sup>78</sup> Nevertheless, on the other hand the dearth of references to this crucial turning point in her trajectory as an historian and intellectual is extremely puzzling, especially given how meticulously documented affiliations and memberships of other more ephemeral groups were, as demonstrated in the analysis of the Comité Audin and the Collectif intersyndical.

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<sup>74</sup> 647AP/97 Lettre: la protestation dans le PCF (28 May 1968). The 50 signatories included Jean Bouvier, Albert Soboul, Jean-Pierre Vernant, Jean Chesneaux, Francis Halbwachs, Antoine Culioli, Jeanne Brunshwig, Léo Matarasso, Hélène Parmelin and Charles Tillon.

<sup>75</sup> 647AP/97 Dossier Madeleine, typed statement, Rebérioux (30 May 1968), p.3.

<sup>76</sup> Interviews with Yolande Cohen (20 May 2014), Rémi Fabre (26 April 2014), Patrick Fridenson (19 January 2014), Eric Lafon (26 May 2014) and Marie-Noëlle Thibault (17 September 2014).

<sup>77</sup> 647AP/26 labelled in the inventory as 'bibliothèque marxiste' contains a membership booklet for the PCF ('statuts du PCF') from May 1964 and a dossier of images and photographs, notably of Stalin, Thorez, Lenin and Marcel Cachin.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Vincent Rebérioux (16 January 2014). Schwartz described her expulsion as a 'wound' and Paul Noirot a 'secret wound'. Schwartz, *Un mathématicien aux prises avec le siècle*, p.433; Paul Noirot, *La mémoire ouverte* (Paris: Stock, 1976), p.317.

It is obvious that relying exclusively on the PCF archives to piece together Rebérioux's membership is extremely problematic, not least as Communist party archives are renowned for their complexity and unreliability.<sup>79</sup> The main PCF source is Rebérioux's *dossier biographique*, held by the Commission centrale de contrôle politique (CCCCP) at the PCF headquarters in Paris. Despite the gradual opening of party archives during the 1990s, the CCCP's 6000 files remain closed to all bar those who can demonstrate a legitimate connection with their research subject.<sup>80</sup> The CCCP reported directly to the PCF *comité central* which made decisions regarding the fate of members who had infringed party statues, copies of which were distributed annually with every membership card. Ten years after Rebérioux's expulsion, journalist Jean Montaldo defined the CCCP as 'l'œil policier du parti, l'ordinateur où aboutissent tous les renseignements relatifs à la vie tant publique que privée de chaque communiste'.<sup>81</sup> Montaldo's description of the CCCP's archives tallies exactly with Rebérioux's file, which contains rumour, scandal and secret reports presented as fact. Indeed, PCF archivist Frédérick Genevée suggested that some CCCP records were 'parfois totalement inventés'.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, Genevée contended that all archivists should warn researchers about the nature of the CCCP files: 'Il faut donc les lire avec la plus grande des circonspections, qu'ils ne permettent pas sans les croiser avec d'autres sources de rendre des conclusions définitives'.<sup>83</sup> Thus Rebérioux's PCF records are inevitably challenging to use. Aside from access issues – there is no public inventory and each file request requires an individual *dérogation* – Rebérioux's file is filled with documents which present rumour as fact, as we shall see below.

Official documentation in the CCCP papers stated that ostensibly Rebérioux's expulsion was due to her position on the editorial board of *Politique aujourd'hui*. The gauchiste revue was founded in May 1968 and sought to promote a Marxist critique of labour

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<sup>79</sup> Bernard Moss, 'The politics of history: French Communists review their past', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 26 (1984), p.65.

<sup>80</sup> Frédérick Genevée, *La fin du secret : histoire des archives du parti communiste français* (Paris: Atelier/Éditions ouvrières, 2012), p.101. Written permission from all four of Rebérioux's children was required in order to access her PCF file, which Vincent Rebérioux kindly gave on behalf of his brothers and sister.

<sup>81</sup> Jean Montaldo, *La France communiste : un état dans l'état* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1978), p.24.

<sup>82</sup> Genevée, *La fin du secret*, p.133.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p.134.

history free from PCF-controlled publishing houses such as Éditions Ouvrières.<sup>84</sup> The PCF, however, believed the revue ran 'contre la politique du parti' and was perceived to 'porter atteinte à son unité et à nuire l'union des forces démocratiques'.<sup>85</sup> On 3 March 1969 the Sorbonne-Lettres *comité de section* ratified the central decision to exclude Paul and Simone Rozenberg and Rebérioux for their participation in the publication. Rebérioux was given an ultimatum. Either she left *Politique aujourd'hui* or she faced temporary exclusion for a year.<sup>86</sup> Rebérioux opted for exclusion. According to PCF membership statutes only the *comité central* had the power to reinstate an excluded member. Thus, as Rebérioux's colleague René Gallissot noted, exclusion was definitive as long as the cause remained.<sup>87</sup>

Yet was *Politique aujourd'hui* the only explanation for Rebérioux's expulsion? It seems likely that the revue was more the climax of two decades of fraught relations between Rebérioux and the party. One of Rebérioux's most open clashes with the party occurred two years prior to May '68, when the PCF was reticent to support the Collectif intersyndical and initiatives like *Six heures pour le Vietnam* which operated outside PCF control. As Rebérioux recounted, 'nous eûmes le plus grand mal à les faire tolérer par le parti'.<sup>88</sup> As a result these initiatives constituted visible, public confrontations with the party line and were duly noted in her CCCP file. With the benefit of hindsight (2002), Rebérioux herself saw a longer gestation for her exclusion:

Plus exposée que d'autres, je suis exclue en 1969 après avoir animé les premières *Six heures pour le Vietnam* et participé aux derniers rassemblements avec le Mouvement de la Paix, grâce à [André] Souquière, en 1967. Mon exclusion entraîne de la part du Syndicat, ce qui était incroyable, le retrait de mes responsabilités au Collectif. C'est que avec Laurent Schwartz et d'autres nous créons France Solidarité Indochine [...] pas question de critiquer le parti publiquement, mais les relations organiques ont cessé.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> PCF archives, Colonel Fabien. 62/883 Dossier biographique Madeleine Rebérioux. Secrétariat CCCP n. 2995 (4 March 1969). René Gallissot, 'L'après-Mai 1968 de la revue *Politique aujourd'hui*. Le Mai des intellectuels communistes sous horizon national-populaire', in *Avenirs et avant-gardes en France, XIX<sup>e</sup>-XX<sup>e</sup> siècles : hommage à Madeleine Rebérioux*, eds. Vincent Duclert, Rémi Fabre and Patrick Fridenson (Paris: Découverte, 1999), p.373. Noirot, the editor-in-chief, discusses the creation of the revue in *La mémoire ouverte*, pp.315-319.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> 62/883 Secrétariat CCCP n. 2995 (4 March 1969).

<sup>87</sup> Gallissot, 'L'après-Mai 1968 de la revue *Politique aujourd'hui*', p.375.

<sup>88</sup> 647AP/97 Dossier Madeleine, typed statement, 'Rebérioux' (30 May 1968), p.1.

<sup>89</sup> Rousseau, 'Art et monde social', p.136.

In addition to reinforcing her long personal history of anticolonial engagement, this personal reflection demonstrated Rebérioux's enduring loyalty to the party, as well as revealing the complex context of her exclusion. Her removal from the PCF had significant ramifications for her anti-imperialist activism. SNÉSup was closely intertwined with the PCF and thus her exclusion from the party had severe consequences for her anticolonial engagement within the Collective.

Despite the general silence in her papers on the issue of the PCF, there is one key letter from Rebérioux's personal archives which directly referenced her rupture with the party. At the end of April 1969 Éric Walter, a SNÉSup member and historian of the French Revolution based at Amiens, wrote to Rebérioux to see if the Collective still existed after the recent upheavals of May '68 and the referendum:

Comment vont les cours à Vincennes ? Et les rapports avec le PCF ? (sujet brûlant : cette question n'est pas une inquisition... mais l'occasion de vous dire que j'ai suivi en toute sympathie vos difficultés avec le bureau politique). Tout compte fait – mais ceci est une opinion, non une « leçon » (!) – *Politique* ne me semble pas une revue si intéressante et si ouverte (« révisionnisme à sens unique ») qu'elle mérite une rupture avec le PCF.<sup>90</sup>

Walter's letter is one of the rare documents which directly alluded to her exclusion. Yet it is equally valuable to understand how contemporaries understood Rebérioux's relations with the PCF. Walter did not consider *Politique aujourd'hui* as a worthy cause for expulsion. The letter equally illustrated Rebérioux's personal hurt over her removal, implied as temporary in the correspondence. Walter also indicated changes in her professional status, referencing her move from the Sorbonne to the new centre at Vincennes.

### 6.3.2 *Alternative narratives: the PCF files*

There is however an alternative narrative which could account for Rebérioux's exclusion in 1969. A hitherto obscured story, Rebérioux's *dossier biographique* at the CCCP reveals reports from various party officials from 1947 to 1969 which suggest a different cause for her exclusion.<sup>91</sup> Whilst it was clear before looking at this documentation that

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<sup>90</sup> 20000529/3 Letter, Walter to Rebérioux (28 April 1969), pp.1-2.

<sup>91</sup> 62/883 Dossier biographique Madeleine Rebérioux; 62/882 Dossier biographique Jean Rebérioux.

Rebérioux had done plenty to challenge her party membership through her anticolonial action, according to the PCF, it was in fact an internal accusation which set up her exclusion. Madeleine's younger sister Paulette Fischer (née Amoudruz, 1922-1991) wrote a series of secret letters in 1947 which denounced her sister as an undesirable member of the party.<sup>92</sup> These records followed Rebérioux within party bureaucracy for the subsequent two decades until her final exclusion in 1969.

In these reports Paulette categorised the Amoudruzs as 'une famille bourgeoise anti-communiste'.<sup>93</sup> Madeleine's subscription to the PCF, according to her sister, was 'un coup de théâtre pour sa famille et ses connaissances'.<sup>94</sup> Paulette stated that from 1939 onwards Rebérioux took up an extreme-pacifist position which bordered on fascism. Her sister maintained that Rebérioux – who was a student at ÉNS Sèvres during the War – was under the influence of various 'undesirable' figures including Michel Alexandre, Félicien Challaye, Léon Émery, Germaine Decaris and Maurice Paz. More shocking still, Paulette claimed that:

Par ailleurs, elle subit en 1941 une autre influence celle de Pierre Boutang, alors professeur de philosophie à Clermont-Ferrand, fasciste tendance AF [Action française] actuellement rédacteur en chef de *L'Époque*. Elle deviendra sa maitresse et il en profite pour tirer d'elle des renseignements. Elle restera l'amie de Boutang jusqu'au milieu 1946 (et l'est peut être encore maintenant mais je l'ignore).<sup>95</sup>

It is worth stressing that, although Boutang was Rebérioux's teacher, there is no empirical evidence to substantiate these claims. Rebérioux herself wrote in 1955 that 'Je n'ai pas participé à la Résistance. J'étais à cette époque « pacifiste intégrale » et encore loin du Parti'.<sup>96</sup> Paulette's reports were postscripted with the note that 'encore une fois Madeleine Rebérioux est ma sœur, et je demande pour des raisons faciles à comprendre que l'origine de ce rapport lui soit toujours inconnu'.<sup>97</sup> Whilst surprising, these kinds of reports conform to experiences recounted in the recent collective study *Europe's 1968*,

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<sup>92</sup> Paulette's entry in the Maitron dictionary describes her thus: 'Elle incarnait l'image du militant indéfectiblement fidèle à la Révolution d'Octobre et à la ligne du parti'. Françoise Olivier-Utard, 'Fischer Paulette [née Amoudruz Paulette]', *Maitron en ligne* <http://maitron-en-ligne.univ-paris1.fr/spip.php?article23814>, (2008) [accessed 21 March 2015].

<sup>93</sup> 62/883 Paulette Fischer, 'Rapport sur l'activité de Mme Rebérioux' (31 January 1947), p.1.

<sup>94</sup> 62/883 Paulette Fischer, 'Note sur Rebérioux, Madeleine' (9 May 1947), p.3.

<sup>95</sup> 62/883 Paulette Fischer, 'Rapport sur l'activité de Mme Rebérioux' (31 January 1947), p.1.

<sup>96</sup> Quoted in Fridenson, 'Rebérioux, Madeleine [née Amoudruz]', p.382.

<sup>97</sup> 62/883 Paulette Fischer, 'Note sur Rebérioux, Madeleine' (9 May 1947), p.4.

that French activists tend to have 'stories that pivot on familial conflict'.<sup>98</sup> Certainly Rebérioux's PCF file points to a complex relationship between the two sisters.

Despite Rebérioux's denial that she was Boutang's mistress when interviewed by a party official in 1950, Paulette's insinuations stuck. In March 1950 an internal memorandum instructed party members to 'veiller à ce qu'elle [Rebérioux] n'ait pas de responsabilité'.<sup>99</sup> Other reports stated that the Fédération Haut-Rhin 'devrait toutefois suivre son comportement' and Rebérioux was labelled as 'un élément étranger au parti'.<sup>100</sup> However, it is not clear how widespread these ordonnances were made, especially as Rebérioux had already served as an elected municipal PCF councillor in Mulhouse in the late 1940s.<sup>101</sup> Evidently much of the content in Rebérioux's file is based on rumour and slander. A *dossier biographique* was only opened if there were negative reports to be made.<sup>102</sup> It is doubtful whether Rebérioux would have been aware of the file's contents. Documents such as these tell a family history which may perhaps never be unravelled; Madeleine's son Pierre-Yves Rebérioux indicated that these documents were not to be taken seriously, an unsurprising position.<sup>103</sup> Nevertheless, the PCF files are useful in that they show how individuals were seen through the eyes of their contemporaries rather than from our more sanitised historical standpoint, highlighting contradictions in an individual's life in the process.<sup>104</sup> Despite the slander and unsubstantiated claims, these documents are still valuable. Created outside of Rebérioux's control, they offer a narrative to counter her own private papers.

On balance, the root cause of Rebérioux's exclusion was her approach to contemporary intellectual politics which was distinct from the party line. The PCF prided itself on its self-identification as the 'party of intelligence'.<sup>105</sup> As we have seen during the events of May '68, in return members were expected to prioritise the interests of the party over

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<sup>98</sup> Gildea, Mark and Warring (eds.), *Europe's 1968*, p.62.

<sup>99</sup> 62/883 Annexe réservé au secrétariat (22 March 1950).

<sup>100</sup> 62/883 Rapport sur Madeleine Rebérioux (Mulhouse) par J Llante (13 April 1950).

<sup>101</sup> Frey, 'Être Algérien à Mulhouse en 1950', p.84.

<sup>102</sup> Interview with Isabelle Lassignardie, PCF CCCP archivist (17 March 2015).

<sup>103</sup> Interview with Pierre-Yves Rebérioux (12 March 2015).

<sup>104</sup> Andrew Smith, 'Character study: Christ of the Corbières' (31 March 2015), <https://awmsmith.wordpress.com/2015/03/31/character-study-the-christ-of-the-corbieres/> [accessed 1 June 2015].

<sup>105</sup> Verdès-Leroux, *Au service du parti*, p.15.

their own right to individual expression. Yet Rebérioux demanded freedom, both as an intellectual and as an historian, which ultimately contributed to her dismissal from the PCF. As she later reflected, 'le grand problème du parti, c'est qu'une fois qu'il s'est forgé un point de vue, il n'accepte pas d'en débattre et c'est là que ça ne marche pas, c'est là que tout s'est coincé'.<sup>106</sup> For Rebérioux, the PCF lost its passion in the late 1960s. Members had been ready to die for their causes, whether it was the USSR, Algeria or other domestic issues 'mais quand plus personne n'a envie de se faire tuer pour un objectif, cet objectif cesse d'être. Avoir envie de se faire tuer c'est aussi avoir envie de vivre [...] je n'ai jamais pu supporter qu'on humilie les gens, je ne supporte pas l'humiliation'.<sup>107</sup> This slightly incongruous quotation runs counter to Rebérioux's emphasis on peace and non-violence. Yet it goes some way to understanding the 'passion' of being a committed PCF member, a notion which is often difficult to comprehend from a twenty-first century Western perspective.

### 6.3.3 *Creating a new type of university: Vincennes*

It is impossible to evaluate the personal consequences of May '68 for Rebérioux without mentioning her role at Vincennes. At the invitation of Jacques Julliard, in the autumn of 1968 Rebérioux took up a teaching post at the new hyper-politicised *centre expérimental* at Vincennes.<sup>108</sup> The new university quickly became infamous for its revolutionary approaches to academia: a focus on the interdisciplinary, small-group teaching, limited use of exams, courses which were open to all rather than just those holding a *baccalauréat*. The centre was equally renowned for its radical politics, a melting-pot of the extreme-left which Rebérioux described as 'un ghetto de gauchisme [...] les profs les plus contestataires se sont repliés à Vincennes'.<sup>109</sup> Pedagogical and institutional innovation at Vincennes was one positive element to result from the defeat of the student movement in May '68. At an individual level, Rebérioux's move to Vincennes also signalled a shift in her historical interests. Although she retained her passion for

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<sup>106</sup> Rousseau, 'Art et monde social', p.123.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p.142.

<sup>108</sup> Interview with Marie-Noëlle Thibault (September 2014). 647AP/3-4 contains notes from Rebérioux's activities at Vincennes during the 1970s; Bibliothèque université Paris VIII Fonds Vincennes V123 (fonds Assia Melamed) contains interviews with Rebérioux and thirteen other teaching and administrative staff.

<sup>109</sup> Interview with Rebérioux (October 1969) in Chapsal and Manceaux (eds.), *Les professeurs pour quoi faire ?*, p.153.



Jean Jaurès and French socialism the new environment led her to work on women from an interdisciplinary perspective, a first for Rebérioux who had previously been uninterested by women's history.<sup>110</sup>

As this chapter is limited to an examination of May '68 there is not the opportunity to fully examine Rebérioux's role in constructing a new form of university education at Vincennes.<sup>111</sup> Nevertheless, it is important to recognise the manifold repercussions of May '68 for Rebérioux's career. It is also worth acknowledging the afterlives of many of the proposals suggested in the occupied Sorbonne in Vincennes a year later: it was as Pierre Merlin described it, 'l'héritier de 1968'.<sup>112</sup> Rebérioux certainly viewed the creation of Vincennes as the partial product of reforms discussed during the *assemblées générales* in May-June 1968. However, at the same time the pedagogical innovation of Vincennes was maligned by the political fallout from the same period, including a lack of funding, uncertain government support and political factionalism on campus. Nevertheless, Vincennes provided a base for students to demand change across society as a whole, not just within Higher Education. Rebérioux recognised a bridge had been crossed: 'Je crois qu'à partir de l'enterrement du mouvement de mai nous avons tous compris qu'une étape politique était franchie'.<sup>113</sup> The seal on limiting open debate to university issues had been broken.

## 6.4 Conclusion

May '68 saw an unprecedented chain of events which, although contested politically and intellectually, had wide-ranging cultural, social, gender and pedagogical ramifications which stretched beyond France's borders.<sup>114</sup> The period of 1968-9 marked a decisive moment in Rebérioux's trajectory, in terms of her networks, modes of engagement and intellectual and academic environments. Considering her reflexive personal history –

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<sup>110</sup> Béatrice Slama, 'Quand nous travaillions sur les femmes à Vincennes dans les années 70', in *Avenirs et avant-gardes en France, XIX<sup>e</sup>-XX<sup>e</sup> siècles : hommage à Madeleine Rebérioux*, eds. Vincent Duclert, Rémi Fabre and Patrick Fridenson (Paris: Découverte, 1999), pp.32-49.

<sup>111</sup> Vincennes is an area I wish to explore further in my future research.

<sup>112</sup> Jacqueline Brunet, Bernard Cassen, François Châtelet, Pierre Merlin and Madeleine Rebérioux (eds.), *Vincennes ; ou le désir d'apprendre* (Paris: Éditions Alain Moreau, 1979), p.9.

<sup>113</sup> Dreyfus-Armand, 'La Sorbonne occupée', p.156.

<sup>114</sup> Callu (ed.), *Le mai 68 des historiens*, p.28.

how she made sense of her activism – Rebérioux did acknowledge 1968 as a personal turning point, commenting in 1999 that the period represented ‘une nouvelle ardeur, de nouveaux thèmes d’enseignement et de recherche liés à une forte attente étudiante comme l’enquête sur les ouvriers du livre, l’étude de la production culturelle en relation avec le mouvement social, le débat intellectuel sur les avants-gardes’.<sup>115</sup> 1968 did not trigger the end of her anticolonial engagement as this remained a constant throughout her life, but her experiences initiated a shift from her longstanding anticolonial, anti-imperialist concerns to a more universal approach to militant themes, which would eventually culminate in her presidency of the Ligue des droits de l’homme. The break was largely caused by her expulsion from the PCF which brought an end to her communist activism and reconfigured her roles in SNÉSup and her position at the centre of the Collective.

Rebérioux was not alone: 1968 signified a rupture for many of its participants. Some of the 500 activists interviewed for *Europe’s 1968* presented the period as the start of ‘a struggle that is still incomplete; the fight for a more tolerant, less nationalistic, more liberal and westernised society’.<sup>116</sup> Although Rebérioux would not have agreed with all of this statement – certainly notions of liberalism and westernisation remained contentious for her – tolerance and the place of the individual in relation to the nation became important themes within her engagement, especially during her LDH presidency. Rebérioux’s trajectory in this sense was not unique and can be compared to individuals such as Bernard Kouchner, who after 1968 moved towards international humanitarianism.<sup>117</sup> For Rebérioux one of the fundamental lessons of the Sorbonne in 1968 was refiguring the relationship between speech and action (‘parole et pratique’) and the relationship between individuals and bureaucratic organisations like the PCF. In her case, her ‘parole’ – participation in *Politique aujourd’hui* and her active critical voice of anticolonialism – had ramifications for the ‘pratique’. Her expulsion from the PCF led to new directions in her militancy, namely a focus on human rights and new approaches to Republican identity politics as explored in the next chapter.

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<sup>115</sup> Interview with Rebérioux by Vincent Duclert (20 March 1999), quoted in Duclert, Fabre and Fridenson (eds.), *Avenirs et avant-gardes en France*, p.396.

<sup>116</sup> Gildea, Mark and Warring (eds.), *Europe’s 1968*, p.287.

<sup>117</sup> Julian Jackson, ‘Rethinking May 68’, in *May 68: Rethinking France’s Last Revolution*, eds. Julian Jackson, Anna-Louise Milne and James Williams (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p.14.

