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NOURISHING THE POLITICAL BODY:
BANQUETS IN EARLY THIRD REPUBLIC FRANCE, 1878 – 1914

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

The most pressing issues of the day in France and in Europe – the place of workers in society, women’s rights, republicanism versus monarchy as the form of government, and expansion of the French empire – were advanced at banquets, ritualized gatherings over food and drink. Drawing on the key historical success of banquets as a means of political mobilization during the prelude to the Revolution of 1848, socialists/anarchists, royalists, imperialists, and feminists turned to the banquet to strengthen their political agendas during early Third Republic France. In *Nourishing the Political Body: Banquets in Early Third Republic France, 1878 – 1914*, I argue that banquets became a critical site for the construction of political and cultural power and identity by creating distinctive, tightly-knit communities that bolstered a diverse array of causes across the entire political landscape.

Using police reports, government documents, accounts of banquet proceedings, newspaper articles, letters, and memoirs, my dissertation analyzes four prominent genres of banquets during late nineteenth and early twentieth-century France: commemorations of the Paris Commune, royalist, empire, and feminist. At these events, different political groups promoted specific agendas that were always ideological, oftentimes subversive, and even revolutionary. Commemorators of the Paris Commune and royalists utilized banquets to promote their revolutionary causes. Imperialists and feminists congregated in order to reinforce the French empire and to fight for women’s equality, respectively. Because banquets attracted typically between 500 and 1000 people across the socio-economic spectrum, they also constituted an early form of mass culture in France. Banquets provided a culturally powerful forum for various political movements and thus became an important instrument in the key process of democratization in early Third Republic France.

In Memory of my Father, Ostap S. Kosovych

*“Our soul shall never perish,
Freedom knows no dying.”*

Taras Shevchenko
The Caucasus, 1845

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1

On a brisk Saturday morning in Paris (28 March 2015), I walked from my apartment in the Bastille quarter of Paris to the metro and took the train to the Maison des syndicats C.G.T. in Montreuil, an eastern suburb of Paris. The banquet commemorating the 144th anniversary of the Paris Commune was organized by the association, Les Amies et Amis de la Commune 1871, and cost 32 Euros to attend. I arrived at 11:00 am and was enthusiastically greeted by the organizing committee. There were about 150 people in attendance for the banquet. I was a little bit surprised by the age of the participants as the vast majority were middle-aged women and men with a couple of young people and a few older folks. Women made up at least half of the attendees and constituted the majority of the organizing committee. I was the only American in attendance; however, there was a Japanese man present.

The banquet lasted approximately 6 ½ hours. Before the actual seated meal, there were peoples at booths selling books, music, and t-shirts on the Paris Commune. Simultaneously, there was a socialization hour where we ate appetizers and drank a drink called the “Communard,” a 10:1 ratio of red wine and Crème de Mûre des Roncières that was mixed together in large plastic containers. It was given out with a lavish hand. I helped myself to this tasty new drink and began to talk to people. I met a chemist who gave me a nice tour of the C.G.T. worker exhibit and explained the history of the French worker.

The formal portion of the meal began around noon. I sat at a table decorated with small red flags. At my table of 6 men and 3 women, an old man was wearing a pin that had a foot stepping on Marine Le Pen. Alongside the exquisite food and fabulous wine, there were many speeches that centered on both the historical Paris Commune of 1871 and present-day politics. Nevertheless, the most powerful aspect of the banquet was the singing in unison of multiple Communard songs including: “Le Temps des cerises” (1866), “L’Internationale” (1871),

“L’Insurgé” (1880), “Drapeau rouge” (1877), and “La Commune est en lutte” (1976). Our singing was accompanied by an acoustic band and everyone waved small, red flags during the songs. The format of the banquet – eating, drinking, talking, and singing together – promoted great solidarity between the attendees.

Shortly after 5:30 pm, I departed the banquet hall with three or four of the organizers. We walked together to the metro and said goodbye to each other. I was filled with excitement and joy as I returned to my apartment. The all-embracing welcoming by the participants, the intimacy of eating communally, the buzz from the five drinks of wine, the enthusiasm of the speakers, and the goosebumps I got when singing these revolutionary French songs with fellow attendees all produced a day for me that will never be forgotten. I wish these present-day commemorators of the Paris Commune all the best for their cause of keeping the memory of the Commune alive and strong.

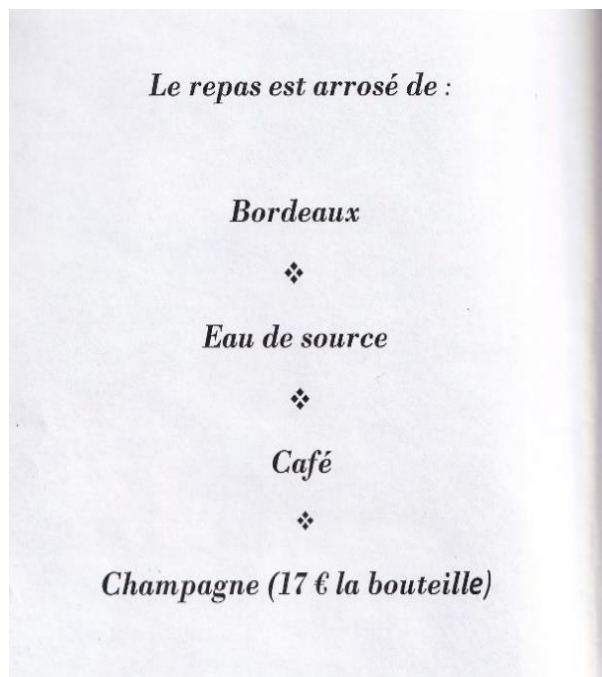


Figure 2: Drink Menu

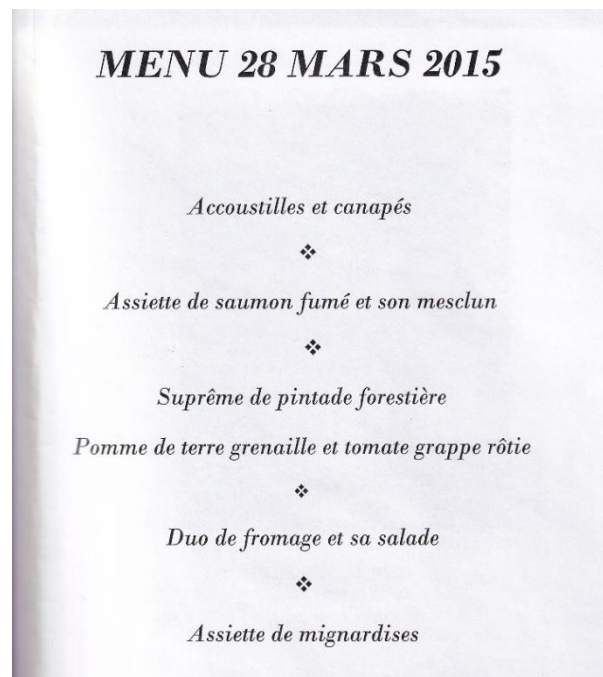


Figure 3: Food Menu

LES AMIES ET AMIES DE LA COMMUNE

1871

2015



BANQUET 2015

Figure 4: Program, 2015 Paris Commune Commemorative Banquet

INTRODUCTION

The banquet was deeply ingrained in the society of Third Republic France. The banquet had already been consecrated in French literature such as the lavish wedding banquet in Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1857). The proliferation of banquets and their popularity were so clear that literary historian Roger Shattuck has characterized the time period from 1885 to 1914 in Paris as the "Banquet Years." Shattuck focused on upper-class banquets as a space in which French high society could exhibit their opulence and where the elaborate ceremony surrounding banquets made them its "supreme rite."¹ Moreover, Shattuck looked at banquets that honored famous people, such as Victor Hugo or other celebrated artists, and those that inaugurated the construction of the Eiffel Tower.² Banquets were not only confined to the higher strata of Third Republican society, but they were a ubiquitous phenomenon.

The years 1878 to 1914 in French history constitute the early Third Republic, a time between the momentous historical events of the Franco-Prussian War (1870 – 1871) and Paris Commune (1871) and the advent of the First World War (1914). Throughout this period, people organized banquets where they gathered to discuss the most pressing issues of the day in France and in Europe. Topics such as workers' place in society, women's rights, republic versus monarchy as the form of government, and expansion of the French empire were all advanced at banquets, ritualized gatherings over food and drink. For this reason, I will utilize the banquet as a lens to analyze the key events and transformations of these crucial decades associated with "the birth of the modern," including the expansion of democracy, flourishing of popular culture, rise

¹ Roger Shattuck, *The Banquet Years: The Origins of the Avant-Garde in France 1885 to World War I* (New York: Vintage Books, 1968 [1955]): 3, 355.

² Shattuck, 3-5, 17-18, 25, 358.

of nationalism, instability of the Third Republic due to challenges from the ideological right and left, a rapidly expanding French empire, and a burgeoning feminist movement.

A contemporary dictionary characterized the banquet as “a formal and sumptuous meal offered to a large number of guests.”³ I define “banquet” as a ritualized ceremonial lunch or dinner, often quite elaborate, that honors a particular person, occasion, cause, or community with many people in attendance. In my dissertation, I investigate four key genres of banquets – commemorations of the Paris Commune, royalist, empire, and feminist – as these were the most influential in early Third Republic France. Nevertheless, there were a multitude of other types of banquets. Besides the commemorations of the Paris Commune, there were other socialist banquets such as one organized by the Comité républicain radical socialiste and the Groupe d’études sociales de Vichy.⁴ Other political banquets included commemorations of the French Revolution⁵ and Bonapartist banquets.⁶ Examples of social banquets consisted of advocating the right to divorce⁷ and the Society of Long Life.⁸

Drawing on the key historical success of banquets as a means of political mobilization during the prelude to the Revolution of 1848,⁹ a wide range of groups – socialists/anarchists, royalists, imperialists, and feminists – turned to the banquet to strengthen their political agendas

³ Pierre Larousse, *Nouveau Larousse illustré, dictionnaire universel encyclopédique, publié sous la direction de Claude Augé*, Vol. 1 (Paris: Larousse, 1898-1901): 715. « Repas plus ou moins solennel et somptueux donné à un grand nombre de convives. »

⁴ Agissements socialistes, congrès, etc. (1876-1915), F/7/12497. Allier, Ville de Vichy, Commissariat de Police, Rapport, 5 March 1901. Archives nationales.

⁵ Léon Gambetta, “Le 14 juillet, discours de Gambetta au banquet de La Ferté-sous-Jouarre.” 14 July 1872. FOL-LB57-3644. Bibliothèque nationale de France.

⁶ Legoux, “Banquet du 15 août 1901. Discours du Baron Legoux.” 8-LB57-13055. Bibliothèque nationale de France.

⁷ Claude-Célestin Épailly, “Discours prononcé par M. le commandant Épailly, au banquet d’inauguration de la Société des amis du divorce, le 17 janvier 1881.” 8-R PIECE-1749. Bibliothèque nationale de France.

⁸ Auguste Loreau, Société de Longue Vie, “Discours prononcé par M. Auguste Loreau, secrétaire perpétuel, au banquet du 24 décembre 1874.” 8-R PIECE-12. Bibliothèque nationale de France.

⁹ John J. Baughman, “The French Banquet Campaign of 1847-1848,” *The Journal of Modern History* 31, No. 1 (1959): 1,14.

during early Third Republic France. In *Nourishing the Political Body: Banquets in Early Third Republic France, 1878 – 1914*, I argue that banquets became a critical site for the construction of political and cultural power by creating distinctive, tightly-knit communities that bolstered a diverse set of causes across the entire political landscape. The banquet of early Third Republic France was a semi-private space within the public sphere.¹⁰ The proportion of private versus public varied in the various banquets with the empire banquets leaning toward more private events as they excluded the lower classes to the commemorations of the Paris Commune, royalist, and feminist banquets being more open to everyone. The semi-private nature of the banquets enabled the attendees to intervene in the public sphere in a more discreet yet effective way. In the following pages, I will explore the history of the French banquet, the notion of the public sphere, mass political culture, sociability, and gender.

The phenomenon of the banquet was not new in late nineteenth-century France. The historiography on French banquets can be divided into pre- and post-1848. Banquets as a historical phenomenon have a history in France dating back to the *ancien régime*. Nonetheless, historians have agreed the banquet first became politicized during the French Revolution of 1789 to 1799.¹¹ In 1959, social historian John J. Baughman analyzed the French political banquets of 1847 to 1848 and argued that these gatherings were perceived by French state authorities as harmless ways to criticize the current government, but in actuality they served as the locus for intense political debates that helped to spark the Revolution of 1848.¹² More recently, cultural historian Vincent Robert has demonstrated in a well-researched monograph that banquets were a

¹⁰ Maria Todorova's characterization of banquets in early Third Republic France as she explained at my dissertation pre-defense, 7 December 2018.

¹¹ Jacqueline Lalouette, "Banqueter" in *Dictionnaire critique de la République*, Vincent Duclerc and Christophe Prochasson, eds. (Paris: Flammarion, 2002): 988; E. Béricourt, *Repas fraternel en l'honneur de la Liberté* (drawing), 1794. Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Estampes et photographie, RESERVE FOL-QB-201.

¹² John J. Baughman, "The French Banquet Campaign of 1847-1848," *The Journal of Modern History* 31, No. 1 (1959): 1, 14.

major, political phenomenon in France from 1818 to 1848, asserting that under the Bourbon Restoration (1814 – 1830) and the constitutional monarchy of Louis Philippe (1830 – 1848), when the right of assembly was not guaranteed by law, banquets served as an acceptable venue where large numbers of politically conscious people gathered to express their opinions including those of a revolutionary nature.¹³ Both Baughman and Robert demonstrated that the banquet became enshrined as a French institution that facilitated politization and agitation, especially in the lead up to the Revolution of 1848.

Writing about banquets from 1838 to 1849 that commemorated the birthday of Charles Fourier, Bernard Desmars argued that although these banquets were festive events, they did not live up to the communal meals imagined by Fourier as women were excluded and the unity of all social classes declared by speakers was not achieved between the members of the audience.¹⁴ However, this was not how contemporaries thought of banquets. Vincent Robert analyzed the views of a contemporary observer, Jean Reynaud (1806 – 1863), who had an entry on banquets in a philosophical dictionary that was never completed. While acknowledging the significance of banquets in his time as one where the right to hold banquets was guaranteed by the Revolution of 1848, Reynaud envisioned the banquet playing a critical role in the future as a civilizing institution in villages and promoting harmony among all social classes.¹⁵

Concerning the post-1848 historiography, the focus of scholars' research has generally steered away from politics. Anne Martin-Fugier, for instance, researched dinner groups during the Second Empire and Third Republic and argued that they were masculine spaces where

¹³ Vincent Robert, *Le temps des banquets : Politique et symbolique d'une génération (1818 – 1848)* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2010): 7-13.

¹⁴ Bernard Desmars, "Festins harmonies ou réunions militantes ? Les banquets phalanstériens de 1838 à 1849," *Romantisme* 137, No. 3 (2007): 33, 35.

¹⁵ Vincent Robert, "Le banquet selon Jean Reynaud," *Romantisme* 137, No. 3 (2007): 38, 40, 46-47.

writers, scientists, artists, and politicians gathered to discuss literature, news, and politics.¹⁶

Jean-Louis Cabanès, exploring literary banquets of the 1890s, asserted that literary banquets and the media attention surrounding them transformed the writer into a public man by providing a new type of publicity.¹⁷

In a different vein, Olivier Ihl, writing in 1996 about republican festivals generally, identified the holding of banquets increasing dramatically after the right to assemble was reestablished by law in 1876, several years after the founding of the new French Third Republic, and asserted that the familial aspect of the banquet produced festive, intimate ties among its participants.¹⁸ Delving into the science-religion debate of Third Republic France, Jacqueline Lalouette researched a 4 April 1895 banquet that both honored Marcelin Berthelot, a distinguished French chemist and statesman, and was part of a broad effort to defend science in the face of strong criticism launched by the Catholic Church. She argued that the choice of the banquet as the venue was not incidental as the festive atmosphere of food, wine, toasts, and speeches seemed to be the most appropriate manner to honor Berthelot.¹⁹ Lalouette also asserted that republicans used this banquet to regain the initiative against clericals.²⁰ Additionally, two large mayor banquets drew mayors from all around France to celebrate banquets during the time of the *Exposition Universelle* of 1889 and 1900 in Paris, with the latter banquet hosting more than 9,000 people.²¹

¹⁶ Anne Martin-Fugier, "Convivialité masculine au XIX^e siècle : les dîners Bixio et Magny," *Romantisme* 137, No. 3 (2007): 49, 51, 54-56.

¹⁷ Jean-Louis Cabanès, "Les banquets littéraires : pompes et circonstances," *Romantisme* 137, No. 3 (2007): 74-75.

¹⁸ Olivier Ihl, *La Fête Républicaine* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1996): 98-99.

¹⁹ Jacqueline Lalouette, "La querelle de la foi et de la science et le banquet Berthelot," *Revue Historique* 300, no. 4 (1998): 842.

²⁰ Jacqueline Lalouette, "La querelle de la foi et de la science et le banquet Berthelot," 842.

²¹ Jocelyne George, *Histoire des Maires, 1789-1939* (Paris: Plon, 1989): 223-225.

The analysis of the historiography for the early Third Republic banquets in general has downplayed the political nature of banquets. Vincent Robert minimized the political significance of banquets by asserting that the banquet became only one of many types of political gatherings during the Third Republic.²² I intervene in the historiography by demonstrating the emergence of a fundamentally transformed banquet during the early Third Republic that became a politically influential cultural site across political, class, and gender lines in France. In this sense, my analysis of the French public sphere during this period builds on yet differs from Jürgen Habermas's well-known theory on the public sphere. Habermas argued that the Enlightenment opened a new political framework, the bourgeois public sphere, in the eighteenth century. The bourgeois public sphere (newspapers, salons, meetings, etc.) was a space where political ideas were critically debated. Habermas envisioned the public sphere as fundamental to democracy.²³ He asserted that while the public sphere had the ideal of inclusion of everyone, it was initially the domain of bourgeois men.²⁴ Nevertheless, when the lower classes finally gained entry into the public sphere, they did so as consumers through the means of a profitable, apolitical press; as a result, the public sphere lost its political debating nature beginning in the mid-nineteenth century.²⁵ Conversely, I argue that French banquets of 1878 to 1914 politicized the public sphere as it brought new political ideas into the public sphere for debate and discussion, which had the effect of not just exhibiting political discourse but influencing and even creating political agendas. Scholars have challenged Habermas for excluding non-

²² Vincent Robert, "Présentation," *Romantisme* 137, No. 3 (2007): 9.

²³ Dena Goodman, "Public Sphere and Private Life: Toward a Synthesis of Current Historiographical Approaches to the Old Regime," *History and Theory* 31, no. 1 (1992): 5.

²⁴ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (*Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*), Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence, trans. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998 [1962]): 4, 56.

²⁵ Habermas, 159, 168-169.

hegemonic groups from the public sphere.²⁶ Likewise, I demonstrate that the participation of women, peasants, and workers as active political actors in banquets opened to them a previously elitist space within the public sphere and enabled women, peasants, and workers to advocate for their agendas.

The French banquet was so popular that it in effect became a global phenomenon. Some Paris Commune commemorative banquets extended beyond France,²⁷ and banquets took place in the French colonies.²⁸ In addition, the French banquets of the Revolution of 1848 expanded beyond the borders of France as an impetus to European revolutions – for instance, in Sweden and the Romanian Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia.²⁹ Similarly, South American politicians utilized French-styled banquets with French menus during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in Argentina, Perú, and Brazil.³⁰

Moreover, banquets played a fundamental role in the emergence of mass culture in France during the early Third Republic. As historians have shown, the development of a French mass political culture happened during this period.³¹ Madeleine Rebérioux demonstrated that a militant cultural movement, which included art and theater clubs, began to develop in France at the time of the Dreyfus Affair in the later 1890s.³² James Lehning investigated the political

²⁶ Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy” in *Between Borders: Pedagogy and the Politics of Cultural Studies*, Henry A. Giroux and Peter McLaren, eds. (New York: Routledge, 1994): 78; Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2002): 113.

²⁷ See Chapter 1 below.

²⁸ See Chapter 3 below.

²⁹ Jonathan Sperber, *The European Revolutions, 1848 – 1851* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 120-121.

³⁰ Leandro Losada, *La alta sociedad en la Buenos Aires de la Belle Epoque: sociabilidad, estilos de vida e identidades*. (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Editores, 2008); Eduardo Dargent Chamot, “Lima. Aproximación a la historia del patrimonio gastronómico local”, *Cultura*, Lima (Perú) 22, (2008): 29; “Banquete ofrecido à representação federal,” *Manaos*, 4 April 1917. Many thanks to Silvia Escanilla Huerta Kosovych and Thaís Rezende Da Silva De Sant’ana for this information.

³¹ I define mass political culture as a cultural event with a political emphasis, which has a large number of participants including a sizable representation from the lower classes.

³² Madeleine Rebérioux, “Culture et militantisme,” in *Le Mouvement Sociale*, no. 91 (1975): 5.

culture of the first two decades of the Third Republic and argued that the leadership of the Republic wanted democracy to be totally governed by voting but that other forms of political culture such as meetings, parades, and strikes challenged this notion and that this push and pull factored into the instability of the regime.³³ On the other hand, Paula Cossart has recently stated that republican leaders saw public assemblies as a means of bringing democracy to the masses, taming the lower classes, and molding them into responsible citizens, yet the leadership feared private assemblies because of their intrinsic ability to unite people in support of a political objective.³⁴ Vanessa Schwartz, analyzing Parisian cultural activities of the morgue, wax museum, newspapers, panoramas, and films, asserted that the emergence of mass culture ushered in a new era of inclusive democracy across class and gender lines.³⁵ In this context, banquets became a prominent early form of mass political culture because they fell into a category in between public and private as they facilitated the discussion and debating of issues but also mobilized support for political causes. Even more, since workers and peasants made up a large portion of its participants, the mass cultural event of the banquet served as a key instrument in the process of democratization in France by including the masses in this expanding political world.

Characterizing the banquet as a mass cultural event, my work closely dialogues with Maurice Agulhon's brilliant work on sociability. Agulhon theorized in particular about post-French Revolution sociability in France. Looking at associations that operated in eastern Provence in the late eighteenth century, he pointed out that their freedom of operation was

³³ James R. Lehning, *To Be a Citizen: The Political Culture of the Early French Republic* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001): ix, 2, 13, 183, 186.

³⁴ Paula Cossart, *From Deliberation to Demonstration: Political Rallies in France, 1868 – 1939*, Clare Tarne, trans. (Colchester, UK: ECPR Press, 2013): 4, 9, 12, 18, 70, 176.

³⁵ Vanessa R. Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-De-Siècle Paris* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998): 131, 202.

contested.³⁶ Yet he asserted that there was a profound emergence of republican democratic thought in the countryside, which flourished because of the press, sociability, and communal relations.³⁷ I argue that banquets also contributed to the strengthening of specific forms of sociability that developed in a semi-private context, which allowed for the rehearsal and production of ideas and discourses. Moving forward into the early Third Republic, Agulhon researched the adoption of Marianne as the personification of the Third Republic; the femininity of Marianne, Agulhon maintained, conveyed more appropriately the democratic ideals than other symbols of the past.³⁸ W. Scott Haine argued that the Parisian working-class café of the nineteenth century was an instrumental subculture, which facilitated the development of class consciousness and strengthened the cohesiveness of Parisian workers by providing a space where workers were able to discuss grievances, unite against workplace injustices, and challenge authority.³⁹ I argue that similar to the working-class café subculture, certain banquets became spaces of sociability where working class people exchanged ideas, listened to each other, and lifted each other up in ways that only the semi-private atmosphere of the banquet offered.

Something similar can be demonstrated about the role of women in the public sphere. Michelle Perrot has argued that after 1878 the feminist and workers' movements brought women into the public sphere and thus gave them a hold on public power in France.⁴⁰ Furthermore,

³⁶ Maurice Agulhon, *La Sociabilité méridionale (Confréries et Associations dans la vie collective en Provence orientale à la fin du 18^e siècle)*. Tome II (Aix-en-Provence, France: Publications des Annales de la Faculté des Lettres, 1966): 567.

³⁷ Maurice Agulhon, *The Republic in the Village: The People of the Var from the French Revolution to the Second Republic*, transl. by Janet Lloyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982): vii, 299.

³⁸ Maurice Agulhon, *Marianne au pouvoir : L'imagerie et la symbolique républicaine de 1880 à 1914*. Paris, France: Flammarion, 1989): 37, 57, 349. Interestingly, the transportation of the bust of Marianne from the mayor's house to the city hall involved much ceremony including a parade, banquet, and ball.

³⁹ W. Scott Haine, *The World of the Paris Café: Sociability Among the French Working Class, 1789-1914* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996): 2, 227, 233-237.

⁴⁰ Michelle Perrot, *Les Femmes ou les silences de l'Histoire* (Saint-Amand-Montrond, France: Flammarion, 1998): 259-266.

Perrot theorized that feminists created a “gender consciousness” through multiple cultural forms of expression: petitions, processions, commemorations, funerals, banquets, conferences, meetings, and, most importantly, national and international congresses.⁴¹ In the same vein, Karen Offen argued that almost all the major issues of “male-female relations” were heatedly discussed in France by the year 1920.⁴² I claim that banquets contributed to the development of the feminist movement by propagating feminist ideas in the public sphere. Although women did have some involvement in the commemorations of the Paris Commune and royalist banquets, they made their greatest contribution by far in the feminist banquets.

Finally, drawing inspiration from Lynn Hunt’s analysis of cultural symbols and rituals during the French Revolution, I analyze how politics became intertwined with the symbols, rituals, ceremonies, music, food, and drink of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century French banquets. Of special importance to my approach will be Hunt’s contention that “political symbols and rituals were not metaphors of power; they were the means and ends of power itself.”⁴³ The cultural site of the banquet collectively energized and sustained political and social movements in France at this time. While politics provided the basis for these meetings, the specifically cultural aspects of banquets transformed the political into a lively and powerful form. Eating and drinking together in a relaxed social atmosphere created a strong solidarity between leaders and rank-and-file members and thus unified movements. Theorizing on the importance of drinks, Paul Manning conveyed the significance of toasts by stating that the drinking that concludes the toast was a performative act.⁴⁴ The simultaneous, collective drinking

⁴¹ Michelle Perrot, “Préface,” in Laurence Klejman et Florence Rochefort, *L’Égalité en marche : Le féminisme sous la Troisième République* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1989): 15.

⁴² Karen Offen, *Debating the Woman Question in the French Third Republic, 1870-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018): x.

⁴³ Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004 [1984]): 54.

⁴⁴ Paul Manning, *The Semiotics of Drink and Drinking* (London: Continuum International Pub. Group, 2012): 15.

among banquet participants signified the audience was behind the speaker's toast, which had the consequence of creating unity for the cause by shaping and solidifying political consciousness. The sociability and communal atmosphere of banquets facilitated the development of various movements that were oftentimes oppositional, subversive, or even revolutionary.

I conducted research for my dissertation in France in the cities of Paris, Aix-en-Provence, and Angers at the following archives, libraries, or organizations: Archives nationales (site de Pierrefitte-sur-Seine), Archives de l'Académie des sciences, Archives de la préfecture de police, Association des Amies et Amis de la Commune de Paris 1871, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Bibliothèque historique de la ville de Paris, Bibliothèque Marguerite Durand, Bibliothèque Forney, Musée de l'histoire vivante, L'Office universitaire de recherche socialiste, Archives nationales d'outre-mer, and Centre des Archives du féminisme. To reconstruct a history of banquets in early Third Republic France, I utilize the following types of sources: police reports and telegrams, government documents, publications at the time that described banquet proceedings, memoirs, letters, private archives, contemporary political works, and newspapers. This rich primary-source base has allowed me to demonstrate that banquets were indeed a significant and ubiquitous phenomenon in early Third Republic France, serving as a dynamic cultural activity that propelled the agendas of various groups. Banquets were not static events that solely looked to the past; rather, they influenced key political, social, and cultural transformations in France.

I have arranged my dissertation thematically with chapters corresponding to the four main genres of banquets studied: commemorations of the Paris Commune, royalist, empire, and feminist. Although republican banquets certainly took place, both the French political right and the political left used banquets to challenge the legitimacy of the recently established and still

vulnerable Third Republic. The political left turned to the banquet to challenge the Republic, and the Paris Commune commemorative banquets were their most powerful cultural expression. Royalists effectively appropriated a leftist cultural site for their own agenda thereby using banquets to advance a political drive for the restoration of the French monarchy that would supplant the Third Republic. Both banquets commemorating the Paris Commune and royalist banquets were clear instances of banquets being used as a forum that actively promoted the incorporation of large numbers of citizens, many of whom were from the lower classes, into political/social movements. The banquet strengthened the French empire by uniting the community of empire supporters and providing a space for influencing the policies of the French empire. Women gave speeches at banquets and feminists organized their own banquets as a forum to fight for women's equality and other causes. These four diverse groups turned to the banquet to galvanize their respective movements; attesting to their effectiveness, they continued to hold banquets for more than 30 years.

Chapter 1 “« Un nouveau monde émerge à l’horizon »⁴⁵: Banquets Commemorating the Paris Commune, 1878 – 1914” traces the history of Paris Commune commemorative banquets from cultural events that espoused revolutionary rhetoric to promoting involvement in electoral democracy and finally becoming divided over the Boulanger and Dreyfus Affairs. The Paris Commune anniversary banquets were unique as they were commemorative. The banquet with its symbols and rituals was an ideal venue for creating a collective memory around the controversial event of the Paris Commune. I argue that although some commemorators worked to actively change the memory of the Paris Commune, the 18 March 1871 commemorative banquets were *milieux de mémoire* where the memory of the Commune was actively lived and contested until

⁴⁵ *Le Droit Sociale*, “Le 18 Mars A Paris,” 26 March 1882, p. 1. Speech by Louise Michel.

1901. At the beginning of the twentieth century, participants in the Paris Commune grew older and some died. As a result, the link between the Paris Commune and the banquets commemorating it deteriorated causing the banquets to become *lieux de mémoire*.⁴⁶ Overall, these banquets enabled the construction of mass political movements for diverse groups including veterans of the Commune, workers, republicans, international socialists, feminists, anarchists, nationalists, and anti-Semites.

While the French political left celebrated the memory of the Paris Commune at banquets, the opposing right held banquets calling for the restoration of the monarchy. Chapter 2 “« À mort les républicains ! »⁴⁷: Royalist Banquets, 1879 – 1913” investigates the emergence and transformation of the royalist banquet. After royalist leadership failed to restore the monarchy with a royalist majority in the National Assembly in the 1870s, the banquet galvanized the royalist movement by expanding its adherents to include workers and peasants as well as providing unity and solidarity through the cultural elements of the banquet. I argue that at banquets throughout France, royalists under the Comte de Chambord (1879 – 1882) advocated a revolutionary rhetoric that sought to violently overthrow the Republic, whereas monarchists under the Comte de Paris (1885 – 1888) worked within the structures of the Republic to attempt to win elections, and royalists allied with Action Française (1908 – 1913) undermined the Republic by promoting an extreme, exclusionary nationalism that included a virulent anti-Semitism.

⁴⁶ Pierre Nora developed the terms *milieux de mémoire* and *lieux de mémoire*, which I will explain in Chapter 1. Pierre Nora, “General Introduction: Between Memory and History,” in *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, Volume I, ed. by Pierre Nora, transl. by Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996): 1.

⁴⁷ *Le Rappel*, 25 August 1882, p. 2. The audience shouted this provocative statement at a 19 August 1882 banquet at Challans in western France.

Whereas the first two chapters cover banquets that opposed the government of the Third Republic, Chapter 3 “« Les serviteurs d’une même et grande cause »⁴⁸: Empire Banquets, 1882 – 1912” analyzes banquets that supported the Third Republic and, more so, its empire. I argue, first, that the rhetoric at empire banquets expressed the major motivations for the French empire that of bestowing national glory and economic exploitation of the colonies rather than a civilizing mission. Nationalism and capitalism fueled the growth and development of the French empire according to speeches presented at banquets. Second, I assert that the banquet was a cultural institution that significantly bolstered the French empire. The banquet strengthened the overseas empire by unifying supporters from a diverse set of professions, providing a space for influencing French imperial policies, softening the harsh aspects of colonial rule, and keeping the public informed about the empire.

In Chapter 4 “« Non, non, pas de galanterie, de la justice ! »⁴⁹: Feminist Banquets, 1898 – 1914,” French feminists organized banquets to campaign for reforms in Third Republic France. The *fin de siècle* period has been called “a golden age of French feminism” with as many as seventeen major feminist organizations that held a striking diversity of stances on how to promote women’s rights and debated which egalitarian agendas to pursue.⁵⁰ I argue below that banquets were an integral part of the feminist movement of early Third Republic France by providing a dynamic forum for feminists to voice their political viewpoints. The banquet enabled feminist women and men to talk about important issues related to the feminist movement in an intimate setting over food and drink, thereby putting on the table the issue of the

⁴⁸ Union Coloniale Française. Rapport de L’Exercice 1896-97. Banquet Colonial de 1897, p.47. Liste des Membres. Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris, 8°Z2020. “We are servants of the same great cause.”

⁴⁹ René Everard, “Pas de galanterie, la justice ! disent les Féministes,” *Le Rappel*, 6 July 1914, p.3. In response to a male speaker’s assertion at a feminist banquet that Parliament would grant women the right to vote out of gallantry, one woman yelled: « Non, non, pas de galanterie, de la justice ! »

⁵⁰ Jennifer Waelti-Walters and Steven C. Hause, eds., *Feminisms of the Belle Epoque* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1994): 4-5.

advancement of the women's rights movement in France and Europe. At these gatherings, feminists debated major issues including the vote for women, internationalism, women's worker pay, limitation of hours of work per week, women's involvement in the running of a city, affordable housing, education, alcoholism, infant mortality, tuberculosis, hygiene, peace, and anti-prostitution.

The following is a brief quantitative analysis of each of the four genres of banquets. For the Paris Commune commemorative banquets and royalist banquets, there were so many of them that I can only provide the number of banquets for the year there was a quantitative high point. At least 15,000 men and women participated in 25 Paris Commune commemorative banquets or reunions in Paris between 18 to 19 March 1882.⁵¹ In addition, there were banquets in Marseille, Lyon, Bordeaux, Amiens, Annonay, Grenoble, Reims, Rennes, Saint-Chamond, Saint-Etienne, Toulon, and Troyes during March 1882.⁵² In 1882, there was a particularly strong, nationwide royalist banquet campaign for the birthday of Comte de Chambord (29 September 1882) with 84 banquets mobilizing a total of 60,000 people across France in support of the royalist cause.⁵³ Based on my archival and newspaper research, I have identified a total of 62 French empire banquets occurring between 1882 and 1912. Likewise, I have discovered 23 feminist banquets (18 mainstream feminist, two of them conservative feminist, and three instances where feminists gave meaningful speeches at other banquets) that occurred between 1898 to 1914. Although there are other times when the number of banquets spike, it appears that the 1880s were the height of banquets under Third Republic France.

⁵¹ *Le Droit Sociale*, "Le 18 Mars A Paris," 26 March 1882, p.1-2; *L'Égalité*, "Mouvement Social," 26 March 1882, p.5-6, L'Office universitaire de recherche socialiste.

⁵² *Le Petit Parisien*, "Les Banquets Du Dix-Huit Mars," 20 March 1882, p.2; *Le Droit Sociale*, "A Annonay," 26 March 1882, p.2-3; *Le Droit Sociale*, "Mouvement Socialiste," 26 March 1882, p.3; *Le Droit Sociale*, "Programme du groupe communiste anarchiste l'Alarme, et du comité exécutif révolutionnaire de propagande la Trique," 12 March 1882, p.3.

⁵³ "La Politique," *Le Gaulois*, 2 October 1882, p.1.

As urban society strengthened in nineteenth-century Europe, local community ties weakened. Writing in 1887, the German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies envisioned an ongoing struggle between *Gemeinschaft* (Community) and *Gesellschaft* (Society).⁵⁴ In other words, modern society, along with the capitalism and individualism that was embedded in it, was degrading and replacing traditional, local structures of village life based on community and cooperation. This struggle was a real one in early Third Republic France, and the banquet was a cultural site that bolstered different communities. The banquet carved out a vibrant space of sociability in an historical time when the advance of capitalistic individualism enervated community structures. The community space of the banquet became an expression of a totally new revolutionary form of political action. Norbert Elias identified what he theorized as the “*psychical* process of civilization” beginning in medieval Europe where society impelled its people to adopt civilized manners.⁵⁵ In the same vein, the banquet created an inclusive and civilized sociability by bringing the masses into a civilized dinner ritual. I demonstrate, moreover, that these banquets were an early form of mass political movement in France because they attracted a large number of participants (typically between 500 and 1000 people in attendance), incorporated marginalized social groups, and advanced diverse causes across a broad political spectrum. The study of banquets and their role in French politics and society contributes to our understanding of modern political cultures across the globe by discovering and elucidating the complex, evolving links between politics and culture in Third Republic France.

⁵⁴ Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Society* (*Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*), trans. by Charles P. Loomis (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1963 [1887]: 230-231.

⁵⁵ Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners* (*Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation*), vol. 1, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Urizen Books, 1978 [1939]): xii, xiv, 140.

CHAPTER 1: « UN NOUVEAU MONDE ÉMERGE À L'HORIZON »¹:
BANQUETS COMMEMORATING THE PARIS COMMUNE, 1878 – 1914



Figure 5: Poster advertising to women and men a Paris Commune commemorative banquet taking place in the thirteenth *arrondissement* (district) of Paris on Sunday, 18 March 1900.²

¹ *Le Droit Sociale*, “Le 18 Mars A Paris,” 26 March 1882, p. 1. Speech by Louise Michel.

² Archives de la Préfecture de Police, BA 891, Anniversaire du 18 mars (1898 – 1901).

Walter Benjamin: “Every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably.”³

Walter Benjamin pondered about how history is produced and preserved, theorizing that the writing of history is fundamentally connected to the time the historian is living. In the same vein as Walter Benjamin’s theory on the construction of history, banquets celebrating the anniversary of the inception of the Paris Commune (18 May 1871) sought to keep its memory alive. After the repressive post-Commune era of the 1870s, the memory of the Commune was important for the commemorators’ contemporary political struggles. Participants used the banquet as a venue in order to struggle for their historical version of the Commune against those in power who sought to obliterate its memory or project an anti-Commune historical view. There were approximately 300 books published after the Paris Commune until 1873 upholding the official narrative historical version that glorified the victory of the French provisional government, the *Versaillais*, and vilified the Communards.⁴

The relationship between history and memory for the Paris Commune was complex and dynamic as the memories of people involved in it challenged conservative historical narratives as well as projected new meaning on the Commune that was oftentimes contrary to the historical event. Pierre Nora developed the concepts of *lieux de mémoire* (“realms of memory”) as commemorative sites that serve the purpose of sanctifying those memories that have lost real connection to the present and no longer are *milieux de mémoire* (“real environments of memory”).⁵ Banquets commemorating the Paris Commune, while initially deeply connected to

³ Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History” in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt and transl. Henry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969 [1940]): 255.