As this case study has revealed, the explosion of political, social and cultural protest witnessed in May 1968 was rooted in the activities of the Collective and other comparable groups earlier in the decade. Chapters five and six offer a fresh perspective on the mechanics of protest during this tumultuous period. For many activists, time during the 1960s accelerated, allowing little time for reflection.<sup>118</sup> Rebérioux and her LMS colleagues chose to open *La Sorbonne par elle-même* with a text by the Collective calling for academics to demonstrate in the Latin Quarter on 21 February 1968.<sup>119</sup> The accompanying paratext observed that ‘c’est dans l’action anti-impérialiste, en particulier pour la victoire du peuple vietnamien, que se forment et se retrouvent les premiers cadres du Mouvement’.<sup>120</sup> Historians writing after 1968 have concurred with her, observing how many elements of protest against Vietnam fed into May ‘68. For Michael Scott Christofferson, political events organised as part of the anti-war movement ‘prefigured the creative anarchy of 1968’.<sup>121</sup> Meanwhile Laurent Jalabert viewed the anti-war movement as ‘une véritable formation politique’ for an entire generation.<sup>122</sup> The anti-war movement offered a certain temporary cohesion to the radical left which was shattered by the May movement.<sup>123</sup>

May ‘68 brought together the various dimensions of Rebérioux’s identity: teacher, historian, communist, trade unionist, anti-imperialist and member of the Algerian generation, demonstrating the astuteness of Perrot’s label ‘multiple Madeleine’. Through her militancy and professional responsibilities Rebérioux cut across many different groups rather than representing the stereotyped *soixante-huitard* as a disenfranchised worker or despondent student. Her archives equally pose questions about gender: the visibility of women or thinking more broadly, about the emergence of individuals rather than collective bodies in this period.<sup>124</sup> Did Rebérioux have a voice that was distinct from the networks she represented? Michelle Perrot, when conceptualising her own

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<sup>118</sup> Gildea, Mark and Warring (eds.), *Europe's 1968*, p.311.

<sup>119</sup> Perrot, Perrot, Rebérioux and Maitron, 'La Sorbonne par elle-même', p.18.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p.17.

<sup>121</sup> Christofferson, *French Intellectuals against the Left*, p.51.

<sup>122</sup> Jalabert, 'Aux origines de la génération 1968', p.78.

<sup>123</sup> Pas, '« Six Heures pour le Vietnam »', p.158.

<sup>124</sup> Cécile Formaglio and Anne-Sophie Lechev-Allier, 'Femmes, quels partis pris ? Féminisme et gender studies', in *Le mai 68 des historiens : entre identités narratives et histoire orale*, ed. Agnès Callu (Villeneuve-d'Ascq: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2010), p.171.

engagement referred to group activities such as editing *Le Mouvement social* or drafting *La Sorbonne par elle-même* rather than of her agency as an individual.<sup>125</sup> This case study makes clear that 1968 was the turning point in the visibility of Rebérioux's militancy, where her position as an individual became more distinct. From 1969 onwards she was no longer one of many in a collective, a committee or an organisation but began to speak out as an important leader. Rebérioux's growing status as an academic and militant figure was a direct result of two decades of anticolonial engagement, along with her role within the internal trade-union and party mechanics of the Sorbonne.

Rebérioux's archives from the period present neither a celebratory nor a condemnatory account of May '68.<sup>126</sup> Instead they represent, as quoted in the introduction of this chapter, 'a collage of individual, sometimes ephemeral, subjectivities' which demonstrate how the protest was experienced through the eyes of an individual who sat at the crossroads between many different political groups in the Sorbonne.<sup>127</sup>

Rebérioux's archives aptly illustrated how the protest was wedded to wider global perspectives, in retrospect if not at the time. Press coverage on the protests collected by Rebérioux after 1968 included articles on Vietnam, American protest against the conflict, assassinations of Bob Kennedy and Pastor King, the Prague Spring and the Soviet invasion, worldwide student protest from the Far East, Africa and Latin America and Black Power at the Olympic Games.<sup>128</sup> Additionally, May '68 can implicitly be traced in her work as an historian. Agnès Callu has suggested that May has become romanticised in many historians' memories. Medievalist Pierre Riché saw it as the equivalent of cultural revolution in the twelfth century, for Jacques Dupâquier it was another 1789 whilst early-modernist Yves-Marie Bercé conceived of it as another 1848.<sup>129</sup> Rebérioux's approach was more pragmatic. In notes preparing work on the history of social movements, Rebérioux constructed a timeline of protest during May from the Third to the Fifth Republics.<sup>130</sup> The timeline started in May 1891 and included Jaurès's speech at Pré-Saint-Gervais (May 1913), mutinies during the First World War (May 1917), Front Populaire strikes (May-June 1936), the post-war strikes of May 1947-

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Gildea, Mark and Warring (eds.), *Europe's 1968*, p.324.

<sup>127</sup> Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*, p.17.

<sup>128</sup> 647AP/97 Dossier '30 ans après'. Press cuttings from *Courier International* (May 1998).

<sup>129</sup> Callu, 'Conscience politique et conscience historienne', p.143.

<sup>130</sup> 647AP/90 Rebérioux handwritten untitled note (undated).

48, May 1968, May 1981, student protest in May 1983, the anti-Semitic attacks at Carpentras in May 1990 and violence in banlieues in May 1991. Such an analysis implicitly placed her own activism in a longer tradition and history of labour protest. In this way, Rebérioux also effectively inscribed her own militancy in the historical narrative.

Rebérioux's experiences of May '68 as recorded in her private papers highlighted the importance of her profession as an historian. Callu has observed how involvement in the protest led to historiographical innovation in some sub-fields, most notably an emphasis the present, leading to the creation of the IHTP.<sup>131</sup> *La Sorbonne par elle-même* arguably contributed to the historiographical development of working on periods 'à chaud'; it is one of the key examples which contradicted Rebérioux's insistence that she only worked on periods outside of her own lifetime. Yet the label of historian is perhaps too broad a term to be meaningful in this context. Individuals within the profession differed according to social trajectories, subject specialism, institutional affiliation, ideological preferences and gender.<sup>132</sup> During this time Rebérioux's growing expertise on Jaurès, her reputation as an anticolonial campaigner and her disinterest in gender as a barrier to her profession distinguished her from her contemporaries. Her expulsion from the PCF in 1969 marked her out from fellow students of Labrousse such as Michelle Perrot, François Furet, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie and Maurice Agulhon who chose to leave the PCF well before Rebérioux was excluded. British historian Sheila Rowbotham has explored the challenges of being a 'remembering historian', such as dealing with personal archives of documents collected during key moments and the problem of interpreting one's own memories.<sup>133</sup> The label of 'historian' does not give further weight to these memories, or in Rebérioux's case, to her archives. Rather, the professional qualities of detachment, critique, objectivity and the ability to observe and interpret the world helps 'remembering witnesses' to place events in a considered framework of cause and effect.<sup>134</sup> Rebérioux's 'multiple' militancy in 1968 reinforces the idea that the discipline of history in France functions as more than simply an academic field.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Callu, 'L'histoire du temps proche', p.272.

<sup>132</sup> Revel, 'L'historien, l'événement', p.17.

<sup>133</sup> Gildea, Mark and Warring (eds.), *Europe's 1968*, p.v.

<sup>134</sup> Maifflet and Richard, 'Qu'est-ce qu'un historien ? Essais typologiques et imaginaires sociaux', p.95.

<sup>135</sup> Anne Simonin, 'Conclusion: does history have a French accent?', in *Writing Contemporary History*, eds. Robert Gildea and Anne Simonin (London: Hodder Education, 2008), p.195.

## Chapter 7. Presiding over the Ligue des droits de l'homme

*Ni parti, ni syndicat, ni organisation humanitaire,  
ni mouvement antiraciste, elle occupe, par sa  
vision des droits et de la citoyenneté et par son  
type de militantisme, une place originale dans la  
vie de ce pays.*

**Madeleine Rebérioux**<sup>136</sup>

### 7.1 Introduction

In 1991 Madeleine Rebérioux became president of the Ligue des droits de l'homme et du citoyen. Founded during the Dreyfus affair, for over a century the League has played an active role in campaigning for political and social justice. Rebérioux's leadership (1991-5) was a significant period of change: she was the first historian, 'communist' and female to lead the prestigious human rights organisation.<sup>137</sup> More importantly, for her as a person the presidency marked a new direction in her militancy. Focussing on humanitarian and citizenship debates was a departure from her previous engagement in anticolonial and anti-imperial movements. As president Rebérioux consciously sought to continue her personal brand of militancy, using collective initiatives to facilitate political and social change. However her presidency was not a comfortable existence. Reconciling Rebérioux's strong politics with the policies of a large bureaucratic establishment, under the intense scrutiny of League members and the press, led to many tension points. Examining Rebérioux's activism within the League is critical to understanding her militancy in yet another sphere where she was able to exercise authority and leadership.

This final case study will use her papers to investigate how Rebérioux made her mark on the League, during her presidency but also later as *présidente d'honneur*, a role which she held until her death in 2005. Unlike the Comité Audin or the Collectif intersyndical the League was active well before Rebérioux was born. Rebérioux was confronted with

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<sup>136</sup> Rebérioux, *Parcours engagés*, p.464.

<sup>137</sup> In May 2015 Françoise Dumont became the second female LDH president.

running an organisation with its own long traditions of engagement. This was a departure from leading the organisations she herself founded, where she could shape practices from the beginning. Analysing Rebérioux's participation in League debates, public image and bureaucracy offers a new perspective on the praxis of her militancy, problematizing her agency as an individual within a well-established national organisation. Since Rebérioux left extensive archives recording her engagement in the League these papers can be used to show, for the first time, the many controversies during her leadership, both within the organisation and at an (inter)national level. However, conducting this analysis is not straightforward, not least because the controversies Rebérioux dealt with during the 1990s have ongoing consequences for France in the twenty-first century. The crises Rebérioux encountered can be mapped onto the Republican tripartite motto *liberté, égalité et fraternité*. Firstly, Rebérioux demonstrated her commitment to liberty and the freedom of speech through her fierce opposition to the 1990 Gayssot law. Secondly, her desire for equality can be seen through her interventions in the headscarf debates, exploring the application of *laïcité* in schools. Lastly, the development and promotion of social citizenship as a political remedy for social crisis substantiated Rebérioux's concern for fraternity and is remembered as Rebérioux's most important contribution as League president.<sup>138</sup>

My analysis of these three areas reveals how Rebérioux balanced 'fitting in' with League traditions alongside her innate desire to innovate as a militant. More importantly, this case study shows how Rebérioux, as a militant, was able to renew her engagement in shifting political and social contexts. As president she engaged in pertinent flashpoints in the application of French Republican ideals at the end of the twentieth century, a time when profound shifts in western societies were taking place. As Max Silverman has theorised, at this time France was grappling with how to deal with the age of 'posts': post-industrial, post-modern, post-communist and post-ideological.<sup>139</sup> Such debates were acutely reflected in Rebérioux's actions as League president. Nevertheless, the contemporaneity of this chapter's subject matter does present difficulties for the researcher, not least as the debates discussed below have ongoing significance for

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<sup>138</sup> Interview with Vincent Rebérioux (16 January 2014). Vincent, Rebérioux's youngest son, is currently vice-president of the League.

<sup>139</sup> *Facing Postmodernity: Contemporary French Thought on Culture and Society* (London: Routledge, 1999), p.4.

France today: the use of legislation in response to political extremism, debates concerning the nature of religion and the state, and what it means to be a French citizen in the twenty-first century. These issues indicate how perspicacious Rebérioux's interventions were, even from the perspective of over a decade after her death in 2005.

### 7.1.1 *The Ligue des droits de l'homme*

Founded in 1898 during Émile Zola's slander trial, the League formed the vanguard of a socio-political movement which sought to protect the Republic during a fraught period of political and intellectual change.<sup>140</sup> The organisation took its lead from the 1789 *Déclaration des droits de l'homme*, a text which placed the guarantee of rights of the individual in the hands of the nation.<sup>141</sup> Signed on 4 June 1898, the League's founding statutes avowed that 'à partir de ce jour, toute personne dont la liberté serait menacée ou dont le droit serait voilé est assurée de trouver auprès de nous aide et assistance'.<sup>142</sup> The League reached its apogee during the interwar years: in 1936 the League counted 180,000 ordinary members including political leaders such as Édouard Herriot, Léon Blum and Paul Painlevé.<sup>143</sup> Yet by the end of the Second World War the League was practically moribund, a decline which has led to some historiographical debate. Whilst Rebérioux believed Vichy caused the League's fall in popularity, other historians including Norman Ingram have argued the League was already in decline before 1939, citing crisis over colonisation and pacifism at the 1937 congress as the primary cause of the League's deterioration. Historical research on the League was hampered by the disappearance of its archives, confiscated during the Occupation by the Gestapo and shipped to Germany. The documents were considered all but lost until they were rediscovered in Russia shortly after the end of Rebérioux's presidency.<sup>144</sup> After a long process of negotiation, the papers were eventually repatriated to the Bibliothèque de

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<sup>140</sup> Gildea, *The Past in French History*, p.40.

<sup>141</sup> Madeleine Rebérioux, 'La naissance de la Ligue des droits de l'homme', in *L'affaire Dreyfus de A à Z*, ed. Michel Drouin (Paris: Flammarion, 1994), p.414.

<sup>142</sup> Madeleine Rebérioux, 'La Ligue des droits de l'homme et la question coloniale : quelques remarques sur les choix', *Après-Demain*, 403-404 (1998), p.24.

<sup>143</sup> Norman Ingram, 'Selbstmord or euthanasia? Who killed the Ligue des droits de l'homme?', *French History*, 22 3 (2008), p.338.

<sup>144</sup> 647AP/42 Letter, Claude Penetier to Rebérioux (2 March 1996).



documentation internationale et contemporaine in Paris in 2000.<sup>145</sup> The return of the archives fuelled a resurgence of historical interest in the League, with notable works by Emmanuel Naquet, William Irvine and Norman Ingram among others.<sup>146</sup>

Rebérioux's presidency, however, falls in a period which has received little scholarly attention. The only rigorous analysis to explicitly focus on the League after the Second World War has been Éric Agrikoliansky's sociological survey of the period 1945-1994.<sup>147</sup> Nevertheless, recent historiography surrounding the League's internal and external crises in the inter-war years provides a useful background for contextualising Rebérioux's presidency six decades later. In particular, William Irvine's research has explored the difficulties of reconciling political allegiances with the defence of civil liberties.<sup>148</sup> Irvine's work is useful for framing Rebérioux's own political engagement as League president, specifically her past association with the PCF. Nevertheless, this case study goes further and demonstrates how involvement in the League acted as an alternative vehicle for Rebérioux's political and social engagement, militancy which was previously expressed through her involvement in the PCF and its associated networks. Rebérioux's status as League president offered a far greater intellectual freedom than she had experienced in her previous militant engagements, partly due to her growth in academic status but also due to the fact she was operating outside the confines of the PCF.

### 7.1.2 *Rebérioux and the League*

Whilst Rebérioux's presidency denoted a new humanitarian stage in her militancy, it also constituted a rupture in the long history of the League's defence of human rights.

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<sup>145</sup> 647AP/42 contains Rebérioux's correspondence concerning the repatriation of the League's archives. See also Sonia Combe and Grégory Cingal (eds.), *Retour de Moscou : Les archives de la Ligue des droits de l'homme, 1898-1940* (Paris: Découverte, 2004).

<sup>146</sup> Emmanuel Naquet, 'La Ligue des droits de l'homme : une association en politique (1898-1940)' (Docteur, Institut d'études politiques de Paris, 2005); William Irvine, *Between Justice and Politics: the Ligue des droits de l'homme, 1898-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007); Ingram, 'Selbstmord or euthanasia?'; Norman Ingram, 'Pacifism, the fascist temptation and the Ligue des droits de l'homme', in *The French Right Between the Wars: Political and Intellectual Movements from Conservatism to Fascism*, eds. Samuel Kalman and Sean Kennedy (NY: Berghahn, 2014), pp.81-95.

<sup>147</sup> Rebérioux was on Agrikoliansky's *jury de thèse* in January 1997. *La Ligue française des droits de l'homme et du citoyen*.

<sup>148</sup> Irvine, *Between Justice and Politics*, p.4.

Rebérioux was the first female president, the first 'communist' and the first full-time professional historian to lead the organisation – previous presidents were (male) lawyers and politicians. As an historian, Rebérioux's personal understanding of the League's long history added a new facet to the role of president. Many of the crises during the 1990s, such as the rise of the far right and problems with the application of *laïcité* were products of longer historical problems and thus Rebérioux was able to use her historical expertise to intervene from an informed position. Many members welcomed the refreshing change Rebérioux's academic leadership offered. As one member commented after Rebérioux's retirement: 'Nous étions si contents d'avoir une femme universitaire comme Présidente qui bouscule les choses !'.<sup>149</sup> Rebérioux's status as a 'communist' was more contentious. In 1922 the League had voted against the compatibility of PCF membership with League ideals.<sup>150</sup> Although Rebérioux was excluded from the PCF in 1969, she never publicly renounced her association with the Communist party and was linked with the PCF in the public imagination. From the beginning of her presidency, Rebérioux anticipated that her political 'baggage' could alienate some League members: 'Vous avez élu une ancienne communiste. Et, qui plus est, une ancienne communiste non-repentie'.<sup>151</sup>

23 boxes at Pierrefitte record her involvement in League business, from internal bureaucracy, publications and campaigns to the controversies explored below.<sup>152</sup> The number of boxes makes the LDH one of the most abundant topics within Rebérioux's private papers at the AN. A further two boxes at the Musée de l'histoire vivante contain additional League papers from her presidency.<sup>153</sup> Although many of the MHV texts are duplicates of those at the AN, these archives are essential as photography is permitted, allowing further analysis away from the archive. Taken together, these 25 LDH boxes differ to her papers concerning anticolonial committees or trade-union activism in that they reflect the League's internal bureaucratic structure, underscoring Rebérioux's autonomy in earlier periods. In comparison with previous case studies there is significantly more material to examine from her League presidency, leading to

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<sup>149</sup> 647AP/41 Letter, Martine Cocquet to Rebérioux (22 June 1994), p.2.

<sup>150</sup> Irvine, *Between Justice and Politics*, p.41.

<sup>151</sup> 647AP/43 Rebérioux, 'Éditorial : Forger les concepts, mettre en œuvre les actes', *Hommes et Libertés* 62 (July-August 1991), p.6.

<sup>152</sup> 647AP/41-56, 63-67, 93-94.

<sup>153</sup> MHV 6MR6-7.

numerous research trips to the archives (January 2014, May 2014 and November 2015). Whilst the types of documents are similar – correspondence, annotated newspaper clippings, publications and drafts for public speeches – the majority of her League papers carry signs of the League’s centralised bureaucratic system. Copies of letters, faxes or dossiers were stamped with the date of receipt at the LDH headquarters; administrative staff initialled which members of the *comité central* or *bureau national* were to be copied in. Such marginalia reinforces how the League was a well-oiled machine with a system that worked for Rebérioux, a system reflected in her own papers. One major benefit of the LDH bureaucracy is the preservation of Rebérioux’s own letters. Using faxes meant that often correspondence was handwritten by the president before being faxed to the recipient. Unlike records for other periods of her militancy, a broader picture of Rebérioux’s engagement can thus be painted, although the fax copies of correspondence are beginning to fade with time, despite the AN’s rigorous conservation conditions.<sup>154</sup>

One absent record from Rebérioux’s paper archives is the story of her early years in the League. During the Algerian war Rebérioux worked with League president and former resistance member Daniel Mayer to publish the *Bulletin* for the Comité Audin. In 1964 Mayer invited her to join the League’s *comité central*. The two shared a hatred of Guy Mollet, and Rebérioux remembered Mayer telling her ‘Madeleine, il y a quelqu’un qui déteste plus Guy Mollet que vous, c’est moi’.<sup>155</sup> Their exchange is a critical example of the classic divisions within the left during the 1950s concerning the exercise of government and the direction of colonial policy. Nevertheless, the Algerian conflict boosted the League’s membership, which had been in decline since the Second World War, leading to the creation of new sections.<sup>156</sup> For the first time, the League agreed to oppose colonisation. Rebérioux’s political allegiances, however, made her reluctant to join the *comité central*: ‘Écoutez, moi je comprends rien à ce truc... c’est créé par des

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<sup>154</sup> The Australian National Archives has warned of the dangers of printed faxes fading in the archives and advise that data be transcribed before archiving. <http://naa.gov.au/records-management/agency/preserve/physical-preservation/thermal-papers.aspx> [accessed 08/12/2015].

<sup>155</sup> Mayer was sanctioned by the SFIO during the Algerian war for his refusal to vote for special powers and his opposition to Mollet’s colonial politics. Rebérioux considered Mollet responsible for the torture committed by French army in Algeria. *Paroles d'historiens*, Part. 4 : Le choix de la liberté, Chap. 41 : La Ligue des droits de l’homme.

<sup>156</sup> 647AP/41 Rebérioux handwritten note, ‘La Ligue des droits de l’homme’ (undated), p.6.

socialistes, je connais absolument rien...en plus je suis communiste !'<sup>157</sup> Yet Mayer persisted, arguing that the League needed someone younger, someone more 'brazen' like Rebérioux. When Rebérioux replied that they would constantly disagree over anticolonial politics, Mayer allegedly retorted 'tant pis, Madeleine, au contraire, j'ai besoin de gens qui soient une véritable opposition', indicating how Rebérioux's political identity could balance out the conservatism of the old LDH guard. PCF membership could offer a balance to others' politics.<sup>158</sup> In the decade that followed, Rebérioux's involvement in the LDH was intermittent, especially following May 1968, her exclusion from the PCF and her role in the establishment of Vincennes university. 1975 marked a tipping point: Rebérioux became a member of the League's *bureau national* and from this point onwards her involvement became more sustained. After presenting reports on *laïcité*, the army and young people's rights, in 1980 Rebérioux became president of the *Commission d'extrême-droite* and was elected League president in 1991.

Rebérioux's day-to-day life became closely entangled with the League. After her husband Jean died in 1992 she moved from the outskirts of Paris to a flat on Boulevard Arago in the fourteenth arrondissement, which was less than five minutes' walk from the League headquarters situated at 27, rue Jean Dolent.<sup>159</sup> The move led to her frequent physical presence in the League, which exacerbated existing personnel tensions within the organisation. With the exception of the disputes explored in the body of this chapter, Rebérioux was undoubtedly a popular president amongst members in the provinces and her archives record her willingness to travel across the country and meet with local sections.<sup>160</sup> League members felt able to communicate their local section grievances with the national president. Two examples, representative of archival evidence, testify to her interest in local League activities. In 1994 Michèle Talec wrote to complain that her local section at Brest had not met for over two years due to the section president's lack of leadership.<sup>161</sup> At the end of her presidency in 1995, the Lille LDH newsletter recorded how, during her tenure, Rebérioux visited the city four times in four years, attending meetings, joining marches against unemployment and the Pasqua laws and giving a

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<sup>157</sup> *Paroles d'historiens*, Part. 4 : Le choix de la liberté, Chap. 41 : La Ligue des droits de l'homme.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> Interview with Gilles Candar (26 May 2014).