⁴ John Merriman, *Massacre: The Life and Death of the Paris Commune* (New York: Basic Books, 2014): 251.

⁵ Pierre Nora, “General Introduction: Between Memory and History,” in *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, Volume I, ed. by Pierre Nora, transl. by Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996): 1-2, 6-7; Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” *Representations*, no. 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (1989): 7.

the Commune and geared toward defending its memory, transformed around the Boulanger and Dreyfus Affairs as participants manipulated the memory of the Commune to suit their various political agendas. I argue that although some commemorators worked to actively change the memory of the Paris Commune, the 18 March 1871 commemorative banquets were *milieux de mémoire* as they were a site where the memory of the Commune was actively lived and contested. Yet, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the generation of veterans of the Paris Commune grew older and some died, thereby severing the link to the Paris Commune and rendering the banquets as *lieux de mémoire*. At the same time, banquets created a powerful solidarity between participants, which enabled the commemorations to continue beyond the lifetimes of the participants in the Paris Commune, nonetheless, in a weaker form. Overall, banquets enabled the construction of mass political movements for diverse groups including veterans of the Commune, workers, republicans, international socialists, feminists, anarchists, nationalists, and anti-Semites. By doing so, banquets brought new ideas up for debate and conversation in the public sphere.

The political left turned to the banquet to challenge the Republic, and the Paris Commune commemorative banquets were their most powerful cultural expression. The commemoration of the beginning of the Paris Commune on 18 March 1871 was a clear instance of banquets being used as a forum that actively promoted the incorporation of the masses into political/social movements as workers and women actively participated. Cultural symbols, rituals, songs, and communal eating were integrated into these events to instill a powerful collective historical memory that mobilized political aims. Alongside these cultural symbols, speakers ardently called for a revolution.⁶ The cultural space of the banquet created a mass movement around the

⁶ For example, Léo Montancey, “L’Anniversaire du 18 Mars 1871,” *Le Figaro*, 18 March 1880, p. 2.

memory of the Commune that has lasted until the present day. This chapter analyzes the Paris Commune banquets from 1878 to 1914 by looking at three distinct periods: 1878 to 1887 was characterized by the fight for amnesty, unity, defense of memory, and revolutionary activity; 1888 to 1901 had the emergence of significant disunity with regards to the Boulanger Crisis and the Dreyfus Affair, a transformation and manipulation of the memory of the Commune, and a struggle between revolutionary aspirations and reform; and the final period 1902 to 1914 was defined by the decline of the banquets on the eve of the First World War.

Even today, 149 years later, the Paris Commune remains an extremely controversial event among historians in respect to its motivations, objectives, and death toll. The Paris Commune is an incredibly difficult revolution for historians to fully grasp because of its political diversity, a combination of moderate republicans, socialists, anarchists, and neo-Jacobins influencing its direction, and its short duration. The people of Paris – the majority from the lower classes with artisanal workers predominating since those of affluence had already escaped Paris during the Prussian siege – revolted against the newly constituted French government in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War. They established the Paris Commune, a revolutionary, social democratic Republic, for a brief 72-day period from 18 March to 28 May 1871.

On 5 January 1871, the Prussian army began shelling Paris. Shortly thereafter, a defeated France signed an armistice, which demobilized the French army and turned over control of Paris to Prussia. Otto von Bismarck required that the French National Assembly ratify a peace treaty. France thereby elected a conservative and monarchical National Assembly on 8 February and appointed Adolphe Thiers as Chief of the Executive with the main task of negotiating peace with Prussia. The National Assembly announced policy changes that angered Parisian workers (who were mainly artisans): discontinuation of National Guard daily pay, reopening of state-owned

pawnshops, refusal to extend the moratorium on rents and debts, and restrictions on speech and assembly.⁷ The preliminary terms of the peace treaty, signed on 28 February 1871, ceded Alsace and Lorraine to Prussia, established five billion francs war compensation, and sanctioned the occupation of Paris by the Prussian army. Subsequently, the Prussians paraded down the Champs Élysées but only remained in Paris for two days. Tensions steadily built up between Paris and the newly constituted French national government.

The Paris Commune emerged from the Paris National Guard having no desire to surrender to Prussia or the French provisional national government. Pressured by the National Assembly, Adolphe Thiers and Joseph Vinoy, the commanding general of the army of Paris, decided to clandestinely seize the Paris National Guard Artillery and arrest all suspected revolutionaries. This struggle over the ownership of the artillery sparked a spontaneous revolution, which evolved into the Paris Commune. Before dawn on 18 March 1871, two army divisions captured artillery in the northeastern areas of Montmartre and Belleville, killing one Paris National Guard soldier. The army, however, forgot to bring horses to tow the artillery. At Montmartre, crowds of Parisian National Guardsmen, women, and children began to gather and mingle with the national army. Surrounded by civilians, the army refused to fire and, in some instances, helped the National Guard take their officers prisoner. During this skirmish, General Clément Thomas and General Claude-Martin Lecomte were captured and killed while the National Guard leadership was deciding what to do with them. Thiers called the army back to Versailles to prepare for an all-out invasion of Paris.

During the next two days, the National Guard Central Committee tried to negotiate with the National Assembly but was not successful. The Central Committee held Parisian municipal

⁷ Carolyn J. Eichner, *Surmounting the Barricades: Women in the Paris Commune* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004): 21.

government elections on 26 March where 227,000 people out of 480,000 voted for radical or socialist delegates. However, out of the 81 deputies, only 35 were workers and these were mostly skilled artisans.⁸ The Paris Commune was officially proclaimed on 28 March 1871 and immediately went to work with dual objectives of overseeing the normal administration of the city and maintaining its defense. As a result, two rival governments emerged in France, the Paris Commune and the provisional French national government seated in Versailles.

Paris, for the time, became independent. Previously underprivileged workers experienced an upsurge in freedom as the entire city became accessible to them and they were able to take part in debating policy and governance.⁹ The Paris Commune was socially progressive in its inclusion of women and by initiating a number of social and egalitarian reforms. Women had an integral role in the Paris Commune serving as speakers and organizers of political clubs, journalists, nurses, cooks, and soldiers. The Commune cancelled all overdue rents, declared the separation of church and state, cancelled the church budget, established a system of universal secular education, enabled artisans to retrieve their pawned tools, and initiated a program of creating producers' cooperatives.¹⁰ More drastic socialist measures such as nationalizing the Bank of France were not taken. The brevity of the Commune and the necessity to maintain its defense limited the potential of further reforms.¹¹

The French national government's massacre of the democratically elected Commune gave the Paris Commune a moral high ground and lasting, heroic appeal. The fight over the control of Paris was not a military battle but a slaughter conducted by 100,000 well-trained

⁸ Jeremy D. Popkin, *A History of Modern France*, third ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006): 145.

⁹ John Merriman, *Massacre: The Life and Death of the Paris Commune* (New York: Basic Books, 2014): 39, 51.

¹⁰ Roger Magraw, *A History of the French Working Class, Volume 1: The Age of Artisan Revolution, 1815 – 1871* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1992): 261.

¹¹ Robert Tombs, *The Paris Commune 1871* (New York: Pearson Education Limited, 1999): 6.

soldiers against disorganized yet determined Parisians. The French national army entered Paris in the morning of 21 May 1871 and easily captured the western side of Paris by 24 May, but then encountered some resistance in the north and east, with the last stand occurring in Père Lachaise cemetery in the twentieth *arrondissement* (district). The French national army carried out mass executions of its own people, participants in the Paris Commune, which began as early as 22 May and continued hours after the fighting had ended on 28 May in a week that would be aptly named *la semaine sanglante* (Bloody Week).¹² The Paris Commune would retaliate during the week, executing about a hundred hostages including the Archbishop of Paris.

Conservatives rendered their version of the events portraying the defenders of the Commune as criminals and depicting women as *pétroleuses* (incendiaries) who tried to burn all of Paris; however, the death tolls on each side tell the real story. The French national army mercilessly crushed the Paris Commune murdering men, women, and children.¹³ The total death toll of the Communards is still under contested debate by historians as a result of the French military efforts to cover up mass graves and secretly dispose of bodies in an effort to minimize the extent of the mass murder.¹⁴ The total number of Communards killed vastly ranges in the historiography from a low estimate of 5,700 to 7,400 with only 1,400 as a result of summary executions¹⁵ to higher figures of executions that of 17,000 based on an official French

¹² Other cities throughout France followed the lead of Paris, thereby attempting to create a national movement. Communes emerged in Marseilles (23 March to 4 April 1871, the longest lasting of the Communes outside of Paris), Lyon, Saint-Étienne, Le Creusot, Toulouse, and Narbonne. These collapsed due to pressure or direct military engagement by the French national army. On the whole, the countryside of France stood with the French national government. Inhabitants of the countryside made up a significant portion of the French national army that defeated the Paris Commune.

¹³ Gay L. Gullickson, *Unruly Women of Paris: Images of the Commune* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996): 172-173.

¹⁴ John Merriman, *Massacre: The Life and Death of the Paris Commune* (New York: Basic Books, 2014): 246, 253.

¹⁵ Robert Tombs, "How Bloody was *La Semaine Sanglante* of 1871? A Revision," *The Historical Journal* 55, no. 3 (2012): 691, 697.

government report and higher estimates reaching 35,000.¹⁶ The number of French national soldiers killed, 877, reveals that this was not a war but a slaughter of unarmed Parisians. In addition, approximately 40,000 Communards were captured, one third of them were arrested after the end of hostilities. Trial by court martial rendered 93 death sentences of which 23 were executed, 6,000 served sentences in prison or hard labor ranging from a few months to twenty years, 4,500 were deported to penal exile in New Caledonia, and the remainder were released after spending up to a year in captivity.¹⁷ The French government's actions were brutal, merciless, unrelenting, and would not be easily forgotten.

Following the defeat of the Paris Commune, the French government attempted to erase its memory of the events through applying strict censorship to anything favorable to the Commune during the following decade.¹⁸ Emphasizing this strategy, Léon Gambetta, President of the Chamber of Deputies and prominent republican leader, spoke to the Chamber on 21 June 1880 in favor of granting full amnesty to the Communards:

You must place the tombstone of oblivion over the crimes and vestiges of the Commune, and you must tell everyone – those whose absence we deplore and those whose contrary views and disagreements we sometimes regret, that there is but one France and one Republic.¹⁹

Although Gambetta wanted to free all exiled and imprisoned, he equated the Commune with criminality and wished for it to be forgotten.²⁰ Conversely, members of the Paris Commune, workers, and socialists began holding annual commemorative banquets in 1878 to mark the Paris

¹⁶ John Merriman, *Massacre: The Life and Death of the Paris Commune*, 253.

¹⁷ Roger V. Gould, *Insurgent Identities: Class, Community, and Protest in Paris from 1848 to the Commune* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995): 165.

¹⁸ Colette E. Wilson, *Paris and the Commune 1871-78: The Politics of Forgetting* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2007): 2, 37.

¹⁹ Quoted in Wilson, 1.

²⁰ *Les Amis de la Commune de Paris 1871 : Histoire de L'Association* (2008): 3. The present-day association, Les Amies et Amis De La Commune de Paris 1871, draws the comparison between the words *amnistie* (amnesty) and *amnésie* (amnesia) that come from the same roots, and asserts that the French government's underlying policy was to promote the obliteration of the memory the Paris Commune.

Commune revolution of 18 March 1871. These banquets commenced in 1878 because of a confluence of factors: a campaign for amnesty for the *communards*, the right to assemble in France was reestablished by law in 1876, and an ease of repression. The commemorative banquets enabled the former members of the revolution and socialists to influence its history by correcting the standard French government's interpretation that demonized the *communards*. Thus, they challenged this view and sought to preserve a positive memory of the Paris Commune.

Karl Marx's history of the Paris Commune, *The Civil War in France* (1871) greatly influenced how the Commune was remembered: "Working men's Paris, with its Commune, will be forever celebrated as the glorious harbinger of a new society. Its martyrs are enshrined in the great heart of the working class. Its exterminators' history has already nailed to that eternal pillory from which all the prayers of their priest will not avail to redeem them."²¹ Whereas those revolting were not the industrial workers that Marx had predicted, they were mainly artisans who fought for their city, their rights, and their vision of the Republic. The 18 March banquets commemorating the Commune appropriated this idea of the *communards* as martyrs fighting for the liberation of all workers. This chapter, rather than focusing on memories of the victors, examines the memory of the defeated, the revolutionaries of the Paris Commune. In this respect, it is a commemoration "from below" by *communards*, workers, socialists, and anarchists each struggling in their own way for their vision of the Paris Commune and their hope for a better society.

Working-class culture and revolutionary culture played significant roles in the commemorative banquets. Parisian workers and the left, in general, were a divided and defeated

²¹ Karl Marx, *The Civil War in France* [1871], transl. by Friedrich Engels, Dodo Press: 63.

entity following the Commune. Socialists reacted to the incredible wealth disparity in the capitalist system under the French Third Republic, and, after the amnesty of the *communards* in July 1880, began to build labor movements and form associations.²² These associations turned to sociability as a strategy to building solidarity between workers by organizing Paris Commune commemorative banquets. Historians have identified the emergence of mass culture in France. Madeleine Rebérioux demonstrated that a militant cultural movement began to develop in France at the time of the Dreyfus Affair and included art and theater clubs.²³ Maurice Agulhon researched the department of the Var in southeastern France during the first half of the nineteenth century and asserted that there was a profound emergence of republican democratic thought in the countryside because of sociability and communal relations.²⁴ James Lehning investigated the political culture of the first two decades of the Third Republic and argued that the leadership of the Republic wanted democracy to be totally governed by voting but other forms of political culture such as meetings, parades, and strikes challenged this notion and this

²² Patrick H. Hutton, *The Cult of the Revolutionary Tradition: The Blanquists in French Politics, 1864-1893* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1981): 129, 149-159; Bernard H. Moss, *The Origins of the French Labor Movement, 1830 – 1914: The Socialism of Skilled Workers* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1976): 153; Madeleine Rebérioux, “Party Practice and the Jaurésian Vision: the SFIO (1905 – 1914)” in *Socialism in France: From Jaurès to Mitterrand*, ed. Stuart Williams (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1983): 20-21. The following are a few of the key organizations, among a multitude of others, that ran the commemorations of the Paris Commune and thereby conveyed their particular history of the 1871 revolution. Jules Guesde and Paul Lafargue founded the Parti Ouvrier Français (POF) in 1882, which advocated overthrowing the bourgeois republic through revolutionary means and became one of the most influential Marxist parties in Europe. The Blanquists, led by followers of Louis Auguste Blanqui, were a substantial socialist, populist, and atheistic revolutionary group in the 1880s and 1890s. The Comité révolutionnaire central (CRC), Blanquist party headquarters during the 1880s, split over disagreements concerning the Boulanger Affair. One faction led by Édouard Vaillant and his associates, shifted towards Marxism and retained the name CRC. The other faction, which favored Boulanger, formed the Comité central socialiste révolutionnaire (CCSR), led by Ernest Granger and heavily supported by Henri Rochefort, and became a nationalist and anti-Semitic organization. In 1905, the disorder within socialism came to an end with the unification of some socialist parties in the Section française de l’internationale ouvrière (SFIO), under the broad framework of Marxist revolutionary socialism; however, in reality the SFIO promoted socialism within republicanism and stressed electoral politics rather than revolution prior to the First World War.

²³ Madeleine Rebérioux, “Culture et militantisme,” *Le Mouvement Sociale* no. 91 (1975): 5.

²⁴ Maurice Agulhon, *The Republic in the Village: The People of the Var from the French Revolution to the Second Republic*, transl. by Janet Lloyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982): vii.

push and pull factored into the instability of the regime.²⁵ The mass cultural event of the banquet was a key instrument in the process of democratization in France by including the masses in this expanding political world.

In his work on film, Walter Benjamin has postulated that leftist groups could use media to foster further radicalization. Benjamin saw how socialism could exploit the dominant capitalist culture in order to politicize it.²⁶ In the case under examination here, newspapers were used to spread or criticize the ideas of socialism via coverage of the commemorations of the Paris Commune; importantly, they often agitated rather than pacified the masses. The press increased the impact of these banquets by bringing the Paris Commune commemorations, in which thousands attended²⁷ to a readership of millions of people as nearly every French newspaper covered the banquets.²⁸ Therefore, the Paris Commune commemorative movement can be seen as being partially fueled by the coverage and viewership it received in the daily newspapers.

Out of the newspapers researched, here is a quick overview of political agendas of nine of the key newspapers: *L'Aurore* (left), *L'Humanité* (left), and *L'Intransigeant* (initially left and then shifting towards the right because of Henri Rochefort's, the editor-in-chief, support for General Boulanger); *Le Petit Journal*, *Le Petit Parisien*, and *La Presse* (center); *Le Figaro*, *Le Gaulois*, and *L'Univers* (right). *L'Aurore*, *L'Humanité*, and *L'Intransigeant* resoundingly

²⁵ James R. Lehning, *To Be a Citizen: The Political Culture of the Early French Republic* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001): ix, 2, 13, 183, 186.

²⁶ Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," in *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media*, eds. Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty, and Thomas Y. Levin, trans. Edmund Jephcott, Rodney Livingstone, Howard Eiland, and others (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008 [1935]): 19-42.

²⁷ There were multiple banquets occurring annually in Paris as well as banquets throughout France. See pages 32 to 33 for some quantitative data.

²⁸ By World War I, the four largest Paris papers, *Le Petit Parisien*, *Le Petit Journal*, *Le Journal*, and *Le Matin*, were printing a combined total of 4.5 million newspapers each day. Additionally, readership was more than raw sales as one newspaper purchased could be shared by many readers.

promoted the commemorations of the Paris Commune with their coverage mainly on the front page and many headlines dedicated to the banquets. *Le Petit Parisien* slightly favored the anniversary celebrations and their articles appeared between pages two and three. *Le Figaro* (p. 2-3), *Le Gaulois* (p. 2-3), and *L'Univers* (p. 1-2) were opposed to the commemorations whereas *La Presse* was slightly against the commemorations and covered them mostly on the front page. *Le Petit Journal* was generally neutral with respect to the banquets and their articles were located between pages two and three. On the whole, each French newspaper summarized the commemoration and provided extensive quotes of the speeches as well as disparaging or favorable editorial criticism. Some of the other newspapers that I researched included Parisian socialist and anarchist newspapers as well as regional ones: *Le Cri du Peuple*, *Ni Dieu Ni Maître*, *L'Égalité*, *La Lanterne*, *Le Parti Ouvrier*, *La Petite République*, *La Révolution Sociale*, *Le Droit Sociale*, *L'Œuvre Socialiste*, *Le Midi Social*, *L'Hydre Anarchiste*, *Le Jura Socialiste*, *Le Combat*, and *La Défense des Travailleurs*. In addition to newspapers, I use police reports, memoirs, and contemporary political works to reconstruct the history of the Paris Commune commemorative banquet. This primary-source corpus represents viewpoints of socialist and anarchist leaders who were a part of the banquets (memoirs and contemporary political works), the police who actively surveilled the commemorations (handwritten and typed police reports as well as telegrams), and the entire political spectrum reporting and commenting on the banquets (newspaper articles).

The banquets commemorating the Paris Commune occurred throughout France, yet Paris – as it was the site of the historical Paris Commune of 1871 – was understandably the focal point with the majority of the commemorations. There were numerous banquets held annually in Paris and throughout France on or about 18 March, the date when the Commune began. There was

typically a commemoration of the Paris Commune in all 20 *arrondissements* (districts) of Paris, although they were not all banquets. In terms of quantity, the years 1880 – 1889 and 1898 – 1901 were the high points for the banquets. For instance, at least 15,000 men and women participated in 25 banquets or reunions in Paris between 18 to 19 March 1882.²⁹ In addition, there were banquets in Marseille, Lyon, Bordeaux, Amiens, Annonay, Grenoble, Reims, Rennes, Saint-Chamond, Saint-Etienne, Toulon, and Troyes during March 1882.³⁰ Commemorators of the Paris Commune organized 50 commemorations in Paris and the *banlieue* in March 1900,³¹ at least 14 of them were banquets.³² In the provinces of the same month and year, there were at least eight banquets: Saint-Amand, Commentry, Pourcheroux, Desertines-Marmignolles, Montvicq, Thiers, Toulouse, and Saint-Martin-de-Boubaux.³³ There were banquets as well as other commemorations of the Paris Commune that occurred internationally; for example, in 1889, in England, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy, Spain, and Portugal.³⁴ The entrance price of a ticket to a Paris Commune commemorative banquet ranged from 1.30 to 5 francs or in one recorded instance the dinner was a picnic style where participants brought their own food to share.³⁵ According to one newspaper, a banquet in the town of Grenoble at the foothills of the

²⁹ *Le Droit Sociale*, “Le 18 Mars A Paris,” 26 March 1882, p. 1-2; *L’Égalité*, “Mouvement Social,” 26 March 1882, p. 5-6, L’office universitaire de recherche socialiste.

³⁰ *Le Petit Parisien*, “Les Banquets Du Dix-Huit Mars,” 20 March 1882, p. 2; *Le Droit Sociale*, “A Annonay,” 26 March 1882, p. 2-3; *Le Droit Sociale*, “Mouvement Socialiste,” 26 March 1882, p. 3; *Le Droit Sociale*, “Programme du groupe communiste anarchiste l’Alarme, et du comité exécutif révolutionnaire de propagande la Trique,” 12 March 1882, p. 3.

³¹ *La Presse*, “L’Anniversaire De La Commune : Vingt-Neuf Ans Après,” 19 March 1900, p. 1. It is unclear how many of these commemorations are banquets.

³² “Réunions, Fêtes Familiales, Punch ou Banquets pour fêter l’Anniversaire du 18 Mars,” 1900, Police Report; *La Petite République*, “L’Anniversaire de la Commune,” 24 March 1900; *Le Temps*, “L’anniversaire du 18 mars,” 19 March 1900; Police Report, Paris, 18 March 1900; Police Report, Paris, 18 March 1900 (there were several police reports on the same day); Police Report, Paris, 19 March 1900. Archives de la Préfecture de Police, BA 891, Anniversaire du 18 mars (1898 – 1901).

³³ *La Petite République*, “L’Anniversaire de la Commune,” 26 March 1900; *Le Jura socialiste*, “Petites Nouvelles. Le 18 Mars,” 24 March 1900, p. 2.

³⁴ *Le Midi Social*, “Banquets Du 18 Mars,” 24 March 1889, p. 2-3. Bibliothèque nationale de France.

³⁵ J. Margat, *Le Gaulois*, “L’Anniversaire du Dix-Huit Mars,” 19 March 1888, p. 3; Police Report. Nomenclature des réunions, fêtes familiales, banquets, à l’occasion du 18 mars. Archives de la Préfecture de Police, BA 891,

Alps on 18 March 1882 that cost 4 francs was too expensive for workers to attend.³⁶ In Paris during the year 1870, the men earned an average of 4.75 francs per day whereas women had a mean daily salary of 2.14 francs.³⁷ Average daily Parisian laborer wages in 1896 were 6.89 francs.³⁸ Mason workers made 8 francs a day for 10 hours of work in Paris between 1900 and 1905.³⁹ This meant that ordinary workers could most likely afford banquets that were under 4 francs as they were a once a year special celebration.⁴⁰

These anniversary banquets gave Communards and workers a unique, personal, and relevant form of political cultural expression. The halls were decorated with red flags, the statue of the Republic draped in red, and revolutionary banners such as « *Ni Dieu, ni Maître* » (“No God, No Master”).⁴¹ The audience normally participated in the proceedings by vocally agreeing or disagreeing (more times in agreement) with the orators and oftentimes shouting « *Vive la Commune*, » « *Vive la Révolution sociale*, » and « *Vive le socialisme*. »⁴² The banquets were a site of inclusion as female workers, wives and children were invited to banquets and the children were oftentimes dressed as little Republicans wearing the Phrygian bonnet.⁴³ At one fourteenth anniversary of the Paris Commune banquet, 400 men, 300 women, and 200 children attended.⁴⁴

Anniversaire du 18 mars (1898 – 1901); Charles Chincholle, “L’Anniversaire du 18 Mars,” *Le Figaro*, 19 March 1894, p. 2.

³⁶ *Le Droit Sociale*, “Mouvement Socialiste,” 26 March 1882, p. 3.

³⁷ Evelyne Sullerot, *Histoire et sociologie du travail féminin* (Paris: Éditions Gonthier, 1968): 103.

³⁸ *The New Volumes of the Encyclopædia Britannica*, 10th ed., vol 33 (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1902): 725.

³⁹ E. Levasseur, “Labor and Wages in France,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 33 (1909): 415.

⁴⁰ Paris Commune commemorative banquets that cost under 4 francs were the vast majority of them.

⁴¹ A. La Fare, “Le 18 Mars,” *Le Gaulois*, 18 March 1880, p. 2-3; Francis Magnard, “Le 18 Mars,” *Le Figaro*, 19 March 1882, p. 1; Charles, “L’Anniversaire Du 18 Mars,” *Le Figaro*, 19 March 1885, p. 2; “Anniversaire du 18 Mars,” *L’Intransigeant*, 20 March 1886, p. 1.

⁴² “La Rue D’Arras,” *La Presse*, 20 March 1880, p. 1; Durville, “Les Virtuoses De La Commune,” *Le Gaulois*, 18 March 1880, p. 3; Léo Mantancey, *Le Figaro*, 18 March 1880, p. 2.

⁴³ “Le 18 Mars,” *L’Intransigeant*, 20 March 1885, p. 1-2; Louis Lambert, “Les Meetings,” *Le Gaulois*, 19 March 1883, p. 3.

⁴⁴ Charles, “L’Anniversaire Du 18 Mars,” *Le Figaro*, 19 March 1885, p. 2.

At these Paris Commune commemorative banquets, participants ate together, and this act of communal dining fostered solidarity between leaders and rank-in-file members. An address read at a 19 March 1892 banquet in the city of Lille in northern France noted this relationship between communal eating and solidarity: “The number of guests reunited as a family around this communal table eating the bread of fraternity.”⁴⁵ Not only the act of eating as a community but the actual symbolism of food united the participants in the memory of the Commune. On one reported occasion at an 1894 banquet, red food was served and brought by participants as in a picnic style meal. Accompanying the red wine was the following red food: beets, radishes, red cabbage, red sausage, bloody steaks, red bean stew, lobster, red sugared almonds for children, and eggs dyed red.⁴⁶ Participants enjoyed a lavish feast resembling the meals of the nobility. The red color of food highlighted the bloody sacrifices that the members of the Paris Commune made in 1871 and looked to socialism as the hope of the future.

The power of music and communal singing also played a critical role in the Paris Commune commemorative banquets throughout the early Third Republic. Participants engaged in communal singing with songs such as “La Carmagnole,” “Drapeau rouge,” and “L’Internationale” and sometimes danced all night at balls that followed the banquets.⁴⁷ Writing about song culture during the French Revolution, Laura Mason asserted that songs were an effective means of conveying political ideas to an inclusive audience.⁴⁸ Jane F. Fulcher stated that music was consequential in the cultural wars in France from the Dreyfus Affair to the First

⁴⁵ “Le 18 Mars A Lille,” *La Défense des Travailleurs*, 26 March 1892, p. 2. « A voir le nombre des convives réunis en famille autour de cette table commune pour manger le pain de la fraternité. »

⁴⁶ Charles Chincholle, “L’Anniversaire du 18 Mars,” *Le Figaro*, 19 March 1894, p. 2; Leon Brésil, “Le 18 Mars,” *Le Gaulois*, 19 March 1894, p. 3; “Le 18 Mars,” *La Presse*, 19 March 1894, p. 1; “Anniversaire du Dix-Huit Mars,” *L’Intransigeant*, 20 March 1894, p. 2; “Le 18 Mars,” *L’Univers*, 20 March 1894, p. 2.

⁴⁷ A. La Fare, “Le 18 Mars,” *Le Gaulois*, 18 March 1880, p. 2-3; Louis Lambert, “L’Anniversaire Du 18 Mars,” *Le Gaulois*, 19 March 1882, p. 2-3; “L’Anniversaire de la Commune,” *La Petite République*, 26 March 1900.

⁴⁸ Laura Mason, *Singing the French Revolution: Popular Culture and Politics, 1789-1799* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996): 3.

World War.⁴⁹ The songs sung at the Commune banquets enabled all attendees to actively participate in the political movement of commemorating the Paris Commune. Charles Baudelaire described the impact of music on the audience in regards to Richard Wagner's opera *Tannhäuser*: "It still remains indisputable that the more eloquent the music, the more quick and accurate the power of suggestion, there are more chances that sensible men conceive ideas related to those that inspired the artist."⁵⁰ Although completely different from Richard Wagner's music, there is little doubt that the popular music of the Paris Commune commemorative banquet functioned as a powerful cultural phenomenon that had the ability to unite many of the participants.

Banquets established a vibrant community around the memory of the Paris Commune in spite of the vigorous advance of individualism that spread across Europe during the nineteenth century. As modern society strengthened in nineteenth-century Europe, community ties weakened. Writing in 1887, the German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies envisioned an ongoing struggle between *Gemeinschaft* (Community) and *Gesellschaft* (Society) and described the consequences of this struggle for the working class as well as its impact on their agency:

City life and *Gesellschaft* down the common people to decay and death; in vain they struggle to attain power through their own multitude, and it seems to them that they can use their power only for a revolution if they want to free themselves from their fate. The masses become conscious of their social position through the education in schools and through newspapers. They proceed from class consciousness to class struggle. This class struggle may destroy society and the state which it is its purpose to reform. The entire culture has been transformed into a civilization of state and *Gesellschaft*, and this transformation means the doom of culture itself if none of its scattered seeds remain alive and again bring

⁴⁹ Jane F. Fulcher, *French Cultural Politics and Music: From the Dreyfus Affair to the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999): 12.

⁵⁰ Charles Baudelaire, *Richard Wagner et Tannhäuser à Paris* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1994 [1861]) : 8-9. « Il reste encore incontestable que plus la musique est éloquente, plus la suggestion est rapide et juste, et plus il y a de chances pour que les hommes sensibles conçoivent des idées en rapport avec celles qui inspiraient l'artiste. »

forth the essence and idea of *Gemeinschaft*, thus secretly fostering a new culture amidst the decaying one.⁵¹

As seen in *communard* activism, the banquet carved out a vibrant space of sociability in an historical time where the advance of capitalistic individualism enervated community structures. French socialists and workers used banquets of the Paris Commune as an effective means of not only displaying their grievances by demanding a revolution and advocating social reforms but also of celebrating their collective power in both the past, the Paris Commune, and the present, as a united community.

Banquets, 1878 – 1887: Amnesty, Unity, Defense of Memory, and Revolutionary Rhetoric

According to John Baughman, the banquet's role as a leftist, revolutionary cultural site dated to those of 1847 to 1848 that led to the Revolution of 1848 and thus the overthrow of the monarchy.⁵² Thirty years later, socialists returned to the banquet as it was a proven successful cultural site for mobilizing the left. They utilized the banquet to campaign for amnesty for the Communards and to remember the Paris Commune. Banquets from 1878 to 1887 directly challenged Third Republic France in a multitude of ways. As Theodore Zeldin notes, just because the French Revolution declared France to be "one nation," it does not mean that we must uncritically accept this assertion.⁵³ During this time period, these lunch and dinner events engaged in a number of causes and issues: fight for amnesty (1878 to 1880); remembrance and glorification of the Commune (only criticism of the Commune was that it did not go far enough);

⁵¹ Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Society (Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft)*, trans. by Charles P. Loomis (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1963 [1887]: 230-231.

⁵² John J. Baughman, "The French Banquet Campaign of 1847-1848," *The Journal of Modern History* 31, No. 1 (1959): 1, 14.

⁵³ Theodore Zeldin, *France 1848-1945. Volume I. Ambition, Love and Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973): 3.

defining Communards and socialists' historical version of the Commune; recovering from the trauma of the Paris Commune civil war and exile; internationalism; unity; condemnation of French imperialism (only on one occasion); an active role for women; criticism of the Catholic Church; emphasis on the Paris Commune being the true Republic; advocating class conflict; revolutionary socialism; anarchism; hope in a future, egalitarian society; and universal suffrage. After the French government had suppressed the memory of the Paris Commune for many years, during the late 1870s *communardes* and *communards* were finally able to defend their actions and recount their experiences to the French people and thereby revise the conservative history of the Commune that had and was continuing to categorically demonize it. Anniversary banquets between 1878 and 1887 stressed the preservation of the Commune's memory by retelling the history of the Paris Commune from the perspective of the former *communards* and socialist leaders, demanded a future revolution, and engaged with contemporary politics.

Most scholars focus on the defeat of the Paris Commune, while my research investigates the hope and promise of the initially victorious revolution as conveyed in the banquets of 18 March. W. Scott Haine cited police reports and noted that there were small "underground" meetings in Parisian cafés as early as May 1872 to honor *communards* killed during the massacre of the Paris Commune.⁵⁴ Robert Gildea and Robert Tombs stated that the fact that the Paris Commune was defeated gave it its historical significance.⁵⁵ Patrick Hutton researched the commemorations of the Blanquists; most notably those that marked the defeat of the Paris Commune, that of processions at Père-Lachaise cemetery. Beginning in 1878, the annual pilgrimage to Père-Lachaise cemetery in late May honored those killed during the Commune at

⁵⁴ W. Scott Haine, *The World of the Paris Café: Sociability among the French Working Class, 1789 – 1914* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996): 225.

⁵⁵ Robert Gildea, *The Past in French History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994): 44-45; Robert Tombs, *The Paris Commune 1871* (New York: Pearson Education Limited, 1999): 214.

the *mur des fédérés* (Wall of the *Fédérés*) during *la semaine sanglante* (Bloody Week).⁵⁶

Whereas the Père Lachaise processions were characterized by sorrow at the defeat of the Commune and death of its members, the banquets of 18 March were joyous occasions that celebrated the short-lived victory of the revolution.⁵⁷ Madeleine Rebérioux asserted that especially between 1880 and 1885 the demonstrations at the *mur des fédérés* (Wall of the *Fédérés*), while not being anti-republican, challenged the bourgeois leadership of the Republic.⁵⁸ Éric Fournier argued that the main memorials to the Paris Commune had been created with the objective of foreshadowing the revolutions of the twentieth century rather than capturing the history of the Commune.⁵⁹ Commune anniversary banquets were a unique form of commemoration as they were not attached to specific places (like a wall), but were rather celebrated in transitory spaces filled with diverse groups of people, a fact that contributed to making the memory that they conserved malleable as well.

The commemorations of the Paris Commune began in London and Geneva in 1872 due to the initiative of Karl Marx in London and Communard exiles in both cities. In 1878, they branched out to France, enabled by an ease of repression, with the objective of campaigning for amnesty for the members of the Commune, thereby enabling men and women across France to celebrate the history of the Commune. Commemorations of the Paris Commune held in London initially enabled French refugee *communards* to keep the memory of the Commune alive. Britain, Switzerland, and Belgium provided sanctuaries where the former *communards* could

⁵⁶ Patrick H. Hutton, *The Cult of the Revolutionary Tradition: The Blanquists in French Politics, 1864-1893* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1981): xii, 121.

⁵⁷ Hutton, *The Cult of the Revolutionary Tradition*, 125.

⁵⁸ Madeleine Rebérioux, "Le Mur des Fédérés," in *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, Volume I, *La République*, ed. Pierre Nora (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1984): 625, 645.

⁵⁹ Éric Fournier, « *La Commune n'est pas morte* » : *Les Usages Politique du Passé de 1871 à nos Jours* (Paris: Éditions Libertalia, 2013): 7.

hold commemorations and tell the history of the Commune from their perspective.⁶⁰ The most powerful commemoration of the Commune in France was the banquet; this focus both shows how much French people value food and communal eating, and – more importantly – reveals the ways in which food and the practices associated with its consumption have been politicized in French society.

The first banquets that commemorated the Paris Commune occurred in Paris on or about 18 March 1878, for the occasion of the seventh anniversary of the establishment of the Commune, centered around a movement for amnesty for the *communards* and a celebration of the anniversary of the Commune. Speakers professed the intention of destroying and recreating the economic system instead of celebrating republicanism or reaffirming the municipal rights.⁶¹ A few months later there was a banquet in Marseille on 19 October 1878 to push for amnesty.⁶² In January 1879, the prime minister of France, Jules Armand Dufaure, pardoned those participants in the Paris Commune who had been convicted, which in effect was a partial amnesty as not all members of the Commune were officially convicted of crimes. Influenced by political pressure, the French parliament voted in favor of total amnesty in July 1880.

The Russian anarchist Peter Kropotkin described his involvement in what he considered the first commemoration of the Paris Commune in March 1878:

At the first commemoration of the Commune, in March, 1878, we surely were not two hundred. But two years later the amnesty for the Commune was voted, and the working population of Paris was in the streets to greet the returning Communards; it flocked by the

⁶⁰ Stefan D. Kosovych, “Banquets and Meetings Commemorating the Paris Commune in Paris and London, 1872 – 1914,” Master’s Thesis at The Citadel and College of Charleston, Daniel Library, 2011; Stefan D. Kosovych, “Commemorations of the Paris Commune in London, 1880 – 1900.” The Western Society for French History Fortieth Annual Conference, Banff, Alberta, Canada, October 11 – 13, 2012.

⁶¹ Police Report. Paris, 15 March 1878. Code: BA 464. Amnistie (1872 – 1879). Amnistie. Année 1878. Archives de la Préfecture de Police. *L’Égalité*, “Le 18 Mars,” 24 March 1878, p. 2-3. L’Office universitaire de recherche socialiste.

⁶² Police Telegram. Marseille, 19 October 1878, 8:10 pm. Code: BA 464. Amnistie (1872 – 1879). Amnistie. Année 1878. Archives de la Préfecture de Police.

thousands to cheer them at the meetings, and the socialist movement took a sudden expansion, carrying with it the radicals.⁶³

Peter Alexeyevich Kropotkin, born into the elite of the Russian aristocracy, ironically became a revolutionary on behalf of the Russian serfs. Kropotkin was involved in the *narodniki* revolutionary movement, a failed attempt to bring socialism to the Russian peasantry and was imprisoned for his involvement; however, he escaped from jail and subsequently fled to Great Britain in 1876.⁶⁴ As a political refugee from oppressive Czarist Russia, he fit in well with the revolutionary circles of London who were also acting against a similar type of oppression.

Kropotkin was a complex character as he did not condemn the assassination of Alexander II; however, he underwent a slight transformation in the 1890s where he condemned violence unless it was defensive as, for example, during a revolution.⁶⁵

Kropotkin asserted that the Paris Commune did not go far enough in its reforms and explained the objectives of anarchist communists: “We are communists. But our communism is not that of the authoritarian school: it is anarchist communism, communism without government, free communism. It is the synthesis of the two chief aims pursued by humanity since the dawn of its history – economic freedom and political freedom.”⁶⁶ He justified this idealized society based on what he considered the cooperation not competition inherent in the animal kingdoms as his critique of Darwin’s theory of evolution and, more so, Social Darwinism demonstrated.⁶⁷ Kropotkin stood for cooperation between people outside of government authority and cited the Red Cross as a microcosm of a free society.⁶⁸

⁶³ Peter Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1899): 406-407.