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.* Rebérioux's League archives record her consistent diverse range of public speeches at local section meetings across France.

<sup>161</sup> 'le président prenait seul des décisions au nom de la section, décisions qui paraissaient dans la presse locale'. 647AP/46 Letter, Michèle Talec to Rebérioux (8 December 1994).

paper on the centenary of the Dreyfus affair at a joint meeting with Lille's CGT branch.<sup>162</sup> These examples reveal the bond between leader and local sections – Rebérioux was seen by ordinary members as approachable and interested in local as well as national issues.

### 7.1.3 *Crises and controversies*

My close reading of Rebérioux's archives reveals how as president and a political militant, Rebérioux was unafraid of facing controversy, a narrative that has not been recounted elsewhere. Her papers demonstrate her confidence in courting controversy or taking a public stance which challenged the status quo. Rebérioux became president during a difficult period for the League, when it faced a chronic membership crisis.<sup>163</sup> In January 1991 the LDH reported 7,394 members; by 1995 this had fallen to 5,998.<sup>164</sup> The drop in numbers was compounded by the ageing membership. Of members surveyed between 1986 and 1994 52% were over fifty; 21% were over 65; four members were centenarians. Rebérioux herself became president at the age of 71, despite protestations from some in the *comité central* that the next president should come from a younger cohort. Furthermore, League statutes specified an age limit of 75 for holding office, restricting her tenure to four years. In her first editorial for the League magazine *Hommes et Libertés* Rebérioux admitted that she might not meet members' expectations: 'Il n'est trop clair tout d'abord que je ne vais pas rajeunir la présidence de la Ligue. Il n'est que trop clair aussi que je ne suis pas juriste mais historienne et universitaire. Vous me direz que ce fut le cas pour le grand Victor Basch et pour Paul Langevin, c'est vrai'.<sup>165</sup>

From the outset Rebérioux made clear her objectives. She sought a more 'collegial' environment within the League, with greater support for regional initiatives and an end to the 'intolerable personal quarrels' within the organisation. Rebérioux warned members of the *bureau national* by name of her intentions to improve the state of internal communications by holding more regular meetings. Such an admonition was needed: her archives record the internal difficulties within the bureaucratic structure of

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<sup>162</sup> 647AP/41 *Hommes et Libertés* Lille: La Lettre 41 (April 1995), p.2.

<sup>163</sup> 647AP/41 Dossiers 'Crise de la LDH' (1994, 1999).

<sup>164</sup> 647AP/41 'Crise de la LDH' (1999), p.3.

<sup>165</sup> 647AP/43 Rebérioux, 'Éditorial : Forger les concepts, mettre en œuvre les actes', *Hommes et Libertés* 62 (July-August 1991), p.6.

the League. Complaints over communication, budgeting and democracy in decision-making, along with the 'aggressive atmosphere' in the Paris office had led to staff resignations.<sup>166</sup> Christian Duché complained about the treatment of League volunteers, who were often left marginalised by the political conflicts between the *comité central*, the *bureau national* and the communication service.<sup>167</sup> It was true that the strain between the three divisions of LDH bureaucracy often hampered the efficacy of the association. The harmful effects of internal conflict can also be verified by the correspondence exchanged between Rebérioux, Yves Jouffa, Michel Tubiana and members of the communication service Philippe Blard and Bernard Wallon following Duché's resignation in 1994. *Bureau* members disagreed over protocol for the communication service and the best practice for distributing information internally. Many of these letters were sent by fax, which allowed swift responses from each individual, although these materials are now close to perishing due to the temporary nature of fax paper.<sup>168</sup> Rapid communication allowed heated debate to quickly escalate into personal insults about individuals' professional capabilities. Arguments like these undermined the League's efficacy in successfully intervening in politics and society and complicated Rebérioux's wider actions as president.

Rebérioux acknowledged how her presidency equally came at a difficult time for France: 'Nous entrons non pas dans les eaux joyeuses et calmes de la liberté que beaucoup voyaient s'ouvrir à la fin de 1989, mais dans une époque de tempêtes'.<sup>169</sup> The categorisation of her League archives gives some indication of the complex problems facing France: box classifications by archivists include domestic issues such as employment, lack of housing, discrimination and integration, the rise of the far right, the place of religion and citizenship, through to global issues such as France's relationship with Europe. Her presidency came two years after the fall of the Berlin wall, a period of intellectual flux as nations considered how to conduct politics in a new, post-Cold war era. Rebérioux's personal stance on these national and international questions solicited strong reactions from League members. Alongside letters praising her interventions at a

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<sup>166</sup> 647AP/41 Dossier 'crise de la LDH' (1994), especially letter, Christian Duché to Rebérioux (16 October 1994) and Olivier Dénoue's resignation letter (14 April 1994).

<sup>167</sup> 647AP/41 Resignation letter, Christian Duché (16 October 1994), p.2.

<sup>168</sup> 647AP/41 series of faxes and letters (1994).

<sup>169</sup> 647AP/43 Rebérioux, 'Éditorial : Forger les concepts, mettre en œuvre les actes', *Hommes et Libertés* 62 (July-August 1991), p.4.

local level can be found negative reviews of her presidency. One particularly aggressive petition demanded her resignation from the League for her association with communist and war criminal Georges Boudarel.<sup>170</sup> In 1991 Rebérioux signed a controversial petition defending Boudarel, a university academic who was accused of torturing French prisoners of war in Indochina during the 1950s.<sup>171</sup> The petition defended Boudarel, member of 'le maquis vietminh': 'nous entendons réagir contre le « révisionnisme » en matière d'histoire coloniale et proposer, à tous ceux qu'anime le souci de la vérité et de la justice, un débat d'idées sur les guerres menées par l'Occident contre les peuples d'outre-mer'.<sup>172</sup> In addition to hundreds of pages of press coverage on the 'Boudarel affair', archives contain twelve highly-critical letters from LDH members and war veterans. Rebérioux, still in the early months of her presidency, was forced to defend her commitment to human rights and to assert her long record of militancy.<sup>173</sup> Some League members accepted her justification, and thanked her for taking the time to explain her personal convictions.<sup>174</sup> However, as explored below, the conflict between her agency as an individual and the League's official line would come to dominate her presidency.

Drawing upon her extensive archives, this case study seeks to scrutinise Rebérioux's place and influence within the League, through an analysis of her leadership during three specific crises and campaigns during her presidency. These tension points can be mapped onto the Republican ideals of *liberté*, *égalité* and *fraternité*. My analysis of these three areas illustrates the practical problems in locating the 'idea of the Republic' in France at the end of the twentieth century.<sup>175</sup> The research presented below underscores the problems in finding a balance between competing notions of French Republican identity, or 'antibodies' as they are characterized by Vincent Duclert.<sup>176</sup> A critical reading of Rebérioux's papers reveals how she attempted to reconcile her

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<sup>170</sup> 647AP/41 Bouron, 'Pétition en vue d'obtenir la démission ou la destitution de Madame Rebérioux' (28 June 1994).

<sup>171</sup> 647AP/94 'Pétition, l'affaire Boudarel' (1991). Other signatories included Dresch, Mayer, Marianne Schaub, Schwartz, Jean-Pierre Vernant and Vidal-Naquet.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> 647AP/94 Letter, Rebérioux to Leweurs (14 October 1992).

<sup>174</sup> 647AP/94 Letter, François Guého to Rebérioux (9 August 1993).

<sup>175</sup> Edward Berenson, Vincent Duclert and Christophe Prochasson (eds.), *The French Republic: History, Values, Debates* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011). Rebérioux's actions in the LDH mirrored many of the 'battles in the Republic' which her own historical research unpicked. See section II 'Les combats dans la République' in Rebérioux, Candar and Duclert (eds.), *Vive la République !*, pp.121-255.

<sup>176</sup> Helen Drake, *Contemporary France* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p.4; Vincent Duclert, 'Beyond the "Republican model"', in *The French Republic: History, Values, Debates*, eds. Edward Berenson, Vincent Duclert and Christophe Prochasson (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), p.369.

personal politics with those of the League, in the process demonstrating how her militancy developed and adapted to new causes, contexts and organisations. Rebérioux's interventions in these debates are crucial for understanding France's contemporary political and social landscape and the themes examined in this chapter speak to wider issues under scrutiny today, such as the function of nationality, notions of integration and the balance between individual religious freedoms and the protection of free speech.

## 7.2 *Liberté: opposing the Gayssot law*

Being League president placed Rebérioux at the forefront of public opposition to the rise of far-right popular politics. Her opposition went beyond combatting the increasing popularity of the Front national (FN) to instead publicly contest the controversial Gayssot law (1990) which criminalised Holocaust denial. Conveying her hostility in print and in person, Rebérioux vociferously defended historians' right and duty to disprove negationist claims, arguing that the problem of Holocaust deniers should be resolved by open, historically-informed debate rather than through litigation. A wide range of scholarly literature explores the rise of the FN and right-wing political extremism in France since the 1980s.<sup>177</sup> The FN's growing electoral success illustrated how far the political landscape had shifted since 1968. During the 1980s, in addition to her work as vice-president of the *Établissement public du Musée d'Orsay*, Rebérioux led the multidisciplinary LDH *Commission d'extrême-droite*, culminating in the publication of research findings in *L'extrême-droite en questions* (1991).<sup>178</sup> Rebérioux's historical knowledge of the rise of political extremism and anti-Semitism during the Third Republic underpinned her opposition to both the Front national and the Gayssot law.<sup>179</sup> As this section demonstrates, Rebérioux's opposition to the legislation and her personal

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<sup>177</sup> Peter Davies, *The National Front in France: Ideology, Discourse and Power* (London: Routledge, 1999); Dominique Albertini and David Doucet, *Histoire du Front national* (Paris: Tallandier, 2013); Valérie Igounet, *Le Front national de 1972 à nos jours : le parti, les hommes, les idées* (Paris: Seuil, 2014).

<sup>178</sup> Madeleine Rebérioux (ed.), *L'extrême-droite en questions. Actes du colloque organisé par le Cercle Condorcet et la Ligue des droits de l'homme (3-4 février 1989)* (Paris: Études et documentation internationales, 1991).

<sup>179</sup> See, for example 647AP/48 Rebérioux handwritten notes, 'Caen' (26 November 1992); 'L'extrême droite en Europe' (April 1997); 'Combattre le FN' (undated).



involvement in legal cases relating to negationism (Bernard Lewis, Philippe Videlier) was highly problematic for her leadership of the League.

### 7.2.1 *Rebérioux and the Gayssot law*

During the 1990s intellectual attention tended to focus more broadly on discussion of the Vichy syndrome and the many 'affairs' and legal trials pertaining to the Second World War, such as René Bousquet, Paul Touvier and later in the decade Maurice Papon.<sup>180</sup> Rebérioux's archives reveal a unique story, of how an individual historian opposed the first of the controversial 'memorial laws'. Of the sixteen boxes on the LDH at the AN, four record her activities related to combatting negationism, indicating how important the issue was during her presidency and how vital her profession as an historian was for the League.<sup>181</sup> Whilst other sources have either noted the existence of the Gayssot law or campaigned against it from a negationist perspective, Rebérioux's papers offer an insight into intellectual responses from the anticolonial milieu and her archives demonstrate the implications of the legislation for historians at a grass-roots level.<sup>182</sup> Rebérioux's hostility to the law opened up important questions concerning the use of the law to resolve historical problems. Many members of the informal network of intellectuals who joined Rebérioux in opposing the Gayssot legislation were also part of Rebérioux's 'Algerian generation' (see chapter three). For example, Pierre Vidal-Naquet, who had lost family at Auschwitz, became a vocal critic of negationism.<sup>183</sup> Others also publicly opposed the legislation. Lawyer and politician Simone Veil argued that 'l'histoire doit être libre. Elle ne peut être soumise à des versions officielles'.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Rousso, *Le syndrome de Vichy*; Richard Golsan, *Memory, the Holocaust, and French Justice: the Bousquet and Touvier Affairs* (London: University Press of New England, 1996). Rebérioux's responses to the Touvier affair are held in 647AP/93. Earlier examples of Holocaust denial in France are examined in Samuel Moyn, *A Holocaust Controversy: the Treblinka Affair in Postwar France* (Waltham/Hanover: University Press of New England/Brandeis University Press, 2005).

<sup>181</sup> 647AP/48-51.

<sup>182</sup> For an example of pro-negationist polemic see Éric Delcroix, *La police de la pensée contre le révisionnisme du jugement de Nuremberg à la loi Gayssot* (Rome: La Sfinge, 2006).

<sup>183</sup> Vidal-Naquet dismantled the revisionist 'method' used by negationists in *Assassins of Memory: Essays on the Denial of the Holocaust*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman (NY: Columbia University Press, 1992).

<sup>184</sup> 647AP/51 Simone Veil interview, *L'Événement du jeudi* (27 June-3 July 1996), p.22.

Holocaust denial emerged as a global phenomenon in the 1960s.<sup>185</sup> In France, negationists shared links with the FN through its leader Jean-Marie Le Pen, who in 1987 described the gas chambers as a 'detail of history' and Bruno Gollnisch, vice-president and later general secretary of the FN and academic at the notorious Lyon-III, which in the 2000s was investigated for its profusion of negationists.<sup>186</sup> The small number of Holocaust deniers masquerading as academics, including Robert Faurisson, Henri Roques and Bernard Notin, indicated the existence of a broader anti-Semitic political faction which criticized the Jewish people's right to self-determination.<sup>187</sup> Le Pen's remarks led the PS to submit two private members' bills to parliament demanding the criminalisation of Holocaust denial.<sup>188</sup> Hastened by the desecration of the Jewish cemetery at Carpentras in May 1990, the PCF submitted another bill to parliament which became law in July 1990, and is named after communist *député* Jean-Claude Gayssot. Modifying the 1881 freedom of press laws, the new legislation stated:

Art. 24 bis. Seront punis des peines prévues par le sixième alinéa de l'article 24 ceux qui auront contesté, par un des moyens énoncés à l'article 23, l'existence d'un ou plusieurs crimes contre l'humanité tels qu'ils sont définis par l'article 6 du statut du tribunal militaire international annexé à l'accord de Londres du 8 août 1945.<sup>189</sup>

The main objective of the Gayssot law was to criminalise the denial of the Holocaust and by extension, other genocides. However the legislation did not refer to events by name, instead only criminalising the denial of crimes against humanity as established by the Nuremberg trials.<sup>190</sup> Consequences of this technicality would later surface in the Bernard Lewis case, explored below. The Gayssot law is a key example of how legislation was, and continues to be used as a response to political extremism. Rebérioux's

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<sup>185</sup> The most well-known British case of negationism is explored in Richard Evans, *Telling Lies about Hitler: the Holocaust, History and the David Irving trial* (London: Verso, 2002).

<sup>186</sup> 'Négationnisme: Gollnisch persiste', *Le Nouvel Observateur* (13 October 2004)

<http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/societe/20041012.OBS8819/negationnisme-gollnisch-persiste.html> [accessed 16 December 2015]; see also Henry Rousso, 'Commission sur le racisme et le négationnisme à l'université Jean-Moulin Lyon III : rapport à Monsieur le Ministre de l'Éducation nationale', (2004); Henry Rousso, 'The political and cultural roots of negationism in France', *South Central Review*, 23 1 (2006).

<sup>187</sup> Valérie Igounet, *Histoire du négationnisme en France* (Paris: Seuil, 2000), p.14.

<sup>188</sup> Guenter Lewy, *Outlawing Genocide Denial: the Dilemmas of Official Historical Truth* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2014), p.93.

<sup>189</sup> JORF n° 0162 du 14 juillet 1990 page 8333 'Loi n° 90-615 du 13 juillet 1990 tendant à réprimer tout acte raciste, antisémite ou xénophobe'

<http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000532990&dateTexte=&categorieLien=id> [accessed 17 June 2014].

<sup>190</sup> 647AP/51 Charles Lederman and Jean-Claude Gayssot, 'Une loi contre l'antisémitisme militant' (31 May 1996), p.1. Ten of 27 EU member-states have laws which criminalise the specific denial of the Holocaust.

interventions demonstrate how academics' voices can shape or attempt to mitigate reactive legislation.

Rebérioux fiercely contested the Gayssot law and its consequences for contemporary society. She was in tune with the League's position: the LDH *comité central* had already indicated opposition to the law before Rebérioux's election as president, agreeing that the legislation 'risque de poser de sérieux problèmes tant au regard de la liberté de la presse qu'au regard de la libre recherche universitaire en histoire'.<sup>191</sup> Indeed, the law directly contradicted several articles of the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme*.<sup>192</sup> The League's stance placed the organisation in opposition to other human rights groups with whom the LDH had previously collaborated, such as the Ligue internationale contre le racisme et l'antisémitisme (LICRA), Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l'amitié entre les peuples (MRAP) and SOS Racisme.<sup>193</sup> Rebérioux's League archives disclose how she argued against the legislation on three grounds. Firstly, the law entrusted judges with the responsibility of ascertaining where historical truth lay, which Rebérioux believed was the historian's vocation. Secondly, use of the terms 'genocide' and 'crimes against humanity' could easily be applied to other conflicts, without considering political motives behind such a classification. Lastly, the law effectively allowed negationists to falsely portray themselves as martyrs and victims of the state, which in turn could bolster their popularity, as the Roger Garaudy scandal illustrated.<sup>194</sup> Three of Rebérioux's published articles, two in *L'Histoire* magazine and one in *Le Monde* are key to understanding her intellectual opposition.<sup>195</sup> Private papers reveal the hitherto unknown context behind these public stances, including the legal cases in which

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<sup>191</sup> 647AP/51 Rebérioux handwritten note, 'Intervention section LDH d'ÉHÉSS' (November 1990), p.8.

<sup>192</sup> Régine Dhoquois, 'Les thèses négationnistes et la liberté d'expression en France', *Ethnologie française*, 36 1 (2006), p.27.

<sup>193</sup> Of the 'four sisters' of antiracism, the League was the oldest. LICRA was founded in 1927, MRAP in 1949 and SOS Racisme in 1984. See Gordon, 'Is there a split in the French antiracist movement? A historical analysis'.

<sup>194</sup> Excluded from the PCF in 1970, Garaudy was prosecuted for his 1995 book *Mythes fondateurs de la politique israélienne* and fined 240,000 francs in 1998. He was defended by Abbé Pierre in the media, which led to the priest's exclusion from LICRA. See Simon Epstein, 'Roger Garaudy, Abbé Pierre and the French negationists', in *Holocaust Denial: the Politics of Perfidy*, ed. Robert Wistrich (Berlin/Jerusalem: Walter de Gruyter/Hebrew University Press, 2012), pp.85-108. 647AP/51 Rebérioux typed note 'Garaudy versus Gayssot' (May 1996).

<sup>195</sup> 'Le génocide, le juge et l'historien', *Histoire*, 138 (1990), pp.92-94; 'Les Arméniens, le juge et l'historien', *Histoire*, 192 (1995), p.98; 'Contre la loi Gayssot', *Le Monde* (21 May 1996). Analysing the press coverage of the intellectual campaign against the Gayssot law would be an avenue for further research.

Rebérioux became embroiled. Documents analysed here demonstrate how problematic the criminalisation of Holocaust denial became for the League.

Rebérioux's presidency occurred at an interesting juncture for the memory of past conflicts in France. As the taboo of silence surrounding traumatic periods like Vichy, the Holocaust and the Algerian war was broken, Rebérioux championed the role of the historian as the best way to heal wounds in collective memory. Her argument aligned with the importance Benjamin Stora placed on 'une cure de vérité' for both civil and military veterans of the Algerian war.<sup>196</sup> The freedom to ask questions and search for truth sat at the heart of Rebérioux's historical and intellectual methodology. Rebérioux was fond of quoting Jean Jaurès's maxim 'le courage, c'est de chercher la vérité et de la dire' (see chapter four).<sup>197</sup> Historians, Rebérioux argued, should enable public acceptance of traumatic history through disseminating truth: 'Si l'historien se rattache à la grande tradition dreyfusarde non seulement d'établissement, mais de diffusion de la vérité, que peut-il faire ? Sa tâche est d'abord d'établir la vérité'.<sup>198</sup> Rebérioux's conception of 'truth' was grounded in the positivist use of documents as empirical proof of validity, a position which aligned with the fin-de-siècle historiographical model offered by Langlois and Seignobos.<sup>199</sup> Furthermore, Rebérioux questioned whether it was possible for the state to define historical truth: 'Rien n'est plus difficile à constituer en délit qu'un mensonge historique, mais le concept même de vérité historique récuse l'autorité étatique'.<sup>200</sup> Her philosophical understanding of historians' 'vocation' led Rebérioux's hostility to the Gayssot law and guided her involvement in subsequent legal cases, explored below. At this juncture Rebérioux's historian persona came into its own.

### 7.2.2 *The Lewis lawsuit*

Rebérioux's papers – including legal transcripts, handwritten notes and correspondence – testified to the Gayssot legislation's impact upon historical practice. Consequences

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<sup>196</sup> *La gangrène et l'oubli*, p.53.

<sup>197</sup> 647AP/61 'Les Douze persistent et re(signent)', Numéro spécial guerre d'Algérie: toute *l'Humanité* contre la torture (January 2001), p.82.

<sup>198</sup> 647AP/48 Rebérioux handwritten note, 'Caen' (26 November 1992), p.21.

<sup>199</sup> Langlois and Seignobos, *Introduction aux études historiques [1898]*.

<sup>200</sup> Rebérioux, 'Le génocide, le juge et l'historien', p.94.

included the Lewis and Videlier affairs, two legal cases which brought the LDH into conflict with fellow antiracist and human rights organisations. On 16 November 1993 *Le Monde* published an interview with Bernard Lewis, a renowned Princeton scholar of the Middle East. In the piece Lewis questioned whether the 1915 massacre of Armenians was an act of genocide:

Pendant leur déportation vers la Syrie, des centaines de milliers d'Arméniens sont morts de faim, de froid... Mais si l'on parle de génocide, cela implique qu'il y ait eu politique délibérée, une décision d'anéantir systématiquement la nation arménienne. Cela est fort douteux. Des documents turcs prouvent une volonté de déportation, pas d'extermination.<sup>201</sup>

In 1995 the Forum des associations arméniennes de France, in conjunction with LICRA, pursued damages under article 1382 of the civil code. Legal documents sent to Rebérioux by the League outlined the Forum's argument:

Bernard Lewis a contesté l'existence du génocide arménien ou, à tout le moins, banalisé les persécutions et souffrances infligées aux déportés arméniens, et en ce faisant, il a commis une faute ouvrant droit à réparation, en raison de l'atteinte très grave qu'il a portée au souvenir et au respect des survivants et de leurs familles.<sup>202</sup>

Lewis' defence centred on historians' freedom to interpret evidence. His lawyers defended his intent by arguing that 'la liberté de l'historien doit être protégée dès lors qu'il n'a pas mis ses facultés critiques au service d'une animosité ni poursuivi une finalité étrangère à son travail, mais qu'il a, à l'inverse, respecté les règles de son métier'.<sup>203</sup> Their argument aligned with Rebérioux's public position that 'chercher, toujours chercher établir des faits, les confronter, comprendre leur enchaînement et leur sens, c'est une tâche d'historien'.<sup>204</sup> In June 1995 the Tribunal de grande instance de Paris ruled that 'attendu que même si n'est nullement établi qu'il ait poursuivi un but étranger à sa mission d'historien [...] il demeure que c'est en occultant les éléments contraires à sa thèse, que le défendeur a pu affirmer qu'il n'y avait pas de 'preuve sérieuse' du génocide arménien'.<sup>205</sup> As a result, Lewis was ordered to pay a symbolic one franc in damages to both the Forum and LICRA. In addition, Lewis was instructed to pay 10,000 francs to the Forum and 4,000 francs to LICRA under article 700 of the new code of the civil procedure.