⁶⁴ George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic, *Peter Kropotkin: From Prince to Rebel* (New York: Black Rose Books Ltd., 1990): 127.

⁶⁵ George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic, 247.

⁶⁶ Peter Kropotkin, “Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles [1887],” In *Kropotkin’s Revolutionary Pamphlets*, ed. by Roger N. Baldwin (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1968): 61.

⁶⁷ Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* (Saint Louis, MO: Dialectics, 2013 [1902]: vii, 3-4.

⁶⁸ Peter Kropotkin, *Conquest of Bread* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1906): 167, 183-185.

As previously noted, banquets commemorating the Paris Commune began in 1878 with the main political objective of fighting for amnesty for the members of the Commune. Once the amnesty was attained, organizers did not stop holding banquets but shifted their focus to defining the history of the Paris Commune, demanding a future revolution, and engaging in contemporary politics. By 1880, banquets commemorating the Paris Commune became a large-scale phenomenon. One of the first, large-scale commemorative banquets was filled with revolutionary enthusiasm throughout the hall in the twelfth arrondissement of Paris – a piano with a large red flannel and a bust of the republic, eight red flags, *communard* war banners, children dressed as little Republicans, and everyone yelling « *Vive la Commune !* » as former members and combatants of the Paris Commune, French workers, and European socialists gathered in Paris on 17 March 1880 to remember the revolutionary events of nine years prior.⁶⁹

Veterans who fought in the Paris Commune were regular participants in the banquets. They suffered the psychological trauma of the Paris Commune civil war as defeated combatants who both engaged in fighting and witnessed atrocities committed by the national government against the Communards. Veterans faced the incredible challenge of returning, after nine years of imprisonment or exile, to a French society that had changed drastically from the one they knew previously.⁷⁰ Despite the amnesty, they were perceived as criminals, which made it difficult to find employment and, in general, to reestablish their place in society. Life for the Communards in exile within other nations was difficult yet it was accompanied with strong solidarity among the community of exiles. Ernest Vaughan, a member of the Paris Commune,

⁶⁹ A. La Fare, “Le 18 Mars,” *Le Gaulois*, 18 March 1880, p. 2-3.

⁷⁰ This is based on my own personal struggles reintegrating into American society after one year serving in war with First Armored Division (August 2003 – July 2004) as a part of Operation Iraqi Freedom and two and half years in Germany. Moreover, problems with reintegration is a common difficulty with veterans of all wars who have experienced trauma.

described his experience in exile in Brussels, Belgium: “Many have died, unfortunately! But their memory has remained deeply rooted in the hearts of the thousands of Communards who came to Belgium and could appreciate each other’s admirable sentiments of fraternity.”⁷¹ Once they returned to France, the banquet provided community for the Communards who were ostracized by French society and thereby assisted with their reintegration as people who had risked their lives for an honorable cause. The act of eating together in a communal fashion eased the psychological burden of war trauma as well as served as a welcoming dinner for those returning from exile and later those attempting to reintegrate into French society. Banquets created a powerful solidarity between veterans of the Paris Commune, workers, socialists, and anarchists.

Nevertheless, those in power reacted differently to the banquet campaign as banquets instilled the fear of another revolution. A journalist for *La Presse* expressed his astonishment at the commemorations taking place in Paris, the site of the revolution: “If one had said to me in 1871...that in 1880 one would celebrate the anniversary of 18 March, I would have refused to believe it.”⁷² The writer then argued, showing his political bias, that the Paris Commune needed to be erased from the public’s memory. Two years later Auguste Roussel, journalist for *L’Univers*, asked: “Why does the government...let it be, without saying a word, throughout the twenty quarters of Paris, these banquets that are a true call for insurrection?”⁷³ In fact, the French government allowed these banquets to take place but placed them under heavy surveillance by the police and had the army including infantry, artillery, and cavalry ready to

⁷¹ Ernest Vaughan, *Souvenirs sans regrets*, Félix Juven, ed. (Paris: France, Imprimerie Paul Dupont, 1902): 13. « Beaucoup ont disparu, hélas ! Mais leur mémoire à tous est restée profondément ancrée dans le cœur des milliers de communards qui, passant par la Belgique, ont pu apprécier, leurs admirables sentiments de fraternité. »

⁷² “La Rue D’Arras,” *La Presse*, 20 March 1880, p. 1. « Si on m’avait dit en 1871...qu’en 1880 on fêterait l’anniversaire du 18 mars, je me serais refusé à la croire. »

⁷³ Auguste Roussel, *L’Univers*, “Le 18 Mars,” 19 March 1882, p. 1. « Pourquoi le gouvernement...laisse-t-il se faire, sans mot dire, dans vingt quartiers de Paris, ces banquets qui sont un véritable appel à l’insurrection ? »

intervene in case the banquets turned into a revolutionary movement. Reacting out of fear, the government carried out preventative arrests prior to the March 1883 banquets evoking a law from 1848 and had 25,000 soldiers ready to intervene.⁷⁴ Repression by the police continued in 1885 as there was an order to immediately remove all red flags and banners from Paris Commune commemorative venues and to arrest all who resisted, and soldiers were confined to garrison duty in Paris in preparation for a possible revolt. One 1885 banquet proudly and defiantly displayed six red flags and had 1,500 people in attendance. Two women sold red flowers to benefit political prisoners. Blanche spoke asserting that trade unions were the only hope of revolution. Jules Guesde described the Commune as full of humanity and recognized the role of women during the Commune, especially Louise Michel, and saluted all of the political exiles and prisoners.⁷⁵ Despite rhetoric at banquets that called for revolution and verbally attacked the Republic and its leaders, the authorities allowed banquets to take place regarding them more as a civil liberty than as a catalyst to revolution.

The banquet was a unique venue as it enabled both leaders and rank-in-file members to unite in a communal meal. These cultural events attempted to reach across class and gender lines in order to bring all classes together in support of the cause. However, this effort was not always successful. Thus, one table at an 1880 banquet in the twelfth arrondissement of Paris had bourgeois men and women drinking expensive wine and champagne next to proletarian workers who looked at their counterparts with suspicion.⁷⁶ C. Chincholle, journalist for *Le Figaro*, described the scene at an 18 March 1882 banquet in the working-class Belleville neighborhood of Paris where the 780 participants were dressed very differently as there were bourgeois as well

⁷⁴ "France," *L'Univers*, 19 March 1883, p.1; F.M., "L'Anniversaire du Dix-Huit Mars," *Le Figaro*, 19 March 1883, p. 1.

⁷⁵ ED. L. "L'Anniversaire Du 18 Mars," *La Presse*, 19 March 1885, p. 1.

⁷⁶ A. La Fare, "18 Mars," *Le Gaulois*, 18 March 1880, p. 2-3.

as workers dressed in their Sunday best.⁷⁷ The question of how strong the solidarity was between the classes at these banquets thus remains an open one as there was significant tension to overcome.

The banquets of 18 March also had strong international attendance including Russians, Belgians, English, Germans, Swiss, Austrians, Spanish, and Italians.⁷⁸ In addition, various international socialist groups sent messages of support. For example, at a 17 March 1880 banquet in Paris organized by the newspaper *L'Égalité* (founded by Jules Guesde, a Marxist), Italian socialists sent a telegram that called for the next Commune to be an international revolution.⁷⁹ The following year at a banquet in the fifth arrondissement of Paris, a Russian nihilist gave a seemingly impromptu speech in French with a strong accent describing the difficulties in Russia, condemning the crimes of the Czar, and saluting his French comrades.⁸⁰ Banquets cultivated the solidarity of the Paris Commune and extrapolated it out to the international community who were already linked by socialist ideology.

While the banquets garnered support outside of France, the content of the toasts and speeches commented on international affairs from time to time. Speakers and participants vigorously celebrated the assassination of Czar Alexander II on 13 March 1881 by members of the Russian revolutionary group Narodnaya Volya (People's Will) that used terrorism as its weapon of choice. Jules Guesde, at a 1881 banquet, compared the assassination of the Russian Czar with the Paris Commune: "The socialist bomb is the sister of the Communard rifle."⁸¹ At a banquet in the working-class Menilmontant area of eastern Paris, a woman ferociously yelled

⁷⁷ C. Chincholle, "Les Banquets du 18 Mars," *Le Figaro*, 19 March 1882, p. 1.

⁷⁸ "Les Banquets du 18 Mars," *La Presse*, 19 March 1880, p. 1; *L'Univers*, 20 March 1881, p. 2; "Chronique," *L'Univers*, 20 March 1887, p. 3.

⁷⁹ A. La Fare, "Le 18 Mars," *Le Gaulois*, 18 March 1880, p. 2-3.

⁸⁰ "Les Banquets du 18 Mars," *L'Intransigeant*, 20 March 1881, p. 3.

⁸¹ *L'Univers*, 20 March 1881, p. 2. « La bombe socialiste est la sœur du fusil communard. »

« *Vivent les assassins du Czar !* »⁸² At another Parisian banquet of the same year with more than 1,000 people in attendance, the *communarde* Louise Michel exclaimed: “The Russians begin the brotherhood of peoples without any recognition of borders.”⁸³ A proposition for solidarity with the Russian nihilists brought up by Letailleur at an 18 March 1882 banquet in the first arrondissement of Paris organized by the Fédération du Centre was supported by the attendees.⁸⁴ In other international matters, criticism of Third Republic France’s growing empire was voiced albeit only in one instance. At 19 March 1886 banquet in the Belleville neighborhood of Paris organized by the Comité révolutionnaire central, Henri Rochefort criticized the French imperialistic campaigns of Tonkin, Annam, and Cambodge (present-day Vietnam and Cambodia) as those in power in France profited from the massacres in those foreign lands.⁸⁵

Banquets were utilized as occasions to bolster socialist worker movements and one key way was the collection of funds from participants to finance strikes and fund political movements. At a 17 March 1880 banquet in the twelfth arrondissement of Paris organized by the newspaper *L'Égalité*, a collection that yielded 71 fr. 30 was split between socialist propaganda and the dyers and workers who adorn fabrics that were on strike.⁸⁶ There was a collection of 21 fr. 15 at an 18 March 1880 banquet in the town of Béziers in southern France, and the funds were distributed by *L'Égalité* to the Comité central socialiste to aid those amnestied already and those not yet amnestied.⁸⁷ At an 18 March 1880 banquet in the town of Roanne in central France with 58 people in attendance, organizers held a collection that produced 28 francs and was equally divided between the orphans of the Communards and

⁸² *L'Univers*, 20 March 1881, p. 2.

⁸³ *L'Univers*, 20 March 1881, p. 2. « Les Russes inaugurent la fraternité des peuples sans distinction de frontières. »

⁸⁴ *L'Intransigeant*, “Les Banquets du 18 Mars,” 20 March 1882, p. 2.

⁸⁵ “Anniversaire du 18 Mars,” *L'Intransigeant*, 20 March 1886, p. 1.

⁸⁶ *L'Égalité*, “Notre Banquet,” 24 March 1880, p. 1.

⁸⁷ *L'Égalité*, “Mouvement Social,” 24 March 1880, p. 6.

L'Égalité.⁸⁸ Donations from supporters in support of political movements went back and forth between Paris and the provinces. A collection at an 18 March 1882 banquet in Paris organized by the Fédération du Centre with 350 men and women present yielded 34 fr. 35 for the strikers of Roanne.⁸⁹ Donations amounting to 109 fr. 10 were raised to support the miners' strike at Anzin at a 19 March 1884 banquet at lac Saint-Fargeau in Paris with more than 1200 participants present.⁹⁰ In 1886, organizers took a collection up for the miners striking at Decazeville.⁹¹

Women played a leading role in the Commune⁹² but in its aftermath they struggled to continue their involvement in the commemorations of the Commune, speaking infrequently at these cultural events run by men. One reason for this was that French socialists rarely considered women's political rights to be a priority.⁹³ Nevertheless, Louise Michel, a former *communarde* and arguably the most popular speaker at the commemorations, would make rounds around Paris attending multiple banquets on the same day. Louise Michel, a heroine of the Paris Commune, became a super-star on the banquet stage. She received three rounds of applause from the audience and delivered a powerful speech filled with the emotions of hope and anger at a March 1882 banquet in the Belleville neighborhood of Paris advocating a violent, revolutionary revival:

Today, we support a kind of awakening, the miners seem to want to start fighting again and this time they will go all the way...A new world is emerging at the horizon, and if we walk there by different paths it is because there is still a lot of darkness between this world and us. But all the paths are good for arriving, all means are good for killing the snakes and vipers; we must exterminate the

⁸⁸ *L'Égalité*, "Mouvement Social," 24 March 1880, p. 7.

⁸⁹ *L'Égalité*, "Mouvement Social," 26 March 1882, p. 5.

⁹⁰ "Le 18 Mars," *L'Intransigeant*, 20 March 1884, p. 2.

⁹¹ C. Chincholle, "Le 18 Mars," *Le Figaro*, 19 March 1886, p. 2.

⁹² Carolyn J. Eichner, *Surmounting the Barricades: Women in the Paris Commune* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004): 1.

⁹³ Helen Harden Chenut, *The Fabric of Gender: Working-Class Culture in Third Republic France* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005): 12.

monsters as formerly the primitive man killed the cave wolf, the large tiger, and the bear.⁹⁴

Hope was a powerful emotion that galvanized these Paris Commune commemorative banquets as participants looked back at the Commune as an inspiration for a future egalitarian society.

Continuing her speech, Michel played on the conservative anti-Commune propaganda of *pétroleuses* (female Communards that the conservatives claimed to have set fire to the buildings of Paris⁹⁵) and directly threatened the enemies of the Revolution: “In the past they were afraid of me as though I were a fire-raiser; I will not be a fire-raiser any more, *I will be an arsonist who will not hesitate to burn a city in order to see the Revolution triumph.*”⁹⁶ Similar to the sentiment of Louise Michel, speakers frequently drew on their own anger and that of the audience by expressing hatred towards the leaders who crushed the Commune and directed the mass executions, imprisonment and forced exile. Emotions can influence history in a significant manner. Theodore Zeldin promoted the inclusion of emotions in history as individual peoples’ feelings altered history, such as tempering nationalism in France.⁹⁷ Peter Gay argued that aggression was the most significant emotion driving the major historical phenomena in nineteenth-century Europe such as revolution, war, nationalism, and imperialism.⁹⁸ The banquet

⁹⁴ *Le Droit Sociale*, “Le 18 Mars A Paris,” 26 March 1882, p. 1. « Aujourd’hui, nous assistons à une sorte de réveil, les mineurs paraissent avoir envie de recommencer la lutte et cette fois ils iront jusqu’au bout...Un nouveau monde émerge à l’horizon, et si nous y marchons par des chemins divers, c’est parce qu’il y a encore beaucoup d’ombre entre ce monde et nous. Mais tous les chemins sont bons pour arriver, tous les moyens sont bons pour tuer les serpents et les vipères, nous devons exterminer les monstres comme autrefois l’homme primitif tuait le loup des cavernes, le grand tigre et l’ours. »

⁹⁵ Gay L. Gullickson, *Unruly Women of Paris: Images of the Commune* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996): 11.

⁹⁶ Auguste Roussel, “Les Banquets du 18 Mars,” *L’Univers*, 21 March 1882, p. 1. « Autrefois on avait peur de moi comme d’une pétroleuse ; je ne serai plus une pétroleuse, *je serai une incendiaire qui n’hésitera pas à brûler une ville pour faire triompher la Révolution.* » [Italics added by *L’Univers*]

⁹⁷ Theodore Zeldin, *France 1848-1945, Volume II, Intellect, Taste and Anxiety* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1977): 1172.

⁹⁸ Peter Gay, *The Cultivation of Hatred, The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud, Volume III* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1993): 3.

halls were filled with a multitude of emotions that brought participants together in an intimate fashion.

Louise Michel stressed the importance of women's role in the Paris Commune and condemned the barbarity dealt against the women exile prisoners like herself in Nouvelle-Calédonie (New Caledonia).⁹⁹ The French government used the forced exile of *communardes* and *communards* to Nouvelle-Calédonie as a dual solution to safeguard France by removing political dissidents and to bolster their empire by forcibly increasing the French population in a colony. Louise Michel attended nearly every Blanquist banquet or rally¹⁰⁰ and frequented numerous commemorations in Paris, always receiving loud ovations from the audience. She dedicated her life to fighting for the ideals of the Commune. The police arrested and imprisoned Michel multiple times because of her outspokenness. Louise Michel remembered the Paris Commune's significance:

Three hundred thousand voices had elected the Commune. Fifteen thousand stood up to the clash with the army during Bloody Week. We've counted about thirty-five thousand people who were executed, but how many were there that we know nothing of? From time to time the earth disgorges its corpses. If we are implacable in the coming fight, who is to blame? The Commune, surrounded from every direction, had only death on its horizon. It could only be brave, and it was. And in dying it opened wide the door to the future. That was its destiny.¹⁰¹

Michel also feared the consolidation of power in the hands of a few individuals:

Who will record the crimes that power commits, and the monstrous manner in which power transforms men? Those crimes can be ended forever by spreading power out to the entire human race. To spread the feeling of the homeland to the entire world, to extend well-being to all people, to give science to all humanity – that will save humanity.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Louise Michel, *The Red Virgin: Memoirs of Louise Michel*, ed. and transl. Bullitt Lowry and Elizabeth Ellington Gunter (The University of Alabama Press, 1981): 140-146.

¹⁰⁰ Hutton, *The Cult of the Revolutionary Tradition*, 131.

¹⁰¹ Michel, 67 – 68.

¹⁰² Michel, 71.

Michel's statement shows her distrust of centralized government, a key tenet of anarchism that she embraced.

The commemorators' recollections of the events of 1871 such as those of Louise Michel were important in that they provided an alternative history of the Commune, emphasizing the Paris Commune as the embodiment of the ideals of the true Republic. Both the heroism of the revolutionaries and the crimes of the French national government were remembered and addressed.¹⁰³ As Louise Michel exclaimed at a banquet occurring on 18 March 1882 in the Belleville neighborhood of Paris:

The 18th of March is for all the true republicans, a day to remember, through which we salute our dead. We assist at this moment the awakening of the people. Honor to the brave people who will go forward! Honor to the brave people who struggle against the reaction!¹⁰⁴

Commemorative banquets envisioned the Paris Commune as saving the Republic from a monarchical restoration or from false republicanism.¹⁰⁵ The revolutionaries, like Louise Michel, still identified themselves as republicans; however, they supported the creation of a social republic rather than what they regarded as the bourgeois republic. By referring to "true republicans," Louise Michel criticized the government that crushed the Commune as well as the republicans of the current government. *Communardes* and *communards* felt they were right in their cause, i.e. the Commune was the ideal government for France, the true Republic.

With the exception of Louise Michel, women did not have a large speaking role at the Paris Commune commemorative banquets. Here is another instance of a female speaker: Léonie

¹⁰³ "Les Banquets du 18 Mars 1881," *L'Intransigeant*, 20 March 1881, p. 1.

¹⁰⁴ "Les Banquets du 18 Mars," *L'Intransigeant*, 20 March 1882, p. 2. « Le 18 mars est pour tous les vrais républicains, un jour de souvenir, dans lequel nous saluons nos morts. Nous assistons en ce moment à l'éveil du peuple. Honneur aux braves qui iront en avant ! Honneur aux braves qui luttent contre la réaction ! »

¹⁰⁵ "Le 18 Mars," *L'Intransigeant*, 20 March 1885, p. 2; "Anniversaire du 18 Mars," *L'Intransigeant*, 20 March 1886, p. 1; "La Journée D'Hier," *Le Petit Parisien*, 20 March 1883, p. 2.

Rouzade, a socialist feminist who exclaimed, at an 1880 banquet in the fifth arrondissement of Paris organized by the Union des travailleurs, the Comité central socialiste d'aide aux amnisties et nonamnisties, and the Union syndicale des travailleurs de la Seine, that the high classes were the barbarians while the people were the civilizers who pushed for progress. Furthermore, Rouzade criticized the church and pleaded for universal suffrage for which she received a loud ovation.¹⁰⁶ Yet, in general, women's role in the banquets was of a more passive nature than of being present as ordinary participants albeit in large numbers.

The 1878 to 1887 commemorations consistently called for a future socialist revolution. In this period, the banquets displayed an ideologically intransigent character – they did not advocate cooperation with the “bourgeois” Third Republic in any way. The commemorations carried on the revolutionary fervor of the Paris Commune. However, the critical difference between the spontaneous revolution of 1871 that had a multitude of causes and the banquets was that the revolutionary aspirations of the banquets adopted a socialist program due to the socialist organizations that organized the anniversary celebrations. In other words, the rhetoric at banquets emphasized a singular view of the Commune as socialist. These associations infused the banquets with their political and social ideologies. Socialist leaders who spoke at the commemorations advocated the recommencement of class conflict. Jules Guesde exclaimed at an 1880 banquet: “The bourgeois have overthrown their boss, who was the king, becoming bosses themselves. Today we have to do the same again.”¹⁰⁷ Émile Eudes, a Blanquist National Guard General who fought for the Paris Commune, spoke at a Blanquist banquet considering

¹⁰⁶ Durville, “Les Virtuoses De La Commune,” *Le Gaulois*, 19 March 1880, p. 3.

¹⁰⁷ Léo Montancey, “L’Anniversaire du 18 Mars 1871,” *Le Figaro*, 18 March 1880, p. 2. « Les bourgeois ont renversé leur patron, qui était le roi, pour devenir eux-mêmes patrons. Il faut aujourd’hui renverser les patrons à nouveaux [sic]. »

Ferry, Gambetta and Freycinet to be a ‘harmful Trinity’.¹⁰⁸ Speakers never apologized for the revolution of 1871, only for its failure, thereby expressing regret that the Paris Commune was defeated. The tentativeness and moderateness of the Commune was criticized, e.g. not burning the Bank of France and not immediately attacking Versailles. Otherwise, the Paris Commune was glorified, including the killing of General Lecomte and General Clément Thomas.¹⁰⁹

Paul Lafargue was a prominent socialist who brought his version of Marxism to banquet audiences. Lafargue, a son-in-law of Karl Marx, was a prominent speaker and audiences would have known him well. The Cuban-born Lafargue developed a French interpretation of Marxism. He married Laura Marx in 1868, moved to Paris where they worked together to expand the influence of the International Working Men’s Association (IWMA), and subsequently fled the repression directed against the *communards*. Leslie Derfler argued that historians have minimized the role of Paul Lafargue in giving an organized political expression to theoretical Marxism.¹¹⁰ Lafargue alongside Jules Guesde established the first French collectivist party, the Federated Socialist Workers Party (Fédération du Parti des Travailleurs Socialistes de France), in 1880, and the first French Marxist party, the French Workers Party (Parti Ouvrier Français, or POF), in 1882.

Lafargue sent a written toast to an 18 March 1882 banquet organized by the Fédération du Centre with 350 men and women present: “We cannot celebrate 18 March without remembering June 1848 and May 1871...Comrades, let’s drink to the organization of the proletarian army!”¹¹¹ In an 1885 appearance at a Paris Commune commemorative banquet,

¹⁰⁸ Louis Lambert, “L’Anniversaire Du 18 Mars,” *Le Gaulois*, 19 March 1882, p. 2-3.

¹⁰⁹ Louis Lambert, “Les Banquets Communards,” *Le Gaulois*, 19 March 1881, p. 2.

¹¹⁰ Leslie Derfler, *Paul Lafargue and the Founding of French Marxism 1842 – 1882* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991): 10.

¹¹¹ *L’Égalité*, “Mouvement Social,” 26 March 1882, p. 5. « Nous ne pouvons célébrer le 18 mars, sans nous souvenir de juin 1848, de mai 1871...Camarades, buvons à l’organisation de l’armée prolétarienne ! »

Lafargue stressed the internationalist element and warned his audience not to trust the radical politicians in the Chamber as they had increased the tax on wheat, which drove up the price of bread.¹¹² In his monumental, satirical work, *The Right to Be Lazy* (1883), Paul Lafargue argued that the working classes should work less (only three hours a day), relax, and consume more. He also harshly condemned capitalism including efforts of reformists: “Capitalist morality, that pitiful parody of Christian morality, whips workers’ flesh with its anathema. The goal is to minimize the needs of producers, and to suppress their joys and passions and to condemn them to the role of a machine.”¹¹³ In addition, his sense of humor rings throughout, which is one reason why *The Right to be Lazy* is still an enjoyable read today: “As for the bourgeoisie who can’t prove their good-for-nothing credentials, we’ll let them follow their instincts: there are enough distasteful jobs to break them – Dufaure could wash the public latrines; Galliffet could perform surgery on mangy sheep and deranged horses.”¹¹⁴ He may have used that humor to good effect on the podium at the Paris Commune commemorative banquets, thereby galvanizing support of participants against the satirical caricatures of the class enemy.

The banquets commemorating the Paris Commune from 1878 to 1887 were not static manifestations that solely looked to the past; they also actively influenced current politics. The anniversaries of the Paris Commune enabled commemorators not only to incite revolution but to use the Commune as a vehicle towards promoting various political reforms. The anniversary celebrations supported worker strikes, both verbally by defending and encouraging their efforts, as well as collecting donations to benefit strikes. Women sold red flowers at the banquets for the benefit of political prisoners. The commemorations, in one instance, also criticized French

¹¹² ED. L. “L’Anniversaire Du 18 Mars,” *La Presse*, 19 March 1885, p. 1.

¹¹³ Paul Lafargue, *The Right To Be Lazy*, transl. Len Bracken (Ardmore, PA: Fifth Season Press, 1999 [1883]): 1.

¹¹⁴ Lafargue, 28.

imperialism in Vietnam and Cambodia. But most of all, the banquets consistently advocated class conflict and workers remained unwilling to incorporate into the French Third Republic under the conditions of the bourgeoisie. Therefore, revolutionary socialism dominated over that of reform socialism at these banquets. The predominance of revolutionary socialism is unique to the banquets of 1878 to 1887; thereafter, reform socialism became a larger part of the commemorations. These banquets projected a socialistic perspective on the Paris Commune revolution and used the platform of anniversary celebrations to demand future revolutions. Louise Michel, in particular, pushed strongly for a revolution that would inaugurate a new society faithful to the principles of the Paris Commune, which she considered the embodiment of the ideal Republic.

Nostalgia for the Paris Commune, as an idealized past utopia, was particularly strong during the period 1878 to 1887. Patrick Hutton stressed the role of nostalgia in regard to Auguste Blanqui and his followers' emphasis on looking to the past for inspiration, thereby directing their politics towards commemoration rather than campaigning for elections.¹¹⁵ The Blanquists, a major player in the commemorative banquets, looked to a revolutionary past, along with other associations and participants, as a strategy of refusing to compromise with the Third Republic. Commemorators held nostalgia for the short-lived Commune, both remembering and idealizing it as a time of peace, justice, and equality. The result was the creation of a vibrant solidarity between participants, a brotherhood/sisterhood around the memory of the Paris Commune. However, the Paris Commune anniversary celebrations would decisively shift in their character in 1888, principally because of General Georges Ernest Boulanger's political ambitions and the movement around him. The unity of the period 1878 to 1887 would abruptly

¹¹⁵ Patrick H. Hutton, "Legends of a Revolutionary: Nostalgia in the Imagined Lives of Auguste Blanqui," *Historical Reflections/ Réflexions Historiques* 39, no. 3 (2013): 50.

crumble in the face of two major political affairs in France: Boulanger and Dreyfus. The effect of these affairs on the Paris Commune commemorative banquet movement will be analyzed in the following section.

Banquets, 1888 – 1901: Transformation and Manipulation of the Memory of the Commune; Rise of Disunity

The banquets from 1878 to 1887, characterized by a unity of revolutionary sentiment and a closer adhesion to the memory of the Commune, experienced a fracturing of the memory into parts during the period 1888 to 1901. The crises of Boulanger and Dreyfus transformed the nature of the commemorations by redirecting them from remembrance of the Commune to taking part in the debate on these two key historical events. The Boulanger Affair began a split of the commemorators into two camps mainly along the lines of international socialists (anti-Boulanger) and nationalists (pro-Boulanger), which became even more divisive and polarized during the Dreyfus Affair. Charles Chincholle, journalist for *Le Figaro*, commented on the focus of a 17 March 1888 Paris Commune anniversary banquet in Paris with 300 people in attendance: “It goes without saying that, during the dinner, it seems as if the Commune was forgotten for speaking mostly about General Boulanger.”¹¹⁶ The political present obscured the political past. The memory of the Paris Commune became drastically removed from the history of the Commune, which caused significant disunity among the banquet movement. Yet Chincholle could have been exaggerating the effect of the emphasis on Boulanger to sew disunity into the Paris Commune commemorative movement.

¹¹⁶ Charles Chincholle, “Le 18 Mars,” *Le Figaro*, 18 March 1888, p. 2. « Il va sans dire que, pendant le dîner, on semble oublier la Commune pour parler surtout du général Boulanger. »

The Boulanger crisis was a decisive event that divided France and shaped the outlook of the participants in the Paris Commune anniversary celebrations. In 1886, General Georges Boulanger was appointed as minister of war, and he subsequently built a popular following not only among soldiers but also workers. Boulanger did so by encouraging solidarity between workers on strike and the army units sent to contain them as well as his patriotic sentiment against Germany that almost caused a war in 1887. As a consequence, Boulanger was dismissed as war minister, and his angry supporters reacted by submitting Boulanger as a candidate in a number of elections in 1888. After these initial electoral successes, Boulanger ran against moderate Republicans in a Parisian election in January 1889, winning a parliamentary seat as royalists, nationalists, and socialists voted for him. Next, his supporters wanted to nominate Boulanger as a candidate in all districts in France; however, republicans changed the law to prevent this. On 1 April 1889, Boulanger fled to Brussels fearing the government was going to arrest him thereby ending a possible coup d'état. Two years later, Georges Boulanger committed suicide at the grave of his mistress.

Besides being the figure around which a coup d'état was attempted, Georges Boulanger fought against the Paris Commune on the side of the French national government. The speakers and audiences at the banquets that opposed Boulanger acted because of these two fundamental reasons stemming from the fact that he had fought against the Paris Commune and a fear of a Boulangist dictatorship. At a 17 March 1888 banquet in Paris, Jules Joffrin told a reporter that our motto is « *A bas Boulanger !* » and added that he regretted not having the money to campaign against Boulanger in Marseilles.¹¹⁷ At the same banquet, municipal councilor Lavy addressed the audience by exclaiming: “We have, citizens, another 18 March to create. We must

¹¹⁷ Charles Chincholle, “Le 18 Mars,” *Le Figaro*, 18 March 1888, p. 2.

destroy the legend of Boulanger! Down with Boulanger!”¹¹⁸ At another commemoration on the same night in the Montmartre quarter of Paris, Maxime Lisbonne condemned General Boulanger for having massacred the *communards*.¹¹⁹ This might have been an extreme allegation as Boulanger was not involved in the slaughter of Bloody Week yet the fact remained that he fought against the Paris Commune. The other major concern developed by socialists was raised by Victor Dalle on the same evening at salle Lévis where he expressed trepidation at the possibility of a Boulanger dictatorship. Someone in the audience yelled « *Vive Boulanger* » and was immediately expelled.¹²⁰

Other discourses at banquets were not as clearly defined as some socialists saw the Boulanger Affair as a vehicle to attain revolution while not necessarily supporting the General, others welcomed a revolutionary fight, and orators spoke in front of divided audiences. At a 19 March 1888 banquet organized by the Comité central révolutionnaire (CRC) in the face of a possible Boulangist coup d'état, Édouard Vaillant stated that if a dictatorship was attempted to be established, this was a means toward attaining a revolution.¹²¹ In other words, Vaillant welcomed the disorder that an attempted dictatorial takeover would produce that could catapult the revolution. Émile Eudes (a General under the Paris Commune), speaking later in the evening, declared that those who would like to overthrow the Republic would have to first fight against the revolutionaries.¹²² The audience was split evenly for and against Boulanger at a 19 March 1888 banquet organized by the Groupe socialiste-autonomiste du conseil municipal and the Fédération des groupes républicains at the restaurant Bonvalet (Boulevard du Temple) in

¹¹⁸ Charles Chincholle, “Le 18 Mars,” *Le Figaro*, 18 March 1888, p. 2. « Nous avons, citoyens, un autre 18 Mars à faire. Nous avons à détruire la légende de Boulanger ! A bas Boulanger ! »

¹¹⁹ Charles Chincholle, “Le 18 Mars,” *Le Figaro*, 18 March 1888, p. 2.

¹²⁰ Charles Chincholle, “Le 18 Mars,” *Le Figaro*, 18 March 1888, p. 2.

¹²¹ “Le 18 Mars : Anniversaire De La Commune,” *Le Petit Journal*, 20 March 1888, p. 2.

¹²² “Le 18 Mars : Anniversaire De La Commune,” *Le Petit Journal*, 20 March 1888, p. 2.

Paris. Speaking in front of a divided audience, Longuet created strong agitation in the room as he spoke out firmly against Boulanger. The other orators steered clear of the controversial subject of Boulanger and focused on the remembrance of the Commune.¹²³ The following year at an 18 March 1889 banquet at lac Saint-Fargeau in Paris with 400 people in attendance, Vaillant declared that boulangists, royalists, and opportunists are in the same sack, and we revolutionaries must take advantage of these struggles between the bourgeoisie.¹²⁴

The main support for Boulanger came from men like Ernest Roche and Henri Rochefort. Ernest Roche was born into a working-class family in Bordeaux, worked initially as an engraver, and became an ardent follower of the imprisoned revolutionary Auguste Blanqui. Because of Roche's incendiary reporting on the mine strike at Decazeville in 1886 for Henri Rochefort's newspaper *L'Intransigeant*, he was convicted and imprisoned. Roche was later elected as a deputy in the national legislature for the seventeenth arrondissement of Paris from 1889 to 1906 and 1910 to 1914 where he used his position to fight for French workers' rights but also a nationalistic and anti-Semitic agenda. Ernest Roche spoke at an 18 March 1890 banquet organized by the Comité central socialiste révolutionnaire (CCSR) and held at salle Favié, lac Saint-Fargeau in Paris. He criticized the government for having driven General Boulanger, who had always done his duty, from France. Roche continued by attacking so-called socialists who shouted « *A bas Boulanger !* » and had no hatred for Galliffet. The audience applauded and yelled « *Vive Boulanger !* » and sang Boulangist songs throughout the night. This incident shows how easily the spectators at these events could be swayed by the speakers as General Boulanger directly fought against the Commune. The commentary of Roche adhered to the

¹²³ "Le 18 Mars : Anniversaire De La Commune," *Le Petit Journal*, 20 March 1888, p. 3.

¹²⁴ Charles Chincholle, "Le 18 Mars," *Le Figaro*, 19 March 1889, p. 2.

political ambitions of Henri Rochefort, supporter of Boulanger, who sent a letter from exile in London to the banquet that praised the grand socialist movement that was emerging.¹²⁵

Some of the differences in the stances taken by commemorators on the Boulanger Affair stems from Henri Rochefort and the split of the Blanquist party, the Comité central révolutionnaire (CRC). The party split into two factions when Henri Rochefort decided to run for election in the Père-Lachaise district of the twentieth *arrondissement* of Paris in 1889. Édouard Vaillant and his associates did not want to support Rochefort directly and thus the Boulanger movement and therefore formed their own organization, retaining the CRC name. Édouard Vaillant claimed that Boulangism showed that the Blanquist anniversary remembrance was dated and he transitioned towards Marxist thought. Rochefort supporters led by Ernest Granger formed the Comité Central Socialiste Révolutionnaire (CCSR) and took most of the membership from the former CRC. Granger and his associates condemned Marxism, considering it to be a “foreign doctrine” not connected to the French revolutionary tradition. Granger believed that the movement around General Boulanger exemplified popular dissatisfaction with Opportunist political leaders. Other socialists weighed in on the Boulanger crisis. Paul Lafargue contended that a Boulangist dictatorship was not realistic and argued that the followers of the movement could be converted to socialism. Jules Guesde preferred to have the POF completely removed from any connection to Boulanger, because of Boulanger’s connections to the bourgeoisie.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Charles Chincholle, “Le 18 Mars Boulangiste,” *Le Figaro*, 19 March 1890, p. 2; “L’Anniversaire du Dix-Huit Mars,” *L’Intransigeant*, 20 March 1890, p. 2.

¹²⁶ Patrick Hutton, *The Cult of the Revolutionary Tradition: The Blanquists in French Politics, 1864 – 1893*, 149–159; Leslie Derfler, *Paul Lafargue and the Flowering of French Socialism 1882 – 1911* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998): 65.

Henri Rochefort, who was of aristocratic heritage, was a strong supporter of General Boulanger and had to flee France because of his collaboration with the general. During the Paris Commune, he was a *communard* who had condemned the vicious repression of the Thiers government but had not been in favor of the Paris Commune's random execution of prisoners, nor its suppression of his newspaper, *Mot d'Ordre*. Rochefort revealed his anti-Semitic sentiments in reference to the downfall of Boulanger in his memoirs: "Boulanger has succumbed under the blows of German Jews, thieves, and mountebanks."¹²⁷ Throughout his life, Rochefort wavered between both the extreme political left and right.¹²⁸ On 1 June 1898, he was condemned by Parisian socialists, because of his activities in support of Boulanger and against Dreyfus; however, he still continued to think of himself as on the left of the political spectrum.¹²⁹ Rochefort is an example where the diametrical classifications of left and right are no longer sufficient to describe someone's politics.¹³⁰

While there were extremist sentiments at banquets regarding the Boulanger Affair, another phenomenon emerged that of electoral politics. At this time in France, adult male workers had the right to vote and banquet speakers took advantage of this opportunity to convince attendees to vote for socialist candidates running for public office. The orders of the day, the capstone of the banquets, that had previously demanded the victory of a future Commune now aspired towards victory in upcoming municipal elections.¹³¹ Although there remained ardent calls for a future revolution, the nature of the commemorations, in some ways, took on a less uncompromising character. The radicalism dissipated when socialists realized that

¹²⁷ Henri Rochefort, *The Adventures of My Life*, Volume 2, arranged for English readers by Henri Rochefort and Ernest W. Smith (London: Edward Arnold, 1896): 372.

¹²⁸ Roger L. Williams, *Henri Rochefort: Prince of the Gutter Press* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966): x.

¹²⁹ Williams, 265, 274.

¹³⁰ Linda E. Mitchell, "Beyond Left and Right: New Perspectives on the Politics of the Third Republic," *Historical Reflections* 34, No. 2 (2008): 1.

¹³¹ "Anniversaire de la Commune," *L'Intransigeant*, 20 March 1900, p. 2.

they could win local elections. During this period, there was a strong engagement with electoral politics and, therefore, a shift from only revolutionary socialism to a situation where ballot-box socialism was a viable option. Rather than advocating the overthrow of the government, some Paris Commune commemorators worked to slowly change the current system by supporting socialist candidates' bids for local offices. Reformist socialist candidates were elected to a number of local and national seats (e.g. Jean Jaurès) and these elected leaders began to preside over anniversary celebrations of the Paris Commune.

The existence of these appeals to electoral politics plus the generally more tolerant atmosphere of the commemorative banquets signifies a move away from revolutionary activity. Leon Brésil, writing for *Le Gaulois*, noticed that the spirit of revolt was no longer present in the anniversary celebrations of 1894.¹³² Henri Rochefort, editor of the newspaper *L'Intransigeant*, conveyed in a letter read by Granger at an 1890 banquet in Paris: "The municipal elections are imminent. It is on the revolutionary socialist candidates that we must especially place our efforts, for it is in them that we have placed our trust."¹³³ Charles Chincholle, journalist for *Le Figaro* who had covered the commemorations of the Paris Commune over the years, observed a change in the objectives when he stated: "The electoral ballot has replaced the rifle."¹³⁴ Chauvin, at a banquet at the Maison du Peuple in Paris, rebuked newly professed socialists for opposing seasoned socialists running for office.¹³⁵ Participants celebrated the election of Victor Mazars (secretary, Chambre syndicale des ouvriers mineurs de l'Aveyron) to the position of

¹³² Leon Brésil, "Le 18 Mars," *Le Gaulois*, 19 March 1894, p. 3.

¹³³ Charles Chincholle, "Le 18 Mars Boulangiste," *Le Figaro*, 19 March 1890, p. 2. « Les élections municipales sont imminentes. C'est sur les candidats socialistes révolutionnaires que nous devons porter surtout nos efforts, car c'est en eux que nous avons placé notre confiance. »

¹³⁴ Charles Chincholle, "L'Anniversaire Du 18 Mars," *Le Figaro*, 19 March 1892, p. 2. "Le bulletin de vote a remplacé le fusil."

¹³⁵ H. D., "L'Anniversaire du 18 Mars," *Le Gaulois*, 19 March 1896, p. 2.

municipal councilor at a 1897 banquet in the town of Decazeville in southern France.¹³⁶ At a 18 March 1900 banquet in Paris organized by the Group d'union socialiste révolutionnaire du IX^e arrondissement, Duverger encouraged all workers of this quarter to elect socialist candidates in order to promote revolutionary propaganda.¹³⁷

Nevertheless, alongside these appeals for electoral participation, revolutionary aspirations continued with considerable frequency. The French government continued to allow the banquets to take place during this period but closely monitored them with police surveillance and censured or dismissed elected officials who partook in them.¹³⁸ Commemorators were concerned that there was only rhetoric at the banquets and no significant action. At a Parisian banquet celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the Paris Commune organized by the Comité central socialiste révolutionnaire (CCSR), a speaker from Vosges conveyed the importance of taking action and explained how banquet participants had been criticized for only speaking and not descending into the streets.¹³⁹ Montagne expressed similar sentiment at a 17 March 1900 banquet organized by the CCSR by reflecting that there was too much talk and too little action, as well as asserting that ordinary people remained indifferent to their cause.¹⁴⁰

Despite the lack of revolutionary action, the rhetoric remained very revolutionary. Paul Lafargue pushed for revolutionary international socialism at a 19 March 1892 banquet in the northern French city of Lille as he stated that in the future the red flag would not only fly in Paris but also in every city in Europe and America.¹⁴¹ Alfred Gabriel, at a Parisian commemorative

¹³⁶ "L'Anniversaire de la Commune. Dans les Départements," *L'Intransigeant*, 23 March 1897, p. 2.

¹³⁷ Rapport, Paris, 19 March 1900, "Banquet organisé par le groupe socialiste révolutionnaire du 9^e arrondissement du 18 Mars 1871," p. 3. Archives de la Préfecture de Police, BA 891, Anniversaire du 18 mars (1898 – 1901).

¹³⁸ "Les Maires et le 18 Mars," *La Presse*, 23 March 1894, p. 2.

¹³⁹ "Le 18 Mars," *L'Univers*, 20 March 1891, p. 2.

¹⁴⁰ Rapport, Paris, 18 March 1900, "Banquet organisé par le comité central socialiste révolutionnaire pour fêter l'anniversaire de la Commune," p. 5. Archives de la Préfecture de Police, BA 891, Anniversaire du 18 mars (1898 – 1901).

¹⁴¹ *La Défense des Travailleurs*, "Le 18 Mars A Lille," 26 March 1892, p. 2.

banquet in 1897, argued that nothing could be accomplished without force and proceeded to toast the next revolution.¹⁴² Ernest Vaughan, who directed the newspaper *L'Intransigeant* from 1889 to 1895 while Henri Rochefort was in exile and founded the newspaper *L'Aurore* in 1897, spoke at an 1898 banquet organized by the Parti d'Action révolutionnaire communiste at the Palais-Royal. He stated that more than 40,000 Parisians including women, children, and the elderly died gloriously supporting the Paris Commune and argued that Thiers transformed the bourgeois Republic into a monarchy that had done nothing for its workers.¹⁴³ At an March 1899 banquet at Palais Royal organized by the Coalition révolutionnaire, a representative from *Cri de Révolte* hoped for a future revolution because he believed the people were still suffering.¹⁴⁴ Speakers were displeased with the direction of the Third Republic and wished to change the political situation through another revolution.

Men, women, and children withstood inhumane working conditions and poor living standards in Third Republic France. Nonetheless, whether the French working classes were incorporated within or alienated from the Third Republic is still an open question. Analyzing data points for property inheritance in nineteenth-century Paris, a French team of researchers led by Adeline Daumard determined that the percentage of Parisians who left nothing to their relatives barely deviated between 1820 and 1911: 1820 (68.1 %), 1847 (72.6 %), and 1911 (71.8 %).¹⁴⁵ Likewise, Lenard Berlanstein argued that workers were not integrated into Parisian society in the late nineteenth century as 70 percent of Parisians were barely surviving on their wages and thereby had no access to the emerging consumer culture.¹⁴⁶ In the same vein, Rachel

¹⁴² "L'Anniversaire De La Commune," *L'Intransigeant*, 23 March 1897, p. 2.

¹⁴³ Thargalion, "Anniversaire de La Commune," *L'Aurore*, 21 March 1898, p. 1-2.

¹⁴⁴ Joan Pivot, "Vive La Commune," *L'Aurore*, 20 March 1899, p. 2.

¹⁴⁵ Adeline Daumard et al., *Les Fortunes françaises au XIX^e siècle* (Mouton, France: École Pratique des Hautes Études and Mouton, 1973): 192.

¹⁴⁶ Leonard R. Berlanstein, *The Working People of Paris, 1871-1914* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984): xv, 3, 198.

Fuchs asserted that Parisian women in the nineteenth century were particularly vulnerable as she noted that an average Parisian woman's annual income from both work and Public Assistance aid was only between 600 and 675 francs while the cost of living was 850 to 1200 francs.¹⁴⁷ Roger Magraw argued that both interpretations are valid as there were social reforms improving the lives of workers but poverty and inborn social differences remained.¹⁴⁸ On the other hand, Vanessa Schwartz asserted that mass culture ushered in a new era of democracy in Paris that included everyone.¹⁴⁹ The commemorative banquets add evidence to the side of incorporation in their support of socialist candidates' bids for election, inclusion of workers, and women's participation in the banquets; however, the defiant rhetoric of revolution rooted in the response to class inequality remains prevalent in the banquets.

The criticism in the early years of commemorations that the Paris Commune had been too moderate continued into this period as well. At a 20 March 1898 banquet at the Maison du Peuple in Paris, Andrieux of the Fédération des cercles départementaux socialistes declared that the Paris Commune did not succeed because it was too moderate.¹⁵⁰ He asked the audience to act with less moderation during the future revolution, "to remove all politicians and to shoot without pity anyone who would like to limit the revolution."¹⁵¹ At a 17 March 1900 banquet followed by a public reunion in Paris organized by the Comité socialiste du 16^e arrondissement, Braut toasts the emergence of a future Commune that will not hesitate in expropriating the Bank

¹⁴⁷ Rachel G. Fuchs, *Poor and Pregnant in Paris: Strategies for Survival in the Nineteenth Century* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992): 16.

¹⁴⁸ Roger Magraw, *A History of the French Working Class, Volume 2: Workers and the Bourgeois Republic, 1871-1939* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1993): 73.

¹⁴⁹ Vanessa R. Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998): 131.

¹⁵⁰ Rapport, Paris, 21 March 1898, "Banquet anniversaire du 18 Mars 1871," p. 2. Archives de la Préfecture de Police, BA 891, Anniversaire du 18 mars (1898 – 1901).

¹⁵¹ Rapport, Paris, 21 March 1898, p. 2. « d'écarter tous les politiciens et de fusiller sans pitié quiconque voudrait limiter la révolution. »

of France.¹⁵² This was a key criticism of the Commune that it did not fully engage in a socialist program. Viviani, an elected deputy, stated the failure of the Paris Commune was because it did not have adequate organization and propaganda and socialists needed to strive to improve this, as he spoke at a 16 March 1901 banquet in Paris organized by the Unité socialiste du 5^e arrondissement.¹⁵³

Commemorators inspired and fueled by the Paris Commune's lessons kept campaigning for a future socialist agenda. At a 17 March 1900 banquet followed by a public reunion in Paris organized by the Comité socialiste du 16^e arrondissement, a former Catholic priest from Bretagne named Campère stated that socialism had successfully permeated Bretagne and it could not be restrained.¹⁵⁴ At a 18 March 1900 banquet in Paris organized by the Groupe d'union socialiste révolutionnaire du IX^e arrondissement, Paul Louis narrated the history of the Paris Commune asserting that 18 March was the most important date for the French proletariat, as well as arguing that the Commune was defeated because a coalition from the countryside who was unaware of the struggles of the revolutionaries inside Paris and had unconsciously carried out the objectives of the bourgeoisie. In future, he claimed, it would be critical that all workers unite to prepare for the next revolution.¹⁵⁵ Charles Bernard, at a 18 March 1900 banquet at Palais-Royal organized by the CCSR, demanded the extermination of the enemies of socialism leading to the victory of the next revolution.¹⁵⁶ At a 17 March 1901 banquet in Choisy-le-Roi, a southeastern suburb of Paris, organized by the Union des groupes socialistes indépendants de Choisy le Roi,

¹⁵² Rapport, Paris, 18 March 1900, "Réunion publique organisé par le Comité socialiste du 16^e arrondissement adhérent au parti socialiste révolutionnaire," p. 1-2. Archives de la Préfecture de Police, BA 891, Anniversaire du 18 mars (1898 – 1901).

¹⁵³ Rapport, Paris, 17 March 1901, "Anniversaire du 18 Mars 1871, 5^e arrondissement," p. 2-3. Archives de la Préfecture de Police, BA 891, Anniversaire du 18 mars (1898 – 1901).

¹⁵⁴ Rapport, Paris, 18 March 1900, p. 2.

¹⁵⁵ Rapport, Paris, 19 March 1900, "Banquet organisé par le groupe socialiste révolutionnaire du 9^e arrondissement du 18 Mars 1871," p. 1-2. Archives de la Préfecture de Police, BA 891, Anniversaire du 18 mars (1898 – 1901).

¹⁵⁶ L'Anniversaire De La Commune," *L'Intransigeant*, 19 March 1900, p. 1.

Camelinat argued that the Paris Commune created an international movement of millions in each European country and declared the dire necessity for unity as well as action by young people.¹⁵⁷

Speakers recognized the importance of the unity of the left and some attempted to achieve it.

Speakers called for unity between the various socialist groups and looked nostalgically back at the first Communard banquets where there was solidarity. The longing for unity was centered on electoral ambitions, revolutionary hopes, and a general frustration with division. At a 20 March 1898 banquet at the Maison du Peuple in Paris, Blondeau representing the *Comités broussiste de la Chapelle – Goutte d’Or*, toasted the different socialists and asserted that the union of all socialists that had been preached for a long time was necessary for enabling the proletariat to triumph in the upcoming revolution.¹⁵⁸ A 26 March 1898 banquet in Lilas, a suburb of Paris, organized by the *Comité révolutionnaire socialiste des Lilas* (member of the *Comité révolutionnaire central*) had the president of the *Union socialiste des Lilas* in attendance. Pillot, former municipal councilor of Saint-Denis, was pleased that the two organizations were working together as he stressed the importance of revolutionary groups uniting in order to fight the anti-socialist Third Republic.¹⁵⁹ Ernest Roche, famous for sowing discord within socialism, felt a loss of unity in the Commune anniversaries and looked back nostalgically to the previous era of solidarity of the initial commemorations: “I remember the era – not so distant! – where we bonded, without distinction of school, in the same love and the same hatred. [Where we shared]

¹⁵⁷ Rapport, Paris, 18 March 1901, “Banquet organisé par l’union des groupes socialistes indépendants de Choisy le Roi,” p. 3. Archives de la Préfecture de Police, BA 891, Anniversaire du 18 mars (1898 – 1901).

¹⁵⁸ Rapport, Paris, 21 March 1898, “Banquet anniversaire du 18 Mars 1871,” p. 3. Archives de la Préfecture de Police, BA 891, Anniversaire du 18 mars (1898 – 1901).

¹⁵⁹ Rapport, Paris, 27 March 1898, “Banquet organisé par le comité révolutionnaire socialiste des Lilas adhérent au comité révolutionnaire central,” p. 1-2. Archives de la Préfecture de Police, BA 891, Anniversaire du 18 mars (1898 – 1901).

the love of the Commune and the hatred of Galliffet.”¹⁶⁰ This desire for a nostalgic return to unity and solidarity was tied to the struggle to maintain the memory of the Commune throughout the decades.

The Paris Commune commemorations continued to keep the collective memory of the Paris Commune alive and relevant. Participants in the banquets remembered and mourned those killed during the Paris Commune in toasts, speeches, banners, and conversations. Speakers expressed grief for the victims who defended the Commune and sadness for the destruction of the communal city government of Paris. General Émile Eudes toasted the victims who died for the Paris Commune at a 19 March 1885 banquet.¹⁶¹ A poem by François Capjuzan published in *L’Univers* reassured the *communards* that the memory of the Paris Commune would be preserved by the next generation who would maintain the revolutionary fervor and aspire to a future revolution:

Sleep eternally,
Your sons prepare the victory.
We guard the memory
Of your glorious defeat.
18 March! Deign to return,
The Social, is ready to avenge you.¹⁶²

A letter from Henri Rochefort read at an 1890 banquet commented on the power of memory. He stated: “We could have drowned in the blood, but they will never erase the memory of the republicans.”¹⁶³ Although the Communards were defeated in 1871 by bloody massacre, the

¹⁶⁰ Ernest Roche, *Ni Dieu Ni Maître*, “A la santé de Galliffet !,” 18 March 1900. « Je me rappelle l’époque – pas si éloignée ! – où nous fraternisions, sans distinction d’école, dans un même amour et dans une même haine. L’amour de la Commune et la haine de Galliffet. »

¹⁶¹ “Le 18 Mars,” *L’Intransigeant*, 20 March 1885, p. 2.

¹⁶² “Le 18 Mars,” *L’Univers*, 19 March 1894, p. 2. « Dormez du sommeil éternel, vos fils préparent la victoire. Nous garderons le souvenir de votre glorieuse défaite. Dix-Huit Mars ! daigne revenir, la Sociale, à te venger *est prête*. »

¹⁶³ “L’Anniversaire du Dix-Huit Mars,” *L’Intransigeant*, 20 March 1890, p. 2. « On a pu étouffer dans le sang, mais qu’on n’effacera pas du souvenir des républicains. »

memory of the Paris Commune could not be destroyed. Da Costa commented at a thirtieth anniversary banquet that the true rehabilitation of the Paris Commune would only come once the massacre of the Communards, Bloody Week, had been enshrined in history.¹⁶⁴ Da Costa's statement illustrates why the banquets were so important to the veterans of the Commune, to preserve and rehabilitate the historical memory.

One major factor that united participants at the Paris Commune commemorative banquets was criticism of the Third Republic. Speakers at banquets between 1888 and 1901 criticized the current government without restraint. Participants contrasted the honest government of the Paris Commune with the corruption of the Third Republic. For instance, Ernest Roche proposed initiating social reforms, revising the Constitution, and suppressing the Senate.¹⁶⁵ Roche's statement went beyond reform and into the realm of anti-parliamentary action. At a 20 March 1899 banquet sponsored by the Coalition révolutionnaire, Amilcare Cipriani, an Italian anarchist, spoke out against the French Third Republic and the Italian monarchy: "The Commune had proclaimed the idea of justice; they, themselves, have prostituted justice. She had affirmed liberty, they have suffocated liberty."¹⁶⁶ At a 17 March 1900 banquet at salle du Coq-Rouge organized by the Groupes socialistes du 3^e arrondissement and the Anciens combattants de la Commune, Navarre took the podium at dessert. He exclaimed that the « République bâtarde » needs to be replaced by the « République sociale. »¹⁶⁷ Navarre asserted that the old veterans of the Commune will be joined by the « prolétariat » on the day of the victory of the revolution.¹⁶⁸ Speakers at Paris Commune commemorative banquets also criticized governmental spending.

¹⁶⁴ "Anniversaire de la Commune : Le Banquet du Comité Central," *L'Intransigeant*, 25 March 1901, p. 2.

¹⁶⁵ "Le 18 Mars," *L'Intransigeant*, 20 March 1892, p. 2.

¹⁶⁶ Joan Pivot, "Vive La Commune," *L'Aurore*, 20 March 1899, p. 1-2. « La Commune avait proclamé l'idée de justice ; ils ont, eux, prostitué la justice. Elle avait affirmé la liberté ; eux ont étouffé la liberté. »

¹⁶⁷ Rapport, Paris, 18 March 1900, "Banquet anniversaire du 18 mars 1871 organisé par les groupes socialistes du 3^e arrondissement," p. 2. Archives de la Préfecture de Police, BA 891, Anniversaire du 18 mars (1898 – 1901).

¹⁶⁸ Rapport, Paris, 18 March 1900, p. 3.

Roche read aloud a letter written by Rochefort, at a 17 March 1900 banquet organized by the CCSR, that asserted that France was in its best financial state under the Commune and that in the current situation of 1900 the national debt has reached 34 billion francs because of parliament.¹⁶⁹ The Paris Commune was upheld as an honest, just government that promoted freedom in contrast to the corrupt, unjust government of the Third Republic that restricted liberty.

In the period of 1888 to 1901, women's vocal participation in the Commune commemorative banquets continued but men still held the vast majority of the speaking roles. French society was still dominated by men and although women had more agency within the venue of the banquet, they were still not equal to men. Socialist party objectives also ensured women's absence from the podium. For example, by the mid-1890s the Parti Ouvrier Français (POF) became more centralized and aimed to win elections and therefore did not want to lose the male worker vote. It consequently shifted from focusing on women as workers equal to men to emphasizing women's roles as wives and mothers.¹⁷⁰ Beginning in the mid-eighteenth century, the concept of motherhood shifted into public political discourse becoming a concern for European nations.¹⁷¹ Some men, however, greatly appreciated women's role in the banquets and in politics beyond their roles as wives and mothers as the following example demonstrates. Speaking at an 18 March 1900 banquet in Paris organized by the Union des groupes socialistes révolutionnaires du 13^e arrondissement, Navarre thanked the women who attended the banquet and argued that it was critical to the objectives of the socialist party that women should engage in

¹⁶⁹ Rapport, Paris, 18 March 1900, "Banquet organisé par le comité central socialiste révolutionnaire pour fêter l'anniversaire de la Commune," p. 1-2. Archives de la Préfecture de Police, BA 891, Anniversaire du 18 mars (1898 – 1901).

¹⁷⁰ Leslie Derfler, *Paul Lafargue and the Flowering of French Socialism 1882 – 1911* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998): 245-246.

¹⁷¹ Eileen Janes Yeo, "The Creation of 'Motherhood' and Women's Responses in Britain and France, 1750 – 1914," in *Women's History Review* 8, No. 2 (1999): 201.

politics, mostly to fight against “these evil men dressed as women, the priests.”¹⁷² Navarre looked to women as allies in socialists’ struggle against the institution of the Catholic Church.

Women continued to agitate for their own rights as well as to support the socialist cause. Paule Minck advocated at an 1894 banquet given by the Agglomération parisienne du Parti ouvrier français that only through socialism could women achieve ‘*le salut*’ (salvation).¹⁷³ One woman, Montminoux, scolded the men in the audience at a 30 March 1901 banquet by asserting that men should convince their wives to embrace socialism instead of considering them “simply as flesh for kids or for pleasure” as women were “capable of a whole lot more than doing the housework.”¹⁷⁴ In at least one instance, a woman held a leadership role in a banquet. A formerly condemned and forcibly deported female Communard named Béatrix Excoffon presided at an 18 March 1900 banquet organized by the Maison du Peuple de Paris. She recounted her experience of being convicted simply because of her revolutionary ideas, emphasizing the repressive power of the government to condemn based on political thought alone.¹⁷⁵

Banquets, during this time period, continued the practice of supporting various causes economically. The Union des groupes socialistes révolutionnaires du 13^e arrondissement took up a collection for the Spanish of Monjuich at a 18 March 1900 banquet in Paris.¹⁷⁶ Monjuich

¹⁷² Rapport, Paris, 19 March 1900, “Banquet, conférence, concert et bal organisés par l’union des groupes socialistes révolutionnaires du 13^e arrondissement,” p. 7. Archives de la Préfecture de Police, BA 891, Anniversaire du 18 mars (1898 – 1901). « ces hommes néfastes habillés en femmes, les curés. »

¹⁷³ “Anniversaire Du Dix-Huit Mars,” *L’Intransigeant*, 20 March 1894, p. 2.

¹⁷⁴ Rapport, Paris, 31 March 1901, “Banquet des groupes socialistes révolutionnaires des départements du centre, 80 boulevard de Clichy,” p. 3. Archives de la Préfecture de Police, BA 891, Anniversaire du 18 mars (1898 – 1901). « simplement comme chair à mioches ou à plaisir » ; « capables tout au plus des soins du ménage. »

¹⁷⁵ Rapport, Paris, 19 March 1900, “Banquet et soirée familiale organisé par la Maison du Peuple, Impasse Pers, 4, pour célébrer l’anniversaire du 18 Mars,” p. 1-2. Archives de la Préfecture de Police, BA 891, Anniversaire du 18 mars (1898 – 1901).

¹⁷⁶ Rapport, Paris, 19 March 1900, “Banquet, conférence, concert et bal organisés par l’union des groupes socialistes révolutionnaires du 13^e arrondissement,” p. 7. Archives de la Préfecture de Police, BA 891, Anniversaire du 18 mars (1898 – 1901).

(Montjuïc or “Jewish mountain”) is a hill in Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain that has a fortress, which served as a prison for 300 to 400 anarchists, socialists, and republicans that were rounded up and submitted to horrible torture following the 7 June 1896 Corpus Christi bombing.¹⁷⁷

Raising money also occurred in the provinces during this period as the following examples of banquets from 1900 demonstrate: at Desertines-Marmignolles in central France, 14 fr. 80 for the families of the ten agricultural workers of Martinique who were shot during a strike; in the central France town of Thiers, 5 fr. 20 for colleagues striking in the town of Gueugnon; and in the southern town of Saint-Martin-de-Boubaux, 5 fr. to support the strikers of Carmaux.¹⁷⁸

Besides financial support, Ernest Roche extended international solidarity when he toasted the republicans of South Africa and their president supporting their fight in the Second Boer War (1899 – 1902) at a thirtieth anniversary banquet organized by the CCSR.¹⁷⁹

Despite all of these organizing efforts for various causes, there was considerable division among socialists and between socialists and anarchists and the rhetoric at banquets exacerbated this situation. The memory of the Paris Commune was contested as socialists and anarchists argued about the direction of the commemorations and current tactics as socialists separated themselves from the anarchists by criticizing anarchist bombings.¹⁸⁰ In a different vein, speakers lashed out at those socialists who were collaborating with the Third Republic. Ernest Roche was one of the main proponents of this divisiveness. Speaking at an 18 March 1900 banquet organized by the CCSR at Palais-Royal in front of 400 people, Roche argued that Minister of Commerce Alexandre Millerand, a socialist, had made War Minister Marquis de Galliffet in

¹⁷⁷ Richard Bach Jensen, *The Battle Against Anarchist Terrorism: An International History, 1878 – 1934* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014): 111.

¹⁷⁸ “L’Anniversaire de la Commune,” *La Petite République*, 26 March 1900.

¹⁷⁹ “Anniversaire de la Commune : Le Banquet du Comité Central,” *L’Intransigeant*, 25 March 1901, p. 2.

¹⁸⁰ Charles Chincholle, “L’Anniversaire Du 18 Mars,” *Le Figaro*, 19 March 1892, p. 2.

charge of guarding this illegitimate Republic whereas the Republic that needed to be defended was the social Republic. He continued by exclaiming that the bourgeoisie had attained its goal of having socialists accept the government of the Republic and that the “herds” of Jaurès and Millerand including Guesde and Vaillant were “grazing” under the protection of Galliffet who had promised not to shoot them during the next Commune.¹⁸¹ Disunity among socialists also took the form of opposition by a member of the audience against the speaker. At an 18 March 1900 banquet in Paris organized by the Union des groupes socialistes révolutionnaires du 13^e arrondissement, as Alfred Moreau attempted to speak he was consistently interrupted by a man in the audience who shouted: “And Galliffet, speak to us about your friend Galliffet !”¹⁸² The protester was eventually expelled from the banquet after he ignored a warning and interrupted again.¹⁸³ The emotion of anger was deployed in banquets against other socialists and against those considered enemies.

Along with the emotions of nostalgia and solidarity, rage and hatred were powerfully important in the banquets commemorating the Paris Commune and were a continuity with the previous period. For instance, Ernest Roche unleashed an angry, violent diatribe against Marquis Gaston Alexandre Auguste de Galliffet, a commanding general during the massacre of the Commune and Minister of War at the time of the following scathing statement:

Galliffet, for all of us, more than Mac-Mahon, more than Thiers, was the hideous and bloody personification of the repression by assassination. If, by chance, he would venture into one of our revolutionary banquets, he would not leave alive. We would quickly strangle him, cut up his dead body, and his heart torn from his chest would be thrown to the dogs.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ “L’Anniversaire de la Commune : Banquet des Socialistes Révolutionnaires,” *L’Intransigeant*, 19 March 1900, p. 1.

¹⁸² Rapport, Paris, 19 March 1900, “Banquet, conférence, concert et bal organisés par l’union des groupes socialistes révolutionnaires du 13^e arrondissement,” p. 3. Archives de la Préfecture de Police, BA 891, Anniversaire du 18 mars (1898 – 1901). « Et Galliffet, parlez nous de votre ami Galliffet ! »

¹⁸³ Rapport, Paris, 19 March 1900, p. 4-6.

¹⁸⁴ Ernest Roche, *Ni Dieu Ni Maître*, “A la santé de Galliffet !,” 18 March 1900. « Galliffet, pour nous tous, plus que Mac-Mahon, plus que Thiers, était la personnification hideuse et sanglante de la répression par l’assassinat. Si,

This rhetoric could easily be seen as inciting violence against Galliffet and other enemies of the socialist movement. The divisiveness in the commemorations and the emotions of anger and hatred would swerve out of control during the Dreyfus Affair.

The attempt at unity among socialist groups and the mission of maintaining the memory of the Paris Commune would be pushed completely aside once again with the emergence of the Dreyfus Affair. The Jewish and German-speaking (as his family came from the region of Alsace) Captain Alfred Dreyfus was falsely accused of espionage on behalf of Germany and, despite his innocence, convicted of treason by a military tribunal in 1894 and sent to Devil's Island prison off the coast of French Guiana for a life sentence. The Dreyfus Affair would last twelve years as French people took two opposing stances. Richard Griffiths argues that polemics dominated throughout the course of the Dreyfus Affair, characterized by repetition targeting two distinct audiences: those people who already agreed with the author or speaker (reinforcement of their beliefs) and those who vehemently disagreed (attack their position).¹⁸⁵ The orators at banquets did not debate the Dreyfus Affair but rather projected their one-sided views on the controversy. While the banquets were not an exception to this total involvement of the French people, the fact that commemorators of the Paris Commune, a leftist historical event, were completely divided is instructive to the historiography of *fin-de-siècle* France.

Just as the banquets became partisan over the Boulanger Affair, the Dreyfus Affair likewise both divided the attendees' opinions and shifted their focus away from the Paris Commune. The Dreyfus Affair was particularly fueled by passionate emotions on both sides.¹⁸⁶

d'aventure, le monstre, se fut risqué dans une de nos agapes révolutionnaires, il n'en fut pas sorti vivant. On l'eût étranglé vif, on eût dépecé son cadavre, et son cœur, arraché de sa poitrine, eût été jeté aux chiens. »

¹⁸⁵ Richard Griffiths, *The Use of Abuse: The Polemics of the Dreyfus Affair and its Aftermath* (Oxford: Berg, 1991): 3,154-155.

¹⁸⁶ Ruth Harris, *Dreyfus: Politics, Emotion, and the Scandal of the Century* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2010): 7-8.

Hatred and anger were particularly manifested at banquets on the anti-Dreyfusard side. Whereas the pro-Dreyfusards stayed within the legacy of the Commune, the anti-Dreyfusards manipulated the memory of the Commune as they infused the history of the Paris Commune with extreme nationalism and anti-Semitism and used the Communard banquet to project this agenda. Importantly, all these instances of harsh, anti-Dreyfus rhetoric occurred in commemorations organized by the CCSR (Comité central socialiste révolutionnaire). Dreyfus was not widely condemned by socialists. The virulent rhetoric, in fact, issued from only one organization with strong connections to the former *communard* Henri Rochefort, who was himself extremely anti-Semitic. Speakers and spectators in the CCSR lashed out against Dreyfus based on their combined support for anti-Semitism, anti-capitalism, and nationalism. This anti-Semitism was triggered by a nationalist, revanchist sentiment directed at Germany. Speakers envisioned French socialism as being specifically French and considered the nations of Germany and Italy as well as the Jews to be enemies. Captain Dreyfus was depicted as a bourgeois officer who did not care for workers and who had no allegiance toward the French nation. Because of the importance of the CCSR, the anti-Dreyfus rhetoric at Paris Commune commemorative banquets was more powerful, numerous, and consistent than the commentary in support of Dreyfus. This seems surprising given the fact that the Paris Commune was a leftist revolution. It aligns, however, with Zeev Sternhell's arguments about the origins of fascism. He asserted that there was a fascist ideology already developing in the late nineteenth-century France and a key component of the development of this proto-fascism was the fusion of extreme left and extreme right politics. In this climate, revolutionary leftists easily transitioned into radical rightists and the nation replaced the proletariat in the revolutionary struggle.¹⁸⁷ The result was an autocratic

¹⁸⁷ Zeev Sternhell, *Neither Right nor Left: Fascist Ideology in France*, transl. David Maisel (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986): 15, 18, 302.

conservative movement that began with the Boulanger Affair and became more prominent with the Dreyfus Affair that garnered wide support from both the left and right.

The strong sentiment condemning Dreyfus kicked off in Paris Commune banquets beginning in 1898 after Émile Zola's famous letter *J'accuse...!* appeared in the newspaper *L'Aurore* on 13 January 1898. Rejecting international socialism, speakers turned to extreme nationalism and anti-Semitism to condemn Dreyfus during commemorations of the Paris Commune where oddly enough references to the Commune were few and far between. The first banquet where this rhetoric coalesced occurred on 19 March 1898 in Paris at Palais-Royal organized by the CCSR with Ernest Roche presiding. Ernest Roche proclaimed that it was because of Rochefort's intervention that Dreyfus had not been exonerated despite the obvious conspiracy of Prime Minister Jules Méline.¹⁸⁸ Furthermore, he denounced those that colluded with Germany, who he considered to be the enemies of France and the Republic. Roche concluded with the assertion that internationalists were both the enemies of socialism and the revolution, and he assured the audience that the Blanquist party would remain revolutionary and patriotic. Speaking next, Clovis Hugues proclaimed that those who accused the Blanquists of defending the general staff of the military during the Dreyfus Affair were not truly French as they wanted France to be defeated. He continued by asserting that the Revolution of 1789 saved the nation of France. This is surprisingly one of the few references to the French Revolution of 1789 at the Paris Commune commemorative banquets as speakers focused mainly on the Paris Commune and occasionally on the Revolution of 1848. Continuing on the nationalist theme, Hugues condemned Dreyfus as someone who was not brave and who would not carry out his

¹⁸⁸ Rapport, Paris, 20 March 1898, "Banquet suivi au bal et concert organisé par le comité central socialiste révolutionnaire..." p. 1-3. Archives de la Préfecture de Police, BA 891, Anniversaire du 18 mars (1898 – 1901).

duties in war.¹⁸⁹ The rhetoric continued in the same vein in the next year. A banquet organized by the CCSR on 19 March 1899 again featured Ernest Roche who claimed that German and Jewish money attempted to corrupt all but we have thwarted this Dreyfusard capitalism.¹⁹⁰ Da Costa took the podium as the clock struck midnight and quickly turned to contemporary politics by stating that the Dreyfusard motto of “*Lumière – justice – vérité*” was a complete lie and arguing that, in reality, those who supported Dreyfus stood for gold and treason.¹⁹¹

During the following two years the rhetoric continued in the same fashion but with more emphasis on expropriating the Commune to condemn Dreyfus and his supporters. At a 17 March 1900 banquet at Palais-Royal, Restaurant de Paris organized by the CCSR and the Jeunesse blanquiste with 400 people in attendance, Ernest Roche delivered a virulent speech in his typical fashion. He proclaimed that by commemorating the Commune tonight, we were also celebrating the nation and the Republic that the 35,000 Communards who were killed had attempted to defend. Roche then turned abruptly to the Dreyfus Affair and condemned the bourgeoisie for making the treason of Dreyfus an issue. Furthermore, Roche accused Jaurès of selling his socialist brothers as Dreyfus sold France’s mobilization secrets to Germany. A. Gabriel followed by comparing the patriotic socialism of the members of the Commune with what he defined as the domesticated socialism of the Jews of Jaurès and Millerand. At the same banquet, Poirier de Narçay made a connection between nationalism and socialism by asserting that patriotism was one of the strongest elements of socialism.¹⁹² The anti-Dreyfus rhetoric can be summed up by a letter from Henri Rochefort read at a 1901 banquet celebrating the thirtieth

¹⁸⁹ Rapport, Paris, 20 March 1898, “Banquet suivi au bal et concert organisé par le comité central socialiste révolutionnaire...” p. 1-6. Archives de la Préfecture de Police, BA 891, Anniversaire du 18 mars (1898 – 1901).

¹⁹⁰ “Anniversaire de la Commune,” *L’Intransigeant*, 20 March 1899, p.2.

¹⁹¹ “Anniversaire de la Commune,” *L’Intransigeant*, 20 March 1899, p.2.

¹⁹² “L’Anniversaire de la Commune: Banquet des Socialistes Révolutionnaires,” *L’Intransigeant*, 19 March 1900, p. 1-2.

anniversary of the Paris Commune: “We are currently fighting against the invasion of France by Jews, internationalists, and Italians.”¹⁹³ Henri Rochefort, some of the fellow veterans of the Paris Commune, and their supporters all became ardent nationalists and anti-Semites.

Supporters of Captain Dreyfus at Paris Commune banquets were less vocal in his defense than those who opposed Dreyfus and the movement around him. Nevertheless, the pro-Dreyfusard camp compared Dreyfus’ penal colony experience with that of the Communards, condemned injustice, and criticized nationalism, clericalism, and militarism. At a 20 March 1898 banquet at the Maison du Peuple in Paris, Chevalier described his horrible experience at the penal colony with his fellow Communards, especially the manner that those forcibly deported had been treated. He also related his own experience to the actions that the French government committed against Dreyfus.¹⁹⁴ Chevalier concluded by scolding socialists for not organizing demonstrations against the clericals who condemned Dreyfus and vilified Zola as well as encouraging protest against arbitrary injustice.¹⁹⁵ Viviani looked to international socialism as inspiration at a 16 March 1901 banquet in Paris organized by the Unité socialiste du 5^e arrondissement where he stressed the importance of struggling against the reaction that had used nationalism as its rallying point.¹⁹⁶ At a 17 March 1901 banquet in Choisy-le-Roi, a southeastern suburb of Paris, organized by the Union des groupes socialistes indépendants de Choisy le Roi, Albert Orry took a firm pro-Dreyfus stance. Orry lectured about how Boulangism preceded the

¹⁹³ “1871 – 1901,” *L’Intransigeant*, 25 March 1901, p. 1. « Nous en sommes, actuellement, à lutter contre l’envahissement de la France par les juifs, les internationalistes et les Italiens. »

¹⁹⁴ Rapport, Paris, 21 March 1898, “Banquet anniversaire du 18 Mars 1871,” p. 4. Archives de la Préfecture de Police, BA 891, Anniversaire du 18 mars (1898 – 1901).

¹⁹⁵ Rapport, Paris, 21 March 1898, p. 4.

¹⁹⁶ Rapport, Paris, 17 March 1901, “Anniversaire du 18 Mars 1871, 5^e arrondissement,” p. 3. Archives de la Préfecture de Police, BA 891, Anniversaire du 18 mars (1898 – 1901).

nationalism of today and sharply criticized the army for having created the Dreyfus Affair, which he considered to be its most severe act of infamy.¹⁹⁷

The internationalist socialists who promoted good relations with workers from other European countries could have been more vocal in defending Captain Dreyfus, but evidently, they did not express this in their commemorations of the Paris Commune. Why not? Perhaps they were conflating capitalism with the Jewish people, were anxious about a loss of electoral support, feared the authorities, or simply did not consider Dreyfus to be a central concern. Paul Lafargue was a supporter of Dreyfus and scolded fellow socialists for not speaking out against the anti-Semitism and militarism.¹⁹⁸

Banquets from 1888 to 1901 continued to be a cultural site where participants remembered the Paris Commune and campaigned for a future revolution. Nevertheless, contemporary politics, namely the Boulanger and Dreyfus Affairs, had changed the banquets in a fundamental way. The Boulanger and Dreyfus Affairs transformed the anniversary banquets of the Paris Commune into heavily politicized events focusing on contemporary issues that were not necessarily connected to the Paris Commune of 1871, and even that were antithetical to its original aspirations. The solidarity of the Paris Commune of 1871 that had been visible in the banquets of 1878 to 1887 disintegrated sharply in the commemorations from 1888 to 1901. Nationalist and internationalist socialist factions each fought for their own interpretation of the Paris Commune during the Boulanger crisis and each side had equal success. The Dreyfus Affair exacerbated these differences between the commemorators and by extension within the socialist movement in France. Yet, surprisingly the anti-Dreyfus camp were more vocal, spewing hate-

¹⁹⁷ Rapport, Paris, 18 March 1901, "Banquet organisé par l'union des groupes socialistes indépendants de Choisy le Roi," p. 4. Archives de la Préfecture de Police, BA 891, Anniversaire du 18 mars (1898 – 1901).

¹⁹⁸ Derfler, *Paul Lafargue and the Flowering of French Socialism 1882 – 1911*, 210.

filled rhetoric in support of their cause. Banquet participants also struggled between revolutionary socialism and incorporation into the Third Republic, a debate that would continue into the next decade.