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<sup>201</sup> 'Un entretien avec Bernard Lewis', *Le Monde* (16 November 1993).

<sup>202</sup> 647AP/49 Tribunal de Grande Instance de Paris. Jugement rendu le 21 juin 1995, p.6.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., p.10.

<sup>204</sup> Rebérioux, 'Contre la loi Gayssot', *Le Monde* (21 May 1996).

<sup>205</sup> 647AP/49 Tribunal de Grande Instance de Paris. Jugement rendu le 21 juin 1995, p.14.

The Lewis affair divided the League's loyalties in a very public manner. On the one hand, the LDH had shared many campaigns with LICRA, and the two groups' association stretched back to the inter-war period. Conversely Rebérioux staunchly defended historians' right to freedom of interpretation and publicly argued that the judge and the historian occupied separate functions within the Republic.<sup>206</sup> Moreover, she asserted that it was the League's 'vocation' to defend freedom of research.<sup>207</sup> Rebérioux's papers indicate how Bernard Lewis' case sent tremors through the League. In a private letter to Rebérioux, League general secretary Michel Tubiana signalled the League's hesitation in taking a public stance on the affair:

Enfin, Henri [Leclerc] est réservé sur cet usage répété de l'article 1382 pour faire échec à la liberté d'expression (et qu'à la liberté de la presse *Le Monde* n'ayant pas été attaqué !) J'en suis d'accord. Réagir sous forme d'un communiqué me paraît exclu tout le sujet est délicat et mérite une réponse fine et réelle analyse détaillée du jugement.<sup>208</sup>

Tubiana asked Rebérioux to draft such a text 'en ta double qualité d'historienne et de présidente d'honneur destinée à être publiée dans *Le Monde*', illustrating the crossover between Rebérioux's role as the public face of the League and the utility of her skills as an historian. Tubiana's correspondence is also useful as it shows how Rebérioux's actions were perceived by her colleagues. Rebérioux's intervention was valued because of her authority as a professional historian. In this way the synchronicity between her actions as LDH president and historian conformed to a longer tradition of historians commenting on political developments which stretched back to the Dreyfus affair.<sup>209</sup>

Rebérioux maintained that neither Bernard Lewis nor *Le Monde* were negationists. Her article in *L'Histoire* (the second of her three public interventions on the dangers of the Gayssot law) in October 1995 repeated her fears for the historical discipline, as well as voicing the technical problems with retroactively applying the Gayssot legislation to conflicts prior to the Second World War.<sup>210</sup> Her archives reveal her original title *Le juge et le métier de l'historien* was amended by the editor to *Les Arméniens, le juge et l'historien*, in order to mirror the wording of her earlier opinion piece. In it, Rebérioux

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<sup>206</sup> Rebérioux, 'Le génocide, le juge et l'historien', p.94.

<sup>207</sup> Rebérioux, 'Contre la loi Gayssot', *Le Monde* (21 May 1996).

<sup>208</sup> 647AP/49 Letter, Tubiana to Rebérioux (undated).

<sup>209</sup> Madeleine Rebérioux, 'Histoire, historiens et dreyfusisme', *Revue Historique*, 255 (1976).

<sup>210</sup> Rebérioux, 'Les Arméniens, le juge et l'historien'.

contended that rather than the alleged distress caused by Lewis' remarks, the central issue was freedom of speech. For her, the freedom to voice opinions was 'un élément fondamental du jeu politique' and integral to the functioning of democracy. She accused the court of sending mixed messages to historians:

C'est ici que le jugement rendu contre Bernard Lewis apparaît bien roué, ou tortueux : d'une part le tribunal affirme que « l'historien a toute liberté d'exposer les faits ». D'autre part, on lui reproche de ne pas les avoir tous exposés : élève Lewis, au bonnet d'âne ! En somme, ce qui est accordé à l'historien d'une main lui est retiré de l'autre. Au juge d'en juger. Non point, bien sûr – le prétoire ne s'y prête guère – au terme d'un libre débat entre savants, mais à la suite d'une discussion entre avocats.<sup>211</sup>

Rebérioux concluded her article by calling upon historians to re-examine the conditions of their profession. The law rendered the practice of history 'fragile, discutabile, toujours remis sur le chantier – nouvelles sources, nouvelles questions – tel est le travail de l'historien. N'y mêlons pas dame Justice: elle non plus n'a rien à y gagner'. Despite the political consequences of entering in the Lewis debate – mixing in the politics of Turkey and Armenia was a dangerous game, as Lewis had demonstrated – Rebérioux received some support for her article. Specialist of Turkish and Ottoman history Gilles Veinstein wrote to inform her that he approved of her stance: 'C'est *L'Histoire* qui sauve l'honneur et je me réjouis qu'il l'ait fait par votre intermédiaire'.<sup>212</sup>

Nevertheless, supporters of the lawsuit disapproved of Rebérioux's interpretation. Rebérioux's archives contains correspondence with Monsieur Agopian, president of the *Azadakroutioun* (the Association d'aide et de coopération à l'Arménie) and Karém Kévonian, president of the Forum seeking damages from Lewis. Letters indicate a mature discussion of the problematic nature of the legislation, both for historians and for protecting the memory of persecuted minorities. Kévonian recognised that 'l'usage que la société fait de l'histoire est trop sérieux pour que le débat soit faussé'.<sup>213</sup> Rebérioux argued that the law ignored the nature of intent in historical writing. According to her, neither Lewis nor *Le Monde* were comparable to the negationists which the law targeted:

[Ils] n'avaient pas la tonalité méprisante et insultante des textes de Monsieur Faurisson et ses disciples. Surtout, même en matière de négationnisme, la LDH

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> 647AP/49 Letter, Gilles Veinstein to Rebérioux (17 October 1995).

<sup>213</sup> 647AP/49 Letter, Kévonian to Rebérioux (12 January 1996).

entend préserver les droits de la recherche historique. C'est pourquoi, à la différence de la LICRA par exemple, nous avons pris publiquement position contre la partie de la loi Gayssot, qui a fait du négationnisme un délit possible des tribunaux.<sup>214</sup>

Rebérioux's involvement in the Lewis case, although not central to the lawsuit, offers a new insight into how she reacted to the practical effects of the Gayssot legislation.

### 7.2.3 *The Videlier affair*

The second affair presented in Rebérioux's archives signalled the wider implications of the Gayssot law for history and politics: the law could be abused to further personal grudges. During the 1990s Rebérioux became embroiled in local university politics in Lyon. In 1993 Philippe Videlier, a CNRS researcher at the Centre Pierre Léon d'Histoire économique et sociale objected to the employment of historian of industry François Robert on the grounds the latter had participated in the negationist revue *La Guerre sociale* in the early 1980s.<sup>215</sup> His claims were later disproved in court after Rebérioux, in her dual capacity as League president and professional historian, demonstrated the invalidity of Videlier's case. In fact, Videlier was already known to Rebérioux. In private correspondence to Christophe Prochasson in 1988 she described Videlier as 'trotskiste, savant et génial'.<sup>216</sup> Aside from the marginal press coverage at the time, very little has been written on Videlier, with the exception of Henry Rousso's investigation into negationism at Lyon-III in 2004.<sup>217</sup> In his report Rousso stated that the Videlier case played 'un rôle de catalyseur au sein des milieux luttant contre le négationnisme, créant des clivages et une forme de radicalisation'.<sup>218</sup> Rebérioux was heavily implicated in the 'rifts' Rousso described and her public position on the case caused friction within the League. Whilst the Videlier affair may at first glance seem marginal to Rebérioux's presidency, her papers relating to the legal case demonstrate how the Gayssot law was used to fuel personal academic quarrels, which undermined the broader aims of tackling political extremism and Holocaust denial. Furthermore, the case illustrated Rebérioux's

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<sup>214</sup> 647AP/49 Letter, Rebérioux to Agopian (31 May 1994). Rebérioux also rebuked Agopian for assuming she was male.

<sup>215</sup> The case was complicated by the fact the Centre was housed in former Gestapo headquarters, an important *lieu de mémoire*.

<sup>216</sup> Private correspondence, Rebérioux to Prochasson (13 April 1988).

<sup>217</sup> Rousso, 'Commission sur le racisme et le négationnisme', pp.172-179.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, p.172.



value to the LDH as a professional historian: she was able to offer her judgement on Videlier's case from a position of expertise.

It is challenging for the researcher to make sense of Rebérioux's papers on the Videlier affair. Although catalogued in one box (647AP/50), the mass of correspondence, press releases, newspaper clippings and legal documents, supporting both Robert and Videlier, are not in chronological order and piecing together the genesis of the crisis is difficult. Several readings of the documents, spread over two separate archival visits were necessary.<sup>219</sup> Furthermore, critically reading the papers was only facilitated by my prior knowledge of how Rebérioux operated. The documents indicate the way in which Rebérioux's networks functioned and the cross-over between her personal connections and League business. Rebérioux first became aware of the affair in April 1993, when Yves Lequin, director of the Centre Pierre Léon, wrote to request advice on how to deal with Videlier's complaint. Lequin highlighted Videlier's lack of evidence: 'Le négationnisme ne pouvait être établi qu'à travers des écrits, des actes ou des propos personnels, dont il n'y a pas trace'.<sup>220</sup> To support his case, Videlier had compiled a thin dossier of evidence against Robert, including copies of his articles for *La Guerre sociale*. Although published in a revue which supported negationists, Robert's articles did not contain any inference of Holocaust denial. Having read the documentary evidence, Rebérioux composed a statement on behalf of the League in September 1993. On balance, Rebérioux declared that the evidence did not suggest Robert had been a negationist:

L'article que François Robert a publié en 1982 dans *La Guerre sociale* voisine avec un texte dont la tonalité négationniste est parfaitement inadmissible [...] Maintes fois sollicité d'étayer sa démonstration, Philippe Videlier, dont l'engagement démocratique n'est évidemment pas en cause, n'a pu apporter d'autre argument que son intime conviction. Celle-ci ne vaut pas preuve. Enfin, l'exigence d'une repentance formulée à l'encontre de François Robert est contraire à la déontologie de la LDH. [...] J'exprime ici le sentiment de Françoise Gaspard et le mien, donc celui de la LDH.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> Archival visits in January 2014 and November 2015.

<sup>220</sup> 647AP/50 Letter, Lequin to Rebérioux (19 April 1993). Videlier also contacted Rebérioux directly to solicit her support; she advised him to contact Françoise Gaspard, director of the LDH *Commission d'extrême droite*.

<sup>221</sup> 647AP/50 Rebérioux, 'Note sur l'affaire François Robert' (27 September 1993).

Moreover, for Rebérioux, Videlier's behaviour was undemocratic. Nonetheless, Rebérioux's statement did not calm the affair, and Videlier took his grievances to a new public level. In October 1994 he founded the Cercle Marc-Bloch which worked in collaboration with SOS Racisme, Ras l'Front and Hippocampe to present a 'united front' against what Videlier believed was evidence of fascism within the academic establishment.<sup>222</sup>

Videlier's resignation in protest at Robert's continued employment, a move which sought to portray himself as a victim, led to an escalation in the affair. In December 1994 Rebérioux and a group of historians chose to speak out via 'VIGILANCE!', a petition which called upon Videlier to end his self-imposed exile and to accept the new post that had been offered to him by the CNRS in the Rhône-Alpes.<sup>223</sup> Signed by 130 academics, Rebérioux was joined by colleagues including Agulhon, François Bédarida, Fridenson, Stéphane Michaud, Gérard Noiriel, Mona and Jacques Ozouf, Michelle and Jean-Claude Perrot, Antoine Prost and Vidal-Naquet.<sup>224</sup> Rebérioux's signature sent shockwaves through the League, in a comparable manner to the effect her signature of the *Manifeste des 121* had on the PCF (see chapter three). Françoise Gaspard complained that Rebérioux had signed the petition as an historian and not as LDH president, thus unnecessarily embroiling the LDH in the dispute.<sup>225</sup> Bruno Escoubès wrote to convey his 'concern' over her signature.<sup>226</sup> Videlier himself wrote to League vice-president Henri Leclerc to protest at the wide circulation of the petition: copies had been sent to local newspapers in Lyon, disseminated amongst Videlier's colleagues and one copy had even been sent to the employer of Videlier's wife.<sup>227</sup> Videlier claimed that his own civil rights had been infringed by the petition, and singled out Rebérioux for her activism against him: 'Madame Rebérioux ne m'a jamais reçu ni entendu, mais elle écrit, et continue d'écrire sur papier en tête de la Ligue, des lettres contraires à toute vérité dans lesquelles elle justifie la discrimination dont je suis l'objet'.<sup>228</sup> Historian Maurice Moissonnier, a supporter of Videlier, wrote many times to Rebérioux, objecting to her

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<sup>222</sup> 647AP/50 copies of *La Lettre du cercle Marc-Bloch*. Rousso compared this 'united front' to the 1934 Communist International front against fascism. 'Commission sur le racisme et le négationnisme', p.178.

<sup>223</sup> 647AP/50 Anne-Caroline Jambaud, 'La vraie fausse affaire Videlier', *Lyon Capitale* (9-15 October 1996).

<sup>224</sup> 647AP/50 Petition, 'VIGILANCE!' (December 1994).

<sup>225</sup> 647AP/50 Letter, Gaspard to Rebérioux (2 February 1995).

<sup>226</sup> 647AP/50 Letter, Bruno Escoubès to Rebérioux et al (17 February 1995).

<sup>227</sup> 647AP/50 Letter, Videlier to Henri Leclerc (9 June 1995).

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

'authoritarian tone' and to defend the Cercle Marc-Bloch against her objections.<sup>229</sup> Others supported Rebérioux's stance, however. Rousso, leading historian and fellow signatory, wrote to thank Rebérioux for speaking out on the affair: 'Merci pour cette éditorial non pour moi mais pour la santé du débat intellectuel en France. Il est très important que des personnalités comme vous et la Ligue prennent de telles positions'.<sup>230</sup>

Two years later, the consequences of the affair were still being felt. In November 1996 Hervé Joly insisted on the separation between Rebérioux's opinion as an individual and that of the League: 'Les attaques contre Madeleine Rebérioux doivent être lues comme une réponse au désaveu sévère que, au nom de la LDH dont elle était présidente, elle avait apporté aux accusations de Philippe Vidalier'.<sup>231</sup> In 1998 the affair culminated in legal proceedings, when François Robert sued Vidalier for civil defamation, following Vidalier's continued assertions (broadcast on national radio) that Robert was a negationist.<sup>232</sup> Rebérioux was called upon to provide a witness statement for Robert's case, which was a précis of her original 1993 League statement.<sup>233</sup> Both Vidalier and *Radio France* were found guilty and ordered to each pay a 20,000 franc fine, along with 50,000 francs in damages to Robert.<sup>234</sup> Rebérioux's witness statement is noteworthy because elsewhere she consistently argued against historians' role as expert witnesses in legal cases. Rebérioux believed that 'le rôle de l'historien n'est pas d'expertiser, ou de témoigner, mais de poser des questions insolentes à l'histoire'.<sup>235</sup> The affair forced Rebérioux to defend her organisation against accusations of supporting negationism: 'La LDH n'a ni à arbitrer, ni à se porter garant de quiconque. Elle était sollicitée de donner son opinion sur les éléments qui lui étaient fournis. Voilà qui est fait'.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> 647AP/50 Letters, Moissonnier to Rebérioux (23 November 1994, 20 December 1994).

<sup>230</sup> 647AP/50, Letter, Rousso to Rebérioux (6 April 1995).

<sup>231</sup> 647AP/50 Hervé Joly, 'Quelques remarques sur la conférence donnée par Vidalier à Villeurbanne' (8 November 1996).

<sup>232</sup> Vidalier's interview with *Radio France* on 10 April 1997; the publication of Alain Bihl (ed.), *Négationnistes : les chiffonniers de l'histoire* (Villeurbanne: Golias/Syllepse, 1997). Vidalier had also published on the affair. See Jean-Pierre Cambier, Philippe Vidalier and Maurice Moissonnier (eds.), *Lyon, capitale du négationnisme ? Conférence-débat, Lyon, 22 novembre 1994* (Villeurbanne: Golias, 1995).

<sup>233</sup> 647AP/50 Rebérioux, 'Témoignage écrit' (15 December 1997).

<sup>234</sup> 647AP/50 Tribunal de Grande Instance de Paris (6 March 1998), p.28.

<sup>235</sup> Löwy, 'Madeleine Rebérioux : militantisme et recherche historique', p.287.

<sup>236</sup> 647AP/50 Rebérioux, 'Note sur l'affaire François Robert' (27 September 1993).

Rebérioux's opposition to the Gayssot law made her a complicated figure in the eyes of the public and the press. Defending the freedom of speech of negationists risked being conflated in the public sphere with subscribing to a negationist ideology. Her archives make plain that Rebérioux did not support Holocaust deniers, whom she classed as the 'assassins of memory', borrowing from Vidal-Naquet's interpretation.<sup>237</sup> During her presidency Rebérioux did not publicly share that her brother and brother-in-law had been deported during the Second World War.<sup>238</sup> However, Rebérioux's archives indicate that privately she referred to her family's experiences in order to demonstrate her motivations in opposing the Gayssot law:

Dois-je ajouter que la moitié de ma famille était déportée, que mon beau-frère était juif etc. Ce sont des choses que je n'ai aucune raison de rappeler publiquement – je n'en fais pas un fonds de commerce. Mais cette lettre est personnelle. Je souhaite qu'elle contribue à votre réflexion.<sup>239</sup>

Rebérioux's son Vincent believes that this personal experience pushed Rebérioux towards her anticolonial, anti-torture campaigns both during the Algerian war and later on in her life.<sup>240</sup> This research has enabled a deeper insight into her private motivations and personal history which adds a further dimension to the public perception of her militancy.

As this 'liberty' section has demonstrated, Rebérioux used a range of interventions, both personally and on behalf of the League, to argue that the criminalisation of Holocaust denial confiscated historians' professional and civic duties and transferred them to the legal profession. Rebérioux not only identified the problems of using legislation as a response to political extremism but also demonstrated her role as an innovator by presenting alternative means to combat negationism. She asserted that greater public debate was needed: 'Expliquer le crime, lui donner sa dimension historique, comparer le génocide nazi à d'autres crimes contre l'humanité, c'est le combattre'.<sup>241</sup> Nevertheless, her opposition to the Gayssot law was unusual in that Rebérioux was arguing to support the freedom of speech of negationists, those who were assassinating memory and

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<sup>237</sup> 647AP/48 Rebérioux handwritten note, 'Caen' (26 November 1992), p.9.

<sup>238</sup> Amoudruz, 'Madé', p.5. See the memoirs of Rebérioux's mother Elise Thonon in *La vie d'une famille face à la Gestapo*.

<sup>239</sup> Gallorini served on Videlier's *jury de thèse*. 647AP/50 Letter, Rebérioux to Buny Gallorini (19 December 1994), p.4.

<sup>240</sup> Interview with Vincent Rebérioux (16 January 2014).

<sup>241</sup> Rebérioux, 'Le génocide, le juge et l'historien', p.94.

discrediting the vocation of the professional historian. Writing for *Le Monde* in 1996 Rebérioux asserted that 'proclamer l'entière liberté de cette recherche, telle est, entre autre, la vocation de la Ligue des droits de l'homme'.<sup>242</sup> In this sense, the work of the League under Rebérioux simultaneously fulfilled the professional responsibilities of the historian whilst remaining faithful to human rights activism. As Rebérioux summarised the aims of League in 1992: 'Notre ambition est de dire le vrai : c'est en essayant de dire le vrai qu'on fait avancer les droits'.<sup>243</sup>

### 7.3 *Égalité: Laïcité* and the banning of the headscarf in schools

The recurring tensions between religion and the Republic can be traced throughout the history of the League. In 1883 Ferdinand Buisson (League president 1914-26) was the first to offer a theoretical definition of *laïcité* and in 1904 one of the League's earliest campaigns supported the separation of church and state.<sup>244</sup> Nine decades later, Rebérioux was also confronted by the theoretical and practical tensions between state and religion. However, by the time of her presidency the debate had shifted from concerns about Catholicism to focus on the place of Islam within the French Republic. Under Rebérioux the League explored ways of defending universal secular values during a time when state education found it increasingly difficult to adapt policy to match the impact of sociological and demographic changes in France.<sup>245</sup> Rebérioux's papers offer a new understanding of contemporary debates about the Republic's attitude to religion, demonstrating how agents in the parapolitical sphere engaged in controversial public battles over the secular nature of education. Through an examination of the LDH's campaign 'Ni voile ni exclusion' – which caused tension between national leadership and local sections – we can paint a picture of Rebérioux's intellectual authority within the organisation. The campaign also offers a clearer understanding of the problems in internal League communications.

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<sup>242</sup> Rebérioux, 'Contre la loi Gayssot', *Le Monde* (21 May 1996).

<sup>243</sup> 6MR7 Rebérioux typed document, 'La Ligue des droits de l'homme' (16 July 1992), p.2.

<sup>244</sup> Jean Baubérot, 'Laicity', in *The French Republic: History, Values, Debates*, eds. Edward Berenson, Vincent Duclert and Christophe Prochasson (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), p.127; Monica Charlot and Jean Charlot, 'Un rassemblement d'intellectuels : la Ligue des droits de l'homme', *Revue française de science politique*, 9 4 (1959), p.999. Agrikoliansky found that almost 75% of LDH members were 'sans religion, laïque, athée'. *La Ligue française des droits de l'homme et du citoyen*, p.182.

<sup>245</sup> Drake, *Contemporary France*, p.123.