Banquets, 1902 – 1914: Decline of the Revolutionary Banquet

While French newspapers from the turn of the twentieth century until the dawn of the First World War still covered the commemorations of the Paris Commune, they did so less frequently and with less depth than the twenty years prior. The last major commemorative banquet vigorously covered by the newspapers was the thirtieth anniversary of the Paris Commune in 1901; thereafter, coverage decreased in terms of quantity and length of articles and the placement of the articles moved farther away from the first page. In addition, police surveillance reports diminished. As time passed and commemorations were no longer kept alive by the memories of the survivors, the commemorations in general faced a critical test for survival.¹⁹⁹ The Paris Commune participants grew old and some died, thereby weakening the core of the banquet supporters. Prominent Communards who passed away prior to or during this period include Louise Michel, Henri Rochefort, Émile Eudes, and Jules Joffrin. Beginning in 1902, the commitment to the memory of the Paris Commune waned and the commemorative banquets no longer sparked the same fear in the authorities nor the same revolutionary aspirations in the participants. Therefore, the banquets commemorating the Commune became *lieux de mémoire* as the connection of the commemorations to the Paris Commune weakened.

Revolutionary aspirations, nevertheless, remained a vivid part of the commemorations. At a March 1902 Parisian banquet, Ernest Roche was angered by the conduct of elections by

¹⁹⁹ Sarah Farmer, *Martyred Village: Commemorating the 1944 Massacre at Oradour-sur-Glane* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000): 205.

what he considered to be fraudulent ballots and envisioned the overwhelming hatred that those massacred in the Commune would have for the existing Republic.²⁰⁰ On the other hand, Julien Caron spoke later in the evening around midnight and upheld the strategy of electoral participation stressing the need for electoral coalitions to achieve the goal of a social revolution.²⁰¹ This is one of the rare instances of the promotion of ballot-box socialism within this period. The revolutionary sentiment had a more anti-state and anti-parliament dimension as the following examples illustrate. At a 22 March 1903 banquet in Paris organized by the Parti Blanquiste, Gaston Da Costa provided a biting analogy riddled with exclusionary nationalism, anti-parliamentarism, and revolutionary anger: “The old lion, being eaten by parliamentary vermin, will shake one its red mane one more time, and with a formidable roar, it will call to arms the Communards of the future.”²⁰² Ernest Roche proclaimed at a 20 March 1905 banquet in Paris organized by the CCSR: “To glorify the Commune is good, to prepare the revenge is better.”²⁰³

Nationalism and anti-Semitism continued in the rhetoric proclaimed by Ernest Roche. At a March 1902 banquet in Paris, Ernest Roche projected a virulent anti-Semitic nationalism that sought the unity of some components of the nation against the excluded others: “The fraternity of barracks and workshop, of worker and soldier, of all those who have the French soul and want both the impenetrable homeland and the Republic wrested from Jews, tyrants, and crooks to be

²⁰⁰ “Anniversaire de la Commune,” *L’Intransigeant*, 24 March 1902, p.1-2.

²⁰¹ “Anniversaire de la Commune,” *L’Intransigeant*, 24 March 1902, p.2.

²⁰² “Anniversaire De La Commune,” *L’Intransigeant*, 23 March 1903, p. 2. « Le vieux lion, las d’être mangé par la vermine parlementaire, secouera une fois encore sa crinière rouge, et, dans un rugissement formidable, il appellera aux armes les communards de demain. »

²⁰³ “L’Anniversaire De La Commune,” *L’Intransigeant*, 21 March 1905, p. 1. « Glorifier la Commune, c’est bien ; en préparer la revanche, c’est mieux. »

handed over to the sovereign people.”²⁰⁴ Roche, speaking two years later at a banquet organized by the Parti blanquist, proclaimed that Blanqui and Rochefort preached the love of nation and revolution over everything else.²⁰⁵

On the other hand, banquets provided a space where speakers and audiences could promote the union between socialists of different groups and nations. This was a return to the unity of the banquets from the period of 1878 to 1887 albeit in a more limited scope. At a 18 March 1905 banquet in the city of Toulouse in southern France organized by the Parti socialiste with about 250 people in attendance including 40 women, Francis de Pressensé, deputy of the Rhône and outspoken supporter of Captain Dreyfus, encouraged the union of all socialists and proclaimed that the socialist party would be the foundation of society in France and throughout the entire world.²⁰⁶ After recounting the history of the Paris Commune, de Pressensé told the audience of strikes taking place in Russia.²⁰⁷ Bedouce took the podium and advocated for the union of all socialists to bolster the working class as it struggled against the bourgeoisie and also countered those who only sought pleasure in life.²⁰⁸ At another 18 March 1905 banquet, this one in Paris, with approximately 1,000 women and men in attendance including the Belgian workers’ party, the Communard Édouard Vaillant presided and recounted that the Paris Commune galvanized socialism against the reaction. He claimed that the same unity was needed now and called for the audience to loudly applaud in support of socialist unity.²⁰⁹ At another Parisian banquet on the same day that centered on the reunion of the Anciens combattants de la

²⁰⁴ “Anniversaire de la Commune,” *L’Intransigeant*, 24 March 1902, p.2. « La fraternité de la caserne et de l’atelier, de l’ouvrier et du soldat, de tous ceux qui ont l’âme française et qui veulent à la fois le Patrie inexpugnable et la République arrachée aux juifs, aux tyrans et aux voleurs pour être remise entre les mains du Peuple souverain. »

²⁰⁵ “Anniversaire de la Commune,” *L’Intransigeant*, 21 March 1904, p.2.

²⁰⁶ Rapport, Toulouse, 19 March 1905. Archives nationales. Agissements socialistes, congrès, etc. (1876 – 1915). Code: F/7/12499. Haute-Garonne.

²⁰⁷ Rapport, Toulouse, 19 March 1905.

²⁰⁸ Rapport, Toulouse, 19 March 1905.

²⁰⁹ “L’Anniversaire du 18 Mars,” *L’Humanité*, 19 March 1905, p. 3.

Commune, the vice president of the group Navarre spoke about the past struggles and about the suffering Paris Commune veterans had endured for the cause of liberating the proletariat.²¹⁰

The two main socialist factions would officially unify during the following month. The Section française de l'internationale ouvrière (SFIO) [French Section of the Workers' International] formed on 25 April 1905 unifying the revolutionary (Jules Guesde) and reformist (Jean Jaurès) factions of socialism. Jules Guesde spoke to the French Chamber of Deputies in 1905, reflecting on the original French Revolution and warned of a future revolution if reforms beneficial to workers were not initiated:

The revolution was already accomplished when the Third Estate snatched the political power from the two privileged orders; and the taking of the Bastille, the burning of powder, the making of corpses, the scaffold – these are only the illustrations of revolution. They are not the Revolution itself (*Applauses from the Extreme Left. Protests from several benches.*) All this drama, I tell you, was not the Revolution; the Revolution was made when the Third Estate...began to dictate law. Well, we are now in similar condition. You have a Fourth Estate in the workers of the mills, of the fields, and the shops, constituting, despite themselves, an inferior class, because they hold no property; because in their French Fatherland they are really aliens, possessing not an inch of ground, not a piece of machinery...If you compel us to do it we shall smash this Bastille too; but if legal means are left open to us we shall not choose violence. (*Renewed applause from the Extreme Left.*)²¹¹

On the other hand, Jean Jaurès, a socialist politician and political director of the newspaper, *L'Humanité*, diverged from other socialists who saw the Paris Commune as a 'blueprint' for the future.²¹² Jaurès adapted Marxism to the French republican system.²¹³ Although Jaurès was vehemently opposed to capitalism, he advocated a non-revolutionary approach to socialism as he eloquently stated:

²¹⁰ "L'Anniversaire du 18 Mars," *L'Humanité*, 19 March 1905, p. 3.

²¹¹ Jules Guesde, "Collectivism: A Speech Delivered by Jules Guesde to the French Chamber of Deputies," (London: Clarion Newspaper Co., Ltd., 1905): 13-15.

²¹² Robert Tombs, *The Paris Commune 1871* (New York: Pearson Education Limited, 1999): 202.

²¹³ Derfler, *Paul Lafargue and the Flowering of French Socialism 1882 – 1911*, 150.

The universe knows how to accomplish its work without any noise; no declamations echo in those heights, no flaming programme obtrudes itself among the tranquil constellations. I believe that French society has at last entered upon that happy stage where everything is accomplished in its full maturity. There will be reforms, great reforms even, but they will come to pass without having been given a name, and they will not trouble the calm life of the nation any more than the dropping of ripe fruit troubles the still autumn days. Humanity will raise itself insensibly toward fraternal justice, just as the earth that bears us rises with a silent motion in the starry spaces.²¹⁴

Echoing the reformism of Jean Jaurès, Francis de Pressensé, at an 18 March 1905 banquet in Toulouse, advocated for the law for the separation of church and state that would be debated the following week in the Chamber.²¹⁵

The commemorations attempted to sustain the memory of the Paris Commune into the twentieth century, but the intensity of this memory was lessened by time and divergent interpretations of its past. The intense earlier battles over the memory of the Paris Commune dispersed as former Communards aged and died and young socialists arrived on the banquet scene. Additionally, other forms of mass political participation such as reunions, conferences, and meetings increasingly challenged the banquet as the major form of expression for the Paris Commune anniversary. The Commune commemorations in the wake of the First World War lost the revolutionary fervor that had been displayed in earlier anniversaries. The increasing nationalism in France prior to the First World War tempered the revolutionary aspects of the Paris Commune anniversary banquets. Marx and his followers' dream of workers bonding with other workers across national borders due to their similar experiences of oppression did not conform to reality as the nationalist rhetoric that rose and consolidated in the last quarter of the nineteenth century trumped internationalist rhetoric. The rise of nationalism in France could be a

²¹⁴ Jean Jaurès, *Studies in Socialism*, transl. by Mildred Minturn (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1906): 191.

²¹⁵ Rapport, Toulouse, 19 March 1905. Archives nationales. Agissements socialistes, congrès, etc. (1876 – 1915). Code: F/7/12499. Haute-Garonne.

reason why the banquets lost steam. The First World War embodied the triumph of nationalism as European nations sent their workers into battle against each other. World War One would put a temporary halt to the commemorative banquets but the memory of the Paris Commune remains a powerful inspiration for the political left, especially in France, up until the present day.

In conclusion, the Communards initially utilized the banquet as a space to rally in support of each other over their common struggles as prisoners and exiles, their common psychological trauma from the experiences of the Paris Commune civil war, and their common difficulties of reintegrating into French society after the amnesty. Veterans faced the incredibly difficult challenge of returning, after nine years of imprisonment or exile, to a French society that had changed drastically from the one they knew previously. Despite the amnesty, they were perceived as criminals, which made it difficult to find employment and, in general, to reestablish their place in society. The banquet provided community for those Communards who had been ostracized by France and thereby assisted with their reintegration into French society as people who had risked their lives for an honorable cause. Former members of the Paris Commune, socialists, anarchists, and republicans constructed a subculture, or a holiday established by the people, within mainstream republican society by holding annual banquets on or about 18 March.

The Commune anniversary celebrations reveal two distinct aspects of political culture in the early Third Republic: on the one hand, state repression, as seen in the regular police and army surveillance of banquets; and, on the other, the extension of democratization as seen by the ways in which radical socialists and workers exerted their right to meet and express themselves in public. The Parisian police declared that the commemorations of the Commune, although voicing sharp criticism of the Third Republic, were « *actes tout platoniques*. »²¹⁶ Although

²¹⁶ “Réunions, Fêtes Familiales, Punch ou Banquets pour fêter l’Anniversaire du 18 Mars,” 1900. Police Report. BA 891. Anniversaire du 18 mars (1898 – 1901). Archives de la Préfecture de Police.

orators used violent language and called for a revolution, the banquet did not become a catalyst to revolution or violent mass insurgency. The revolutionary fervor was contained inside the cultural site of the banquet. Nevertheless, the mere fact that the police were monitoring them lends credence to the belief that the French government was also concerned about the impact of these commemorations on the masses. Socialist leaders who spoke at the banquets commemorating the Paris Commune were extremely radical in their rhetoric and potentially dangerous to the continued existence of the Third Republic.

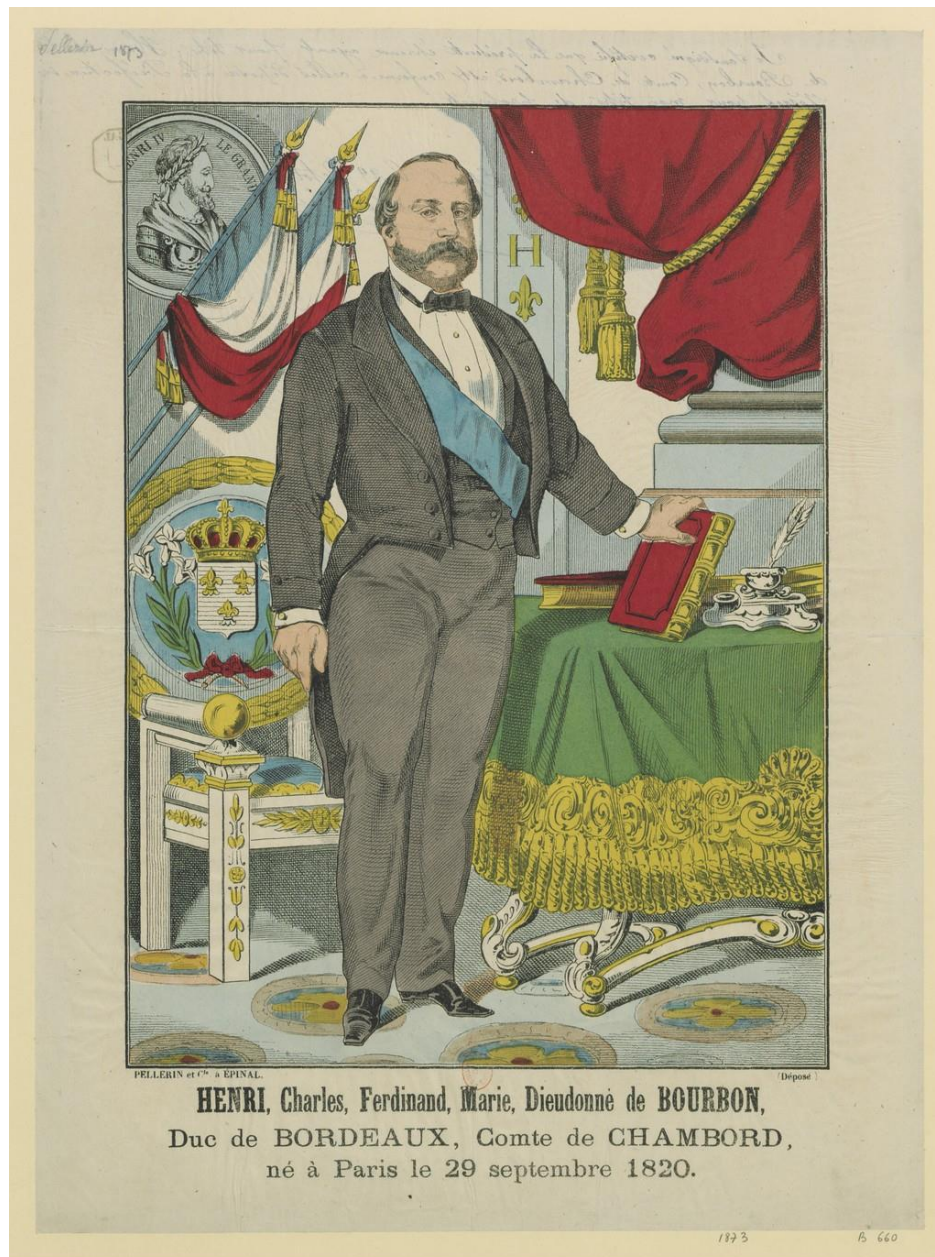
The banquet of 18 March was a space where veterans of the Paris Commune, republicans, socialists, feminists, and anarchists gathered not only to preserve the collective memory of the Commune and to fight for its historical legacy but also to demand another revolution and campaign for contemporary political matters. The banquets defined the Paris Commune as a revolution that saved the republic from the restoration of the monarchy or false republicanism. Throughout the period 1878 to 1914, speakers at these communal lunches and dinners consistently and ardently called for a revolution. Yet the commemorations also appropriated the memory of the Paris Commune to influence their respective political and social movements. Likewise, women spoke at banquets, defending the memory of the Commune and calling for their political and social rights.

The banquets, in some respect, shaped socialism by eventually toning down the revolutionary radicalism of French workers by supporting electoral democracy. By promoting electoral participation, the banquets helped to integrate the working classes in the French Third Republic not as defeated workers but as citizens fighting for different forms of what they believed was social justice. The banquets redirected the revolutionary anger of the French workers towards promoting reform through the electoral process. This represented a change

from striving to overthrow the Third Republic to working for gradual change within the system. Nevertheless, the banquet had its own democratic structure that brought a large and diverse group of people together and galvanized them to act as a mass political movement in support of various causes.

The memory of the Paris Commune became fractured over the years. Commemorations of the Paris Commune supported a wide range of political activity including reformist socialism, revolutionary Marxist socialism, anarchism, feminism, and anti-Semitic nationalism. The Boulanger and Dreyfus Affairs contributed to diverting the commemorations of the Paris Commune away from remembrance and towards engagement in a contemporary politics that was far removed from the original essence of the Commune. The fact that Paris Commune commemorative banquets were later used to project anti-Semitism and extreme nationalism was ironic since these views were contrary to those that had originally been historically espoused. This is a compelling example of how commemorations can completely lose sight of what they were remembering. Most of this manipulation of the memory of the Paris Commune was nonetheless the product of one organization, the Comité central socialiste révolutionnaire (CCSR). For the most part, the commemorative banquets adhered to the historical spirit of the Commune, struggled for social reforms, and fought for the rights of the underprivileged. French women, men, and children who gave their lives for the Paris Commune would have been proud of most of the organizers and participants who through dedication and perseverance kept the memory of the Commune alive. This memory lives on today in a Paris Commune commemorative banquet held annually in Paris in March by the organization Les Amies et Amis de la Commune de Paris 1871.

CHAPTER 2: « À MORT LES RÉPUBLICAINS ! »¹: ROYALIST BANQUETS, 1879 – 1913



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Figure 6: Wood Engraving of the Comte de Chambord (1873)

¹ *Le Rappel*, 25 August 1882, p. 2. The audience shouted this provocative statement at a 19 August 1882 banquet at Challans in western France.

Werner Heisenberg, German physicist: “Only the true conservative can be a true revolutionary.”²

Werner Heisenberg pondered about how conservatism in scientific thinking, that is considering a theory to be complete, was more revolutionary than continuous modifications to an existing theory.³ Heisenberg’s statement illustrates the dilemma for conservatives by implying that it can be more revolutionary to return to the politics of a past time than to go with the winds of change. The royalists under the Third Republic were under this tough quandary as they sought to return to what they envisioned as an idealized past and they, interestingly, used revolutionary leftist tactics and discourse to attempt to do so. Were royalists under the Third Republic revolutionaries? Or were they counterrevolutionaries? The French banquet had a history as a leftist, revolutionary cultural site dating to those of 1847 to 1848 that led to the Revolution of 1848 and thus the overthrow of the monarchy.⁴ Thirty years later, and shortly after the banquets commemorating the Paris Commune began, French royalists appropriated the banquet for political action and royalist banquets became a consistent, widespread practice by 1879.⁵ Royalists used banquets to challenge and attempt to replace the Third Republic with a restored monarchy.

At a 4 July 1886 banquet of the departmental monarchical press, Charles Lambert de Sainte-Croix, former senator and deputy, exclaimed: “In our troubled times, are not the wisdom, foresight, and experience of history there to demonstrate the danger of closing all possibilities of escaping from revolutions? Would we be precisely condemned to hear proclaimed toward the

² Qtd in Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, *The Structure of Physics* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006 [1985]): 312.

³ Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, *The Structure of Physics* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006 [1985]): 311-312.

⁴ John J. Baughman, “The French Banquet Campaign of 1847-1848,” *The Journal of Modern History* 31, No. 1 (1959): 1, 14.

⁵ I have information on the planning for one royalist banquet on 15 July 1878 from a police report but no information on the actual banquet or any other banquets from 1878. Rapport, Paris, 21 May 1878. Archives de la préfecture de police, BA 1541, Union Royaliste.

end of the 19th century, as a supreme irony, the divine right of the Republic?”⁶ According to de Sainte-Croix and the royalist movement, there must be a means to supplant the Republic.

Initially, royalists were attempting to overthrow a well-established Republic by turning to the revolutionary cultural site of the banquet to be the center of their political action. The banquet became a cultural site that facilitated the subversive politics of the royalist cause. Royalists had, in effect, adopted a revolutionary discourse that sought a restoration of the monarchy through revolutionary means. Although a royalist revolution did not take place, royalists occupied a space of revolutionary agitation, the banquet, which enabled them to proclaim a violent, revolutionary rhetoric that shook the democratic Republic from 1879 to 1882. Through the lens of the banquet, we can see the transformation of the royalist movement over time. I argue that at banquets throughout France, royalists under the Comte de Chambord (1879 – 1882) advocated a revolutionary discourse that sought to violently overthrow the Republic, whereas monarchists under the Comte de Paris (1885 – 1888) worked within the structures of the Republic to attempt to win elections, and royalists allied with Action Française (1908 – 1913) undermined the Republic by promoting an extreme, exclusionist nationalism that included a virulent anti-Semitism.

In this chapter, I use various primary sources to reconstruct the royalist banquet: published accounts written by banquet participants, organizational proceedings, handwritten police reports at the local and national level, archives of the Ministry of Justice, and newspapers from three different political perspectives. *Le Gaulois* was a right-wing newspaper that projected

⁶ “Discours de M. Lambert de Sainte-Croix, prononcé au banquet de la presse monarchique des départements, le 4 juillet 1886,” 1886, p. 8. 8-LB57-9143. Bibliothèque nationale de France. « Est-ce que, dans nos temps troublés, la sagesse, la prévoyance, l’expérience de l’histoire ne sont pas là pour démontrer le danger de fermer toute possibilité d’échapper aux révolutions ? Est-ce que nous serions précisément condamnés à entendre proclamer vers la fin du XIX^e siècle, comme une suprême ironie, le droit divin de la République ? »

a royalist politics that was geared to the nobility and high bourgeoisie. On the other hand, *Le Rappel* was on the left of the political spectrum, exhibiting an anti-clerical republican slant and was read by students, artisans, and workers. Finally, *L'Action française* was an extreme-right newspaper, expressing nationalism, anti-Semitism, and royalism. These sources are varied as they contain the perspective of the banquet participants, the monitoring of banquets by the French government and police, and diverse political reporting by journalists.

Traditionally, historians have not envisioned royalists as revolutionaries. Samuel M. Osgood asserted that the failure of the royalists to restore the monarchy was related to their inability to win over the lower classes.⁷ Osgood did not cover the years 1879 to 1882 in his history of Third Republic French royalism but I show that these years were the height of the royalist banquet campaign. Similar to Osgood, Jean El Gammal stated that during the Third Republic royalists failed to retain the support of the French public.⁸ Countering both Osgood and El Gammal, my study of royalist banquets demonstrates that royalists did engage with workers and peasants in their banquet campaign. Martin Simpson argued that Legitimists (those who advocated for a hereditary, absolute monarchy) were focused on the local level.⁹ I argue contrarily that Legitimist royalists held banquets across the French nation, thereby making their movement into a national phenomenon. Neil McWilliam asserted that Catholics, royalists, and nationalists used the commemorative monument of Joan of Arc to push their political agendas of the time including supporting the Catholic Church, opposing Freemasons and Jews, backing the army, and criticizing the Republic.¹⁰ I will show how the alliance between royalists and the

⁷ Samuel M. Osgood, *French Royalism under the Third and Fourth Republics* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960): 211.

⁸ Jean El Gammal, "Les courants monarchistes sous la Troisième République," *Pouvoirs* 78 (1996): 104.

⁹ Martin Simpson, "The Death of Henri V: Legitimists Without the Bourbons," *French History* 15, No. 4 (2001): 379.

¹⁰ Neil McWilliam, "Conflicting Manifestations: Parisian Commemoration of Joan of Arc and Etienne Dolet in the Early Third Republic," *French Historical Studies* 27, No. 2 (2004): 384.

Action Française brought extreme nationalism and anti-Semitism into royalist banquets. Stephen Hanson demonstrated that during times of crisis and instability the political groups that offer the most coherent ideological programs win out and during the 1870s in France it was the Legitimists and radical republicans that drew the most support because of their ideologies with the radical republicans eventually becoming victorious.¹¹ The ideology of legitimists was a key factor in their ability to successfully draw thousands of royalists to their banquets.

François Furet has asserted that the revolutionary period came to an end only by 1880 as the French Revolution was finally victorious after the unsuccessful attempt by the Paris Commune and a failure by royalists to restore the monarchy.¹² Furet linked the end of the revolutionary period with three governmental policies of 1879 – 1880: Bastille Day becoming the national holiday of France, the reinstatement of “La Marseillaise” as the national anthem, and the Chamber of Deputies return to Paris.¹³ Furet is correct in that the period of the French Revolution concluded. Yet a new revolutionary rhetoric emerged around 1878 that reached out to common people. I contend that from 1878 until the First World War was distinguished by sustained criticism of the Third Republic and, at times, significant revolutionary activity, namely banquets commemorating the Paris Commune that called for a socialist revolution (Chapter 1) as well as royalist banquets seeking to restore the monarchy. This revolutionary impulse was contained by the flexibility of the Third Republic as the authorities did not suppress these banquets yet closely monitored their activity through extensive police surveillance. The French banquet initially transformed royalism into a revolutionary movement under the Comte de

¹¹ Stephen E. Hanson, “The Founding of the French Third Republic,” *Comparative Political Studies* 43 (2010): 1027-1028.

¹² François Furet, *Revolutionary France 1770 – 1880*, trans. by Antonia Nevill (London: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 1995): x.

¹³ Furet, 537.

Chambord that integrated workers and peasants in the cause. The cultural aspects of the banquet – for example, the banners, symbols, socializing, eating, drinking, and singing together – galvanized the politics of the royalist movement. The banquet created a strong sense of community among royalists by uniting participants together in a common objective, the restoration of the monarchy.

The banquet has been a special cultural space throughout history. Michel Jeanneret, writing about Renaissance banquets, theorized that the union of speaking and eating in a banquet created an atmosphere where thinking and the senses mutually enrich each other.¹⁴ He asserted that the banquet has been important throughout history in many different cultures.¹⁵ Jeanneret further argued that the banquet produced lofty feats as connecting people to the gods, demonstrating humans' relation to nature, and strengthening social bonds between people.¹⁶ His third assertion explains why political groups rally to the banquet to galvanize their movements. Theorizing on the importance of drinks, Paul Manning conveyed the significance of toasts by stating that the drinking that concludes the toast was a performative act.¹⁷ The simultaneous, collective drinking among banquet participants signified that everyone was behind the speaker's toast, which had the consequence of creating unity for the cause. Writing about republican festivals in France, Olivier Ihl asserted that the familial aspect of the banquet produced festive, intimate ties among its participants.¹⁸

The banquet was an attractive venue for political action for several reasons. First of all, food, drink, and a festive atmosphere attract people to the event. Rather than a simple meeting

¹⁴ Michel Jeanneret, *A Feast of Words: Banquets and Table Talk in the Renaissance*, trans. by Jeremy Whitely and Emma Hughes (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991): 1.

¹⁵ Jeanneret, 13.

¹⁶ Jeanneret, 13.

¹⁷ Paul Manning, *The Semiotics of Drink and Drinking* (London: Continuum International Pub. Group, 2012): 15.

¹⁸ Olivier Ihl, *La Fête Républicaine* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1996): 98-99.

where there are only speeches, the banquet appeals to an audience beyond the politically engaged. While some attendees primary interest is the speeches, others will attend because of food, drink, and the opportunity to socialize. Yet those who were initially only interested in the food and drink, for instance, will be introduced to the politics in a friendly setting and, thus, could become politically engaged. Secondly, the act of eating together is warm and personal and, therefore, creates solidarity between fellow participants. Royalists were conscious of this phenomenon as they described banquets as « fêter en famille », ¹⁹ celebrating with family. Another speaker, Joseph de Carayon-La Tour, who was a lieutenant colonel in the French army, deputy, and then senator, described how he felt about the solidarity at a 29 September 1880 banquet in Bordeaux: « l'on se sent ici véritablement en famille...des cœurs qui battent à l'unisson. » (“It seems like here we are truly among family...Our hearts beat in unison.”) ²⁰ Therefore, a banquet lunch or dinner imitates a family eating together. Thirdly, wine served at the banquets heightens everyone’s emotions due to the effect of alcohol, thereby making the socializing as well as the speeches more interesting. Finally, the specifically cultural aspects of the banquet, the socializing, singing together, banners with slogans, and royalist emblems and symbols invigorated the political movement. Particularly, singing together gets everyone involved in an active and communal manner and strikes an especially emotional chord in the participants.

Royalist banquets were oftentimes held on specific occasions such as the following: Chambord’s birthday (29 September) and St. Henri Day (15 July) under the Comte de Chambord, a banquet attached to the Conference Molé-Tocqueville and a monarchical press

¹⁹ “Souvenir du banquet du 29 Septembre à Arras : 1881,” 1881, p. 22. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

²⁰ “Le 29 Septembre 1880 à Bordeaux. La Messe, Le Banquet, Les Discours,” 1880, p. 13. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

banquet under the Comte de Paris, and St. Philippe Day (3 May), St. Marie Day (15 August), and a banquet honoring Camelots du Roi departing for military service during the time of the alliance with the Action Française. A staple that occurred at nearly every royalist banquet was the shouting out of « Vive le Roi ! » numerous times by both speakers and the audience. A typical royalist banquet had cultural aspects like the following banquet in the town of Segré in western France on 1 October 1882 that celebrated the birthday of the Comte de Chambord. The banquet began at noon and lasted until 3:00 P.M. and was held outside in a large tent in the park of the château de la Loge. There were 1500 people in attendance and two gendarmes to keep the peace. The tent was decorated with art, flowers, and emblems composed of leaves and flowers. On the table of honor, there was a bust of the Comte de Chambord positioned between a banner of Zouaves (French infantry unit that served in Algeria) and a white Bourbon flag with bullet holes from the 1815 and 1832 military campaigns. A number of speeches including a toast to the King (Comte de Chambord) were delivered. In between the speeches all of the attendees sang royalist songs together. After the conclusion of the banquet, the participants saluted the white flag.²¹ The decorations, cultural symbols (bust of the Comte de Chambord, banner of Zouaves, and white Bourbon flag with bullet holes), and singing together energized the royalist movement by adding excitement to the gathering by providing powerful symbolic complements to the political speeches as seen in this banquet occurring on 1 October 1882 in Segré.

The warm atmosphere of royalist banquets that produced a strong solidarity was oftentimes described by participants. For instance, at the same banquet in Segré, the author of the pamphlet, Ernest Faligan, a medical doctor and writer, highlighted the powerful effect of the banquet on the royalist cause: “A profound cordiality reigned in the numerous attendees and that

²¹ Ernest Faligan, “Les Vendéens chez le Roi et le Banquet Royaliste de Segré,” 1882, p. 9-13. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

had its source in the intimate union of hearts in a common faith...When a cause has many fervent defenders, and moreover, has on its side law and justice, one can say that it is a cause won, and that its victory is certain and close.”²² From this comment, the author drew a connection through the use of a metaphor between the solidarity produced by the banquet and the success of the royalist cause. We can see how banquets energized and propelled the royalist political movement forward as they kindled the emotion of love as in the solidarity between fellow royalists.

Royalist banquets were massive events that required significant planning, much more planning than for a simple meeting. The difficulty of arranging these events lends credence to the importance of banquets for royalists. Banquet planning required booking a venue, sending out invitations, decorating the banquet hall, obtaining food and drink for approximately 1000 people, selecting speakers, booking musicians, and actually staging the event. For instance, organizers, of a 19 November 1879 banquet in the western town of Challans with between 1000 and 1200 people in attendance, served 700 *livres* (a *livre* is a half kilogram or a pound) of meat.²³ Banquets were more meaningful and powerful than meetings for royalists so they made the extra effort to organize them.

Food at monarchist banquets sometimes carried royalist symbolism. For instance, at a 15 October 1882 banquet in the Saint-Mandé suburb of Paris for the birthday of the Comte de Chambord, some of the food had royalist touches to it. On the menu was *turbot* (flounder) with a *sauce Royale* and *filet de bœuf aux fleurs de lys* (beef filet with the royalist symbol fleur-de-lis

²² Ernest Faligan, “Les Vendéens chez le Roi et le Banquet Royaliste de Segré,” 1882, p. 13. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica. « C'est la cordialité profonde qui régnait dans cette nombreuse assistance, et qui avait sa source en l'intime union des cœurs dans une foi commune...Quand une cause compte d'aussi nombreux et d'aussi fervents défenseurs, et que, de plus, elle a pour elle le droit et la justice, on peut dire qu'elle est une cause gagnée, et que sa victoire est certaine et prochaine. »

²³ Ivan de Wœstynne, “Le Banquet Royaliste de Challons,” *Le Gaulois*, 20 November 1879, p. 1-2. Thank you to Laura LoVetere for tracking down this exciting banquet among many other royalist ones.

on it).²⁴ This symbolism made the food extra special and reaffirmed the royalist identity of the participants of the banquet. The rich tradition of food in France along with the historically revolutionary aspect of banquets made the banquet a specifically French cultural site.

Banquets under the Comte de Chambord, 1879 – 1882

The height of royalist banquets during early Third Republic France in terms of attendance and number of banquets was during the years 1879 to 1882. These banquets occurred during the final years of the “reign” of the Legitimist pretender, Henri V, known as Comte de Chambord. Henri Charles Ferdinand Marie Dieudonné d’Artois (1820 – 1883), Comte de Chambord, was the grandson of King Charles X of France. Comte de Chambord was considered the Legitimist pretender as he was a descendent of King Louis XV and the last living male in the elder branch of the French Bourbons. He was exiled from France at the age of nine because of the Revolution of 1830 and the ascension to the throne of Louis Philippe and thereafter lived most of his life in a château in Frohsdorf, Austria. At the beginning of the Third Republic, Comte de Chambord was the leading pretender to the throne of France. He was not a man of action and therefore missed key opportunities to restore the monarchy in the 1870s. Comte de Chambord did not attend any of the royalist banquets and therefore his influence on the banquets was limited. Although Chambord was not able to attend any of the banquets, participants wrote an address to the King to keep him informed about the proceedings. The banquets under Chambord had a distinctive character and thus will be analyzed separately. Royalist banquets under the Comte de Chambord exhibited a violent revolutionary discourse, heavily criticized the Third Republic especially what they perceived as the Republic’s persecution of the Catholic Church, and upheld the monarchy as

²⁴ Mareuil, “La Manifestation de Saint-Mandé,” *Le Gaulois*, 16 October 1882, p. 2.

the best government for France yet also incorporated workers and peasants, advocated peace, appropriated the republican language of democracy, equality, and liberty, and had a few instances of promoting electoral politics. Some of the royalist program advocated at these banquets conforms with the traditional concerns of royalism while other aspects show a surprising influence from republican ideology.

Before analyzing the banquets under Chambord, it is important to discuss French royalist politics from 1871 to 1878. During this period, royalists failed to restore the French monarchy despite highly favorable circumstances because of ideological divisions within the royalist movement. The election to the National Assembly on 8 February 1871 yielded a royalist majority; however, the royalists were divided between the Legitimists with the Comte de Chambord as their pretender to the throne and the Orlanists having the Comte de Paris as their pretender. The common sense course of action would have been for the two royalist factions to reach a compromise, thereby allowing the older, childless Comte de Chambord to become King first and then the younger Comte de Paris to succeed him.²⁵ This compromise was never attained. In 1873, Comte de Chambord stipulated that a required condition of him becoming King was the return of the Bourbon White Flag with the fleur-de-lis as the national flag of France.²⁶ The Orlanists could not compromise on the reinstatement of the Bourbon flag. To Orlanists and to French people in general, the Bourbon flag symbolized the nefarious Old Regime and thus they could not allow its return.²⁷ Chambord's demand for a monarchy that approached absolutist rule drove away any chance of compromise with the parliamentary Orlanist monarchists.²⁸ The two pretenders, Comte de Chambord and Comte de Paris, and the

²⁵ Osgood, 2.

²⁶ Osgood, v.

²⁷ Osgood, 17.

²⁸ Robert Gildea, *The Past in French History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994): 303.

royalist majority in the National Assembly could not agree on the conditions for a restoration of the monarchy. The 1876 election to the Chamber of Deputies (lower chamber of the National Assembly) yielded a republican majority, thereby drastically reducing the possibility of a restoration of the monarchy.

After the failure of royalists to restore the monarchy by the leadership at the top during the 1870s, the royalists turned to the banquet in a nationwide effort to expand the royalist movement at the ground level by uniting thousands of people at these lively cultural events, which included the incorporation of peasants and workers into their campaign. Royalists realized that they needed popular support to restore the monarchy and banquets became a means for the royalists to reach the masses. The banquet was essentially a means for furthering democracy in politics as it brought new social groups into political movements, thereby expanding by number and by social class the people involved in politics. Royalist banquets frequently attracted between 1000 and 1500 people per event, and a 19 August 1882 banquet in Challans in western France had 7000 royalists in attendance.²⁹ In 1882, there was a particularly strong, nationwide banquet campaign for the birthday of Comte de Chambord (29 September) with 84 banquets mobilizing a total of 60,000 people in support of the royalist cause.³⁰ In 1882, royalist banquets took place in towns and cities all over France: Lille, Amiens, and Arras (north); Sainte Anne d'Auray, Rennes, Segré, Le Havre, Le Mans, and Angoulême (west); Bordeaux, Sainte-Foy-la-Grande, Nîmes, Sainte Ambroix Alais, Le Vigan, Marseille, La Camargue, Carpentras, Montpellier, Montauban, and Toulouse (south); Nancy, Bourg, Reims, and Troyes (east); Tours, Limoges, and Nevers (center); and in Paris.³¹ Banquets were a prominent early

²⁹ Émile Hardouin, "Le "Gaulois" en Vendée : Le Banquet de Challans," *Le Gaulois*, 20 August 1882, p. 1.

³⁰ "La Politique," *Le Gaulois*, 2 October 1882, p. 1.

³¹ Agissements Royalistes, F/7/12431. Campagne de banquets royalistes. Prétendu réveil de l'esprit monarchique. 1882 – 1883. Archives nationales,

instance of mass political movements as royalists reached out to peasants and workers in an attempt to carry forward their revolutionary movement. The inclusion of workers and peasants in attendance was a distinctive feature of banquets during the time of the Comte de Chambord.