According to her contemporaries, Rebérioux was a strong supporter of *laïcité*. Vidal-Naquet was struck by her ‘violent anticlericalism’ and Jean-François Chanut described her as ‘détachée de toute croyance religieuse’.<sup>246</sup> However, family papers in her archives reveal that Rebérioux received her first communion according to Catholic rites at the age of 12.<sup>247</sup> Yet by adulthood Rebérioux had rejected religion. When her children were at school in Catholic-dominated Mulhouse they were often teased for not attending mass on Sundays. Their response, no doubt influenced by Madeleine, was emphatically Republican: ‘Dimanche, c’est le jour de voter’.<sup>248</sup> Rebérioux’s interest in the relationship between religion and state cut across her militancy and research. As a militant, her secular politics were a part of her longstanding loyalty to communist ideals.<sup>249</sup> As an historian, Rebérioux viewed *laïcité* as part of a longer history of secularisation in France, bound up with notions of citizenship stemming from the Revolution, the *ancien régime* and beyond.<sup>250</sup> Rebérioux’s historical interests lay in the agents who enabled secularisation prior to 1905: intellectuals, the working-class movement along with freemasons and human rights organisations such as the League itself.<sup>251</sup> However, she was also interested in the gap between the theory of *laïcité* in the nineteenth century, and the realities of political praxis concerning religion, a dialectic which foreshadowed debates a century later.<sup>252</sup>

Rebérioux’s papers offer a new perspective on 1993-4, which along with 1989 and 2004 constituted one of the three flashpoints when the headscarf became a battleground for disagreements over French identity politics.<sup>253</sup> Rather than focussing on the headscarf controversy itself, which has been well-documented elsewhere, this section

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<sup>246</sup> Vidal-Naquet, ‘Notes pour un portrait de la citoyenne’, p.18; Chanut, *Une laïcité socialiste*, p.7.

<sup>247</sup> 647AP/1 Postcard, ‘Souvenir de ma première communion faite en l’Église St Pothin le 1<sup>er</sup> Juin 1933. Madeleine Amoudruz’.

<sup>248</sup> Interview with Marie-Noëlle Thibault (17 September 2014).

<sup>249</sup> Chanut, *Une laïcité socialiste*, p.17. Chanut offers a concise survey of Rebérioux’s historical research on *laïcité*.

<sup>250</sup> 647AP/46 ‘Note d’une intervention de Rebérioux sur la laïcité à l’Institut universitaire de formation des maîtres de Montargis’ (17 September 1997), p.4.

<sup>251</sup> 647AP/46 Rebérioux, ‘La laïcité française: genèse et définition’, *LDH La laïcité et l’épreuve de la diversité: égalité et pluralisme en France et en Europe*. 6<sup>e</sup> université d’automne (18-19 November 2000), p.6.

<sup>252</sup> Rebérioux explored these debates in *La République radicale ? 1898-1914*, pp.83-88.

<sup>253</sup> Others have referred to this as the ‘veil’, ‘foulard’ or ‘hijab’ controversy but I use headscarf as a less-politically charged term. See Joan Wallach Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), pp.16-17.

concentrates on Rebérioux's interventions in public debates concerning the place of religion in schools.<sup>254</sup> The many press releases, annotated newspaper articles and interviews in Rebérioux's archives establish how the *laïcité* debates of the 1990s had a significant impact on the LDH's relationship with its declining membership. Moreover, these documents offer an indication of Rebérioux's broader personal concerns for social and political justice as an historian, militant and League president and how she conceptualised the relationship between state, religion and the individual. Subsequent legislation, such as the 2004 law banning the wearing of ostensible signs of religion in state schools and the 2010 law criminalising the *niqab* cast Rebérioux's papers in a new light. Rebérioux's actions indicate the strong intellectual opposition to the criminalisation of religious signs in society in the decades before such legislation was passed.<sup>255</sup>

### 7.3.1 *Challenging the Ministre de l'Éducation nationale*

The headscarf affair of 1993-4 was important for Rebérioux because it exposed the tension-point between her personal position on *laïcité*, influenced by her strong beliefs in the importance of education as a civil right, and wider, differing responses from League sections across France. As seen in other areas of her activism, Rebérioux placed great value on education as a formative Republican tool (see chapter four). Some historical context is needed in order to understand her interventions in headscarf debates. During Rebérioux's presidency Education minister François Bayrou issued a series of controversial memoranda clarifying the state's position on religion within state schools.<sup>256</sup> The 1993-4 statements were a direct response to cases in Lyon and Grenoble where female pupils refused to remove their headscarves during Physical Education

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<sup>254</sup> In addition to Scott, see Trica Keaton, *Muslim Girls and the Other France: Race, Identity Politics, & Social Exclusion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006); John Bowen, *Why the French Don't Like Headscarves: Islam, the State and Public Space* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); Bronwyn Winter, *Hijab and the Republic: Uncovering the French Headscarf Debate* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008); Hilal Elver, *The Headscarf Controversy: Secularism and Freedom of Religion* (Oxford: OUP, 2012).

<sup>255</sup> Drake, *Contemporary France*, pp.136-137.

<sup>256</sup> Circulaire n°93-316 du 26 octobre 1993 (voile islamique); Circulaire du 20 septembre 1994: Port de signes ostentatoires dans les établissements scolaires, [http://archives.gouvernement.fr/villepin/information/fiches\\_52/textes\\_officiels\\_sur\\_laicite\\_51146.html](http://archives.gouvernement.fr/villepin/information/fiches_52/textes_officiels_sur_laicite_51146.html) [accessed 01/12/2015]. Photocopies of the documents are also held amongst Rebérioux's papers, in 647AP/46.

classes.<sup>257</sup> Addressing headteachers, education officers, and school inspectors, the latter of Bayrou's edicts went beyond the existing emphasis on free, compulsory and secular education to insist that 'il n'est pas possible d'accepter à l'école la présence et la multiplication de signes si ostentatoires que leur signification est précisément de séparer certains élèves des règles de vie communes de l'école'.<sup>258</sup> Bayrou's line went against the Conseil d'État's preference for a case-by-case approach.<sup>259</sup> The memoranda stoked existing heated debate concerning the place of religion in the classroom and divided intellectual opinion in France. The emergence of another round of public debate about the headscarf also coincided with a wave of violence in Algeria between the army and the Groupe islamique armé during the mid-1990s. Media reports of the fighting connected (in the French imagination although not in reality) Islamist terrorism with the presence of Islam in French schools.<sup>260</sup> According to Rebérioux the correlation cast suspicion on Algerians living in France, making the situation for immigrants even more difficult.

Personal archives record how Rebérioux responded to Bayrou's memoranda through newspaper interviews, opinion pieces, private correspondence and in a controversial LDH press release (discussed below). Rebérioux's observations were published in unexpected places. On 27 October 1994 conservative Catholic paper *La Croix* printed an interview with Rebérioux where she outlined her position on *laïcité*, a viewpoint which was at odds with the paper's conservative editorial line.<sup>261</sup> Rebérioux made plain her opposition to excluding female pupils who wore the headscarf, but equally maintained that wearing the headscarf was a sign of oppression: 'Il faut expliquer aux jeunes filles que même quand elles se croient libres en mettant le voile, elles ne le sont pas'. Moreover as Rebérioux quoted, excluding these pupils contradicted the principle of free education outlined by Jules Ferry in 1881-2: 'Le propre de l'école publique est de ne pas exclure [...] son rôle est de transmettre un enseignement, de créer un cadre de socialisation, de débats, de pratiques civiques et, donc, d'émanciper'. Yet this could only be done if students participated in all elements of school life, as Rebérioux explained in

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<sup>257</sup> Bowen, *Why the French Don't Like Headscarves*, p.87.

<sup>258</sup> Circulaire (20 September 1994).

<sup>259</sup> Inès Brulard, 'Laïcité and Islam', in *Aspects of Contemporary France*, ed. Sheila Perry (London: Routledge, 1997), p.179.

<sup>260</sup> Bowen, *Why the French Don't Like Headscarves*, p.90.

<sup>261</sup> 647AP/46 Rebérioux, 'Il ne faut pas exclure les jeunes filles voilées', *La Croix* (27 October 1994), p.6.



her interview for Christian weekly magazine *La Vie*: 'Les élèves, eux, doivent suivre tous les cours. Pas question d'échapper, à Voltaire, aux croisades, aux origines de la vie'.<sup>262</sup> Both periodicals were not predisposed to favour Rebérioux's secular, left-wing views, and the content of these two interviews, along with the LDH press release, sparked intense debate within the League and the press more widely. In an open letter to *La Croix*, Claude Lavy, chargé du secteur laïcité-liberté of the Syndicat des Enseignants (Fédération de l'Éducation nationale), declared that Rebérioux had found 'la recette pour résoudre la quadrature du cercle'.<sup>263</sup>

When questioned over the compatibility between her viewpoint and the League's secular ideals, Rebérioux often used Jaurès: 'Je suis proche de la définition de la laïcité au sens de Jean Jaurès : faire en sorte que l'école puisse discuter des grands problèmes'.<sup>264</sup> Citing her historical subject in this way played up to her status as a leading Jaurésian scholar and helped to legitimise her position on the headscarf debates. In a similar manner to her opposition to the Gayssot law, Rebérioux contended that Bayrou's memoranda were hypocritical, and created problems 'là où il n'existent pas'.<sup>265</sup> Her archives show how she kept up-to-date with contemporary literature on *laïcité*. Her papers include copies of the Conseil d'État's 1989 memorandum, various clippings and photocopies from trade union magazines, *Le Monde de l'Éducation*, and research on the concept and application of *laïcité* by David Kessler.<sup>266</sup> Rebérioux highlighted Kessler's statement 'nul ne doit être inquiété pour ses opinions, mêmes religieuses, pourvu que leur manifestation ne trouble pas l'ordre public établi par la loi', adding the comment 'l'article X' in reference to the freedom of religion as guaranteed by the 1789 *Déclaration des droits de l'homme*. As explored below, Rebérioux mobilised her prestige in the public sphere as a supplement to her personal forms of militancy. Whilst press releases and interviews communicated as a mass level, correspondence with individuals added an effective personal touch.

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<sup>262</sup> 647AP/46 Rebérioux, 'Carte blanche à Madeleine Rebérioux : « Exclure ? Non, au même nom de la laïcité »', *La Vie* 2576 (12 January 1995), p.21.

<sup>263</sup> 647AP/46 'Lettre ouverte à Madeleine Rebérioux suite à son interview à *La Croix*' (28 October 1994, published 16 November 1994). Lavy also compared wearing the headscarf with the compulsory wearing of the yellow star in Nazi Germany.

<sup>264</sup> 647AP/46 Rebérioux, 'Il ne faut pas exclure les jeunes filles voilées', *La Croix* (27 October 1994), p.6.

<sup>265</sup> 647AP/46 Rebérioux untitled handwritten note (undated).

<sup>266</sup> 647AP/46 Avis du Conseil d'État concernant le port à l'école de signes d'appartenance à une communauté religieuse (27 November 1989); 'Entretien avec David Kessler, Laïcité: du combat au droit', *Le Débat* 77 (November-December 1993).

### 7.3.2 'Ni voile ni exclusion'

Following Bayrou's 1994 directive, more than one hundred girls were expelled from French schools.<sup>267</sup> In response to the crisis, the League issued a public statement on 30 November entitled 'Ni voile ni exclusion' which outlined its national stance on the wearing of religious symbols in schools. The final version of the text charted a fine line between advocating schools' neutrality towards religion and the suspension of religious beliefs in the classroom, as this excerpt demonstrates:

En tant que prohibition du corps féminin, le port du voile s'effectue sous la pression d'idéologies patriarcales et obscurantistes. Il symbolise en bien des pays un statut insupportable. Notre universalisme et notre refus de toute discrimination nous conduisent à le condamner. Mais exclure des jeunes filles de l'école, sous prétexte qu'elles portent le voile, c'est faire des victimes d'un intégrisme religieux, des victimes, en outre, de l'obsession xénophobe ; c'est les soumettre à un véritable régime de double peine. La LDH tient à réaffirmer que l'école laïque, l'école de la République, n'a jamais eu vocation à exclure. Elle seule, au contraire, peut offrir aux enfants qu'elle a mission d'accueillir, tous et toutes, les moyens, à long terme, de leur émancipation.<sup>268</sup>

The text was a compromised response, demanding both an end to exclusions but also an end to the wearing of headscarves. Many elements of the League's stance were supported by other campaigners. As John Bowen has asserted, 'with few exceptions' feminists active in the MLF during the 1970s opposed the wearing of headscarves in schools as it legitimised women's inequality.<sup>269</sup> Through this statement the League transformed the debate about the legal specifics of wearing headscarves in schools into a wider discussion of individual freedoms: should female students be free to dress according to their religion or free to explore personal convictions without family pressures?<sup>270</sup>

As with most LDH press releases, ascertaining precise authorship is difficult. Drafting statements was a collective exercise, completed by various members of the *bureau national*. Several drafts of the document are preserved in Rebérioux's papers, many with

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<sup>267</sup> Bowen, *Why the French Don't Like Headscarves*, p.90.

<sup>268</sup> 6MR6 LDH Communiqué, 'Ni voile ni exclusion' (30 November 1994). Copies in held in 647AP/46 were printed on the reverse of another statement, 'La LDH condamne la position négative du gouvernement algérien après la rencontre des partis d'opposition à Rome' (28 November 1994).

<sup>269</sup> Bowen, *Why the French Don't Like Headscarves*, p.209.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, p.97.

her own handwritten modifications signifying her central role in shaping the League's response.<sup>271</sup> Rebérioux's earlier drafts disclose the difficulties in finding a unanimous response to school exclusions. In addition to correcting grammar, Rebérioux argued against the inclusion of the phrase 'prohibition du corps féminin' and wanted greater emphasis on 'les valeurs universelles que nous défendons'. Earlier in the month Rebérioux had favoured a more moderate stance. 'L'école publique', she argued in private correspondence, 'n'a pas à exclure ; elle est le lieu où des adolescents évoluent, en raison de l'enseignement, en raison du milieu scolaire [...] mais il n'est pas question d'abandonner la critique du fond contre « le foulard » ni la discussion avec celles qui le portent'.<sup>272</sup> Furthermore, originally Rebérioux did not want the title 'Ni voile ni exclusion' preferring the less inflammatory 'La LDH condamne les exclusions des filles portant le voile'.<sup>273</sup> The shorter, edited title immediately aroused the attention of the press and divided the opinion of League members.

### 7.3.3 *Letters from the League*

'Ni voile ni exclusion' sparked a strong response from LDH members, especially in the provinces. Letters to Rebérioux demonstrated the symbiotic, active relationship between national leadership and individual local sections. The latter relied on the national platform offered by the League in order to have a louder voice in the public sphere, however, national motions were still subject to ratification at a local level. One of the main purposes of local section meetings was to discuss and expand debate on League themes, sharing ideas with new audiences.<sup>274</sup> As a source, these letters foreshadowed the body of correspondence sent to Rebérioux in the aftermath of the *Appel des Douze* (see chapter four). The majority of letters were critical of the press release and some correspondents personally disparaged Rebérioux for the League's position on school exclusions. Examples from this group included a letter from the ten-member-strong section at Coupière, who voted against 'Ni voile ni exclusion' with eight against and two abstentions. The motion was denied on the basis that the refusal to exclude only 10, 20 or 100 pupils now would only lead to the exclusion of 500, 1,000 or

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<sup>271</sup> Around half of the earlier drafts are on fax paper which are near impossible to read.

<sup>272</sup> 647AP/46 Letter, Rebérioux to Roger le Vasseur (November 1994).

<sup>273</sup> 647AP/46 LDH press release draft (November 1994)

<sup>274</sup> Agrikoliansky, *La Ligue française des droits de l'homme et du citoyen*, p.185.

10,000 pupils in the future.<sup>275</sup> The section feared that allowing headscarves would lead to Muslim pupils selecting which classes to attend, contradicting Jules Ferry's emphasis on compulsory education. Coupière section member Roger Goyon compared the contemporary situation to that of 'our fathers' in 1933-4: 'La situation nous semble différente aujourd'hui ? Mais, comme ce fut le cas au moment de l'avènement d'Hitler, ne manquerions nous pas d'un peu de clairvoyance ?'.<sup>276</sup>

In another series of letters the headscarf debate led André Villain, a League member from Granville, to question Rebérioux's agency as president. Villain argued there was a lack of democracy within the LDH and also expressed his fear concerning 'l'islamisme, qui manipule les gamines'.<sup>277</sup> A month later Villain resigned from the League, denouncing Rebérioux for her stubborn refusal to view the wider picture: 'Vous n'avez pas compris – ou voulu comprendre – que ce foulard ne représente que la minuscule partie visible de l'iceberg intégriste, musulman, c'est seulement le côté provocation du véritable problème.'<sup>278</sup> Villain had his own conception of the kinds of human rights that the League should defend, such as the right to work, housing, health and a living wage – ironically all aspects of Rebérioux's social citizenship campaign (analysed in the next section). Villain argued that 'devant tous ces problèmes il faudrait que la LDH fasse sa propre révolution, qu'elle cesse de se cantonner à l'aspect uniquement juridique du problème. Depuis Dreyfus, le monde a changé, les hommes ont d'autres droits à faire valeur'. Although the League's long history still offered a certain cachet, this evidence indicates how ordinary members sought modernisation, especially with regard to internal bureaucracy.

LDH member Georges Caron contended in correspondence with Rebérioux that headscarves should be banned not as a religious sign but because it introduced to classrooms 'la représentation visible d'une inégalité fondamentale contraire au droit français le plus important, l'article premier de la Déclaration des droits de l'homme, que je n'ai sans doute besoin de vous rappeler !'.<sup>279</sup> Caron's position highlighted how the

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<sup>275</sup> 647AP/46 Letter, Roger Goyon to Rebérioux (6 February 1995).

<sup>276</sup> 647AP/46 Letter, Goyon to Rebérioux (6 February 1995).

<sup>277</sup> 647AP/46 Letter, André Villain to Rebérioux (December 1994).

<sup>278</sup> 647AP/46 Letter, Villain to Rebérioux (26 January 1995).

<sup>279</sup> 647AP/46 Letter, Georges Caron to Rebérioux (4 December 1994)

debate concerning the headscarf was a form of 'political and social hysteria' designed to protect a fixed cultural notion of Frenchness rather than protecting abstract forms of *laïcité*.<sup>280</sup> Bernadette Blatt-Santi equally berated the LDH for 'cette attitude, la vôtre, [qui] est purement aberrante au pays de Descartes précisément, où le bon sens, le simple bon sens est la « chose la mieux partagée » et le reste, en dépit des divagations médiatiques que nous ne supportons plus'.<sup>281</sup> Other League members expressed disappointment that Rebérioux, with her specialist historical knowledge, could be so 'misled' on the issue of wearing the headscarf in schools. Bernard Lemaire, a League member with over thirty years' teaching experience, criticized Rebérioux thus: 'L'admiration que je vous porte, tant pour votre travail d'historienne que pour vos engagements de militante, m'incite à vous faire part de mon désarroi devant un pareil communiqué, dans l'espoir d'une explication qui rétablirait la cohérence dans ce que je crois connaître de la Ligue'.<sup>282</sup> In some cases Rebérioux's response to correspondence is included in the archives, especially if letters were faxed or typed to recipients. In response to one correspondent Rebérioux argued that 'il n'existe aucune loi en France et aucun texte fondateur de l'école laïque qui interdise aux élèves (en revanche il existe des textes formulés pour les enseignants) de porter des signes, religieux ou autres'.<sup>283</sup> Unfortunately her replies to other League members were either unrecorded or else the fax copies have become illegible.

Not all sections were displeased with 'Ni voile ni exclusion'. Some members remained undecided. William Goldberg from the Caluire section wrote to argue that the LDH should wait and reflect more upon the situation before picking sides.<sup>284</sup> Gilberte Drog encouraged Rebérioux with the campaign, signing off her New Year card 'Vive la laïque sans Bayrou !'<sup>285</sup> Drog also congratulated Rebérioux for her controversial interview in *La Vie*, declaring that 'enfin une page claire, nette catégorique, pour dire « non »'. Teachers wrote to the SNES (FSU) magazine *L'Université Syndicaliste* to declare their support for Rebérioux's opposition to excluding students from education.<sup>286</sup> The Fédération d'Indre et Loire reprinted Rebérioux's *La Croix* article in their local

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<sup>280</sup> Elver, *The Headscarf Controversy*, p.124.

<sup>281</sup> 647AP/46 Letter, Bernadette Blatt-Santi to Rebérioux (10 November 1994).

<sup>282</sup> 647AP/46 Letter, Bernard Lemaire to Rebérioux (4 December 1994).

<sup>283</sup> 647AP/46 Letter, Rebérioux to Roger le Vasseur (November 1994).

<sup>284</sup> 647AP/46 Letter, William Goldberg to Rebérioux (30 January 1995).

<sup>285</sup> 647AP/46 Card, Gilberte Drog to Rebérioux (January 1995).

<sup>286</sup> 647AP/46 *L'Université syndicaliste* (21 October 1994), pp.24-25.

newsletter, reproduced alongside Jaurès's 'l'église et la laïcité' speech to the Chambre des députés (3 March 1904).<sup>287</sup> Others, such as the section at St Étienne, voted to support the LDH, despite the lack of clarity on the issue from the *comité central*.<sup>288</sup> Correspondence concerning *laïcité* in schools was not restricted to Rebérioux's presidency however. Her archives demonstrate the persistent nature of the debate, indicating the scale of the problem and the lack of consensus on a solution. As *présidente d'honneur* Rebérioux continued to receive letters concerning exclusions in schools. For example, in 1999 Anne-Claire Chaveau, assistant head teacher at the Collège Henri Wallon in Aubervilliers wrote to express how isolated she felt within her school community. Many of her colleagues were refusing to teach pupils who wore the headscarf as they believed these students were under the influence of the Taliban. Chaveau was comforted by Rebérioux's articles on *laïcité* and hoped that in the future 'le débat va être moins passionné et plus intellectuel'.<sup>289</sup> Another parent with children at the same school wrote to the LDH in 2003 to explain how his two daughters had been excluded for refusing to remove their headscarves.<sup>290</sup> This correspondence, representative of other letters in the archives, demonstrated the high regard in which many held Rebérioux, both for her work in the LDH and her years as a teacher. Nevertheless, Rebérioux freely admitted that her teaching experiences were from a different era: 'Quand j'ai enseigné c'était une autre école, une autre époque'.<sup>291</sup>

A close reading of newspaper clippings in the archives reveals how discussion spilled over from private correspondence into the media. Rebérioux's academic colleague, fellow nineteenth-century historian Maurice Agulhon supported the ban on ostentatious religious signs in schools as a way of opposing the rise of a 'système à base [de] théocratique intolérante'. Writing in *L'Histoire* magazine, Agulhon criticized those on the left, including Rebérioux, who had suddenly developed an attachment to libertarian ideas.<sup>292</sup> Agulhon suggested that 'peut-être il est temps de donner un coup d'arrêt à la tendance libertaire, laxiste, antirépressive, et d'accentuer, sans mauvaise conscience, la répression contre les maux (vols et racket, trafic de drogue, violences contre les

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<sup>287</sup> 647AP/46 Fédération d'Indre et Loire supplément à *Hommes et Libertés* (1994).