Workers and peasants made up a significant portion of the attendees at many royalist banquets. For example, farmers and workers composed three-quarters of the 200 attendees at a 2 October 1881 banquet in the northeastern town of Nancy.³² Agricultural workers formed the majority of the 600 people in attendance at an 1882 banquet in the town of Rennes in northwestern France.³³ City workers and inhabitants of the countryside were the majority of the 1500 attendees at a 1 October 1882 banquet in the northwestern town of Segré.³⁴ Further evidence of the lower classes being present at royalist banquets comes from the newspaper *Le Gaulois*’ reporting on a 19 November 1879 banquet in Challans where the address to the King (Comte de Chambord) was signed by all participants at the banquet and those who did not know how to write made a cross in lieu of signing their name.³⁵ Here we see the illiterate, obviously part of the lower classes, in attendance.

The royalist banquet thus became a cultural space that embodied the inclusion of peasants and workers in the French nation. Royalists inviting workers and peasants to banquets thereby produced a situation where all social classes dined together. Workers and peasants were invited to the banquet to take part in the building of the French royalist nation. This must have been attractive to French workers and peasants. Workers, historically sought out vigorously by the political left, began to be courted by the royalist right. Royalists realized that they needed

³² “Banquet Annuel du 29 Septembre à Nancy. 1881. Discours prononcé par M. Amédée de Margerie, Doyen de la Faculté Catholique des Lettres de Lille,” 1881, p. 5. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

³³ “Les Vendéens chez le Roi et le Banquet Royaliste de Segré,” 1882, p. 29. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

³⁴ “Les Vendéens chez le Roi et le Banquet Royaliste de Segré,” 1882, p. 10-11.

³⁵ Ivan de Wœstye, “Le Banquet Royaliste de Challans,” *Le Gaulois*, 20 November 1879, p. 2.

popular support for their movement. According to a police report, the admission cost of banquets from 1882 to 1883 was between 3 and 4 francs per event.³⁶ Banquet organizers sometimes provided lower-class attendees with discounted rates on entrance passes or outright free tickets.³⁷ Royalists inviting peasants and workers to banquets and dining with them is a gesture that shows that the peasants and workers were regarded as part of the French nation. Eating together has a welcoming, embracing quality to the act that promotes equality. In modern society, how we get to know someone is normally over food and drink. The same situation applies to the royalists' invitation to peasants and workers implying that royalist leaders wanted to get to know them in a personal way. Not only did royalists include peasants and workers in their banquets but also royalists engaged with the peasants and workers' political concerns.

The Comte de Chambord had shown concern for workers dating back to his *Lettre sur les Ouvriers* of April 1865 where he described the conditions of workers as horrible and offered as solutions the renewal of the right to association, the return of the old corporations, and the backing of private organizations that assist workers.³⁸ Chambord had the objective of reducing the severity of class conflict, thereby creating a peaceful French society.³⁹ Some aristocrats of the Legitimist royalist faction felt that their privilege came with responsibility, a duty to care for the lower classes.⁴⁰ Speakers at royalist banquets aimed to convince workers and peasants that only the monarchy could improve their situation. Apart from the desire of royalists to assist workers and peasants, royalists were also interested in including peasants and workers in their banquets with the objective of expanding the royalist movement. Why do peasants and workers

³⁶ Agissements Royalistes, F/7/12431. Campagne de banquets royalistes. Prétendu réveil de l'esprit monarchique. 1882 – 1883. Archives nationales.

³⁷ Marvin L. Brown Jr., "Catholic-Legitimist Militancy in the Early Years of the Third French Republic," *The Catholic Historical Review* 60, No. 2 (1974): 249.

³⁸ Osgood, 12-13.

³⁹ Osgood, 13.

⁴⁰ Osgood, 13.

decide to attend royalist banquets? Peasants and workers might have been frustrated by the lack of improvement in their condition under the government of the Third Republic and turned to the royalists with the hope that the future monarchy would enact much needed reforms. Another possibility is that they were simply drawn to the food and drink and the socializing aspects of the banquet. A chance to eat opulently with upper-class society could be an exciting event for curious French workers and peasants. Or peasants and workers were motivated by a combination of these two possibilities. Another possibility is that peasants and workers disliked royalists and attended to obtain information on the royalist movement.

Worker conditions and politics became the central focus at a royalist banquet that took place on 29 September 1880 in the northern city of Lille. Charles Thellier de Poncheville, a lawyer and municipal councilor of Valenciennes, gave a speech arguing that only the monarchy can ameliorate the conditions of the worker and bring back social harmony.⁴¹ French workers, according to de Poncheville, were vulnerable and isolated at the mercy of powerful industrial companies.⁴² De Poncheville identified the inequality and terrible working conditions that the French worker lived with and confronted on a daily basis.⁴³ He claimed that the solution under the monarchy was for the worker to stop dreaming of the socialist utopia and to return to a Christian philosophy of work.⁴⁴ Furthermore, Christian charities would ease the suffering of the worker but they needed the freedom to operate properly and only the monarchy would bestow this liberty on Christian charities.⁴⁵ Royalists felt this way because of republican secularism that royalists considered to be undermining the Catholic Church's influence on French society. De

⁴¹ "La Question Ouvrière. Discours prononcé au Banquet royaliste de Lille, le 29 septembre 1880, par M. Charles Thellier de Poncheville, avocat à Valenciennes," 1880, p. 8. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

⁴² "La Question Ouvrière...", p. 5.

⁴³ "La Question Ouvrière...", p. 8.

⁴⁴ "La Question Ouvrière...", p. 8.

⁴⁵ "La Question Ouvrière...", p. 8.

Poncheville argued that the monarchy was uniquely positioned to carry out reforms with regards to workers as a monarchical government was stable and unlike the Republic did not depend on the changing opinion of the electors.⁴⁶ Although the royalists did not offer anything new to alleviate the poverty and suffering of workers (only a return to a past policy, i.e. the revamping of Christian charitable organizations), they did accurately identify the difficulties facing workers of escaping from their horrendous living and working conditions and moved towards a Christian socialism. This acknowledgment by royalists of the awful situation faced by workers in their daily lives and an attempt to find a solution could have appealed to workers.

Further instances of royalists' concerns with the political issues of workers and peasants are seen in the following examples. At a 29 September 1880 banquet in the Parisian suburb of Saint-Mand , a cabinetmaker (Lebrun) was elected as the president of the banquet,⁴⁷ showing the willingness of royalists to admit workers into leadership positions. At the same banquet, Andr  Barbes stated that for republicans the people are those who prioritize politics over work and who riot. On the other hand, Barbes asserted that royalists see that you workers live by work and order and have the right to make your lives better.⁴⁸ Royalists redefined what it meant to be a worker as one who is obedient and accomplishes work rather than those who go on strike or riot. Barbes adds that in 1865 the Comte de Chambord criticized the revolutionaries for destroying institutions instead of reforming them.⁴⁹ Yet surprisingly, Chambord also stood for the right of association and for workers to have the opportunity to freely organize and create unions. De La Salmoni re, speaking at a 1 October 1882 banquet in the western town of Segr , laid out a few

⁴⁶ "La Question Ouvri re. Discours prononc  au Banquet royaliste de Lille, le 29 septembre 1880, par M. Charles Thellier de Poncheville, avocat   Valenciennes," 1880, p. 10. Biblioth que nationale de France, Gallica.

⁴⁷ "Banquet Royalist Ouvrier du Faubourg Saint-Antoine. La R publique devant la Question Sociale, par Andr  Barbes," 1880, p. 5. Biblioth que nationale de France, Gallica.

⁴⁸ "Banquet Royalist Ouvrier...", p. 18.

⁴⁹ "Banquet Royalist Ouvrier...", p. 20-21.

policies that will be pursued by the future monarchy. Included in them is the right to association for workers and promoting the success of those living in the countryside.⁵⁰ Henry Goulet defended artisans at a 5 October 1882 banquet in the city of Reims in northeastern France by stating that the government has a role in protecting the work and pay of the artisan whereas the republican government has passed laws that have taken away workers' freedoms and distributed French workers' jobs to foreigners.⁵¹ Royalists championed workers' right to association and argued that the government should protect French workers' jobs and pay.

Although workers frequently attended royalist banquets, it was relatively rare for workers to speak during the banquet. In general, royalists regarded the role of workers at banquets to be that of a passive audience, consisting of solely listening to the speeches. Here are two excerpts of speeches from workers to show their viewpoints in an unusually active role. M. Jurand, a worker from Nîmes, spoke at the large banquet on 19 August 1882 in Challans with 7000 people in attendance. He criticized the Republic's increase in taxation as it has expanded from the religious tithe and the duty to 50 taxes that go straight to those who govern.⁵² Jurand exclaimed that royalists must act and not just talk because only action could return the King as the ruler of France.⁵³ He toasted the defeat of the Republic and made a bold question to the 7000 royalists in attendance asking if there were brave men present who were prepared to die for the royalist flag.⁵⁴ Here a worker was strongly promoting a revolutionary agenda compelling fellow workers and aristocratic royalists to act. Yet the journalist Émile Hardouin of the pro-royalist newspaper *Le Gaulois* could have exaggerated Jurand's language to foment revolutionary fervor. At a 1

⁵⁰ "Les Vendéens chez le Roi et le Banquet Royaliste de Segré," 1882, p. 17. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

⁵¹ "Discours prononcés au banquet royaliste de Reims, 5 October 1882," 1882, p. 26. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

⁵² Émile Hardouin, "Le "Gaulois" en Vendée : Le Banquet de Challans," *Le Gaulois*, 20 August 1882, p. 2.

⁵³ Hardouin, *Le Gaulois*, 20 August 1882, p. 2.

⁵⁴ Hardouin, *Le Gaulois*, 20 August 1882, p. 2.

October 1882 banquet at Segré, a worker stood up and began to speak. The way it is described in the text makes it seem like this was a spontaneous speech. M. Rohard, a quarry worker from Trélazé and a committed royalist, exclaimed that the King, Comte de Chambord, was concerned more than anyone else with the condition of workers and that he would unite this French society divided by hate and bring a solution to the social question, whereas the republicans only promised a solution but had not delivered.⁵⁵ This concern of Comte de Chambord and the royalists for the well-being of French workers and the sentiment that they would end the divisive hatred in society and unify France demonstrated that royalists were serious about improving the lives of workers and creating a harmonious society. Rohard continued to argue that many workers were tricked by republicans, but they were now returning to the royalist cause.⁵⁶ We see here examples of two workers deeply committed to the royalist cause who saw a restored monarchy as the only hope for improvements in the condition of workers.

Speakers at royalist banquets communicated with the lower-class audience by utilizing a revolutionary discourse filled with anger towards the Republic. This is a surprising inversion of roles from the July Monarchy to the Third Republic as royalists transformed into a revolutionary group whereas republicans became concerned with the preservation of the state. This violent language is concentrated during the period of the “reign” of the legitimist pretender, Henri V, Comte de Chambord. The address to the King (Comte de Chambord) read by Léon de Baudry-d’Asson, deputy of Vendée, at a 19 August 1882 banquet in Challans exclaimed: “We will be ready to combat, if it is necessary, and to die, until the last, For God! For the King! For

⁵⁵ “Les Vendéens chez le Roi et le Banquet Royaliste de Segré,” 1882, p. 12. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

⁵⁶ “Les Vendéens chez le Roi...,” p. 12.

France!”⁵⁷ This is an example of revolutionary fervor emanating from below as banquet participants were trying to push the Comte de Chambord towards revolutionary action. De Baudry-d’Asson spoke again at a royalist banquet on 8 October 1882 in Lyon remembering the war cry of royalists in Lyon during the French Revolution “Live free or die in combat” and he stressed that this would be the future motto at the time of the restoration of the monarchy.⁵⁸ O. de Chevigné read the address to the King at a 15 October 1882 banquet in the Saint-Mandé suburb of Paris: “We are ready to serve you and die for you.”⁵⁹ De Chevigné echoed the sentiment that royalists were prepared to die for the restoration of the monarchy. At a 29 September 1880 banquet in Bordeaux, Joseph de Carayon-La Tour exclaimed: “This is so with the cross on the front, our flag in hand, and a sword in the other that we must fight for our rights and for our liberties.”⁶⁰ The writer Comte Léonce de Larmandie proclaimed at a 16 July 1881 banquet in Paris “You prepare your weapons for the immediate hour of the supreme combat.”⁶¹ De Larmandie concludes with the following fighting words: “We will separate and take our posts on the battlefield, but we will all meet again with the flowering of this noble lily, that carries on its corolla, united in a mystical fragrance, all the glories of the past, all the splendors of the future.”⁶² De Larmandie used very poetic yet also warlike language as he was ready to

⁵⁷ Émile Hardouin, “Le “Gaulois” en Vendée : Le Banquet de Challans,” *Le Gaulois*, 20 August 1882, p. 2. « Nous serons prêts à combattre, s’il le faut, et à mourir, jusqu’au dernier, Pour Dieu ! Pour le Roi ! Pour la France ! »

⁵⁸ “Les Banquets Royalists en Province,” *Le Gaulois*, 9 October 1882, p. 2. « Vivre libre ou mourir en combattant. »

⁵⁹ Mareuil, “La Manifestation de Saint-Mandé,” *Le Gaulois*, 16 October 1882, p. 2. « Nous sommes prêts à vous servir et à mourir pour vous. »

⁶⁰ “Le 29 Septembre 1880 à Bordeaux,” 1880, p. 22. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica. « C’est alors avec la croix sur le front, notre drapeau dans la main, et une épée dans l’autre que nous devons combattre pour nos droits et pour nos libertés. »

⁶¹ “Allocution prononcée à Paris au Banquet Royaliste du VII^e Arrondissement, le 16 Juillet 1881, par M. Léonce de Larmandie,” 1881, p. 3. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica. « Vous apprêtez vos armes pour l’heure imminente du suprême combat. »

⁶² “Allocution prononcée à Paris au Banquet Royaliste du VII^e Arrondissement..., p. 8. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica. « Nous allons nous séparer et reprendre nos postes sur le champ de bataille, mais nous nous retrouverons tous à la floraison de ce noble lys, qui porte sur sa corolle, unies en un parfum mystique, toutes les gloires du passé, toutes les splendeurs de l’avenir. »

take the royalist cause to the battlefield and to convince those in attendance to pursue this escalated course of action. Royalists spoke as if they were prepared to take revolutionary action in order to restore the monarchy as evident in their violent, warlike speeches at banquets. Royalist discourse harks back to France's revolutionary tradition, a tradition that was anti-royalist in the past yet during the Third Republic had become pro-royalist and anti-republican. Marvin L. Brown Jr. identified the existence of a strand of Catholic-Legitimists, operating largely independent of the Comte de Chambord, who were prepared to use violence to restore the monarchy during the early years of the Third Republic.⁶³ Nevertheless, royalists did not act on their revolutionary ambitions and only exercised a revolutionary discourse.

Speakers were not the only ones to express revolutionary sentiments. Ordinary attendees also vocalized revolutionary ambitions as evidenced by these shouts from the audience at a 19 August 1882 banquet at Challans: « À mort les républicains ! Vive l'insurrection ! vive la guerre civile ! vive la révolution ! vive le roy ! »⁶⁴ Some of these bursts of revolutionary anger seem more like those of the political left than the political right as these ordinary royalists were calling for a revolution and a civil war. It is possible that the leftist, pro-republican newspaper *Le Rappel* was either shocked by the rhetoric of ordinary royalists and aimed to warn the left about this emerging threat or the newspaper could have exaggerated the language of the banquet audience to stir up support against the growing royalist engagement with peasants and workers. Nevertheless, these royalist supporters were exhibiting the emotion of anger against the Republic. Participants in banquets were ready to revolt and they seem to only await a signal

⁶³ Marvin L. Brown Jr., "Catholic-Legitimist Militancy in the Early Years of the Third French Republic," *The Catholic Historical Review* 60, No. 2 (1974): 235-236, 242.

⁶⁴ *Le Rappel*, 25 August 1882, p. 2.

from the Comte de Chambord. This violent language demonstrated that royalists wanted to be seen as advocating drastic change.

Alongside this violent language advocating revolution against the Third Republic, royalists also expressed counterrevolutionary sentiment as well as assertions against revolution as a course of action. At a 29 September 1880 banquet in the northern city of Lille, Charles Thellier de Poncheville asserted that the monarchy would carry out reforms without resorting to revolution.⁶⁵ André Barbes, speaking at a 29 September 1880 banquet in the Parisian suburb of Saint-Mandé, argued that royalists must avoid a violent revolution and put their energy into winning elections.⁶⁶ At a 29 September 1881 banquet in Nancy, Du Pont de Romémont proclaimed that royalists would defeat the revolution and liberate France.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, these statements against revolution are in the minority as compared to the calls for revolution. The anger expressed in the rhetoric of royalist speakers at banquets under the Comte de Chambord was mainly directed to the objective of overthrowing the Third Republic by revolutionary action.

Royalists promoted a peaceful, anti-militarist program that they claimed was pursued by the monarchy in the past and would be a focus of the future monarchy, a policy that they saw as sharply deviating from the militarism of the Republic as well as the Republic's inability in the 1870s to secure alliances in Europe. At a 29 September 1879 banquet in Chambord, the Comte de Déservillers argued that only the Comte de Chambord could guarantee peace because only he could setup alliances with other nations.⁶⁸ Ferdinand Lapène, speaking at a 29 September 1880 banquet in Bordeaux, asserted that republicans have promised peace; however, in reality, the

⁶⁵ "La Question Ouvrière. Discours prononcé au Banquet royaliste de Lille, le 29 septembre 1880, par M. Charles Thellier de Poncheville, avocat à Valenciennes," 1880, p. 10. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

⁶⁶ "Banquet Royalist Ouvrier du Faubourg Saint-Antoine. La République devant la Question Sociale, par André Barbes," 1880, p. 25. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

⁶⁷ "Banquet Annuel du 29 Septembre à Nancy. 1881. Discours prononcé par M. Amédée de Margerie, Doyen de la Faculté Catholique des Lettres de Lille," 1881, p. 7. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

⁶⁸ "Chambord : Banquet du 29 Septembre 1879," 1879, p. 10. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

Republic is a despotic and violent regime.⁶⁹ He further argued that only the monarchy could achieve peace.⁷⁰ At a 16 July 1881 banquet in the seventh arrondissement of Paris, Léonce de Larmandie stated that the Republic is always at war and there is constant strife within France.⁷¹ What wars was De Larmandie referencing? De Larmandie depicted the monarchy as being the opposite by citing the historical examples of the Bourbon monarchs promoting peace. He asserted that the Bourbons have always disliked war as the burden falls on the poor who risk their lives and die in combat.⁷² De Larmandie probably uttered this sentiment because workers were attending this banquet. He continued with a tendentious reading of France's history citing the pacifism of past monarchs by stating that Henri IV wanted peace throughout the world, Louis XIV offered all his personal wealth to the enemies in order to secure peace for France in 1710, Louis XV gave back what he had conquered for peace, and Louis XVIII in 1815 decided not to continue the war against Prussia and Russia with Austria and England.⁷³ Royalists offered a version of history of a pacifist monarchy and a warlike Republic that does not correspond to the actual historical record. In reality, the French monarchy was involved in numerous wars throughout its history whereas the last major war fought by a French Republic from the time of this banquet dates back to the First French Republic; however, royalists might have considered Napoléon I and III to be part of the Republic's tendency towards war. French royalists argued for a peaceful, anti-militarist foreign policy because they wanted to position themselves as the party of peace in contrast to what they saw as a Republic prone to carrying out war.

⁶⁹ "Le 29 Septembre 1880 à Bordeaux. La Messe, Le Banquet, Les Discours," 1880, p. 30. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

⁷⁰ "Le 29 Septembre 1880 à Bordeaux...", p. 30.

⁷¹ "Allocution prononcée à Paris au Banquet Royaliste du VII^e Arrondissement, le 16 Juillet 1881, par M. Léonce de Larmandie," 1881, p. 4. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

⁷² Allocution prononcée à Paris au Banquet Royaliste du VII^e Arrondissement..., p. 4.

⁷³ Allocution prononcée à Paris au Banquet Royaliste du VII^e Arrondissement..., p. 4.

Concern for winning elections was another tactic used by speakers at royalist banquets. This shows some evidence of royalists playing by the rules of electoral democracy, a fundamental pillar of the democratic Third Republic. Are royalist attempts to win elections evidence in favor of royalists accepting the Republic or attempts to use an electoral victory as a means to restore the monarchy? At a 29 September 1880 banquet in the Saint-Mandé suburb of Paris, André Barbes, speaking to the royalist workers in attendance, argued that it is time to organize and get ready for the elections.⁷⁴ Marquis Adolphe-Charles de Partz de Pressy, deputy and departmental councilor, gave a toast at a 29 September 1881 banquet in Arras and asserted that we had an energetic electoral campaign due to the Union monarchique that brought together a range of conservatives.⁷⁵ Royalists engaging in electoral politics was not a fundamental aspect of the royalist movement under the Comte de Chambord as there were only these two instances of royalists promoting involvement in elections.

When speakers highlighted the program of the future monarchy, they did not speak of an all-powerful monarch who ruled through absolutism. On the other hand, speakers at royalist banquets appropriated the republican language of democracy, equality, and liberty; however, these concepts had entirely different meanings to the royalists. When liberty is championed, there is always the question of whose liberty. When royalists spoke of liberty at banquets, they oftentimes talked about religious liberty, which they considered to be constantly under attack by the republican regime. At a 29 September 1879 banquet at Chambord, M. Baragnon noted that the liberty of teaching has taken away the liberty of religion.⁷⁶ At a 10 October 1880 banquet in Nantes, M. Mollat read the address to the King (Comte de Chambord) that stated that Bretagne

⁷⁴ “Banquet Royaliste Ouvrier du Faubourg Saint-Antoine. La République devant la Question Sociale, par André Barbes,” 1880, p. 25. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

⁷⁵ “Souvenir du banquet du 29 Septembre à Arras : 1881,” 1881, p. 9. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

⁷⁶ “Chambord : Banquet du 29 Septembre 1879,” 1879, p. 25. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

(Brittany) implored God to reestablish the monarchy so that our violated rights, especially the freedom of religion, would be reinstated.⁷⁷ At a 1 October 1882 banquet in Segré, Comte A. d'Andigné asserted that the French Revolution began by oppressing the freedom of religion and closing churches in an attempt to wipe out all religious thought.⁷⁸ M. de Monvallier continued by questioning what has happened to liberty under the Republic. He argued that the Republic was a tyrannical government that had laws that desecrated our churches, shut down our convents and monasteries, and laicized our schools and hospitals.⁷⁹ De Monvallier added "She (the Republic) has said to the father, mother, and all French Catholics: Your child! He belongs to me, and in the name of the law, I seize and imprison him in my public school of obligatory atheism."⁸⁰ This is clearly an exaggerated claim yet it illustrates royalists' preoccupation with their struggle over the defense of the freedom of religion against the Republic's laicization program of the 1880s. Royalists' concern with liberty also extended into what would be typically seen as the republican realm.

Royalists also upheld democratic liberties. Henri Paris gave a speech at a 29 September 1879 banquet in the department of the Marne in northeastern France and proclaimed that the Comte de Chambord would become King not by force but only as the result of the will of the people.⁸¹ Ferdinand Lapène asserted that the King (Comte de Chambord) wanted everyone to be equal under the law as he spoke at a 29 September 1880 banquet in Bordeaux.⁸² Comte Hélión

⁷⁷ H. M. "Banquet de Nantes," *Le Gaulois*, 11 October 1880, p. 1.

⁷⁸ "Les Vendéens chez le Roi et le Banquet Royaliste de Segré," 1882, p. 18-19. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

⁷⁹ "Les Vendéens chez le Roi...", p. 22-23.

⁸⁰ "Les Vendéens chez le Roi...", p. 23. « Elle [la République] a dit au père, à la mère, à nous tous catholiques français : Votre enfant ! il est à moi, et au nom de la loi, je m'en empare et je l'emprisonne dans mon école publique d'athéisme obligatoire. »

⁸¹ "Banquet de la Marne. 29 Septembre 1879. Discours prononcé par M. Henri Paris, ancien maire de Reims," 1879, p. 6. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

⁸² "Le 29 Septembre 1880 à Bordeaux. La Messe, Le Banquet, Les Discours," 1880, p. 31. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

de Barreme, in a long discourse that criticized the Republic and extolled the monarchy at a 29 September 1881 banquet in the northern town of Arras, argued: “The royal program provides all of the modern conquests: equality of all before the law; public posts accessible to all without exception of birth or religion; tax voted by the two Chambers; universal suffrage honestly practiced.”⁸³ This language sounds very similar to the pronouncements of republicans as the royalists stressed equality, universal suffrage, hiring based on merit, and voting by the Chambers to approve taxes. Royalists called into question the official pronouncements of the Republic, those of being the defender of equality and liberty, by depicting the Republic as a persecutor and oppressor of rights and freedoms. Then the royalists offered the monarchy as the sole government able to defend liberty.

One of the main themes in the speeches at royalist banquets concerned criticism of the Third Republic. Royalists consistently launched widespread denunciations with the objective of delegitimizing the Republic. Henri Paris, at a 5 October 1882 banquet in Reims, listed the consequences of the last 10 years of Republican policy: French people have been divided against each other, hatred between capitalists and workers, wasteful spending of money, weakening of the judiciary, European nations showing disrespect for France, loss of our liberties, and disrespect for God.⁸⁴ A vivid example of royalists’ criticism of the Republic is an excerpt from the invitation to the Comte de Chambord to a 19 August 1882 banquet in Challans that commented: “The odious Republic rushed upon our poor France when it lay beneath the foreign victor’s feet. The infamous regime has exhausted honor, blood, and gold; It leaves France

⁸³ “Souvenir du banquet du 29 Septembre à Arras: 1881,” 1881, p. 67. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica. « Le programme royal consacre toutes les conquêtes modernes : égalité de tous devant la loi ; — les charges publiques accessibles à tous sans acception de naissance ou de religion ; — l’impôt voté par les deux Chambres ; — le suffrage universel honnêtement pratiqué ! »

⁸⁴ “Discours prononcés au banquet royaliste de Reims, 5 octobre 1882,” 1882, p. 9. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

broken up by the enemy, exhausted and withered by civil war.”⁸⁵ Royalists considered the founding of the Third Republic to be illegitimate as they saw the Republic seizing power from a defeated France. Furthermore, royalists considered the Republic to be close to collapse. At a 1 October 1882 banquet in Segré, Monseigneur Jude Chauveau de Kernaëret, Professor at the Académie d’Angers, proclaimed: “The hour of definitive solutions is close to ringing, the Republic is cut in half...When a house is threatened with ruin, the rats hurry to leave. This is what will happen to the republicans.”⁸⁶ Royalists saw the defects in the Republic as being too much for the Republic to handle. Royalists’ criticism of the Republic under the “reign” of Chambord primarily focused on: persecution of religion, violation of liberties, the Republic not being a true democracy, failure to make alliances in Europe, the loss of dignity, respect, and stature before European nations, declining economy, amnesty of the Communards (participants in the Paris Commune), and increasing class conflict. Interestingly, some of the criticism of royalists focused on the Republic not living up to its own program while other criticism followed royalist opposition to the Republic.

Royalists vigorously criticized what they saw as the Third Republic’s persecution of the Catholic religion. Joseph de Carayon-La Tour, at a 29 September 1880 banquet in Bordeaux, stated that the Republic has violated the homes of French fathers who have sought to teach and raise their children under the beliefs of the Catholic Church.⁸⁷ The address to the King (Comte de Chambord), read by M. Mollat at a 10 October 1880 banquet in the western city of Nantes,

⁸⁵ Auguste Vacquerie, “L’Adresse au Roy,” *Le Rappel*, 22 August 1882, p. 1. « L’odieuse République s’est ruée sur notre pauvre France quand elle gisait sous le pied vainqueur de l’étranger. L’infâme régime l’épuisa d’honneur, de sang et d’or ; il la laisse morceler par l’ennemi, épuiser et flétrir par la guerre civile. »

⁸⁶ “Les Vendéens chez le Roi et le Banquet Royaliste de Segré,” 1882, p. 15. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica. « L’heure des solutions définitives est bien près de sonner, la République est à moitié forcée...Lorsqu’une maison menace ruine, les rats s’empressent de la quitter : c’est ce que commencent à faire les républicains. »

⁸⁷ “Le 29 Septembre 1880 à Bordeaux. La Messe, Le Banquet, Les Discours,” 1880, p. 14-15. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

implored God to restore the monarchy and to thus return to the people of France their rights especially the freedom of religion.⁸⁸ Comte Hélión de Barreme condemned the government for shutting down the Catholic religious orders during a 29 September 1881 banquet in Arras.⁸⁹ De Franssu followed with a toast stating that there was persecution and prohibition of Catholic charity associations under the Republic.⁹⁰ At a 2 October 1881 banquet in the town of Nancy in northeastern France, du Pont de Romémont exclaimed that the Republic had no future as it attacked God and the Catholic Church.⁹¹ Henri des Houx, journalist and writer, spoke at a 19 August 1882 banquet in Challans and asserted that the Republic has forced divorce and atheistic teaching on all.⁹² At the same banquet, Léon de Baudry-d'Asson read an address to the King that stated that the Republic acted with hatred toward the monasteries and conducted a war against God.⁹³ At a 1 October 1882 banquet in Segré, de Monvallier charged that the Republic desecrated our churches, shut down our convents and monasteries, and laicized our schools and hospitals.⁹⁴ Monseigneur Jude Chauveau de Kernaëret followed by stating that the Republic with its guillotine, barricades, and schools that exclude God acted against our rights.⁹⁵ Royalists spoke out frequently against what they envisioned as a merciless attack on the Catholic Church by the government of the Third Republic.

In addition to the anger of royalists at the violation of their religious rights, royalists also fought what they perceived as an attack on their rights and liberty in general. The address to the

⁸⁸ H. M., "Banquet de Nantes," *Le Gaulois*, 11 October 1880, p. 1.

⁸⁹ "Souvenir du banquet du 29 Septembre à Arras: 1881," 1881, p. 57. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

⁹⁰ "Souvenir du banquet du 29 Septembre à Arras: 1881," p. 25-26.

⁹¹ "Banquet Annuel du 29 Septembre à Nancy. 1881. Discours prononcé par M. Amédée de Margerie, Doyen de la Faculté Catholique des Lettres de Lille," 1881, p. 6. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

⁹² Émile Hardouin, "Le "Gaulois" en Vendée: Le Banquet de Challans," *Le Gaulois*, 20 August 1882, p. 2.

⁹³ Hardouin, *Le Gaulois*, 20 August 1882, p. 2.

⁹⁴ "Les Vendéens chez le Roi et le Banquet Royaliste de Segré," 1882, p. 23. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

⁹⁵ "Les Vendéens chez le Roi..." p. 16.

King, read by Marquis Adolphe-Charles de Partz de Pressy at a 29 September 1881 banquet in Arras, stated that the Republic has taken away our most precious liberties.⁹⁶ There were three other instances where speakers lashed out at the Third Republic for infringing on their liberties, Comte Héliou de Barreme at a 29 September 1881 banquet in Arras, M. de Monvallier at a 1 October 1882 banquet in Segré,⁹⁷ and Rostan d'Ancezune reading the address to the King at a 22 October 1882 banquet in Marseille.⁹⁸ Royalists considered the Third Republic to be hypocritical as it claimed to uphold liberty but acted in opposition to liberty.

Likewise, royalists challenged the legitimacy of the Third Republic's self-identification as a democracy. This was a direct attack on the core identity of the Republic. At a 29 September 1879 banquet in the department of the Marne, Henri Paris stated that republicans did not follow universal suffrage as republican officials brought their friends into elected office.⁹⁹ At a 29 September 1880 banquet in the Parisian suburb of Saint-Mandé, André Barbes argued that the Republic has perpetrated injustice, violence, and immoral acts.¹⁰⁰ Barbes continued by stating that the Republic was not a democracy but in actuality a government ran by an unrestrained minority, « une aristocratie de bohêmes » (“a bohemian aristocracy”).¹⁰¹ Therefore, Barbes asserted that the Third Republic was failing at being what it identified with most that of being a democracy. At a 29 September 1880 banquet in Bordeaux, Ferdinand Lapène exclaimed that the Republic claims to follow the motto « Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité »; however, in reality the

⁹⁶ “Souvenir du banquet du 29 Septembre à Arras : 1881,” 1881, p. 7. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

⁹⁷ “Les Vendéens chez le Roi et le Banquet Royaliste de Segré,” 1882, p. 22. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

⁹⁸ “Les Banquets Royalistes,” *Le Gaulois*, 23 October 1882, p. 2.

⁹⁹ “Banquet de la Marne. 29 Septembre 1879. Discours prononcé par M. Henri Paris, ancien maire de Reims,” 1879, p. 22-23. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

¹⁰⁰ “Banquet Royaliste Ouvrier du Faubourg Saint-Antoine. La République devant la Question Sociale, par André Barbes,” 1880, p. 11. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

¹⁰¹ “Banquet Royaliste Ouvrier du Faubourg Saint-Antoine...,” p. 14-15.

Republic was tyrannical, unjust, and violent.¹⁰² Baron Albert de Chamborant de Périssat, speaking at a 28 September 1882 banquet in Angoulême, argued that the government of the Republic was a parliamentary tyranny.¹⁰³ Royalists boldly called into question the legitimacy of the democracy of the Third Republic, thereby challenging the validity of the chief tenet of republican government.

Criticism of France's economy was a major subject in speeches at royalist banquets that included a denunciation of the increasing national debt and a condemnation of the decline in agriculture, industry, and commerce. Comte Héliou de Barreme, at a 29 September 1881 banquet in Arras, talked about the initials R.F. that stand for République Française but he stated that according to the people it had another meaning « Rapacité Friponnerie » meaning “Rapacity Dishonesty.”¹⁰⁴ He then continued to criticize the Republic's indebtedness by asserting that the government was 3 billion francs in debt, France's imports were more than 1.5 billion francs more than their exports, and free public education was not free but costly.¹⁰⁵ Additionally, he condemned the French government for spending money in Africa on imperial ventures, thereby criticizing French colonial activities and policies.¹⁰⁶ At a 2 October 1881 banquet in Nancy, the writer Amédée de Margerie noted that France was financially in ruin as the national debt increased by one billion francs each year.¹⁰⁷ At a 1 October 1882 banquet in Segré, Comte A. d'Andigné stated that the Republic has destroyed French agriculture, industry, and commerce and, furthermore, has raised taxes and borrowed money resulting in a devastating financial

¹⁰² “Le 29 Septembre 1880 à Bordeaux. La Messe, Le Banquet, Les Discours,” 1880, p. 30. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

¹⁰³ “Discours prononcé le 28 septembre 1882, par M. Le Baron A. De Chamborant De Périssat au Banquet Royaliste D'Angoulême,” 1882, p. 5. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

¹⁰⁴ “Souvenir du banquet du 29 Septembre à Arras : 1881,” 1881, p. 48. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

¹⁰⁵ “Souvenir du banquet du 29 Septembre à Arras : 1881,” p. 50-52.

¹⁰⁶ “Souvenir du banquet du 29 Septembre à Arras : 1881,” p. 51.

¹⁰⁷ “Banquet Annuel du 29 Septembre à Nancy. 1881. Discours prononcé par M. Amédée de Margerie, Doyen de la Faculté Catholique des Lettres de Lille,” 1881, p. 17. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

situation.¹⁰⁸ Speakers at royalist banquets denounced the Third Republic's mishandling of the economy arguing that a struggling economy put France at serious risk.

Royalists chastised the Republic for promoting conflict between the social classes and benefiting from this class struggle. Marquis de Rancogne spoke at a 29 September 1879 banquet at Chambord and criticized the Republic for its reliance on hatred between the classes that would result in a continual societal conflict.¹⁰⁹ At a 29 September 1881 banquet in Arras, de Franssu gave a toast where he condemned the existence of class warfare under the Republic.¹¹⁰ Royalist rhetoric condemning the promotion of class conflict by the Republic aligns with royalist objectives of creating a unified French nation by reaching out to and addressing the needs of peasants and workers.

Royalists criticized what they perceived as the failure of the Third Republic to make alliances in Europe and France's loss of dignity, respect, and stature before European nations. Marquis de Rancogne spoke at a 29 September 1879 banquet at Chambord and criticized the Republic for the failure to establish alliances in Europe.¹¹¹ The address to the King, read by Marquis Adolphe-Charles de Partz de Pressy at a 29 September 1881 banquet in Arras, stated that the Republic has jeopardized the colony of Algeria, a colony that was conquered by the monarchy.¹¹² At a 19 August 1882 banquet in Challans, Léon de Baudry-d'Asson read an address to the King that charged that the Republic has created dishonor in the army and navy.¹¹³ De Monvallier spoke at a 1 October 1882 banquet in Segré and rebuked what he considered to be

¹⁰⁸ "Les Vendéens chez le Roi et le Banquet Royaliste de Segré," 1882, p. 19. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

¹⁰⁹ "Chambord : Banquet du 29 Septembre 1879," 1879, p. 17-18. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

¹¹⁰ "Souvenir du banquet du 29 Septembre à Arras : 1881," 1881, p. 25-26. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

¹¹¹ "Chambord : Banquet du 29 Septembre 1879," p. 17-18.

¹¹² "Souvenir du banquet du 29 Septembre à Arras : 1881," p. 7.

¹¹³ Émile Hardouin, "Le "Gaulois" en Vendée : Le Banquet de Challans," *Le Gaulois*, 20 August 1882, p. 2.

terrible policies of the Republic that led to France's loss of dignity in the eyes of European countries.¹¹⁴ At a 22 October 1882 banquet in Montpellier, Vicomte de Rodez-Benavent asserted that as a result of the foreign policy of the Republic, France no longer held international supremacy.¹¹⁵ Royalists blamed the Third Republic for not securing diplomatic alliances in Europe and for the loss of the grandeur of France, a grandeur that went hand in hand with the monarchy.

The banquet became an occasion to oppose the Third Republic's policy of amnesty for the Communards. French royalists were against the Paris Commune as it was a revolutionary attempt by republicans, socialists, and anarchists to establish a Republic in Paris. At a 29 September 1879 banquet in Chambord, M. Baragnon criticized the Republic for granting amnesty to the Communards in January, thereby rehabilitating the historical memory of the Paris Commune by allowing them to come back to France as martyrs.¹¹⁶ Similarly, Henri Paris, speaking at a 29 September 1879 banquet in the department of the Marne, expressed anger that the Communards were amnestied and welcomed back as heroes.¹¹⁷ At a 29 September 1880 banquet in Bordeaux, Joseph de Carayon-La Tour rebuked the Republic for welcoming back the Communards who killed our soldiers and priests and set fire to our monuments.¹¹⁸ Royalists spoke out in opposition to the Third Republic granting amnesty to the Communards as they were vehemently against any reconciliation with the socialist, anarchist, and republican revolutionaries of 1871.

¹¹⁴ "Les Vendéens chez le Roi et le Banquet Royaliste de Segré," 1882, p. 22. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

¹¹⁵ "Les Banquets Royalistes," *Le Gaulois*, 23 October 1882, p. 2.

¹¹⁶ "Chambord : Banquet du 29 Septembre 1879," 1879, p. 23-24. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

¹¹⁷ "Banquet de la Marne. 29 Septembre 1879. Discours prononcé par M. Henri Paris, ancien maire de Reims," 1879, p. 22. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

¹¹⁸ "Le 29 Septembre 1880 à Bordeaux. La Messe, Le Banquet, Les Discours," 1880, p. 14-15. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

Royalists under the Comte de Chambord strongly felt that the monarchy was the best government for France. Marquis de Rancogne, speaking at a 29 September 1879 banquet in Chambord, proclaimed that the monarchy established France and therefore only the monarchy could protect and advance French national interests.¹¹⁹ At a 29 September 1881 banquet in the northeastern town of Nancy, M. du Pont de Romémont gave a toast to the Comte de Chambord arguing that French people would realize that the monarchy produced centuries of greatness and would push for the return of the monarchy in France.¹²⁰ Henri Paris gave the Address to the King at a 5 October 1882 banquet in the northeastern city of Reims exclaiming with nostalgia: “The reestablishment of the King on the throne can only return France to religious faith, her moral and political grandeur and the glorious place that she has always occupied throughout the world during the reign of our illustrious ancestors. Long live the King.”¹²¹ Royalists looked back with the emotion of nostalgia to the historical greatness of the French monarchy as a justification for the necessity of its restoration.

Royalists under the Comte de Chambord brought workers and peasants into their banquet campaign to push for a revolutionary agenda to restore the monarchy. The fact that the royalists incorporated the lower classes into their movement and used language of war and class conflict made it revolutionary rather than just restorative. Nevertheless, this period featured contrasting features from violent, war inciting language against the Republic and harsh, extensive criticism of the republican government to an appeal for peace, democracy, equality, and liberty. Nonetheless, the former remained the more prominent element. The major aim of royalist

¹¹⁹ “Chambord : Banquet du 29 Septembre 1879,” 1879, p. 19. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

¹²⁰ “Banquet Annuel du 29 Septembre à Nancy. 1881. Discours prononcé par M. Amédée de Margerie, Doyen de la Faculté Catholique des Lettres de Lille,” 1881, p. 7. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

¹²¹ “Discours prononcés au banquet royaliste de Reims, 5 octobre 1882,” 1882, p. 36-37. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica. « Le rétablissement du Roi sur le trône peut seul rendre à la France la foi religieuse, sa grandeur morale et politique et le rang glorieux qu’elle a toujours occupé dans le monde pendant le règne de vos illustres ancêtres. Vive le Roi. »

politics will shift from an emphasis during the time of the Comte de Chambord on revolutionary rhetoric that sought to overthrow the Republic and restore the monarchy to the main objective under the Comte de Paris of attempting to win elections within the republican system.

Banquets under the Comte de Paris, 1885 – 1888

Comte de Chambord, the last male in the elder branch of the French Bourbons, died on 24 August 1883 and was succeeded by the Orleanist, Louis Philippe Albert (1838 – 1894), Comte de Paris, as the leading pretender to the throne with the royal title of Philippe VII. At the beginning of his “reign,” the Comte de Paris held more support than the Comte de Chambord had at any time yet the Comte de Paris was not skilled at getting the common people excited and involved in the royalist cause.¹²² However, the Comte de Paris did excel at forming alliances as he established the Union Conservatrice that brought right-wing republicans and Bonapartists into the royalist movement, which resulted in great gains in the 1885 elections for royalists.¹²³

There were fewer banquets under the Comte de Paris as compared to the Comte de Chambord. With the leadership of the royalists shifting from the Legitimists to the Orleanists, the political objectives of royalist banquets significantly changed. Compared to banquets under the “reign” of the Comte de Chambord, the incorporation of workers and peasants in the banquets completely dropped off under the Comte de Paris and the linkage of the monarchy with peace as well as the use of violent, revolutionary language was not as frequent. Language that emphasized democracy, equality, and liberty along with criticism of the Republic and an exaltation of the monarchy as the ideal government continued and there was a greater focus on electoral politics. The most significant change from banquets under the Comte de Chambord to

¹²² Osgood, 36, 38.

¹²³ Osgood, 39, 40.

those under the Comte de Paris was a shift from violent language that advocated a revolution to a greater emphasis in trying to win elections. Whereas royalists under the Comte de Chambord sought to overthrow the Republic and restore the monarchy, royalists under the Comte de Paris aimed at working within the structures of the Republic by attempting to get democratically elected. Therefore, royalists became incorporated into the Republic.

Unlike the Comte de Chambord who lived in exile in Austria and therefore was unable to speak at royalist banquets, the Comte de Paris spoke at a least one royalist banquet before his forced exile from France. At a 10 May 1885 banquet, the Comte de Paris gave guidance to the audience not to remain silent in front of the oppression and teach the French people about the wrongdoing of the Republic.¹²⁴ The French government exiled the Comte de Paris because of a lavish 16 May 1886 engagement party between Princess Marie-Amélie (daughter of the Comte de Paris) and Prince Dom Carlos (Crown Prince of Portugal) that energized the royalists. Royalists lamented the forced exile of the Comte de Paris at a 4 July 1886 banquet as Charles Lambert de Sainte-Croix recounted how the Comte de Paris was exiled from France, the same nation that his ancestors brought glory.¹²⁵ De Sainte-Croix followed with: “Our prince has done his duty. It is up to us now to do ours.”¹²⁶ He placed the responsibility for the future not on the pretender to the throne but on royalists and looked to the banquet as an important site to galvanize the royalist movement.

Speakers linking the monarchy with the promotion of peace continued albeit to a much lesser extent in royalist banquets under the Comte de Paris’ time as the leading pretender to the

¹²⁴ August Vacquerie, “Le Banquet Royaliste,” *Le Rappel*, 14 May 1885, p. 1.

¹²⁵ “Discours de M. Lambert de Sainte-Croix, prononcé au banquet de la presse monarchique des départements, le 4 juillet 1886,” 1886, p. 2. 8-LB57-9143. Bibliothèque nationale de France.

¹²⁶ “Discours de M. Lambert de Sainte-Croix...,” p. 2. « Notre Prince a fait son devoir. A nous maintenant de faire le nôtre. »

throne of France. There were only two situations where speakers' rhetoric stressed the ability of the monarchy to secure peace and make diplomatic alliances. Lambert de Sainte-Croix stated that the monarchy would secure an honorable peace for France at a 4 July 1886 banquet.¹²⁷ At a 27 May 1887 banquet, Duc Albert de Broglie, highlighted the importance of diplomatic alliances and criticized the Republic for having no actual alliances in Europe.¹²⁸ De Broglie, a longtime supporter of the Comte de Paris and the Orleanist cause, served as Prime Minister (1873 – 1874, 1877), French ambassador to London (1871 – 1872), deputy, and senator. Nevertheless, an argument for the connection of the monarchy with peace was not a major concern in royalist banquets under the Comte de Paris.

Calls for violent, revolutionary action were less frequent at banquets under the “reign” of the Comte de Paris as compared to those under the Comte de Chambord. There was only one instance of revolutionary discourse during this time period, yet it was a vivid example. At a 29 April 1888 banquet in Marseille, Xavier de Magallon proclaimed: “We have foreseen the creation of innumerable legions, that we will create, in fact, and that must be organized in such a way that they will rush forward themselves to the depths of the country, at the decisive hour...where the King, for the supreme struggle, will strike his foot on the national soil.”¹²⁹ According to de Magallon, royalists were ready to join with the King to overthrow the Third Republic in a violent manner and restore the monarchy. Nevertheless, to keep everything in perspective, this was the only example in this period of the royalists advocating revolution.

¹²⁷ “Discours de M. Lambert de Sainte-Croix, prononcé au banquet de la presse monarchique des départements, le 4 juillet 1886,” 1886, p. 6. 8-LB57-9143. Bibliothèque nationale de France.

¹²⁸ “Discours de M. Le Duc De Broglie, Prononcé le 27 Mai 1887 au Banquet des Membres de l’Union Monarchique,” 1887, p. 10. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

¹²⁹ “Discours prononcé par M. Xavier de Magallon, Délégué de la Jeunesse Conservatrice d’Aix, au Banquet Royaliste Donné par la Jeunesse Conservatrice de Marseille au Roucas-Blanc le 29 Avril 1888,” 1888, p. 9. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica. « On a pressenti la création des légions innombrables, que nous créerons, en effet, et qu’il faudra organiser de telle sorte qu’elles s’élancent d’elles-mêmes des entrailles de la patrie, à l’heure décisive...où le Roi, pour la lutte suprême, frappera du pied le sol national ! »

Royalists directed their attention to electoral politics to a greater extent under the Comte de Paris. Royalists actively participated in Third Republic elections as they promoted their candidates. By doing so, royalists were becoming part of the democratic process and becoming incorporated into the Republic. Speeches at banquets reveal the concern of royalists with winning elections. At a 11 May 1886 banquet, A. Deville gave a toast where he thanked the royalist youth for their energetic assistance in the electoral campaign.¹³⁰ Although it was a lost election for Duc de Broglie, A. Deville was confident about the future because of the activity of the young royalists.¹³¹ Lambert de Sainte-Croix added that 3,500,000 votes has shown that France was receptive to the royalist movement.¹³² At a 4 July 1886 banquet, Lambert de Sainte-Croix states that we should make alliances with regard to the next elections.¹³³ Duc de Broglie speaking at a 27 May 1887 banquet argued that the election of October 1885 revealed a revival of conservatism and royalism in France.¹³⁴ In the legislative elections of October 1885, royalists teamed up with right-wing republicans and Bonapartists as part of the Union Conservatrice, pioneered and directed by the Comte de Paris, and won 201 seats out of 584 in the Chamber of Deputies. This gave royalists confidence in the possibility of becoming the majority party. The planning for an August 1887 banquet had the main objective of creating propaganda for the upcoming elections.¹³⁵ Without a doubt, royalists put their energy and resources in the electoral terrain with the objective of winning elections. These instances of royalists supporting their

¹³⁰ "11 Mai 1886, Banquet du Groupe de l'Union Monarchique de la Conférence Molé-Tocqueville," 1886, p. 6. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

¹³¹ "11 Mai 1886, Banquet du Groupe de l'Union Monarchique...", p. 5-6.

¹³² "11 Mai 1886, Banquet du Groupe de l'Union Monarchique...", p. 8.

¹³³ "Discours de M. Lambert de Sainte-Croix, prononcé au banquet de la presse monarchique des départements, le 4 juillet 1886," 1886, p. 7. 8-LB57-9143. Bibliothèque nationale de France.

¹³⁴ "Discours de M. Le Duc De Broglie, Prononcé le 27 Mai 1887 au Banquet des Membres de l'Union Monarchique," 1887, p. 3. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

¹³⁵ Agissements Royalistes. Campagne de banquets royalistes. Prétendu réveil de l'esprit monarchique. 1882 – 1883, p. 36. Archives nationales.

electoral candidates demonstrates that royalists were no longer working against the Republic but within the democratic structures of the Republic.

The focus of language on democracy, equality, and liberty continued with the Comte de Paris. At a 11 May 1886 banquet of the Groupe de l'Union Monarchique, Lambert de Sainte-Croix proclaimed that as royalists you would have to return liberty to the Catholic Church and bring back representative government.¹³⁶ Lambert de Sainte-Croix spoke at another banquet, a 4 July 1886 banquet of the departmental monarchical press, asserting that the Republic has taken away the liberty of teaching and believing; however, as long as some liberty still exists we would use it to fight the Republic.¹³⁷ De Saint-Croix' sentiments reveal how royalists envisioned liberty, as enabling them to challenge the Republic to reclaim their rights. Lambert de Sainte-Croix continued by stating the monarchy would make universal suffrage the free voice of the people.¹³⁸ One could easily think that he was promoting the ideology of the Republic. Two years later at a 26 June 1888 banquet, Lambert de Sainte-Croix stated that only the monarchy could ensure public liberties while the Republic persecuted the liberties of the people.¹³⁹ At a 11 November 1888 banquet in Marseille, M. de Seranon asserted that the modern monarchy must be democratic and that royalists had the highest regard for equality.¹⁴⁰ At the same banquet, Marquis Henri de Breteuil, deputy of Hautes-Pyrénées, called for universal suffrage that would produce a conservative majority and thus a royalist majority in 1889.¹⁴¹ Whereas the freedom of

¹³⁶ "11 Mai 1886, Banquet du Groupe de l'Union Monarchique de la Conférence Molé-Tocqueville," 1886, p. 12. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

¹³⁷ "Discours de M. Lambert de Sainte-Croix, prononcé au banquet de la presse monarchique des départements, le 4 juillet 1886," 1886, p. 3. 8-LB57-9143. Bibliothèque nationale de France.

¹³⁸ "Discours de M. Lambert de Sainte-Croix...", p. 6.

¹³⁹ Auguste Vacquerie, "Après Boire," *Le Rappel*, 27 June 1888, p. 1.

¹⁴⁰ Breteuil, Henri-Charles-Joseph Le Tonnelier de. "La Monarchie démocratique, discours prononcé au banquet populaire du Roucas-Blanc, à Marseille, le 11 novembre 1888, par M. le Marquis de Breteuil," 1888, p. 20-22. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

¹⁴¹ "Le Discours du Marquis de Breteuil et la 'Correspondance nationale,'" *Le Gaulois*, 13 November 1888, p. 1.

religion remains specific to royalist demands, royalist calls for equality, universal suffrage, and democracy closely resemble republican ideology. It seems as if royalists have learned from the pronouncements of republicans and have realized that people want democracy, liberty, and equality. By advocating democracy, freedom, and equality, royalists sought to regain their rights and to form a free and democratic constitutional monarchy.

Criticism of the Republic remained a key component in the banquet speeches under the “reign” of the Comte de Paris. Royalists’ criticism of the Third Republic concentrated on the following themes: the Republic’s persecution of the Catholic Church and opposition to freedom of religion, public schools, exile of religious clergy and princes, violation of liberties, police abuse, worsening of relations between the classes, the government’s failure to balance the budget, self-interested government ministers, increase in taxes, corruption, instability of the Republic, failure to make alliances in Europe, and the creation of disarray in the judiciary and the army. There was generally similar criticism of the Republic comparing the periods of the Comte de Chambord and the Comte de Paris. A few differences were banquets under the Comte de Chambord had quantitatively more criticism of the Republic and mentioned the declining economy and those under the Comte de Paris criticized the abuse of power exercised by the police.

The following are comments at royalist banquets at the time of the Comte de Paris that were critical of the Republic. At a 11 May 1886 banquet, Lambert de Sainte-Croix described the state of France under the Republic as anarchical: government ministers would compromise what was most important to France in order to extend their time in office, governmental employees were afraid of the deputies, police could enter a home without a warrant, the authorities shot

women, freedom of religion was being violated, and public education taught atheism.¹⁴² Duc de Broglie followed and stated that the Republic violently persecuted religion, the budget deficit was increasing, antagonism between the classes was intensifying, and the moral disorder of the Paris Commune arose again in the miners' strike at Decazeville.¹⁴³ Royalists tapped into French people's discontent with the Republic. During a 4 July 1886 banquet, Lambert de Sainte-Croix argued that the royalists most effective means of propaganda was criticizing the Republic, specifically its oppression, persecution, and move toward ruin.¹⁴⁴ He added that the role of the royalist press was important and they must continue to expose the attacks against liberty and religion as well as reveal to the taxpayer why taxes were constantly increasing and show them the fraud, corruption, and red tape.¹⁴⁵ Discourse contrasted the instability of the Republic with the stable government of the monarchy. At a 27 May 1887 banquet, Duc de Broglie asserted that the main problem of the Republic was that it relied on the whims of the electorate and therefore was not consistent and stable like the monarchy.¹⁴⁶ He continued the criticism by stating that republicans spend money recklessly and France had to pay the interest of the loans as well as the Republic has made no real alliances with the European nations and the leaders of the army have been selected based on politics.¹⁴⁷ At a 29 April 1888 banquet in Marseille, Xavier de Magallon exclaimed that the royalist youth condemned republicans who destroyed our country, ruined our finances, exiled our princes and religious leaders, brought discord into the judiciary and the

¹⁴² "11 Mai 1886, Banquet du Groupe de l'Union Monarchique de la Conférence Molé-Tocqueville," 1886, p. 9-10. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

¹⁴³ "11 Mai 1886, Banquet du Groupe de l'Union Monarchique...", p. 16-17.

¹⁴⁴ "Discours de M. Lambert de Sainte-Croix, prononcé au banquet de la presse monarchique des départements, le 4 juillet 1886," 1886, p. 4. 8-LB57-9143. Bibliothèque nationale de France.

¹⁴⁵ "Discours de M. Lambert de Sainte-Croix...", p. 4-5.

¹⁴⁶ "Discours de M. Le Duc De Broglie, Prononcé le 27 Mai 1887 au Banquet des Membres de l'Union Monarchique," 1887, p. 6-7. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

¹⁴⁷ "Discours de M. Le Duc De Broglie...", p. 7-11.

army, and violated the freedom of religion.¹⁴⁸ Xavier de Magallon, in front of the assembled royalist youth, sharply criticized the Republic. Although royalist banquets under the Comte de Paris took a less revolutionary stance, they still vehemently criticized the Third Republic.

Royalists under the Comte de Paris remembered the glory of the past under the monarchy, compared it to the problems of the present perpetuated by the Republic, and presented a vision of a harmonious future under a restored monarchy. Auguste Boucher, at a 19 November 1887 banquet in Orléans, argued that the French monarchy founded the French state, abolished feudalism, defended France against numerous invasions, and gave France its institutions and customs.¹⁴⁹ Xavier de Magallon, at a 29 April 1888 banquet in Marseille, asserted that the French monarchy has successively transformed throughout history to meet the needs of the French people, and he even went so far to claim that the Revolution of 1789 was carried out by the monarchy but was diverted by criminals.¹⁵⁰ At a 4 July 1886 banquet, Lambert de Sainte-Croix instructed the audience to tell the French people about the greatness and accomplishments of the monarchy throughout our history and to make a comparison to the despair and the disgrace of the present Republic.¹⁵¹ Lambert de Sainte-Croix asserted, at the same banquet, that the future monarchy in France would be “traditional by its principle, modern by its institutions” and then offered a blueprint for a future France: the monarchy would provide a strong government for our democracy, carry out all justifiable reforms, raise the poor up to a decent level without reducing everyone else’s status, support work over strikes, pass harmonious laws, and the French

¹⁴⁸ “Discours prononcé par M. Xavier de Magallon, Délégué de la Jeunesse Conservatrice d’Aix, au Banquet Royaliste Donné par la Jeunesse Conservatrice de Marseille au Roucas-Blanc le 29 Avril 1888,” 1888, p. 14. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

¹⁴⁹ “La Monarchie et L’œuvre Nationale. Allocution de M. Auguste Boucher au Banquet d’Orléans, le 19 novembre 1887,” 1887, p. 5. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

¹⁵⁰ “Discours prononcé par M. Xavier de Magallon...,” p. 10.

¹⁵¹ “Discours de M. Lambert de Sainte-Croix, prononcé au banquet de la presse monarchique des départements, le 4 juillet 1886,” 1886, p.5. 8-LB57-9143. Bibliothèque nationale de France.

monarchy would be a government for everyone.¹⁵² De Sainte-Croix's words indicate the promotion of an inclusive and democratic yet conservative monarchy that is characteristic of the royalist movement at this time period.

A key event that occurred in between this chapter section and the next was the height of the Boulanger Affair from 1888 to 1889. A few royalist leaders made an alliance with General Georges Boulanger with the reluctant permission of the Comte de Paris and provided financial support to the Boulangist movement. There were Boulangist banquets during this period and these banquets exemplified much more than royalist politics and thus cannot be considered royalist banquets as they were more Bonapartist in their character. Royalist banquets during the Boulanger Affair were scarce. This account of royalist banquets will skip ahead to the next major controversial time regarding the royalist banquet movement, that of royalism and the Action Française.

There was a decisive shift in the politics of royalist banquets from revolutionary language under the Comte de Chambord that sought to overthrow the Republic in a violent manner to an emphasis under the Comte de Paris on getting royalists elected to public office and attempting to become the majority party in the National Assembly. The electoral campaign was successful in increasing the number of royalists elected to office but was not enough to achieve a majority. Royalists continued to stress democracy, liberty, and equality and persisted in their criticism of the Republic. Another significant change in royalist politics would occur as the result of an alliance with the extreme nationalist and anti-Semitic organization, Action Française.

¹⁵² "Discours de M. Lambert de Sainte-Croix, prononcé au banquet de la presse monarchique des départements, le 4 juillet 1886," 1886, p. 6. 8-LB57-9143. Bibliothèque nationale de France. « traditionnelle par son principe, moderne par ses institutions. »

Anti-Semitism and Extreme Nationalism in Royalist Banquets, 1908 – 1913

During this period, Philippe, Duc d'Orléans (1869 – 1926), the son of the Comte de Paris, was the leading pretender to the throne of France with the royal name of Philippe VIII. Nevertheless, the major influence on the royalist movement from 1908 to 1913 was not Philippe, Duc d'Orléans but an extreme right-wing organization known as Action Française. The founding of Action Française in 1898 and their subsequent alliance with royalists drastically changed the royalist movement in France as anti-Semitism and extreme nationalism became infused into royalism. Action Française embodied an exclusionist nationalism. Charles Maurras, one of the key leaders and theorists in the Action Française organization, asserted that Jews, Protestants, Freemasons, and foreigners were “colonizing France” and therefore they had to be either controlled or outright removed from France.¹⁵³ Action Française brought together two different strands of the political right that of populist nationalism and elitist royalism.¹⁵⁴ Action Française's Declaration of 15 November 1899 contrasted rule in a democracy with a monarchy arguing that democratic rulers had limited authority as they ruled for a short period of time on the basis of electoral support and thus periodically subjected their nation to a crisis of succession.¹⁵⁵ On the other hand, a King ruled for his entire life and his authority was undisputed and therefore the monarch had the ability to pursue long-term policies.¹⁵⁶ This echoes the sentiment expressed by speakers at royalist banquets under both the Comte de Chambord and the Comte de Paris. Action Française claimed that a democracy had less freedom than a monarchy as people in a democratic society were isolated individuals before a centralized

¹⁵³ Eugen Weber, *Action Française: Royalism and Reaction in Twentieth-Century France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1962): 13.

¹⁵⁴ Weber, 24.

¹⁵⁵ Weber, 28-29.

¹⁵⁶ Weber, 29.

state removed from the protective institutions of family, trade, and region.¹⁵⁷ In order to restore the monarchy, Action Française considered all options on the table including a coup d'état.¹⁵⁸ Membership in the Action Française came mainly from the middle and upper classes as the organization struggled to recruit workers and peasants in sizable numbers.¹⁵⁹

The connection between royalists and the Action Française was emphasized in banquet speeches. For instance, the address to the King, Duc d'Orléans, at a 22 January 1911 banquet in the southeastern town of Chambéry, proclaimed: "Long live Action Française; so that long live the King of France."¹⁶⁰ The shift in royalist policy toward the political objectives of the Action Française is evident in the changed nature of the royalist banquets. In this era, the royalist banquet political program embraced and professed a virulent anti-Semitism in speeches and songs, proclaimed an extreme nationalism that sought out a war with Germany, criticized the Republic, proclaimed the revolutionary rhetoric of overthrowing the Republic and restoring the monarchy, enabled women to play a greater role in the royalist movement, and incorporated workers to assist in the royalist cause.

The new and radically different anti-Semitic focus was a political discourse proclaimed by royalists with the objective of increasing their support by expanding out to the extreme right. At a 1911 banquet, Henri Jonquères d'Oriola proclaimed that we are not simply royalists but are royalists of the Action Française,¹⁶¹ thereby drawing a distinction between the royalists of old and new. Because of this new alliance of the right, anti-Semitism entered royalist banquets in speeches and in audience reactions. At the same banquet as above, Comte Eugène de Lur-

¹⁵⁷ Weber, 29.

¹⁵⁸ Weber, 30.

¹⁵⁹ Weber, 63, 68.

¹⁶⁰ "Nos Réunions et Nos Sections," *L'Action Française*, 31 January 1911, p. 4. « Vive l'Action française ; pour que Vive le Roi de France ! »

¹⁶¹ "Ligue D'Action Française," *L'Action Française*, 14 July 1911, p. 2.

Saluces, journalist and former army officer, asserted that the Republic capitulated before Jews, Protestants, Freemasons, and foreigners and that Action Française resisted these four entities on behalf of the nation.¹⁶² Henri Vaugeois, one of the founders of Action Française, followed with similar sentiments of hatred by exclaiming that the Jew's reign over France was because of the French Revolution.¹⁶³ At a 26 September 1912 banquet in Paris honoring members of the Camelots du Roi departing for military service, Léon Daudet, a journalist, writer, and one of the founders of the newspaper *L'Action Française*, argued that the Camelots du Roi were defenders of the French nation and that they were reviled by Jewish treason and then mentioned what he considered to be the treason of Alfred Dreyfus and Charles Benjamin Ullmo (French Jewish naval officer who attempted to sell French naval secret codes to Germany to pay for his opium habit and his mistress).¹⁶⁴ Daudet concluded by asserting that France must no longer be under the feet of Jews.¹⁶⁵ Members of the Action Française used royalist banquets to transmit anti-Semitic propaganda to young Frenchmen who were departing to serve in the French army. This aspect is the most troubling as the youth were the target of the new anti-Semitic royalist right's propaganda. Furthermore, the newspaper of this organization, *L'Action française* used its readership, which was 19,000 in 1910,¹⁶⁶ to further disseminate its hateful message to a wider audience.

These speeches containing anti-Semitic rhetoric occurred within a banquet setting that featured cultural elements of food, drink, banners, symbols, and royalist songs. For example, the banquet hall at an 18 May 1913 banquet in the Parisian suburb of Saint-Mandé was decorated

¹⁶² "Ligue D'Action Française," *L'Action Française*, 14 July 1911, p. 2.

¹⁶³ "Ligue D'Action Française," *L'Action Française*, 14 July 1911, p. 2.

¹⁶⁴ "Le Banquet des Conscrits," *L'Action Française*, 27 September 1912, p. 2.

¹⁶⁵ "Le Banquet des Conscrits," *L'Action Française*, 27 September 1912, p. 2.

¹⁶⁶ Bellanger, Claude, Jacques Godechot, Pierre Guiral, et Fernand Terrou. *Histoire Générale de la Presse Française. Tome III : De 1871 à 1940* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1972): 296.

with the tri-color flag of France, banners of the royalist committees of each of the twenty arrondissements of Paris, and white and blue flags honoring Jeanne d’Arc (Joan of Arc).¹⁶⁷ The singing of royalist songs was an integral part of the royalist banquets. During this period, they were sung at a minimum of three banquets.¹⁶⁸ The songs included “La Youpignole,” “La France bouge,” “La Gueuse,” and “Camelots.” The anti-Semitic song “La Youpignole” contains a refrain that aims to incite violence against Jews, the following is an excerpt: “Down with the Jews! Down with the Jews! We must hang them without further delay.”¹⁶⁹ These songs exemplified the royalist politics of the time and became even more powerful propaganda tools when the banquet attendees sang them together as everyone actively participated in enunciating the song’s anti-Semitic message. These cultural elements bolstered the political aspects of royalist banquets by unifying all participants through shared meals, drinking together, seeing royalist symbols, and singing royalist songs in unison.

Drawing on the momentum of the burgeoning feminist movement and envisioning the potential that women could contribute to the monarchist cause, royalists opened their banquet halls to women. In contrast to the lack of women’s participation in royalist banquets beyond mere attendance under the eras of Comte de Chambord and the Comte de Paris, banquets from 1908 to 1913 featured Madame la Marquise de Mac Mahon as president of three banquets and delivering speeches at four banquets. At a 26 September 1912 banquet in Paris for members of the Camelots du Roi who were departing for military service, Marquise de Mac Mahon exclaimed that the soon-to-be soldiers had the task of renewing patriotism.¹⁷⁰ Marquise de Mac

¹⁶⁷ Georges Huillard, “En l’honneur de la Saint-Philippe : Belle Manifestation de Patriotisme monarchique,” *Le Gaulois*, 19 May 1913, p. 1.

¹⁶⁸ “Le Banquet Royaliste du XVII^e Arrondissement,” *L’Action Française*, 10 January 1909, p. 1; “Nos Réunions et Nos Sections,” *L’Action Française*, 18 September 1913, p. 2; “Le Banquet des Deux Classes: La Fête des Conscrits d’Action française,” *L’Action Française*, 30 September 1913, p. 1.

¹⁶⁹ « A bas les juifs ! A bas les juifs ! Il faut les pendre, sans plus attendre. »

¹⁷⁰ “Le Banquet des Conscrits,” *L’Action Française*, 27 September 1912, p. 2.

Mahon spoke at another military service departure banquet, this one in September 1913 in Paris, and asserted that the future soldiers have the title of Camelots du Roi, a title equal to that of the nobility.¹⁷¹ She added that this noble title obliged them all to act with discipline and courage in the army.¹⁷² Marquise de Mac Mahon concluded her speech by proclaiming that the departing soldiers might be the ones who would assist in the restoration of the monarchy.¹⁷³ Alongside her male colleagues, Marquise de Mac Mahon made a public mark on the royalist movement in her role as banquet president and delivering a number of rousing speeches.

At this time, royalists also frequently sought out the attendance of women at their banquets. Royalists invited women to their banquets with announcements in newspaper articles using language such as “women are particularly invited”¹⁷⁴ and “women and young girls are especially invited.”¹⁷⁵ This was an effort to get women to attend royalist banquets independently of men. Royalist women responded to the invitation and attended the banquets. For instance, there were numerous women at a 9 January 1909 banquet in the seventeenth arrondissement of Paris and the following four women among others were seated at the table of honor: Madame Real del Sartre, Marquise de Vasselot, Vicomtesse de Larocque-Latour, and Madame Dubout.¹⁷⁶ Women participated in royalist banquets in the following ways. At a 7 May 1911 banquet in the Parisian suburb of Saint-Mand , the women royalists of the twentieth arrondissement of Paris displayed a banner alongside other emblems of Parisian groups and the French tri-color flag.¹⁷⁷ Comte de Castillon de Saint-Victor, speaking at a 15 August 1911 banquet honoring the

¹⁷¹ “Le Banquet des Deux Classes : La F te des Conscrits d’Action fran aise,” *L’Action Fran aise*, 30 September 1913, p. 2.

¹⁷² “Le Banquet des Deux Classes...,” *L’Action Fran aise*, 30 September 1913, p. 2.

¹⁷³ “Le Banquet des Deux Classes...,” *L’Action Fran aise*, 30 September 1913, p. 2.

¹⁷⁴ “Nos R unions et Nos Sections,” *L’Action Fran aise*, 25 August 1912, p. 2.

¹⁷⁵ “Nos R unions et Nos Sections,” *L’Action Fran aise*, 29 September 1913, p. 2.

¹⁷⁶ “Le Banquet Royaliste du XVII  Arrondissement,” *L’Action Fran aise*, 10 January 1909, p. 1.

¹⁷⁷ “Bloc-Notes Parisien : A Saint-Mand : Le Banquet de la Saint-Philippe,” *Le Gaulois*, 8 May 1911, p. 1.

Duchesse d'Orléans in the Parisian suburb of Corbeil with 1200 people in attendance, asserted that royalists were supported by committees of women in the quest for rallying people to the monarchy.¹⁷⁸ During this time period, women began to play a more active role in the royalist movement.

At a time of increasing nationalism in France and growing concern about Germany, royalists stoked the fires of nationalism with their banquet speeches. One of the specific genres of royalist banquets that promoted extreme nationalism and advocated war with Germany were the banquets that honored Camelots du Roi who were departing as conscripts to the French army. For example, at a September 1913 banquet in Paris, Henri Vaugois proclaimed that Germany's predominance was a catastrophe for civilization.¹⁷⁹ Vaugois continued by asserting that the young recruits who were departing for the French army were a part of the revenge generation.¹⁸⁰ He meant that it was this generation's task to take revenge on Germany for their victory in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 and the seizure of Alsace-Lorraine. At the same banquet, Léon Daudet exclaimed that Germany was a perpetual threat to France and because the departing soldiers were royalists, they also must be loyal patriots.¹⁸¹ Gratien Lehoudey, managing director of the association Etudiants d'Action Française, added that going to war and fighting for France was still serving King Philippe VIII even though France was a Republic.¹⁸² In this instance, nationalism overpowered royalism. At an 18 May 1913 banquet in the Parisian suburb of Saint-Mandé, Duc de Luynes argued that the youth of France were fed up with anti-patriotism, anti-

¹⁷⁸ Paul Roche, "La Fête de Madame la duchesse d'Orléans : Le Banquet Royaliste de Corbeil," *Le Gaulois*, 16 August 1911, p. 2.

¹⁷⁹ "Le Banquet des Deux Classes : La Fête des Conscrits d'Action française," *L'Action Française*, 30 September 1913, p. 2.

¹⁸⁰ "Le Banquet des Deux Classes...", *L'Action Française*, 30 September 1913, p. 2.

¹⁸¹ "Le Banquet des Deux Classes...", *L'Action Française*, 30 September 1913, p. 1.

¹⁸² "Le Banquet des Deux Classes...", *L'Action Française*, 30 September 1913, p. 2.

militarism, and immorality, and they were ready to fight and risk their lives for their country.¹⁸³

The alliance between royalists and the Action Française had infused royalism with an extreme nationalism and this was evident in the speeches at banquets.

Royalists advocated an overthrow of the Republic and restoration of the monarchy in banquet speeches that was oftentimes connected to nationalism and mobilization for war. In this way, revolutionary rhetoric returned to royalist politics. At the same departing Camelots du Roi for military service banquet in the above paragraph, Baron Tristan Lambert stated that when France would be threatened by the enemy (Germany), the King would lead the Camelots du Roi in battle.¹⁸⁴ Lambert explicitly drew a connection between nationalism and the restoration of the monarchy. A similar link was made at another banquet honoring Camelots du Roi who were departing for military service, this one on 26 September 1912 in Paris, where General Henri Bonnal proclaimed that the recruits would have significant influence over their fellow soldiers, they should use this influence to insure that the French army was worthy of the King, and then the King would lead the army.¹⁸⁵ Bernard de Vesins addressed the audience at a 5 April 1908 banquet in the town of Épinal in northeastern France and argued that royalists must begin an overt, aggressive anti-republican movement.¹⁸⁶ At a 7 May 1911 banquet in the Parisian suburb of Saint-Mandé, Marquis de Suffren asserted that monarchists must work to expedite the King's return and thus the restoration of the French monarchy.¹⁸⁷ Henri Bertran, president of the Fédération Catalane, stated, at a July 1911 banquet, that the Action Française has brought together old and new royalists to liberate France by overthrowing the Republic and restoring the

¹⁸³ Georges Huillard, "En l'honneur de la Saint-Philippe : Belle Manifestation de Patriotisme monarchique," *Le Gaulois*, 19 May 1913, p. 1.

¹⁸⁴ "Le Banquet des Deux Classes : La Fête des Conscripts d'Action française," *L'Action Française*, 30 September 1913, p. 2.

¹⁸⁵ "Le Banquet des Conscripts," *L'Action française*, 27 September 1912, p. 1.

¹⁸⁶ "Réunion Royaliste A Épinal," *L'Action française*, 6 April 1908, p. 1.

¹⁸⁷ "Bloc-Notes Parisien: A Saint-Mandé: Le Banquet de la Saint-Philippe," *Le Gaulois*, 8 May 1911, p. 1.

monarchy.¹⁸⁸ It is interesting that the president of the Fédération Catalane is speaking at a royalist banquet, showing an international connection between French royalism and the Spanish region of Catalonia. This royalist discourse echoed the revolutionary sentiments from the time of the Comte de Chambord.

Likewise, royalists returned to their engagement with workers. At a 2 May 1909 banquet in Lyon, Comte Eugène de Lur-Saluces told royalist supporters that they needed to convince workers that they could not achieve reforms unless the monarchy would be restored.¹⁸⁹ This demonstrates that royalists continued their engagements with workers outside of banquets as well. Workers also spoke at royalist banquets during this period. At a 9 May 1909 banquet in the western town of Poitiers, a worker upon hearing that the royalists would stand beside the French worker against the Jewish and foreigner onslaught, exclaimed: “Ah heck! If it is like this, long live the King!”¹⁹⁰ Here we see an example of the anti-Semitic and anti-immigrant views of speakers being an effective means of converting workers to the royalist cause. At a 12 January 1913 banquet in the town of Gaillac in southern France, a rope manufacturer worker, Hibert, condemned the crimes that the Republic committed against workers and saluted the King.¹⁹¹ Royalists engaged with workers, a shift away from the tactics of the Comte de Paris yet they were not as successful as the effort under the Comte de Chambord.

Criticism of the Republic was not as prevalent as in previous eras because French nationalism as advocated by the Action Française did support fighting for the French Republic against Germany. Nevertheless, there were a few instances of criticism of the Republic that went

¹⁸⁸ “Ligue D’Action Française,” *L’Action française*, 14 July 1911, p. 2.

¹⁸⁹ “Les Camelots du Roy manifestant à Lyon,” *Le Rappel*, 4 May 1909, p. 3.

¹⁹⁰ Léon Daudet, “Le Saint-Philippe et la Gueuse,” *L’Action française*, 12 May 1909, p. 1. « Ah zut ! si c’est comme ça, vive le Roi ! »

¹⁹¹ “Nos réunions et nos Sections,” *L’Action française*, 19 January 1913, p. 2.

alongside calls for the overthrow of the Republic. At a July 1911 banquet, Comte Eugène de Lur-Saluces brought up the Second Moroccan Crisis of 1911 as an example of how the French republican government would make territorial concessions to Germany in order to secure peace.¹⁹² The other criticisms of the Republic that follow aligned with those under the Comte de Chambord and the Comte de Paris. Comte Georges de Castillon de Saint-Victor, hot air balloon pilot and president of the Royalist Committee of the Seine (1909 – 1913), criticized the Republic at a 15 August 1911 banquet in Corbeil by stating that the republican government was anarchical, corrupted by favors, the government finances were in ruin, and the parliamentary government was in actuality tyrannical.¹⁹³ The order of the day at an 18 May 1913 banquet in the Parisian suburb of Saint-Mandé stated that royalists remained determined to protect our liberties, namely the liberty of religion and the liberty of teaching that were constantly under attack.¹⁹⁴

Royalist politics took another sharp turn during the time of the alliance with Action Française as an analysis of their banquets demonstrates. New features in the royalist movement emerged including a malicious anti-Semitism, extreme nationalism fomenting war against Germany, and enabling women to take a greater role in the royalist campaign. Criticism of the Republic continued as in the previous two eras although at a lesser extent. There was a return to two policies from the time of the Comte de Chambord: revolutionary rhetoric that sought to overthrow the Republic and an inclusion of workers in banquets. A prominent discourse from the eras of the Comte de Chambord and Comte de Paris that was missing during the time of the

¹⁹² “Ligue D’Action Française,” *L’Action française*, 14 July 1911, p. 2.

¹⁹³ Paul Roche, “La Fête de Madame la duchesse d’Orléans : Le Banquet Royaliste de Corbeil,” *Le Gaulois*, 16 August 1911, p. 2.