<sup>288</sup> 647AP/46 Letter, Guyot to Rebérioux (13 February 1995).

<sup>289</sup> 647AP/46 Letter, Anne-Claire Chauveau to Rebérioux (24 April 1999).

<sup>290</sup> 6MR6 Letter, Laurent Lévy to the LDH (2003).

<sup>291</sup> 647AP/46 Note d'une intervention de Rebérioux sur la laïcité à l'Institut universitaire de formation des maîtres de Montargis (17 September 1997), p.1.

<sup>292</sup> 647AP/46 Maurice Agulhon, 'Non au foulard islamique', *L'Histoire* 185 (February 1995), p.102.

enseignants...)]. However, as Agulhon argued, the renewed debate surrounding headscarves was not about school discipline but about ideology. France should decide if the headscarf was 'a sign of evil'. If it was, then pupils should be excluded from schools but if not, then the law should be modified. A month earlier Rebérioux had already argued against identifying Islam as an 'evil' as such categorisation simply reinforced social exclusion.<sup>293</sup>

Rebérioux's intellectual responses to headscarf debates, along with the extensive League correspondence reinforced the conflicting interpretations of equality within the Republic as well as growing fears about communalism.<sup>294</sup> As Bourdieu hypothesised, questioning whether the headscarf should be permitted in schools concealed broader concerns regarding the integration of North African immigrants in metropolitan France.<sup>295</sup> Debates such as Rebérioux's illustrate the problem of 'two Frances': the difficulty of reconciling freedom of conscience when significant sections of the population held contrasting attitudes to secularism in society.<sup>296</sup> Yet the reason arguments concerning the place of religion in schools, specifically Islam, erupted at this time was not just about *laïcité*. John Bowen has suggested exclusions were a symptom of broader political and social changes including disappointment in Mitterrand's economic policies at a national level and more globally, the fall of the Berlin wall which left many 'without a touchstone, and others without an enemy'.<sup>297</sup> This disappointment is evident in Rebérioux's interactions with the public and League members.

Rebérioux's interventions in the headscarf debates had implications beyond her presidency. In 2006, a year after her death, two LDH members, Antoine Spire and Cédric Porin publicly resigned in protest at the League's 'downward spiral'. The pair blamed the organisation's shift away from its Dreyfusard heritage on Rebérioux's leadership

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<sup>293</sup> 647AP/46 Rebérioux, 'Carte blanche Madeleine Rebérioux : « Exclure ? Non, au même nom de la laïcité »', *La Vie* 2576 (12 January 1995), p.21.

<sup>294</sup> Jeremy Jennings, 'Equality', in *The French Republic: History, Values, Debates*, eds. Edward Berenson, Vincent Duclert and Christophe Prochasson (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), p.103.

<sup>295</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Interventions politiques (1961-2001): Textes et contextes d'un mode d'intervention politique spécifique* (Marseille: Agone, 2002), p.305.

<sup>296</sup> Baubérot, 'Laicity', p.135.

<sup>297</sup> 'The Republic and the veil', in *The French Republic: History, Values, Debates*, eds. Edward Berenson, Vincent Duclert and Christophe Prochasson (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), p.274.

during the 1990s.<sup>298</sup> League member Alain Bondeelle responded to Spire and Porin's accusations and his testimony explains how for many League members, Rebérioux's fearlessness in speaking out offered hope for a new future.<sup>299</sup>

Je suis entré à la Ligue en 1994 précisément à cause de la position très forte exprimée par Madeleine, alors présidente de la LDH, au mois d'octobre à Mantes-la-Jolie. Elle était venue prononcer une conférence sur l'affaire Dreyfus [...] À la fin de la conférence, quelques élèves musulmanes qui portent depuis la rentrée un foulard sur la tête [...] l'interpellent et l'interrogent sur leur situation ; elle leur tient un discours très ferme et leur fait remarquer que leur situation n'est en rien comparable à celle d'Alfred Dreyfus en 1894, que toute tentative de mise en parallèle serait outrecuidante; elle ajoute que, elle-même professeur des universités et ancien professeur de lycée, ne comprend ni n'approuve leur décision d'afficher au lycée leur appartenance religieuse par le port d'un couvre-chef.<sup>300</sup>

The fact an ordinary League member remembered and publicly revealed such a brief encounter with Rebérioux over a decade later is telling of her positive relationship with many local sections. Rebérioux continued to defend the neutral place of the school but refused to do so at the expense of sacralising education. The title of her 2003 opinion piece for *Le Monde*, 'un voile sur les discriminations', made this clear.<sup>301</sup> According to Chanet, Rebérioux did not believe that *laïcité* offered either a political doctrine or a primary motive for engagement in society. Rebérioux was instead motivated by the desire to prevent religion from dividing society, obstructing social mobility or as a barrier to political emancipation.<sup>302</sup>

#### **7.4 Fraternité: renewing social citizenship**

At Rebérioux's initiative, 'social citizenship' was unveiled as the League's central campaign at their 1993 congress in Aubervilliers. In presenting the motion, Rebérioux emphasized how the theme offered a new era for the organisation:

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<sup>298</sup> 'La dérive vient de loin : sans doute du moment où, sous la présidence de Madeleine Rebérioux, elle décida d'épouser de façon acritique l'engagement aux côtés des plus démunis de nos concitoyens [...] de même, les débats, provoqués par l'arrêt du processus électoral en Algérie en 1992 ont introduit au sein de la LDH cette culture de la repentance postcoloniale.' 'Pourquoi nous quittons la LDH', *Le Monde* (24 November 2006).

<sup>299</sup> Chanet, *Une laïcité socialiste*, pp.44-45.

<sup>300</sup> 'Alain Bondeelle répond' <http://ldh-toulon.net/Alain-Bondeelle-repond-a-Antoine.html> [accessed 10/12/2015].

<sup>301</sup> *Le Monde* (17 December 2003).

<sup>302</sup> Chanet, *Une laïcité socialiste*, p.50.



Les ligueurs seront peut-être surpris par cette motion. Elle rompt en effet, doublement, avec nos habitudes [...] la situation exigeait une activité de prospection et j'ai acquis la certitude que la LDH était la seule organisation susceptible de donner à la crise sociale liée au chômage et à l'organisation du travail la dimension, civique, de la citoyenneté.<sup>303</sup>

Social citizenship was also a new direction for Rebérioux's militancy as an individual. Unlike other cases explored in this thesis, focussing public attention on the issue of citizenship was a top-down intervention rather than a reactive response to an external crisis or conflict. The campaign therefore demonstrates her work as an innovator. Rebérioux's agency and initiative in developing the concept and promoting the campaign was the closest she came to acting as an 'intellectual' (rather than a militant) to shape public policy. Her actions conformed to Jeremy Ahearne's idea that 'policy-framing' intellectuals bring a 'broader historico-cultural frame of reference to bear on given political problems and issues'.<sup>304</sup>

Rebérioux's desire to reform citizenship offers a new interpretation of the Republican idea of fraternity. Although fraternity has been described by some as 'the poor relation of the revolutionary triad', crossing the division between politics and morality, Rebérioux's archives demonstrate how citizenship and the broader notion of fraternity was a central battleground for debating Republican ideals during the 1990s.<sup>305</sup> For Rebérioux the League fostered fraternity and solidarity, functioning as a social 'creuset de la citoyenneté'.<sup>306</sup> In the public imagination citizenship was coterminous with the nation-state: democracy, citizenship and the Republic constituted three corners of the same political triangle. Rebérioux challenged this view of citizenship, arguing that the 'Republic' did not just designate the political regime and its institutional structures but a wider sweep of 'des principes, des valeurs : liberté [qui est] inséparable de l'égalité des droits'.<sup>307</sup> As she often repeated, 'dans socialisme il y a social'.<sup>308</sup> The citizenship debates of the 1990s reflected the problem, unique to France, of translating a long tradition of

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<sup>303</sup> 6MR6 73<sup>ème</sup> Congrès, *LDH Info* (April 1993), p.xxi.

<sup>304</sup> *Intellectuals, Culture and Public Policy in France: Approaches from the Left* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), p.34.

<sup>305</sup> Anne-Claude Ambroise-Rendu, 'Fraternity', in *The French Republic: History, Values, Debates*, eds. Edward Berenson, Vincent Duclert and Christophe Prochasson (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), p.112.

<sup>306</sup> 647AP/63 Rebérioux handwritten note, 'Naissance LDH', Musée d'Orsay (2 November 1994), p.4.

<sup>307</sup> 647AP/48 Rebérioux handwritten note, 'FN et démocratie' (undated), p.1.

<sup>308</sup> Rebérioux, *Parcours engagés*, p.12.

'grand principles' into everyday actions.<sup>309</sup> Social citizenship was Rebérioux's attempt to marry abstract principles of Republican Universalist notions with the political and social realities of late twentieth-century France, within the broader international context of *altermondialisme*. What made Rebérioux's interventions remarkable, however, was her desire to reform citizenship so that it was not just an apparatus of the nation-state, but a parapolitical form of agency. Social citizenship was the basis of a new form of everyday militancy for a new millennium: a citizenship independent of national institutions expressed at a local level, with meaningful engagement in social and economic life.<sup>310</sup> As this section explores, Rebérioux was not alone in her ideas. However, her agency in identifying social citizenship emphasizes her ability to perceive relevant questions for political militancy.

Rebérioux's papers uncover the genesis of social citizenship, why it was important to her and how she promoted the concept. Rebérioux's archives on social citizenship, split between the AN and the MHV, consist of newspaper cuttings, handwritten (usually in her own shorthand) notes for public speeches and various press interviews to promote the campaign.<sup>311</sup> Making sense of these diverse sources is challenging. Firstly it is difficult to decipher her handwriting, which worsened with age, and secondly it is sometimes hard to make sense of the various scraps of often untitled and undated A5 paper. Once deciphered in the archive, my reading of drafts of her speeches and public lectures makes public, for the first time, Rebérioux's personal views on the social crisis facing France. Unfortunately, unlike the debate surrounding the Gayssot law or the headscarf affairs, archives contain very few records of League members' responses to the citizenship campaign, suggesting a lack of consensus within the LDH concerning social citizenship. This final section will unpick Rebérioux's role in promoting the concept, within the LDH and wider publics. How central was Rebérioux's historical understandings for developing social citizenship? How did theoretical elements of the campaign compare with practical tangents? Finally, why is social citizenship important for understanding Rebérioux's presidency of the League and more broadly, her militancy as a whole? My analysis stresses how Rebérioux was a militant constantly evolving and

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<sup>309</sup> Drake, *Contemporary France*, p.146; Silverman, *Facing Postmodernity*, p.135.

<sup>310</sup> Cécile Laborde, 'Citizenship', in *The French Republic: History, Values, Debates*, eds. Edward Berenson, Vincent Duclert and Christophe Prochasson (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), p.143.

<sup>311</sup> 647AP/47, 52-54, 6MR7.

adapting to developing issues. Social citizenship indicates how Rebérioux remained innovative as a militant right to the end.

#### 7.4.1 *Redefining political participation*

Rebérioux used her status as president of the largest human rights organisation in France to encourage greater democratic participation, especially amongst disenfranchised individuals. As the protector of civic practices, the LDH sought to safeguard citizens' political rights, in the form of voting, the right to petition, protest and hold political meetings.<sup>312</sup> Rebérioux demanded a wider definition of citizenship which tackled the social challenges which France faced in the 1990s. Problems included electoral absenteeism, crises in the welfare state, increasing poverty and social exclusion, precarious job stability and rising unemployment.<sup>313</sup> Rebérioux was not alone in realising the need to restructure the relationship between individual rights and the nation's duties to its citizens. Étienne Balibar had argued for new forms of citizenship to separate the rights of 'man' from the rights of 'citizen'.<sup>314</sup> In 1995 Pierre Rosanvallon connected the crisis of the welfare state (a topic on which he had published in 1981) with the need for new forms of civic social engagement.<sup>315</sup> Rosanvallon suggested that a philosophical reading of the welfare state could revitalise contemporary understandings of the social contract. To move forward, he argued for a rethinking of the welfare state and notions of citizenship in order to better address the needs of the individual (especially in relation to illness and unemployment) along with greater social solidarity and civic equality. Rebérioux's campaign concurrently yet independently developed these themes but for militant, rather than academic ends.

Acute awareness of history underpinned Rebérioux's theory of social citizenship.<sup>316</sup> Rebérioux argued that the Dreyfus affair highlighted how French citizenship was

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<sup>312</sup> 647AP/53 Interview with Rebérioux, 'Tous citoyens !', *Unité et action* 117 (26 October 1993), p.12.

<sup>313</sup> *Paroles d'historiens*, Part. 4 : Le choix de la liberté, Chap. 45 : Réhabiliter la pratique politique.

<sup>314</sup> Quoted in Silverman, *Facing Postmodernity*, pp.149-150.

<sup>315</sup> Pierre Rosanvallon, *La crise de l'État-providence* (Paris: Seuil, 1981); Pierre Rosanvallon, *La nouvelle question sociale : repenser l'État-providence* (Paris: Seuil, 1995).

<sup>316</sup> See Patrick Fridenson, Madeleine Rebérioux and Pierre Rosanvallon, 'Citoyenneté politique et citoyenneté sociale au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Le Mouvement social*, 171 (1995); Madeleine Rebérioux, 'La défense des droits sociaux', in *Droits de l'homme : combats du siècle*, eds. Gilles Manceron and Madeleine Rebérioux

exceptional: inherited from the Revolution and intrinsic to the Republic.<sup>317</sup> The League's identity and purpose was closely tied to concepts of citizenship in France, especially as the birth of the organisation coincided with a time when, for Rebérioux, 'les droits de l'homme Dreyfus devenaient l'image des droits de tous'.<sup>318</sup> Other academics including Carlos Herrera have agreed, arguing that classifying social rights ('droits sociaux') as part and parcel of a broader human rights agenda stemmed from the Dreyfus affair.<sup>319</sup> Unlike other political and social theorists, however, Rebérioux believed in French exceptionalism on the grounds of citizenship. She argued that whilst the social fracture was not unique to France, 'sa portée est beaucoup plus grave ici que dans d'autres pays où la citoyenneté a été traditionnellement moins valorisée'.<sup>320</sup> Specialists of political practice have identified how social elements of citizenship fell by the wayside during the twentieth century. Cécile Laborde contended that during the Third Republic 'the social content of citizenship remained thin' as the labour movement hesitated between defending the interests of the working class or supporting universal citizenship which prioritised the individual over the collective.<sup>321</sup> More recently, sociologist Peter Taylor-Grooby has highlighted the importance of 'the cultural penumbra of social citizenship' in the day-to-day operation of western welfare states.<sup>322</sup> Rebérioux's promotion of social citizenship was also an intellectual response to new social movements of the mid-1990s, which called for participatory democracy whilst retaining the established rights of nation-state citizenship.<sup>323</sup>

Social citizenship was one of Rebérioux's responses to the rise of political extremism. Rebérioux believed that her new definition of citizenship could tackle the social consequences of immigration and racism, thus reducing votes for the FN.<sup>324</sup> Between

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(Paris: BDIC/Seuil, 2004), pp.52-67. See also section I 'La République des droits' in Rebérioux, Candar and Duclert (eds.), *Vive la République !*, pp.23-117.

<sup>317</sup> 647AP/53 Interview with Rebérioux, 'Tous citoyens !', *Unité et action* 117 (26 October 1993), p.12.

<sup>318</sup> 647AP/53 Rebérioux handwritten note, 'D'hier à aujourd'hui : LDH' (undated).

<sup>319</sup> Carlos Herrera, 'L'autre combat pour l'universel : les droits sociaux', in *Être dreyfusard, hier et aujourd'hui*, eds. Gilles Manceron and Emmanuel Naquet (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2009), pp.499-507.

<sup>320</sup> 6MR6 73<sup>ème</sup> Congrès, *LDH Info* (April 1993), p.xxi.

<sup>321</sup> Laborde, 'Citizenship', p.138.

<sup>322</sup> Peter Taylor-Grooby, *Reframing Social Citizenship* (Oxford: OUP, 2009), p.5.

<sup>323</sup> Laborde, 'Citizenship', p.143. The mouvement des Indignés could also be seen as a partial product of discussions concerning social citizenship. See 'Stéphane Hessel, tête pensante du mouvement des Indignés', *Le HuffPost* (27 March 2013), [http://www.huffingtonpost.fr/2013/02/27/stephane-hessel-tete-pensante-des-indignes\\_n\\_2771525.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.fr/2013/02/27/stephane-hessel-tete-pensante-des-indignes_n_2771525.html) [accessed 16/03/2016].

<sup>324</sup> 647AP/48, Rebérioux handwritten note, 'Combattre le FN' (undated).

1898-1939 the League had been the leading voice in defending the rights of immigrants in France.<sup>325</sup> Considering the organisation's historical record of representing the rights of marginalised individuals, Rebérioux attempted to reinforce the League's duty to defend those who could not represent themselves.<sup>326</sup> This group included foreign nationals resident in France, the unemployed and even prisoners, as she reasoned that 'le détenu reste un citoyen'.<sup>327</sup> Rebérioux's desire to fully integrate those on the margins of society with the rest of the Republic aligned with Third Republic's attempts to instigate a 'culture of the French national identity'.<sup>328</sup> Targeting the disenfranchised was supported by Rosanvallon's research, which asserted that increasingly it was more helpful to claim victim status to increase chances of social and political inclusion.<sup>329</sup> Rebérioux concurred, arguing that there was little use in the contemporary atavistic conception of citizenship if one were a foreign immigrant, or out of work, or homeless: 'Pour disposer réellement des droits (et non pas seulement aux termes de la loi) il faut avoir un logement, un métier, un travail, un salaire'.<sup>330</sup> Yet Rebérioux's analysis simultaneously validated the Republican tendency towards the 'culturisation' of the political, especially her use of the label 'immigrant' which Laborde argued constituted an 'inner frontier' within citizenship discourse.<sup>331</sup>

#### 7.4.2 *Praxis*

Social citizenship was not just about reformulating how individuals conceptualised politics. There was also a practical dimension to Rebérioux's plans which focussed on reducing unemployment rates and returning dignity to those who were out of work. Citizenship, Rebérioux insisted, was 'un outil pour agir et non une prise de position sans lendemain'.<sup>332</sup> Social citizenship sought to remedy the political, social and economic crises which particularly affected younger generations, a demographic whose social and

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<sup>325</sup> Danièle Lochak, 'Un siècle de défense des droits des étrangers', in *Droits de l'homme : combats du siècle*, eds. Gilles Manceron and Madeleine Rebérioux (Paris: BDIC/Seuil, 2004), p.111.

<sup>326</sup> 647AP/47 Rebérioux handwritten note, 'Droit de vote des étrangers' (2000).

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*, p.2.

<sup>328</sup> Laborde, 'Citizenship', p.139.

<sup>329</sup> Rosanvallon, *La nouvelle question sociale*.

<sup>330</sup> 647AP/53 Arven, 'Pour une citoyenneté sociale : entretien avec Rebérioux', *Témoignage Chrétien* (5 February 1995), p.1.

<sup>331</sup> Laborde, 'Citizenship', p.141.

<sup>332</sup> 6MR7 Compte rendu du comité central, 'Initiatives en faveur de la citoyenneté sociale' (December 1993).

political rights had been brought to her attention by the protests of May '68 (see chapter six).<sup>333</sup> Rebérioux observed that the average turnout for elections sat at 60%, which she claimed compared unfavourably with the 78-80% average of the Third Republic.<sup>334</sup> High unemployment (in 1994 France counted 3.5 million unemployed with a further 6 million in unstable work) and limited career prospects had left a generation without hope, especially as a fifth of those unemployed were under the age of 25.<sup>335</sup> Recasting the practices of citizenship with a social dimension, Rebérioux asserted, would help to restore 'dignity' to all workers.<sup>336</sup> Rebérioux noted that unlike workers of today, their nineteenth-century counterparts still had 'hope for a better future', a debatable point.<sup>337</sup>

From her interviews and notes we can see that Rebérioux was especially concerned about the vicious circle of unemployment and its impact upon individuals' quality of life. She advocated free public transport for the unemployed, believing that 'sortir de chez soi, circuler c'est de resocialiser, c'est aussi aller à la rencontre des lieux où du travail peut se trouver'.<sup>338</sup> Rebérioux also supported a reorganisation of working time. Deep reflection was needed on the part of employers, Rebérioux contended, in order to restructure the working day and working week, share the division of labour and thus reduce unemployment. She called upon trade unions to support not just their own members, but those who were unemployed. As she publicly argued, 'un barrage est en train de se construire entre « ceux qui ont encore » du travail et « ceux qui n'ont déjà plus »'.<sup>339</sup> She believed restructuring the working week would have knock-on social benefits: family responsibilities could be more equally shared between men and women; individuals would be able to negotiate a healthier balance between work, children, leisure and associational activities.<sup>340</sup> Rebérioux proclaimed 'vive la courte journée

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<sup>333</sup> 6MR7 Rebérioux typed document, 'La Ligue des droits de l'homme' (16 July 1992), p.2.

<sup>334</sup> The franchise during the Third Republic was restricted to men. 6MR6 'Madeleine Rebérioux, historienne', *Libération* (5 August 1994).

<sup>335</sup> 647AP/53 Rebérioux, typed note, 'La citoyenneté sociale' (undated), p.1.

<sup>336</sup> 647AP/53 'Promouvoir la citoyenneté sociale : une interview de Madeleine Rebérioux', *Santé et travail* (undated), p.70.

<sup>337</sup> 6MR6 'Un entretien avec Madeleine Rebérioux', *Le Monde* (1 November 1994).

<sup>338</sup> Rebérioux did not suggest ways of financing the initiative. 647AP/53 Rebérioux, 'Quand l'Histoire éclaire', *Territoires* (la revue des acteurs locaux) 354 (January 1995), p.30.

<sup>339</sup> 647AP/53 'Promouvoir la citoyenneté sociale : une interview de Madeleine Rebérioux', *Santé et travail* (undated), p.72.

<sup>340</sup> It is worth noting Rebérioux's personal solution to her work-life balance; her husband Jean raised their family and supported her academic work by typing manuscripts for her. 647AP/53 Rebérioux, typed note, 'La citoyenneté sociale' (undated), p.1.

plutôt que les vacances !'.<sup>341</sup> Nevertheless, Rebérioux's initiative was not new. It built on the PS '110 propositions pour la France' (1981) which was eventually voted in under the Chirac/Jospin government in 2000.

Social citizenship was a very different terrain to her previous campaigns, which focussed on single-issues (the freedom of Maurice Audin, the material conditions of academics in Vietnam) rather than an open-ended question affecting the whole of France. However, Rebérioux still relied on her tried and tested methods of militancy to promote her ideas. Archives record how her articles were published in *Le Monde*, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, *L'Humanité*, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, *Regards sur les idées* and *La Tribune du Démocrate* as well as in trade union publications and magazines.<sup>342</sup> Rebérioux travelled across France, giving many interviews and public talks on the topic, notes for which are held amongst her papers. As discussed below, this historical evidence shows her continued appetite for militancy. In publicising social citizenship she frequently took the opportunity to call on stricter legislation to protect those on the edges of society. She felt it was important to protect the right to social housing and offer economic support to the unemployed.<sup>343</sup> In one newspaper piece Rebérioux urged the state to enforce the 1990 Besson law, which made housing a legal right.<sup>344</sup> In calling for state intervention and judicial support to resolve social crisis, Rebérioux conformed more to the role of a public intellectual than an engaged militant, a significant shift in terms of her personal militancy.

Rebérioux's focus on social citizenship had wide ramifications for the League. In many ways it was an extension of the organisation's early engagement. The League first became interested in social and economic rights between 1907 and 1909.<sup>345</sup> It reaffirmed the organisation's connections with syndicalist groups, who were looking for methods to increase their membership by entering new workplaces. Rebérioux's previous activist networks enabled her to act as a lynchpin for new alliances, for

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<sup>341</sup> 647AP/53 Rebérioux, typed note, 'Le travail, ce « dieu de l'histoire »', p.2.

<sup>342</sup> 647AP/53 Various newspaper clippings.

<sup>343</sup> 647AP/53 Rebérioux handwritten note, 'Narbonne, démocratie locale, citoyenneté sociale' (undated), p.6.

<sup>344</sup> 647AP/53 'Promouvoir la citoyenneté sociale : une interview de Madeleine Rebérioux', *Santé et travail* (undated), p.71.

<sup>345</sup> 647AP/53 Rebérioux handwritten untitled note (undated).

example her engagement in the campaign 'Agir contre le chômage' (AC !) with the CGT in 1993.<sup>346</sup> Trade unions CGT and CFDT also joined the LDH in other campaigns later in the decade, notably *Action pour une taxe Tobin d'aide aux citoyens* (ATTAC) in 1998.<sup>347</sup> The theme of social citizenship equally demonstrated how the League was able to rearticulate the relationship between the social and the political in contemporary French life. As Rebérioux argued, 'la LDH est un des lieux où il peut trouver une expression politique : un lieu de recherche, un lieu de militantisme y compris européen'.<sup>348</sup>

In terms of practical action, however, the social citizenship initiative was limited by its broad scope and the scale of the problems it strove to resolve. Rebérioux sought the renewal of the wider practices associated with citizenship, such as 'action de refus, action de contre-pouvoir et action de pétition'.<sup>349</sup> Rebérioux listed petitions, delegating public services, community outreach, municipal democracy, and re-appropriating the law as effective ways to do this. However, despite her grand ideas, the campaign contained very little practical action for League members to pursue. The most detailed plans were idealistic at best. The gap between theory and praxis hampered the impact social citizenship had on resolving contemporary social crises. Despite Rebérioux's public promotion of the campaign, without practical considerations its impact was limited. Nevertheless, the lack of realistic goals did not prevent Rebérioux from urging League members to prioritise the crisis in citizenship over other LDH campaigns. As she asserted, 'prendre au sérieux la fracture sociale, le désarroi et la perte de citoyenneté'.<sup>350</sup>

### 7.4.3 *Rebérioux's enduring legacy*

Rebérioux was proud of her initiative in launching the social citizenship campaign and repeatedly referred to her status as the 'inventor' of the concept.<sup>351</sup> In private

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<sup>346</sup> 'en '93, c'est moi'. 647AP/53 Rebérioux handwritten note, 'L'évolution de la citoyenneté sociale' (undated), p.2. AC ! was supported by trade unions, academics, students and charity figures.

<sup>347</sup> 647AP/53 Rebérioux handwritten note, 'Et aujourd'hui?' (1999), p.5.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid., p.7.

<sup>349</sup> 6MR6 'Un entretien avec Madeleine Rebérioux', *Le Monde* (1 November 1994).

<sup>350</sup> 647AP/48 Rebérioux handwritten note, 'La Ligue dit non' (undated), p.30.

<sup>351</sup> 647AP/53 Rebérioux handwritten note, 'La naissance de la citoyenneté sociale' (undated), p.1.



correspondence to Christophe Prochasson, she noted how 'J'espère fortement que dans 50 ans on citera (mais sur quel support ??) la motion de la LDH sur la citoyenneté sociale'.<sup>352</sup> Nevertheless it is extremely difficult to measure how successful the campaign was, as the movement produced few tangible outputs which could be measured in quantitative or qualitative ways. Assessing the impact of the campaign was further complicated by its many wide-ranging tangents, such as targeting unemployment, local government, the status of immigrants and foreigners working in France. Furthermore it is near impossible, without large sociological surveys of those affected, to evaluate shifts in individuals' sense of social inclusion or exclusion. Nevertheless, developments in social movements after Rebérioux's presidency later validated her identification of the social problems facing France, corroborating her ability to ascertain pertinent issues in contemporary society. Jacques Chirac was elected president in November 1995 on a platform which promised to heal 'social fracture', a broad set of problems Rebérioux had already identified in 1993. Alain Juppé's proposed overhaul of the pensions system resulted in a two-million strong strike in December 1995 which further demonstrated the scale of social dissatisfaction among the French population.<sup>353</sup>

One possible way of evaluating Rebérioux's success in promoting social citizenship can be seen in the rising number of references to the concept in publications during and after her presidency. An Ngram graph (below) showing usage of the bigram 'citoyenneté sociale' within the French-language corpus of Google Books indicates a sharp growth in use of the term. The increase in usage and popularity correlates with Rebérioux's presidency, beginning in 1991 and continuing until 1996, the year after Rebérioux's presidency ended.<sup>354</sup> Whilst there are many limitations to this data, not least because the corpus only includes books rather than the media and press – using this kind of digital humanities research can offer insights into cultural trends which her archives do not show.

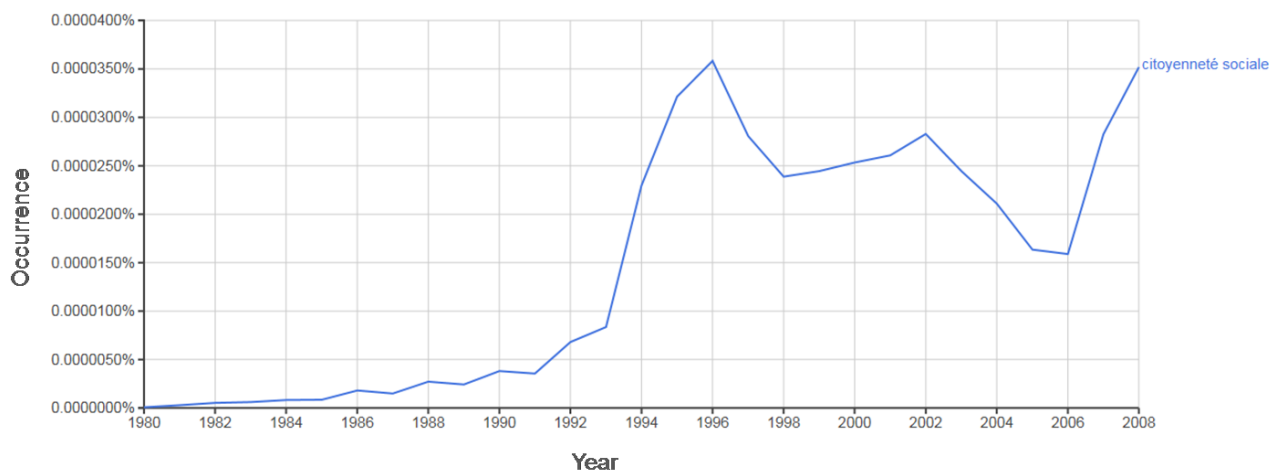
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<sup>352</sup> Private correspondence, Rebérioux to Prochasson (22 November 1994).

<sup>353</sup> Jim Wolfreys, 'France in revolt: 1995-2005', *International Socialism* 109 <http://isj.org.uk/france-in-revolt-1995-2005/>, (2006) [accessed 16 December 2015].

<sup>354</sup> See Figure 1. The Ngrams corpus finished in 2008. Jean-Baptiste Michel and et al, 'Quantitative analysis of culture using millions of digitized books', *Science*, 331 6014 (2011), pp.176-182.

**Figure 1: Ngram viewer demonstrating usage of 'citoyenneté sociale' in the French corpus of Google Books (1980-2008) generated via <http://books.google.com/ngrams>**



Whilst it is difficult to ascertain the precise social and political impact of Rebérioux's social citizenship campaign, her archives and the memories of those who knew her make plain her personal and professional attachment to defending the rights of those on the margins of society. Vincent Rebérioux stated that as League president, his mother's greatest initiative was social citizenship, which was important to her because it combined the Republican practice of citizenship with the social element espoused by Jaurès.<sup>355</sup> Rebérioux publicly asserted that the campaign had led to 'rejuvenation' in the League's militancy, although in the same interview she admitted that social citizenship in practice remained an 'utopia'.<sup>356</sup> However, most telling was the fact that social citizenship was not fully embraced by other leaders within the League. In a 1994 report examining the health of the League, Rebérioux objected to the absence of citizenship in the strategy for future campaigns.<sup>357</sup> Such an oversight emphasized how it was her drive and enthusiasm which kept social citizenship on the League's agenda. In addition, it was unlikely that the current political system had the ability or even impetus to resolve complex economic and social problems in line with her analyses, however pertinent they may have been. Nevertheless, her emphasis on considering debates about citizenship uncovers how intellectuals responded to heightened concerns about French identity and social problems at the end of the twentieth century. Social citizenship, whilst idealistic,

<sup>355</sup> Interview with Vincent Rebérioux (16 January 2014).

<sup>356</sup> 6MR6 'Un entretien avec Madeleine Rebérioux', *Le Monde* (1 November 1994).

<sup>357</sup> 647AP/41, 'Crise de la LDH' (1994), p.1.

encouraged public discussion of the place and importance of civic debates in society. The reawakening of interest in diverse forms of citizenship remains the enduring legacy of Rebérioux's presidency of the League.

## 7.5 Understanding her presidency

Evidence from her League presidency reveals new depths to Rebérioux's militancy. Unlike previous case studies, the League was not a single-issue movement and Rebérioux's leadership of its campaigns cut across many political, social and economic questions. During her tenure as president, Rebérioux supported the League's heritage as a defender of the Republic, as 'un contre-pouvoir unanimement respecté – un lieu de défense de tous les droits'.<sup>358</sup> Yet, as this chapter has demonstrated, the praxis of defending the three core principles of the French Republic in changing political, social and demographic contexts was increasingly problematic. Managing the League's agency and public image whilst tackling various differing crises was extremely difficult for Rebérioux. Her opposition to the Gayssot law, position on the headscarf and promotion of social citizenship made plain her leadership style. She often struggled to temper her strong personal views with the more nuanced approach of the League. Whilst her professional training and vocation as an historian was essential in providing a deeper understanding of the genesis of these problems, often it was not conducive to working within a large bureaucratic structure and managing the difficult context of fluctuating membership numbers.

During her leadership, Rebérioux sought to continue her previous methods of engagement, albeit on a larger, national platform. Her longstanding belief in the value of public debates, peaceful protests, petitions, letter writing and press releases as a way of agitating and influencing public opinion aligned with the League's emphasis on civic engagement.<sup>359</sup> Yet Rebérioux also sought new ways of involving the falling League membership, which drew on her own professional and militant beliefs in the power of evidence. In December 1991 the League, under her leadership, launched a new

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<sup>358</sup> 647AP/41 Rebérioux handwritten note, 'Présentation LDH, La Varenne' (8 December 1992), p.12.

<sup>359</sup> 6MR7 Rebérioux typed document, 'La Ligue des droits de l'homme' (16 July 1992), p.4.

publication *Dossiers et Documents*, which collected scientific analysis and press cuttings to tackle specific issues. Subjects included the blood transfusion scandal, the EU treaty, the right to housing and the importance of offering asylum to Algerian refugees, among many other topics.<sup>360</sup> The themes explored in this case study, whilst specific to the place of Republican ideals in late twentieth-century France, were also an extension of Rebérioux's previous intellectual battles: the fight to right injustice, promote truth and further equality within society. Nonetheless, as the twentieth century crept to a close, developments in technology, communications and even shifts in ideologies meant that these modes of intellectual practice became increasingly difficult to sustain.

As the public face of the League, Rebérioux often courted controversy, driving a fine line between her personal opinions and those of the LDH. Conflict between president, *comité central* and local sections was mirrored by problems within the internal bureaucracy of the organisation. Behind the scenes, the LDH headquarters in the fourteenth arrondissement were often equally hostile. Patrick Fridenson, a close friend but outsider to the League described the organisation as 'un lieu de désaccord'.<sup>361</sup> Rebérioux's near-omnipresence in the headquarters heightened existing tensions, as explored in the introduction to this chapter. Rebérioux became a delayed victim of Henri Noguères's modernisation of the League during the 1970s, when those over the age of 75 were banned from holding office.<sup>362</sup> Although willing to take on a second presidential term, Wallon and Blard solicited her resignation in 1995 as their means of modernising and rejuvenating the League.<sup>363</sup> Rebérioux brushed off criticisms, believing they were symptomatic of League members' honesty rather than a desire to contest her leadership.<sup>364</sup> Her retirement did not meet with unanimous approval amongst League members, however. Some members suggested it was not always necessary to follow statutes to the letter.<sup>365</sup> In addition Rebérioux received many letters thanking her for her work as president. Geneviève de Gaulle Anthonioz, the well-known resistant who was recently *pantheonisé(e)*, recognised Rebérioux's contribution to furthering human rights in France: 'Vous avez œuvré sans relâche pour que la voie démocratique soit la seule

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<sup>360</sup> See 647AP/43: LDH publications. *Dossiers et Documents* continued after her presidency.

<sup>361</sup> Interview with Patrick Fridenson (19 January 2014).

<sup>362</sup> Agrikoliansky, *La Ligue française des droits de l'homme et du citoyen*, p.68.

<sup>363</sup> 647AP/41 Letter, Philippe Blard and Bernard Wallon to Rebérioux (10 March 1994).

<sup>364</sup> 647AP/41 Letter, Rebérioux to Cocquet (30 June 1994).

<sup>365</sup> 647AP/41 Letter, Cocquet to Rebérioux (22 June 1994), p.4.

pour lutter contre les atteintes et violations du droits de l'homme'.<sup>366</sup> After the end of her term as president Rebérioux continued, as was tradition, as *présidente d'honneur* until her death in 2005. This ceremonial role arguably allowed her greater intellectual freedom to intervene in society than during her tenure as president, as she was no longer as restricted by internal bureaucracy and the problem of reconciling the League's views with her own.

## 7.6 Conclusion

From a longer biographical perspective, Rebérioux's presidency is crucial for understanding developments in her militancy. The League offered Rebérioux the added cachet of leading the same organisation which had intervened in the Dreyfus affair and in which her historical subjects (Victor Basch, Francis de Pressensé, and Ludovic Trarieux) had campaigned.<sup>367</sup> Following her expulsion from the PCF in 1969, the League presented an alternative vehicle for activism, albeit one which continued the ethics of her militancy: defence of workers' rights and fighting against colonial injustices.<sup>368</sup> Rebérioux's involvement in the League's campaigns led an humanitarian turn, where her militant interests broadened from anticolonialism and anti-imperialism to address the wide range of socio-political problems facing France at the end of the twentieth century. Whilst Rebérioux's presidency was a new step for the League, leading the organisation also presented new challenges for her political engagement. Presiding over the League demonstrated her capacity to innovate, even when restricted by a complex bureaucratic system. Her actions explored in this chapter point to how Rebérioux was able to consider new approaches to rejuvenating democracy beyond traditional Republican frameworks.<sup>369</sup> Her League archives are a valuable counterpoint to other militant organisations examined in this thesis, as her extensive papers reveal how Rebérioux operated in a group with its own traditions, style of engagement and commitment to a wide range of civic issues. Nevertheless, despite differences when compared to the Comité Audin, Collectif intersyndical or Sorbonne-Lettres, Rebérioux was consistent in

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<sup>366</sup> 647AP/47 Letter, Geneviève de Gaulle Anthonioz to Rebérioux (23 May 1995). Geneviève was also a supporter of social citizenship.

<sup>367</sup> Rebérioux, 'En guise de préface', pp.13-25.

<sup>368</sup> 6MR7 Rebérioux typed document, 'La Ligue des droits de l'homme' (16 July 1992), p.2.

<sup>369</sup> Silverman, *Facing Postmodernity*, p.159.

her militant methods and sought to retain her own voice as an individual political militant within her actions for the League.

Rebérioux's engagement as LDH president retained her personal brand of militancy: her desire to speak out, to work across political factions and to defend the rights of the marginalised. In any case, Rebérioux's membership of the PCF had always pointed towards Republicanism rather than factionalism, which aligned with the League's ethos of inclusion.<sup>370</sup> In Rebérioux's words, the League's activism was based on 'les luttes politiques, dans les débats fondamentaux qui traversent la gauche française'.<sup>371</sup> As explored in this case study, by opposing the Gayssot law, criticizing Bayrou's education memoranda and promoting social citizenship Rebérioux was not directly representing the left, politicians, Muslim schoolchildren, Holocaust survivors, historians or those on the margins of society. Instead, inspired by her historical predecessors in the League Rebérioux defended the pluralistic notions of 'les droits de l'homme' to fortify the Republican values of *liberté, égalité et fraternité* into the twenty-first century.

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<sup>370</sup> Interview with Marie-Noëlle Thibault (17 September 2014).

<sup>371</sup> 647AP/63 Rebérioux typed note 'La LDH : une histoire bientôt séculaire' (April 1993), p.1.

## Chapter 8. Conclusion

*La culture historique, ça n'existe que si on se pose des questions.*

**Madeleine Rebérioux<sup>1</sup>**

### 8.1 Making sense of Rebérioux's historical militancy

At the heart of this thesis lies the story of a militant historian and her archives. The study has revealed how to trace and historically interrogate Rebérioux's militancy in order to widen scholarly understanding of the relationship between modern democratic practices and challenges from academic voices. Building on existing work on leftist intellectual engagement by Jean-François Sirinelli, Sudhir Hazareesingh and Tony Judt and on women's militancy by Françoise Thébaud, my research makes plain how Rebérioux was a militant rather than an intellectual. She chose to speak and act out rather than thinking and theorising solely in the abstract. The breadth of Rebérioux's activities as a militant undoubtedly deserves wider attention. Her engagement touched on a complex range of political, social and intellectual issues at both macro and micro level. These questions include: how an historian can engage in society beyond their research, the state of the political left from Marxist consensus to the post-communist world, the politics of anticolonialist pacifism, the contrast between transnational and domestic engagement, sociological structures of engagement and France's place in the wider world during and after the Cold war. Rebérioux's militancy fused new readings of traditional protest methods with more innovative initiatives in order to shape public opinion. Moreover, Rebérioux's example merits interest for her conscious articulation of the relationship between being an historian and a militant. For her, both vocations centred on questioning received knowledge and authority. The analysis of her trajectory in this thesis uncovers how the connection between history and militancy played out in practice.

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<sup>1</sup> *Paroles d'historiens*, Part. 2 : Le choix de Jaurès, Chap. 11 : Harmoniser recherche historique et militantisme.

Through my close reading of her archives – the ‘Rebérioux continent’ of documents which have never before been studied in a scholarly context – this thesis offers a deeper understanding of the inner mechanics of grass-roots militancy from a diachronic perspective. Scrutinising Rebérioux’s engagement over half a century indicates how, during the Fourth and Fifth Republics individuals were able to shape public and private opinion in the parapolitical sphere, that is, the gap between the state and the people. Rebérioux’s militancy was not single-issue activism but extended across a wide spectrum of issues including anticolonialism, anti-imperialism, human rights and the defence of the marginalised. The three case studies demonstrate how one woman spoke and acted out in a male-dominated world, not with the express aim of furthering feminist agendas, but as an individual voice within a broader collective of the political left. In doing so, Rebérioux considerably furthered the visibility of women as agents of history during key political moments in recent French history.

Rebérioux asserted that she believed in the separation between militancy and academia, referencing the need for Minerva’s owl to return before a history of her own time could be written.<sup>2</sup> However, this thesis argues that Rebérioux’s profession and work as an historian did inform her militancy, in the same way that her actions as a militant shaped her professional work. In many ways, the label ‘avenirs et avant-gardes’, the title of the edited volume published in homage to Rebérioux’s work as an historian, was a more accurate reflection of her militancy.<sup>3</sup> Through her protest activities she campaigned for the use of new public understandings of history to solve contemporary problems, such as postcolonial trauma, the rise of the far right or new forms of citizenship. Rebérioux’s militancy aligned with Judt’s view of studying modern history as a ‘path to intellectual history and civic investment’.<sup>4</sup> Through Rebérioux’s militancy as an individual we can also trace wider shifts in engagement and politics in contemporary French history, from the difficulties of conforming to the PCF line through to less ideological engagement which focussed on humanitarian and human rights discourse. Rebérioux carved out a unique space in the parapolitical sphere in which she applied her skills as an historian to conceptualise and resolve difficult, complex problems affecting contemporary society.

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<sup>2</sup> ‘D’autres que moi verront l’oiseau de Minerve se lever’. *Paroles d’historiens*, Part. 2 : Le choix de Jaurès, Chap. 11 : Harmoniser recherche historique et militantisme.

<sup>3</sup> Duclert, Fabre and Fridenson (eds.), *Avenirs et avant-gardes en France*.

<sup>4</sup> Judt and Snyder, *Thinking the Twentieth Century*, p.154.



A central question running throughout this investigation is the nature of the relationship between Rebérioux and the PCF. Undoubtedly her expulsion in 1969 marked a key turning point in her militancy, but one which is shrouded in mystery due to the lack of reliable documentation explaining her removal. Rebérioux tested the party line for two decades before her expulsion through participation in clandestine revues *Vérité-liberté* and *Politique aujourd'hui*. However, her cultivation of networks which extended beyond the PCF sustained her in the years following 1969, a period when in any case, the party's fortunes fell and its activist base diminished.<sup>5</sup> Whilst documentation from the PCF archives suggests a more sensationalist reading of her exclusion, available evidence points to a longer narrative of anticolonial and anti-imperialist activism which was ultimately incompatible with the PCF's emphasis on ideological and political homogeneity. 1969 signalled the beginning of Rebérioux's humanitarian turn, when she became more interested in the campaign for human rights, a shift which culminated in her presidency of the LDH.

Drawing upon work by Carolyn Steedman and Arlette Farge, the methodology for this research centred on developing a strategy to navigate the detailed, vast paper archives in order to trace one individual's militancy in a variety of often ephemeral protest groups and associations. A range of archives have been investigated: from Rebérioux's private papers catalogued after her death (Archives Nationales; MHV) through to the Collective papers which she herself donated and had a hand in preparing for historical preservation. Other sources, such as the CCCP (PCF) papers were created outside of her control or knowledge and indicate how others perceived her political engagement. Despite the differing contexts of archival creation, the AN and MHV papers are largely consistent (letters, drafts of speeches, annotated newspaper clippings) signifying a consistency in Rebérioux's militant methods. Within the archive, my approach drew on qualitative text-based analysis of documents, which involved several stages. The first challenge was deciphering Rebérioux's handwriting and the shorthand code she used in private notes. To this end, the development of my 'Rebérioux dictionary' was essential

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<sup>5</sup> Nick Hewlett, 'Class, class conflict and the left: the place of the people in French politics', in *France Since the 1970s: History, Politics and Memory in an Age of Uncertainty*, ed. Emile Chabal (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), p.79.

(see appendix) where codes and shorthand were retraced and noted for future reference. Secondly, to resolve the lack of context for each document, especially where no titles or dates were recorded, it became necessary to read archival boxes both forwards and backwards and to use other sources (especially Rebérioux's annotated newspaper clippings) to aid research. Lastly, multiple archive visits facilitated decoding private papers, especially as my expertise increased. Whilst the focus has been on archives, meeting Rebérioux's family and former colleagues enriched empirical research, although this process is not 'oral history' per se as it is the documents which lead the analysis. Rebérioux's five-hour filmed interview was essential for contextualising her private papers. Comparing perceptions of others (from my interviews, Rebérioux's private correspondence or in her contemporaries' autobiographies) with documents created by Rebérioux allows a more nuanced appreciation of the impact of her militancy.

## **8.2 From the Algerian war to the Ligue des droits de l'homme**

The first case study (chapters three and four) established the central place of anticolonialism in Rebérioux's militancy, manifested particularly through her role in opposing the use of torture during the Algerian war and her interventions in subsequent memory battles. As the structure of this thesis demonstrates, anticolonial interests bookmarked both ends of her career as a militant, beginning with opposition to the Algerian war and ending with her leadership of the *Appel des Douze*. The Algerian war was key to understanding her engagement from a broader perspective: both ideologically in cementing her support for marginalised peoples and practically by forging an intellectual network of contemporaries, the 'Algerian generation' (most notably Pierre Vidal-Naquet and Laurent Schwartz). The war was the single most important 'behavioural experience' which transformed her biography as a militant and historian.<sup>6</sup> Engaging through often ephemeral, grass-roots organisations such as the Comité de vigilance universitaire and local school groups during the late 1950s was compared and contrasted with the top-down national media campaign the *Appel des Douze* (2000), demonstrating how Rebérioux's militancy grew in scale whilst retaining

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<sup>6</sup> Doug McAdam, 'The biographical impact of activism', in *How Social Movements Matter*, eds. Marco Giugni, Doug McAdam and Charles Tilly (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), p.122.

the same objective of using historical methodologies to heal collective memory wounds from the Algerian war.

The second case study problematized Rebérioux's fraught relationship with the PCF, through the prism of her role in founding the Collectif intersyndical during the Vietnam war (chapter five) and her accelerated engagement during the protests of May '68 (chapter six). This study focussed on how Rebérioux, drawing on education trade unions as a conduit for militancy, was able to successfully organise collective action on two very different scales and in two contrasting environments. Rebérioux was at the centre of organising and leading militant networks which placed her outside PCF orthodoxy. The Collective developed transnational activism to fulfil commitment to opposing American imperialism in Vietnam. This was completed through practical, organised initiatives such as Books for Vietnam and the militant theatre piece *V comme Vietnam*. Meanwhile, May '68 was a more spontaneous, accelerated protest movement in which Rebérioux was still able to successfully innovate and adapt to her aims as a militant, teacher and historian. Nevertheless, her exclusion from the PCF in 1969 effectively removed her from the Collective. Her removal from the party indirectly led to new forms of teaching and parapolitical engagement at Vincennes experimental teaching centre.

The final section marked a thematic departure from other two case studies, examining the challenges Rebérioux faced as president of the Ligue des droits de l'homme. This period was however a broader extension of her commitment to political and social justice and constituted an 'humanitarian turn' in her militancy, especially following her PCF exclusion. Through the LDH Rebérioux sought to translate abstract Republican ideals into everyday action. Nevertheless, as chapter seven explored, she encountered difficulties in reconciling her personal politics with leading a complex organisation with its own bureaucracy and traditions. Such tensions resulted in Republican flash-points concerning the freedom of speech (Rebérioux's opposition to the Gaysot law) the supposedly egalitarian application of *laïcité* in state schools, and finally Rebérioux's advocacy of social citizenship as a solution to the crisis in French democracy. Her interest in human rights was distinct from the bifurcation between those who turned to humanitarian discourse as a result of anti-totalitarianism or the post-'68 *droit à la*

*difference* however.<sup>7</sup> Rebérioux's increasing involvement in the LDH was an organic part of her evolving political identity, supported by an inherent desire to improve living and working conditions.

The three examples of engagement offer an original window onto how an historian, acting both individually and through collective structures, was able to shape politics, policy and society. What inspired Rebérioux to act and speak out? Anticolonialism and supporting the marginalised, the two factors which initially motivated Rebérioux to join the PCF in 1946, became the two guiding ideas for her later engagement, and fed into her wider interest in human rights. The three case studies reveal how the scale of Rebérioux's militancy expanded over the course of her career. During the Algerian war it was the fate of individuals like Ali Boumendjel and Maurice Audin which mobilised Rebérioux into action, but by the 1990s she was thinking on a global scale about the nature of citizenship and democracy. Rebérioux was passionate about defending those on the edges of society against neo-capitalist oppression: this was seen by her academic interest in Jaurès and the working classes, and her championing of social citizenship to support the marginalised. Beyond these longstanding political and social principles lay a more complex patchwork of ideals and motivations which spurred Rebérioux into action at different points in her life, often interlinking with her professional experience of teaching and research.

Rebérioux believed in the political left as a shelter for all and supported inclusion over factionalism, even before her exclusion from the PCF. Her actions embodied the left's idea of the Republic as the 'institutional form of the universalist elements of the revolutionary tradition'.<sup>8</sup> Her professional vocation as an historian was extremely significant in informing her public position. Whilst Rebérioux believed history was a key way of resolving societal problems, she was against the use of legislation or litigation to resolve historical problems (such as the Gayssot debate, chapter seven). Rather, Rebérioux asserted that historians should use their expertise to inform open, public

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<sup>7</sup> Camille Robcis, 'Republicanism and the critique of human rights', in *France Since the 1970s: History, Politics and Memory in an Age of Uncertainty*, ed. Emile Chabal (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), p.225.

<sup>8</sup> Khilnani, *Arguing Revolution*, p.9.

debate. Education was also important, as a way of offering the next generation a sense of compassion and as a tool to understand the state's past mistakes. Rebérioux defended the democratic system in France whilst seeking the regeneration of traditional Republic ideals (for example *laïcité*) in order to adapt them for the needs of contemporary society.

What then, of Rebérioux's methods to achieve these ends? Rebérioux engaged in the parapolitical sphere to mobilise public opinion, educate individuals and seek changes in policy. Rebérioux adapted the traditions of Republican protest which stretched back to the Dreyfus Affair to ameliorate the problems of her own time. Through protests, petitions, films, letter writing and newspaper appeals Rebérioux nurtured her own form of 'counter-democracy' to challenge the *raison d'état*, finding new ways of critiquing modern democratic norms.<sup>9</sup> Of these methods, letter writing and engaging in personal correspondence were the most important. Her private papers record how, throughout her life, Rebérioux consistently engaged in personal correspondence, whether to distribute film reels for *Octobre à Paris*, establish the transnational activism of the Collective, react to crises within the LDH or respond to testimonies resulting from the *Appel des Douze*. Taking the time to respond individually was often more effective in persuading public opinion. Her brand of militancy, however, relied most on her professional skills as an historian: the importance of documentation and evidence to prove her cause, academic networking to find like-minded supporters, or using her expertise on Jean Jaurès to further legitimise her own public or media standing. As her colleague Françoise Blum commented after her death, 'On faisait de l'histoire comme on militait. On militait parce qu'on faisait de l'histoire ou on faisait de l'histoire parce qu'on militait'.<sup>10</sup>

As explored in the case studies, Rebérioux was actively involved in the practical elements of intellectual engagement, which centred on Schalk's moral and pedagogic stages of engagement rather than counter-legal resistance. Rebérioux's modus operandi was diverse: organising and leading committees, petitioning (the *Manifeste des 121* or

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<sup>9</sup> See Pierre Rosanvallon, *Counter-Democracy: Politics in an Age of Distrust* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008).

<sup>10</sup> Blum, 'Portrait de groupe avec Dame', p.54.

the *Appel des Douze*), preparing evidence for publication, writing articles for newsletters or the national press, fundraising and bringing people together physically to discuss initiatives. Rebérioux was willing to get involved at all levels, including administration and bureaucracy. Stuffing envelopes and managing correspondence demonstrated how she often acted behind the scenes without seeking public gratification. Moreover, Rebérioux was an innovator and problem-solver, as shown by her support for the Books for Vietnam initiative or her adaption of the exam timetable for students affected by May '68. Cultural forms of engagement were important tools to spread her political message to wider public audiences, as revealed by her roles in *Octobre à Paris, V comme Vietnam* and the Collective's art exhibitions. Nevertheless, Rebérioux was forced to balance her ingenuity with being able to 'fit in', a tension which manifested during her League presidency. One platform which links all three case studies is left-wing newspaper *L'Humanité*. Rebérioux distributed copies in Mulhouse during the late 1940s; anticolonial committees advertised events in the paper during the Algerian war; Rebérioux herself wrote to the paper during May '68 to protest at the lack of visibility accorded to Sorbonne protesters; the newspaper carried her LDH interviews; and lastly it was *L'Humanité* which launched the *Appel des Douze* in 2000. Perhaps this is the greatest indication of how her militancy operated within the left as a broad church: even after exclusion her own narrative of engagement was inscribed in the official news organ of the PCF and the paper founded by Jean Jaurès.

How successful was Rebérioux in her militant endeavours? Her accomplishments are difficult to measure in quantitative terms, as her projects were so wide-ranging and her aims were often linked to specific contexts.<sup>11</sup> In terms of anticolonial engagement, Rebérioux was certainly most effective in shaping the memory of the Algerian war after the amnesty. Her promotion of open discussion has helped begin the process of healing wounds in collective memory. The legacy of this engagement has continued beyond her death. The memories (plural) of the Algerian war is now a compulsory part of the school history curriculum; the *Appel des 171* (March 2014) continues the campaign started by the Comité Audin and the *Appel des Douze*. Thinking in more conceptual terms,

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<sup>11</sup> Charles Tilly has noted the difficulties of measuring outcomes of social movements. 'From interactions to outcomes in social movements', in *How Social Movements Matter*, eds. Marco Giugni, Doug McAdam and Charles Tilly (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), pp.253-270.

Rebérioux was unique in her ability to engage effectively across the geographical spectrum, by taking national and global issues and making them relevant at a local level. The meshing of the micro and macro can be seen throughout her career, from grass-roots anticolonial militancy in Mulhouse and St Maur and regional screenings of *Octobre à Paris* and *V comme Vietnam* to local LDH section meetings. Her awareness of the importance of the 'local' allowed her to connect with the individuals with whom she corresponded and the strength of this rapport is demonstrated by the increasing numbers of *lieux de mémoire* in homage to Rebérioux across France.<sup>12</sup> Lastly, in assessing Rebérioux's 'success' it is clear that she had an innate knack of identifying causes that were extremely prescient for later periods. For example the issue of torture resurfaced forty years later; today we are dealing with questions of how to respond to political extremism, nationality in the age of mass migration, questions of social citizenship and the wider problem of how we, as a society, collectively process and remember the recent past.

### 8.3 The future of Rebérioux's militancy

Julian Wright has suggested that 'the dynamic of activism and historiography, which, until her recent death, Madeleine Rebérioux incarnated perfectly, seems to be on the ebb'.<sup>13</sup> Rebérioux was among the last of the great leftist militant figures to fuse militancy with wider historical innovation in order to effect political and social change. Her militancy was unique for three reasons. Firstly, her engagement was a product of her political and historical environment: a transformative period where Marxist orthodoxy was pushed out in favour of new intellectual paradigms, such as neo-liberalism or European integration, resulting in French political culture 'losing its bearings' in the twenty-first century.<sup>14</sup> Rebérioux was part of the last generation to participate in what Judt defined as 'the public engagement in political argument [...] a vital part of the action

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<sup>12</sup> These include the Centre socio-culturel Madeleine Rebérioux in Creteil, the Écoles maternelle et élémentaire in Chambéry and streets named after her in Saint-Ouen, Laon, Lille, Saint-Nazaire and Paris. 'Hommages à Madeleine Rebérioux', SÉJ website [http://www.jaures.info/dossiers/dossiers.php?val=52\\_hommages+madeleine+reberieux](http://www.jaures.info/dossiers/dossiers.php?val=52_hommages+madeleine+reberieux) [accessed 22/02/2016].

<sup>13</sup> Wright, 'The state and the left in modern France', p.454.

<sup>14</sup> Sudhir Hazareesingh, 'France - the eternal crisis?', in *France Since the 1970s: History, Politics and Memory in an Age of Uncertainty*, ed. Emile Chabal (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), p.264.

of the left in modern France'.<sup>15</sup> Secondly, the nature of academic research has mutated to adapt to financial pressures. Whilst commercialisation and research metrics pervade higher education in Britain, in France the sector continues to suffer from elitism, overcrowding and a lack of funding, making the research environment very different to the relative freedom Rebérioux enjoyed.<sup>16</sup> As a result, today's academics on the left do not compare favourably with Rebérioux's example, in part due to these ideological and institutional shifts but more because of societal changes led by technological developments. The internet age has rendered Rebérioux's style of engagement less visible, if not obsolete. As Prochasson has observed, recent years have witnessed a reduction in the number of flyers distributed, posters displayed or public discussions.<sup>17</sup> The twenty-first century has ushered in the age of cyberactivism, with the internet and social media provoking new ways of shaping progressive social change.<sup>18</sup> The shift from material protest to virtual engagement is a new step in narratives of militancy and constitutes a new 'age of dissent', albeit one which will be difficult to historically interrogate due to the lack of material archives.<sup>19</sup> On the one hand 'hashtag activism', to give one example, has rewritten our understanding of political organising and social change. However on the other hand, in broader intellectual terms such movements continue to advocate similar themes to Rebérioux's militant endeavours: defending the oppressed, promoting equality or safeguarding democracy.<sup>20</sup>

This thesis has opened the way for further work on Rebérioux and other historians of her generation as a route to exploring the agency of historians in politics, society and culture. Moving forward, like her own historical subject Jaurès, there is still much to explore within Rebérioux's own life story. Beyond the focus of this thesis, there is scope to explore the emergence of the Société d'études jaurésiennes in 1959 and to unpick

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<sup>15</sup> Judt, *Marxism and the French Left*, p.7.

<sup>16</sup> Rebecca Ratcliffe, 'University protests around the world: a fight against commercialisation', *The Guardian* (25 March 2015), <http://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2015/mar/25/university-protests-around-the-world-a-fight-against-commercialisation> [accessed 23/02/2016].

<sup>17</sup> Prochasson, *La gauche, est-elle morale ?*, p.100.

<sup>18</sup> Martha McCaughey and Michael Ayers (eds.), *Cyberactivism: Online Activism in Theory and Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp.1-4; Gerbaudo, *Tweets and the Streets: Social Media and Contemporary Activism*.

<sup>19</sup> David Bailey, 'Hard Evidence: this is the Age of Dissent – and there's much more to come', *The Conversation* (11 January 2016) <https://theconversation.com/hard-evidence-this-is-the-age-of-dissent-and-theres-much-more-to-come-52871> [accessed 22/01/2016].

<sup>20</sup> In this category I would include events such as the Arab Spring through to movements such as Occupy, anti-austerity protests and the #blacklivesmatter campaign.



how and why the figure of Jaurès moved from being a political totem to an historical subject in his own right. Other sociological militant structures preserved in Rebérioux's papers equally merit further attention: the development of *Le Mouvement social*, the Front de Solidarité Indochine, publishing Jaurès's *Oeuvres*, the Centre International George Sand et le Romantisme and most interesting of all, Rebérioux's place in historical innovation and political contestation at the new centre of experimental teaching at Vincennes during the 1970s.

This thesis has explored new ways of thinking about the engagement of academics on the left in modern France. A history of Rebérioux's political engagement opens up new avenues for considering how important events of the post-war period were experienced at an individual level and how these encounters are materially represented in the archives.<sup>21</sup> Examining Rebérioux's life through her papers casts new light on previously-studied polemical moments of the Fifth Republic, such as opposition to war in Algeria and Vietnam, May '68, and the rise of extremist politics. Her papers indicate how individuals who sat at the junctures between many groups participated and shaped protest. Rebérioux's example establishes how historians can contribute to society beyond academia, fusing research with an awareness of wider issues relevant to contemporary society. There is much to learn from the overlapping of academia and militancy through the example of 'multiple Madeleine'.

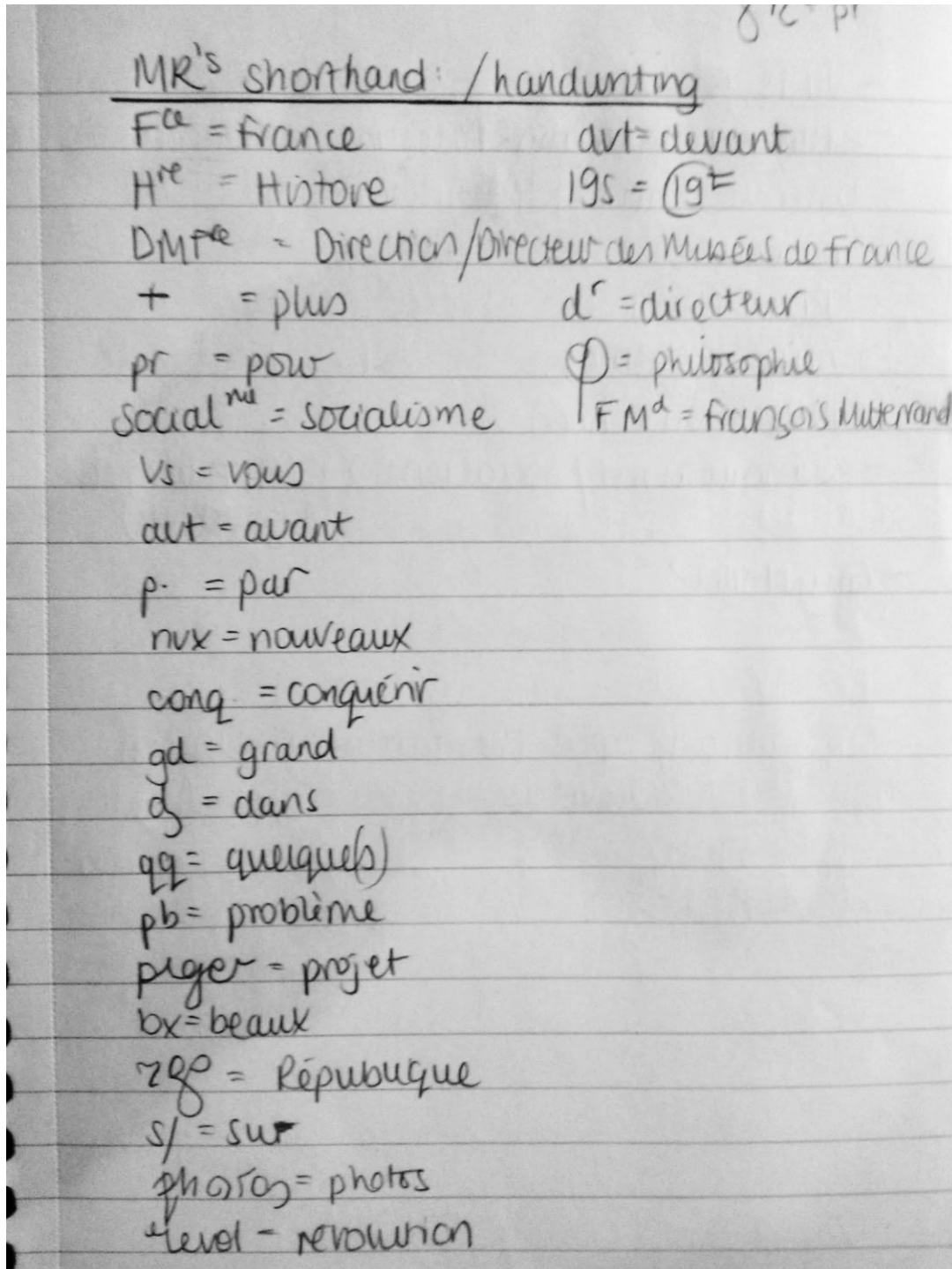
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<sup>21</sup> These themes were explored at the 'New directions in French History' workshop at the IHR in September 2015. See 'New directions in French History', *French History Network Blog* <http://frenchhistorysociety.co.uk/blog/?cat=55> [accessed 15/02/2016].

## Appendix

### 'Rebérioux dictionary'

Compiled during each archival visit, to facilitate with deciphering Rebérioux's handwriting and shorthand notes.



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cit<sup>é</sup>/ré = citoyenneté  
q = question  
com = commission  
l<sup>é</sup> = égalité  
d<sup>ts</sup> = droits  
pcq = parce que  
m<sup>re</sup> = maire  
st = sont  
fr<sup>a</sup> = française  
nat<sup>te</sup> = nationalité  
chr = évangélique  
v<sup>t</sup> = veulent / veut  
pr = pour  
Ausch = Auschwitz  
evt = événement  
c̄ = comme  
m̄ = même  
lgtps = longtemps  
nve = nouvelle  
au<sup>des</sup> = allemands  
ch = chaque

d<sup>mo</sup> = démocratie  
R<sup>ep</sup> = République  
sup<sup>te</sup> = supérieur(e)  
d<sup>te</sup> = droite  
l'<sup>ED</sup> = extrême droite  
l'<sup>in</sup> = té = inégalité  
Pop<sup>le</sup> = populaire  
cpdt = cependant  
t<sup>dce</sup> = tendance  
trib<sup>x</sup> = tribunal  
EU = USA  
j<sup>t</sup> = juillet  
C. = Congrès  
d<sup>t</sup> = dent  
Syndts = syndicats  
essent<sup>t</sup> = essentiellement

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- 20000529/1-8      Fonds Collectif intersyndical
- 20060521/6      École des hautes études en sciences sociales
- F/60/3165      « Affaires graves » Maurice Audin (Commission de sauvegarde des droits et libertés individuels)

#### *Musée de l'histoire vivante, Montreuil*

- 6MR/1-20      Les archives Madeleine Rebérioux

#### *Archives départementales de la Seine-Saint-Denis, Bobigny*

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#### *Bibliothèque de Paris-VIII, Pierrefitte*

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Commission centrale de contrôle politique

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