¹⁹⁴ Georges Huillard, “En l’honneur de la Saint-Philippe : Belle Manifestation de Patriotisme monarchique,” *Le Gaulois*, 19 May 1913, p. 2.

alliance with Action Française is the rhetoric advocating democracy, liberty, and equality. The royalist movement allied with Action Française exemplified an authoritarian and exclusionary politics and, more importantly, a vision of a future dictatorial monarchy.

In conclusion, this analysis of royalist banquets from 1879 to 1913 reveals a multifaceted and evolving royalist movement. After royalist leadership failed to restore the monarchy with a royalist majority in the National Assembly in the 1870s, the banquet galvanized the royalist movement by expanding its adherents to include workers and peasants as well as providing unity and solidarity through the cultural elements of the banquet. From 1879 to 1913, the royalist banquet movement had two major continuities throughout, that of criticism of the Republic and an exaltation of the monarchy as the ideal government for France. Nevertheless, there were many sharp differences in royalist politics across this period. For instance, workers only engaged in the banquets during the time of the Comte de Chambord and in the era of Action Française. Women became active beginning in twentieth-century royalist banquets as royalists realized the potential of political women. The revolutionary rhetoric that was prevalent under the Comte de Chambord was nearly nonexistent under the Comte de Paris and then had a resurgence during the period of the alliance with Action Française. On the other hand, an emphasis on winning elections occurred mainly during the era of the Comte de Paris. The promotion of pacifism that was a key feature under the Comte de Chambord declined under the Comte de Paris and then completely disappeared as banquets in the pre-World War One era pushed for war with Germany.

During both the eras of the Comte de Chambord and the Comte de Paris, royalists advocated for the values of democracy, liberty, and equality. Despite their narrow focus on an absolutist monarchy, royalists under the Comte de Chambord still upheld a notion of democracy

that envisioned the King as the protector of the Catholic Church, nobility, workers, and peasants against both the perceived tyranny of the republican government and industry. On the other hand, the royalists under the Comte de Paris sought a parliamentary monarchy as their ideal form of government but were content with working within the democratic structures of the Third Republic. Conversely, royalists of the Action Française were not democratic as they did not believe in the liberty and equality of all as seen in their exclusionary discourse of anti-Semitism. An examination of the banquet provides new, surprising insights into the diverse nature of early Third Republic royalism such as royalists projecting a revolutionary discourse, including workers, peasants, and women in the movement, working within the Republic to win elections, promoting democracy, equality, and liberty, and, unfortunately, propagating an extreme nationalist, anti-Semitic agenda.

CHAPTER 3: « LES SERVITEURS D'UNE MÊME ET GRANDE CAUSE »¹: EMPIRE BANQUETS, 1882 – 1912



Figure 7: Empire Banquet in Madagascar, 1910 – 1911²

¹ Union Coloniale Française. Rapport de L'Exercice 1896-97. Banquet Colonial de 1897, p. 47. Liste des Membres. Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris, 8°Z2020. "We are servants of the same great cause."

² Discours du gouverneur général Picquié au banquet de la gare (1910 – 1911), Madagascar. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, FR ANOM 8 Fi2/131. According to this photograph, there seems to be only well-dressed men present at this banquet that took place in the colony of Madagascar.

Paul Lafargue: “The manufacturers travel the world over in search of markets for the goods which are heaping up. They force their government to annex Congo, to seize on Tonquin, to batter down the Chinese Wall with cannon shots to make an outlet for their cotton goods.”³

The prominent French Marxist Paul Lafargue, Karl Marx’s son-in-law through a marriage with Laura Marx, sharply connected imperialism with capitalism in his satirical work, *The Right to be Lazy* (1883). In the French empire banquets from 1882 to 1912, we can see this capitalist as well as nationalist thread. The French empire used deception in their proclamation of the civilizing mission. This study of empire banquets will reveal the real motivations of the French empire behind this deceptive veil. Scholars have stated that France used the concept of the *mission civilisatrice*, bringing French language, education, values, infrastructure, and technology to the colonies, to improve the lives of the native people and to justify their empire. Most notably, Alice Conklin argued that as France began to increase its empire from the 1870s onwards, France embraced the civilizing mission as a formal tenet of imperialism to resolve inconsistencies between empire and republican democracy.⁴

An analysis of the discourse at banquets concerning the French empire reveals that the civilizing mission was not the most prominent rhetorical message. Instead, the two following themes dominated: economic exploitation of the colonies and the empire bringing national glory to France. At the fourth annual colonial banquet of 16 June 1897 held in Paris and sponsored by the Union coloniale française – an organization of French businessmen founded in 1893 that promoted the French empire to fulfill their own economic interests – Émile Mercet, president of the association, asserted: “We are servants of the same great cause, the colonial cause...the

³ Paul Lafargue, *The Right to be Lazy* (Essays by Paul Lafargue) [*Le Droit à la paresse*], ed. by Bernard Marszalek (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr and AK Press, 2011 [1883]): 33-34.

⁴ Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895 – 1930* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997): 1-2.

common ambition of making France more grand, more rich, more prosperous by its colonies.”⁵ Mercet did not mention anything related to France helping the indigenous people of the colonies and instead focused on how the colonies are benefiting France in both an economic way and in terms of national prestige. At the same banquet, the dual emphasis on the empire bringing national glory to France and the economic exploitation of colonies is further illustrated by the words of André Lebon, the Minister of the Colonies, as he proclaimed that tremendous efforts were being made in the colonies to bestow glory on France and to achieve economic profit.⁶

I utilize banquets as a lens to look at the French empire from a micro-level perspective in order to uncover France’s major imperial motivations. This objective is accomplished through the use of archival sources (e.g. geographic societies, commercial organizations, and private papers), organizational reports and publications (e.g. Union coloniale française), and newspapers (colonial and mainstream)⁷ that reveal the discourse at these empire banquets. Whereas the discourse to the public centered on the civilizing mission, the speeches at these semi-private banquets addressed the reasons why France was involved in colonialism. The obfuscatory aspects that put the empire in a humanitarian light are removed, revealing the dual driving forces of nationalism and capitalism. In addition, these banquets strengthened the French empire as they united the community of empire supporters at these important political and cultural events, provided a space for influencing the policies of the French empire, softened the harsh aspects of colonial rule, and kept the public informed about the empire. I argue first that the rhetoric at empire banquets reveals the major motivations for the French empire that of bestowing national

⁵ Union Coloniale Française. Rapport de L’Exercice 1896-97. Banquet Colonial de 1897, p. 47. Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris, 8°Z2020. « Nous sommes les serviteurs d’une même et grande cause, la cause coloniale...l’ambition commune de faire la France plus grande, plus riche, plus prospère par ses colonies. »

⁶ Union Coloniale Française...Banquet Colonial de 1897, p. 57.

⁷ The major French newspapers have very little coverage of the empire banquets as compared to the three other genres of banquets studied: commemoration of the Paris Commune, royalist, and feminist.

glory and economic exploitation of the colonies and second that these banquets significantly bolstered the French empire.

France had an empire long before the time of the Third Republic dating back to the sixteenth century. The early empire, also known as the first colonial empire, was characterized by settler and slave plantation colonialism. Looking at the totality of the French empire from the early sixteenth century to 1931, Frederick Quinn asserted that the civilizing mission, Catholic missionary activity, and racism were the major driving forces.⁸ As the economy of the empire was based on slavery, race was key to France's rule over the colonies and they codified their racial policy into law, *Code Noir* of 1685, and beginning in the eighteenth century racism adopted a more scientific justification.⁹ Guillaume Aubert demonstrated that race became increasingly central to the French empire in the eighteenth century as seen in the laws forbidding sexual relations of the French with Africans and Indians in the colonies of the Americas.¹⁰ Interesting, speakers at the French empire banquets from 1882 to 1912 rarely referenced racial differences between the colonizers and colonized. The mercantilist economy of the early French empire based on slave labor gave way to capitalism in the next phase of the empire.

The historiography concerning the motivations of the French empire during the Third Republic is varied. James Cooke asserted that France's New Imperialism (1880 – 1910) was based on nationalism and specifically the pressing need to recover from the humiliating defeat in the Franco-Prussian War (1870 – 1871).¹¹ On a similar yet more globalized vein, Wolfgang Mommsen countered established academic theories on imperialism that tied imperialism together

⁸ Frederick Quinn, *The French Overseas Empire* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2000): 2-9.

⁹ Quinn, 8; William B. Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans: White Response to Blacks, 1530-1880* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003 [1980]): xvi, 283-284, 292.

¹⁰ Guillaume Aubert, " 'The Blood of France': Race and Purity of Blood in the French Atlantic World," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 61, no. 3 (2004): 477-478.

¹¹ James J. Cooke, *New French Imperialism 1880 – 1910: The Third Republic and Colonial Expansion* (Newton Abbot Devon, UK: David and Charles, 1973): 10.

with capitalism by stating: “Imperialism was primarily the consequence of the overflowing energy of European societies in the economic, military and political fields.”¹² Looking at the French imperial mentality, Alice Conklin argued that France adopted the civilizing mission as official doctrine for the empire in order to resolve the contradiction between a conquering empire and republican democracy.¹³ Pascal Blanchard and Nicolas Bancel asserted that republicans saw the civilizing mission as extending the rights of man of the French Revolution to the uncivilized world and, therefore, there was no conflict between the Republic and the empire.¹⁴ Investigating the French empire’s execution of the civilizing mission, J. P. Daughton stated that while republicans promised to carry out the civilizing mission, the reality of its financial cost made them turn to Catholic missionaries to fulfill their work.¹⁵ Shifting toward the economy, Jacques Marseille demonstrated that prior to the First World War, the French empire became a space for the expansion of French businesses.¹⁶ Moreover, Alain Clément argued that political leaders such as Jules Ferry defended the expansion of the French empire with economic reasoning.¹⁷ According to the historiography in general, the major motivations for the French empire were nationalism, capitalism, and the civilizing mission. Yet the study of the discourse of empire banquets reveals that nationalism and capitalism were the most dominant motivations.

The French empire greatly expanded during the Third Republic as France added the following colonies: French Congo (1875), Tunisia (1881), Dahomey (1883), French Sudan

¹² Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Theories of Imperialism*, trans. P.S. Falla (New York: Random House, 1980 [1977]: 147.

¹³ Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895 – 1930* (Stanford: CA, Stanford University Press, 1997): 1-2.

¹⁴ Pascal Blanchard and Nicolas Bancel, “La fondation du républicanisme coloniale. Retour sur une généalogie politique,” *Mouvements* 38, no. 2 (2005): 31.

¹⁵ J. P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided: Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1870-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006): 5-6.

¹⁶ Jacques Marseille, *Empire colonial et capitalisme français : Histoire d’un divorce* (Paris: Abin Michel, 1984): 368.

¹⁷ Alain Clément, “L’analyse économique de la question coloniale en France (1870-1914),” *Revue d’économie politique* 123, no. 1 (2013): 53.

(1883), French Indochinese Union (1887), Niger (1890), French Guinea (1891), Madagascar (1896), Chad (1900), Mauritania (1902), Oubangui-Chari (1905), and Morocco (1912). Most of the expansion of the French empire occurred in Africa as France competed with other European nations to seize African lands in what is known as the “Scramble for Africa.”¹⁸ These new colonies were joined to the existing French empire that was composed of Algeria, Senegal, Côte d’Ivoire, Gabon, Cochinchina, parts of East Africa, French Guiana, and some Atlantic, Caribbean, and Pacific islands. The French empire had become the third largest empire in the world behind only the British and Russian empires. By 1914, the French empire encompassed a land area of 10.6 million square kilometers and colonized 55 million people. This was an incredible boost to the French national grandeur as the growth of the French empire showed the world that France was once again a major world power. Militarily, the empire enabled France to have a global outreach on land and at sea and the colonies could potentially supply soldiers to fight for France as did occur in the First World War. Economically, the French colonies provided France with raw materials such as the following products: coffee, sugar, spices, rice, bananas, coconuts, citrus, vegetable oil, cotton, rubber, wood, and minerals. The colonies served France by bestowing national greatness and as a source for cheap raw materials.

Empire banquets began in 1882, a time when the French empire was starting its rapid expansion and the banquet was emerging as a popular form of social gathering. I identified a total of 62 French empire banquets occurring between 1882 and 1912. Unlike the royalist and commemoration of the Paris Commune banquets that were oppositional in nature, the empire banquets were supportive of the existing government. Emphasizing the backing of the Third Republic, the banquets celebrating empire typically opened with a toast to the President of the

¹⁸ Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa 1876–1912* (New York: Random House, 1991): xxi.

Republic. The cost of admission ranged from 10 to 20 francs (price was more commonly 20 francs), meaning that those who attended were financially well-off. There were generally between 100 and 500 people in attendance. These banquets attracted a wide-ranging group of people including government ministers, senators, deputies, government employees of the colonies, colonists, explorers, merchants, industrialists, journalists, and members of geographical societies and colonial societies.¹⁹ These attendees were for the most part either members of the government or people who had a direct interest in the maintenance of the French empire. The empire banquets were predominantly masculine spaces. Only one woman, Madame Adam, appeared on the lists of the prominent attendees that included about a 100 people per event and she attended only two banquets, the first and second annual colonial banquets of 6 June 1894 and 8 June 1895, respectively.²⁰ The banquets were mainly dinners that began at around 7:00 or 8:00 pm and lasted until midnight. The banquet halls were located in majestic buildings such as the palais d'Orsay²¹ and were beautifully decorated. For example, a 10 August 1886 banquet in Le Havre, a city in the Normandy region, was decorated with flags of various nations and many plants and flowers on the stage, tables, and throughout the room filled the banquet hall with vibrant colors.²² The empire banquets were, therefore, large opulent events where supporters of the empire from a broad spectrum of professions gathered to eat a communal meal and discuss the major issues of the French empire.

¹⁹ Union Coloniale Française. Rapport de l'Exercice 1893-1894. Banquet Colonial de 1894, p. 33-34. Paris: Librairie coloniale. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque École coloniale, 2104/5.

²⁰ Union Coloniale Française...Banquet Colonial de 1894, p. 35; Union Coloniale Française. Rapport de l'Exercice 1894-1895. Banquet Colonial de 1895, p. 70. Paris: Librairie coloniale, 1895. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque École coloniale, 8177/1.

²¹ Congrès Colonial Français de 1906...Banquet du 6 juillet, p. 349. Paris: Au Secrétariat Général des Congrès Coloniaux Français, 1907. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque AOM, 41738/1.

²² Société de Géographie Commerciale du Havre. Bulletin 1886. Banquet offert par la Société à M. Savorgnan de Brazza, p. 162. Havre: Imprimerie de la Société des Anciens Courtiers, 1886. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque AOM, 21457/1886.

The food at empire banquets had influences from the French colonies. The following food served at banquets was inspired by various peoples of the French empire: Carry de Bichiques (a fish larva dish from the island of Réunion located in the Indian Ocean east of Madagascar) served aboard the French naval ship, Lapérouse that was located off the coast of Madagascar;²³ Poulardes Cochinchinoises à la Financière aux truffes (Cochinchinese fattened chicken with a Financière sauce and truffles), Mousse du Mékong au kirsch (Mekong mousse with Kirsch) at a banquet in Paris at l'hôtel Continental;²⁴ Consommé Tunisien (Tunisian consommé), Selle de Béhague à l'Africaine (Béhague saddle of meat African style), Gâteau Tonkinois (Tonkinese cake), and Glace Bombe Algérienne (Algerian ice cream bomb) in Paris at the palais d'Orsay.²⁵ With the exception of Carry de Bichiques, a recipe from Réunion, it is unclear whether the food was prepared using actual recipes from the colonies or if the dishes just carried the name of the colony. Regardless, French participants at the empire banquets gathered together to eat a communal meal of dishes inspired by the colonies. This signifies that the French imperialists were appropriating the food culture of the colonies whether in a more authentic manner with the use of actual recipes or in a more general way.²⁶ This appropriation of food from the colonies was perhaps a conduit for introducing "ethnic" cuisine into France, the metropole. Nonetheless, the French were appropriating symbolically what they had already done

²³ Menu, A bord du Lapérouse, le 13 mars 1897. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Archives privées, Alfred Durand, 61 APC/1.

²⁴ "Le Banquet Doumer," *La Politique Coloniale*, 9 January 1897, p. 2. Archives nationales d'outre-mer.

²⁵ Congrès Colonial Français de 1906...Banquet du 6 juillet, p. 352. Paris: Au Secrétariat Général des Congrès Coloniaux Français, 1907. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque AOM, 41738/1.

²⁶ Another example of cultural appropriation in the banquets was a French speaker using an Arab proverb to convey his message. This occurred at the second annual colonial banquet on 8 June 1895 where Émile Mercet, president of l'Union coloniale française, read the following Arab saying translated into French: « Les chiens aboient, la caravane passe » (The dogs bark, the caravan passes). Mercet used this Arab proverb to convey that business and industry will carry out their objectives regardless of the criticism they receive. Union Coloniale Française. Rapport de l'Exercice 1894-1895. Banquet Colonial de 1895, p.76. Paris: Librairie coloniale, 1895. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque École coloniale, 8177/1.

in a practical manner by occupying and ruling foreign lands. Gathered around this food and drink, a wide range of people bonded over their shared interest in the French empire and listened to speeches that were tailored to their concerns, which were bestowing glory on the French nation and the economic exploitation of the colonies.

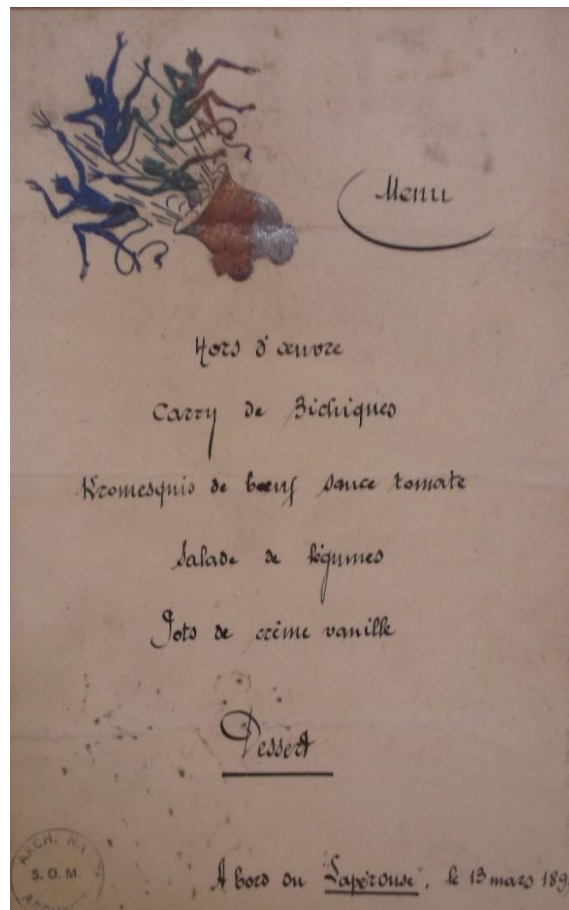


Figure 8: Menu at a banquet aboard the Lapérouse²⁷

²⁷ Menu, A bord du Lapérouse, le 13 mars 1897. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Archives privées, Alfred Durand, 61 APC/1. This menu was for a banquet aboard the French naval ship, Lapérouse that was located off the coast of Madagascar. Carry de Bichiques, mentioned on page 146, is on this menu.

Banquets Revealed the Motivations of the French Empire: Bestowing Glory on the French Nation and Economic Exploitation of the Colonies

Above all else, the rhetoric at the empire banquets emphasized the two primary motivations of those who were crafting the French empire: bestowing glory on the French nation and the economic exploitation of the colonies. In contrast, the civilizing mission did not receive as much focus. I will begin by analyzing the first motivation in detail. These banquets showcased how the French empire elevated the grandeur of the French nation. The growth of the French empire became a means to elevate the national glory of France. An examination of the discourse at the banquets shows how concerned participants were with the strength and international stature of France and how little they cared about the wellbeing of the indigenous people of the colonies. At a 27 June 1901 banquet run by the Union coloniale française, an organization mainly composed of businessmen involved in the French colonies that organized annual empire banquets beginning in 1894, Émile Mercet asserted: “I ask you to drink with me to the development and triumph of this colonial politics, that makes our nation greater in the world and gives it more force and more prestige.”²⁸ At these empire banquets, nationalism was a motivation for the French empire: the rapid expansion of the French empire under the Third Republic restored France’s national prestige following their defeat in the Franco-Prussian War; France’s national greatness under its past empire of the sixteenth to the eighteenth century inspired the expansion of the contemporary empire; the French empire raised France’s standing among European nations; and the conquering of new territories was envisioned as a patriotic duty.

²⁸ “Banquet de l’Union Coloniale,” *La Quinzaine coloniale*, 10 July 1901, p. 412. « Je vous demande de boire avec moi au développement et au triomphe de cette politique coloniale, qui fait notre patrie plus grande dans le monde et lui donne plus de force et plus de prestige. »

Concerning the first point, the French empire was seen as an ideal means to recover national glory following France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War. After France's humiliating defeat with Prussia, the French nation turned its focus away from Germany and towards enlarging its empire by acquiring new territory overseas in Africa and Asia. French veterans of the Franco-Prussian War were particularly moved by the expansion of the French empire. At a 30 November 1909 banquet centered on the topic of Morocco, René Millet, former resident general of Tunisia and veteran of the Franco-Prussian War, exclaimed: "For the combatants of 1870, there was already the beginning of justice and reparation in this admirable rise of the French Republic, that soon went around the world. Our chest swelled at each new phase of this prodigious epic that, in less than twenty years, gave France 40 million collaborators belonging to all the races of the world and a territory twenty times larger than that of the metropole."²⁹ Millet was proud of the size of the French empire and also relieved that France gained 40 million colonized people who could support France in a possible future war with Germany. He continued his speech by asserting that France has been reborn on the other bank of the Mediterranean.³⁰ Millet concluded by stating that the veterans of the Franco-Prussian War could now die in peace because they now saw a regenerated France.³¹ For Franco-Prussian War veterans like Millet, the agony of defeat had been replaced with a sense of pride in the glory of the French empire.

²⁹ René Millet. Comité du Maroc. Banquet du 30 novembre 1909. La France au Maroc, discours prononcé par M. René Millet, p. 4. Paris: Comité du Maroc, 1910. Bibliothèque nationale de France, 8-LB57-15120. « Pour les combattants de 1870, il y avait déjà un commencement de justice et de réparation dans cet essor admirable de la République française, qui allait bientôt faire le tour du globe. Notre poitrine se dilatait à chaque phase nouvelle de cette prodigieuse épopée qui, en moins de vingt ans, donnait à la France 40 millions de collaborateurs appartenant à toutes les races du monde et un territoire vingt fois supérieur à celui de la métropole. »

³⁰ Millet, 5.

³¹ Millet, 22.

This sentiment was not just confined to veterans or soldiers as some civilians also felt the humiliation of defeat being wiped away by the rapid expansion of the empire. At the first annual colonial banquet on 6 June 1894 organized by the Union coloniale française, Eugène Étienne, a deputy and leader of the colonial group in the Chamber of Deputies, proclaimed that those who considered France weakened after being defeated in the Franco-Prussian War now saw France as regaining its place in the world due to its colonial empire.³² The expansion of the French empire restored national confidence after France's defeat with Prussia by making France a world power again. Although speakers never referred to the Napoleonic empire directly, the banquet participants nostalgically looked back to the early French overseas empire of the sixteenth to eighteenth century. French imperialists admired the British model of an overseas empire and avoided mention of a Napoleonic/Ancient Roman type of empire as this empire was already attempted under Napoleon I and III with disastrous results.

Discourse at banquets described France as being great in the past due to its colonial empire of the sixteenth to eighteenth century and that the contemporary empire would make France powerful again. Speakers envisioned national strength as being directly proportional to the size of France's colonial empire. Colonial activists drew inspiration from France's historical empire in the Americas. For instance, Eugène Étienne proclaimed that France was strong previously due to its colonies and now because of its enlarged empire France would be powerful again at the first annual colonial banquet on 6 June 1894.³³ Eugène Étienne echoed similar sentiments five years later at a 4 November 1899 banquet by stating that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries France had the vanguard of its colonial movement that has inspired France

³² Union Coloniale Française. Rapport de l'Exercice 1893-1894. Banquet Colonial de 1894, p. 55. Paris: Librairie coloniale. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque École coloniale, 2104/5.

³³ Union Coloniale Française...Banquet Colonial de 1894, p. 56.

to take its prominent role in the world again by expanding the empire through colonial conquests.³⁴ The French empire of the late nineteenth century was inspired by the large historical empire of the sixteenth to eighteenth century and the national greatness associated with it. Interestingly, this early French empire occurred under the leadership of the Bourbon Kings. Nevertheless, the historical empire under the French monarchy provided justification for the Republican government's invasion of a multitude of countries in order to rebuild the French empire.

The empire elevated France's national grandeur by increasing its stature before the European nations and the world. This was the time of the Scramble for Africa where European nations rushed to take possession of African land and measured their greatness relative to the size of their empire, and France specifically rapidly expanded its empire in Africa and Asia during the 1880s and 1890s. Speakers at banquets used a masculine discourse in their description of the expansion of the French empire. Eugène Étienne spoke at a 3 December 1893 banquet run by the Association tonkinoise – a society composed of military veterans of the Tonkin War – with close to 300 people in attendance and exclaimed that the French nation has been extended well beyond the seas and, as a consequence, Europe now sees France as a powerful nation that needs to be respected.³⁵ At the fifth annual colonial banquet organized by the Union coloniale française taking place on 10 June 1899, Émile Mercet asserted that the colonial empire brought wealth to France and ensured that France was among the top nations of

³⁴ Banquet offert le 4 novembre 1899, à l'Hôtel Continental par l'Union Coloniale, la Société d'Économie Industrielle et Commerciale et la Société de Géographie Commerciale, p. 13. Paris: Imprimerie de la Bourse de Commerce, 1899. Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris, 941693.

³⁵ "Le Banquet de L'Association Tonkinoise," *La Politique Coloniale*, 5 December 1893, p. 2. Archives nationales d'outre-mer.

the world.³⁶ The French empire bestowed to France the status and recognition of being a major global power.

The elevation of France to a world power came about largely as a result of the French army conquering territory, thereby increasing the size of the French empire. Speakers at banquets considered the conquering of new territories to be a patriotic duty that brought glory to the French nation and attendees honored those soldiers who had fought and died for the enlargement of the empire. At a 2 June 1889 banquet, Eugène Étienne considered the expansion of the French empire as patriotic and gave praise to Captain Louis-Gustave Binger's exploratory mission in West Africa.³⁷ At the third annual colonial banquet organized by the Union coloniale française taking place on 17 June 1896, Émile Mercet proclaimed: "Due to the bravery of our army, due to its energetic and perseverant effort, the great African island of Madagascar has become a French possession...Honor to those who have fought, honor to those who have suffered, honor to those who have made us triumph, honor above all and respectful memory to those who have given their lives for the glory of our country."³⁸ At the fifth annual colonial banquet organized by the Union coloniale française taking place on 10 June 1899, Émile Mercet gave a toast to the courageous commander Jean-Baptiste Marchand and his dedicated soldiers as they have undertaken a campaign where they have brought our French flag from the Congo to the Nile and the Red Sea and thereby have raised the honor of France.³⁹ At a 24 June 1905

³⁶ Union Coloniale Française. Cinquième Banquet Colonial (1899), p. 73. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque École coloniale, 8177/3.

³⁷ "L'Exposition. Chronique du Champs de Mars. Banquet Colonial," *Le Petit Journal*, 3 June 1889, p. 2.

³⁸ Supplément au *Bulletin de L'Union Coloniale Française*. Septembre 1896. *Union Coloniale Française*. Rapport de L'Exercice 1895-96. Banquet Colonial de 1896, p. 49. Paris, Le Siège de L'Union Coloniale Française, 1896. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica. « grâce à la vaillance de notre armée, grâce à ses efforts énergiques et persévérants, la grande île africaine de Madagascar est devenue possession française...Honneur à ceux qui ont combattu, honneur à ceux qui ont souffert, honneur à ceux qui ont fait triompher nos armes ; honneur surtout et respectueux souvenir à ceux qui ont donné leur vie pour la gloire de notre pays. »

³⁹ Union Coloniale Française. Cinquième Banquet Colonial (1899), p. 68.

banquet honoring General Joseph Galliéni, Eugène Étienne applauded General Galliéni and his soldiers for adding to the glory of the French nation by crushing the insurrection and thereby pacifying Madagascar.⁴⁰ Military victories such as defeating insurrections in the colonies and conquering new territories were imbued with a patriotic duty and those who took part in these military operations received praise at these banquets. Thus, the empire became an essential component of French national identity and the banquet became a critical site for the construction of a linkage between military conquest, the empire, and the Republic.

In addition, speakers at banquets emphasized the importance of the economic exploitation of the colonies. Alongside nationalism, capitalism was a primary motivating factor for the expansion and sustainment of the French empire. At the third annual colonial banquet taking place on 17 June 1896 organized by the Union coloniale française, André Lebon, Minister of the Colonies, proclaimed: “No, it is not to conquer for the glory of weapons, that we made the expedition of Tonkin and more recently that of Madagascar; it is for opening a new field for the activity of our agriculturalists, of our merchants, of our industrialists.”⁴¹ The Minister of the Colonies openly made the assertion that the reason for the establishment of the French empire was to provide a new outlet for economic expansion and did not mention anything about the civilizing mission. Capitalism influenced the French empire as shown in the rhetoric at banquets in the following ways: commerce and industry were crucial to establishing and running a successful empire; private initiative was instrumental in developing the colonies; a union

⁴⁰ “Le Banquet Galliéni,” *La Revue diplomatique*, 2 July 1905, p. 7.

⁴¹ Supplément au *Bulletin de L’Union Coloniale Française*. Septembre 1896. *Union Coloniale Française*. Rapport de L’Exercice 1895-96. Banquet Colonial de 1896, p. 60. Paris, Le Siège de L’Union Coloniale Française, 1896. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica. « Non, ce n'est pas pour conquérir la gloire des armes, que l'on a fait l'expédition du Tonkin et plus récemment celle de Madagascar ; c'est pour ouvrir un champ nouveau à l'activité de nos agriculteurs, de nos commerçants, de nos industriels. »

between business and the colonial government; a focus on public works projects in the colonies; and the use of native and penal labor.

Orators stressed that the French empire sought out the establishment of commerce and industry in the colonies as they played a critical role in the successful establishment and effective operation of the empire. At a 28 March 1886 banquet with more than 500 people in attendance, Paul Bert, resident general of Annam and Tonkin, proclaimed: “This is a colony of merchants and industrialists that I want to see established over there; this is a colony of creators of resources and wealth, a colony of exploitation and exportation that must be made.”⁴² Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza, an Italian-born French explorer, stated at a 10 August 1886 banquet offered to him by the Société de Géographie Commerciale du Havre in the city of Le Havre that the colonizing work he had carried out in Africa would have been inadequate had commerce and industry not come after him.⁴³

Speakers were also concerned with the economic vitality of the colonies. At the first annual colonial banquet held on 6 June 1894, Émile Mercet argued that only commerce and industry can guarantee the success of the colony as France would eventually grow impatient with colonies that always ran a deficit.⁴⁴ Discourse at banquets praised commerce as it produced successful colonies. At the annual colonial banquet taking place the following year on 8 June 1895, Jules Charles-Roux stated that the Union coloniale française would return commerce to its

⁴² Banquet du 28 mars offert à M. Paul Bert, député, résident général de l’Annam et du Tonkin, p. 5, 13. Année 1886. Compte-rendu in-extenso. Saigon, Imprimerie Rey et Curiol, 1886. MFICHE 8-LN27-36702. « C’est une colonie de marchands et d’industriels que je désire voir s’établir là-bas ; c’est une colonie de créateurs de ressources et de richesses, une colonie d’exploitation et d’exportation qu’il faut faire. »

⁴³ Société de Géographie Commerciale du Havre. Bulletin 1886. Banquet offert par la Société à M. Savorgnan de Brazza, p. 168. Havre: Imprimerie de la Société des Anciens Courtiers, 1886. Archives nationales d’outre-mer, Bibliothèque AOM, 21457/1886.

⁴⁴ Union Coloniale Française. Rapport de l’Exercice 1893-1894. Banquet Colonial de 1894, p. 42. Paris: Librairie coloniale. Archives nationales d’outre-mer, Bibliothèque École coloniale, 2104/5.

prestigious position as it is the means of ensuring the prosperity of France's colonies.⁴⁵ In one instance, the colonist and journalist Ulysse Leriche who directed the newspaper *Le Mékong*, chastised the Chinese economic involvement in Indochina and Cochinchina as being dishonest and resulting in the flow of French money to China, at an 1897 banquet in Paris organized by the Syndicat de la Presse coloniale.⁴⁶ Speakers also showcased the specific economic gains of the colonies, highlighting those that were profitable. For instance, at a 4 November 1899 banquet, Eugène Étienne talked about the economic growth of the colonies by stating that Guinée française earned 3 or 4 million francs in 1889 and increased this to attaining 20 million francs in 1898 and along with Côte d'Ivoire and Dahomey were self-sustaining as they did not require any financial support from France.⁴⁷ Commerce and industry bestowed great hope for the future of the colonies. Charles Jonnart, Governor-General of Algeria, predicted a promising future for Algeria due to the productivity of the agriculture and mines at a 6 March 1908 banquet.⁴⁸ Commerce and industry were considered essential for the economic development of the French colonies and, furthermore, were one of the fundamental reasons for the establishment and growth of the French empire.

Speakers emphasized the critical role of private initiative in developing the colonies, thereby highlighting the Republican-capitalism nexus. At the first annual colonial banquet organized by the Union coloniale française that took place on 6 June 1894, Théophile Delcassé, Minister of the Colonies, asserted that private initiative was the most important actor for the

⁴⁵ Union Coloniale Française. Rapport de l'Exercice 1894-1895. Banquet Colonial de 1895, p. 84. Paris: Librairie coloniale, 1895. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque École coloniale, 8177/1.

⁴⁶ "Le Banquet Doumer," *La Politique Coloniale*, 14 January 1897, p. 2. Archives nationales d'outre-mer.

⁴⁷ Discours prononcé par M. Eugène Étienne le 4 novembre 1899 au banquet offert par l'Union Coloniale, la Société d'Économie Industrielle et Commerciale et la Société de Géographie Commerciale, p. 12-14. Paris: Imprimerie Alcan-Lévy, 1899. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque AOM, B//849.

⁴⁸ Discours de M. Jonnart gouverneur général de l'Algérie au banquet du conseil général de Constantine (6 Mars 1908), p. 4. Alger: Imprimerie Administrative Victor Heintz, 1908. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque AOM, B//500.

economic development of the colonies as it is the most dynamic ensemble of commerce and industry and, moreover, advised combining capital to build roads and railroads.⁴⁹ Interestingly, the Minister of the Colonies favored the private over the public sector in improving the infrastructure of the colonies. Émile Mercet, at the third annual colonial banquet taking place on 17 June 1896, proclaimed that tremendous advances have been made in the last 20 years due to the private sector.⁵⁰ At the fifth annual colonial banquet taking place on 10 June 1899, Antoine-Florent Guillain, Minister of the Colonies, stated that private initiative enables the development of the colonies, thereby bringing wealth and glory to France.⁵¹ Banquet participants, including two Ministers of the Colonies, praised the private sector as being the greatest force behind the development of the French empire.

As business was regarded as crucial to colonial development, orators at banquets stressed the importance of a union between the business community and the colonial government. Speakers encouraged government officials to do more to aid commerce and industry in their colonial enterprises. At a 30 January 1894 banquet offered by the Société d'Economie Industrielle et Commerciale – an association that took an active role in the colonization of West Africa and Southeast Asia – to Lieutenant Antoine Mizon, the president of the society Léon Tharel stated that businessmen have backed colonialism, and he asked the government, in turn, to assist the endeavors of capitalists in the colonies.⁵² Émile Mercet, at the third annual colonial banquet taking place on 17 June 1896, stated that the business community desired the assistance

⁴⁹ Union Coloniale Française. Rapport de l'Exercice 1893-1894. Banquet Colonial de 1894, p. 48. Paris: Librairie coloniale. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque École coloniale, 2104/5.

⁵⁰ Supplément au *Bulletin de L'Union Coloniale Française*. Septembre 1896. *Union Coloniale Française*. Rapport de L'Exercice 1895-96. Banquet Colonial de 1896, p. 51. Paris, Le Siège de L'Union Coloniale Française, 1896. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

⁵¹ Union Coloniale Française. Cinquième Banquet Colonial (1899), p. 76. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque École coloniale, 8177/3.

⁵² "Le Banquet Mizon," *La Politique Coloniale*, 1 February 1894, p. 2. Archives nationales d'outre-mer.

and advocacy of the government.⁵³ Banquet participants regarded the Minister of the Colonies as responsible for supporting the growth of business in the empire. M. Boulanger proclaimed that the main duty of the Minister of the Colonies was to enable the commercial growth of France at a 9 April 1894 banquet concerning a Chicago exhibition.⁵⁴ Émile Chautemps, Minister of the Colonies, asserted at the second annual colonial banquet held on 8 June 1895 that the Minister of the Colonies acted also as a second Minister of Commerce meaning that facilitating commerce and industry in making profits in the empire was a central component of the duties of the Minister of the Colonies.⁵⁵ These speakers honed in on the importance of business for the French empire and the necessity for the government to do more to support the initiatives of business leaders in the colonies.

Public works projects in the colonies was a major theme at these banquets as railroads, roads, canals, ports, telegraphs, telephones, and the postal service facilitated business operations and showcased both the benefits and the power of the French empire to the indigenous peoples. At the third annual colonial banquet taking place on 17 June 1896, Émile Mercet stated that it took us more than ten years until we figured out that Tonkin would be in a permanent state of debt so we gave Tonkin the means to carry out public works including building railroads, roads, canals, and ports thereby enabling development.⁵⁶ Mercet continued by asserting that the other colonies needed public works too as they had untapped natural resources.⁵⁷ In addition to facilitating development, public works served a political role as well. At the fourth annual

⁵³ Supplément au *Bulletin de L'Union Coloniale Française*. Septembre 1896. *Union Coloniale Française*. Rapport de L'Exercice 1895-96. Banquet Colonial de 1896, p. 51. Paris, Le Siège de L'Union Coloniale Française, 1896. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

⁵⁴ Paul Combes, "Le Banquet de Chicago," *La Politique Coloniale*, 10 April 1894, p. 2. Archives nationales d'outre-mer.

⁵⁵ Union Coloniale Française. Rapport de l'Exercice 1894-1895. Banquet Colonial de 1895, p. 79. Paris: Librairie coloniale, 1895. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque École coloniale, 8177/1.

⁵⁶ Supplément au *Bulletin de L'Union Coloniale Française*...Banquet Colonial de 1896, p. 54.

⁵⁷ Supplément au *Bulletin de L'Union Coloniale Française*...Banquet Colonial de 1896, p. 54.

colonial banquet occurring on 16 June 1897, André Lebon, Minister of the Colonies, proclaimed that public works serve two main purposes as they enable the development of the colony and create the conditions for political domination of the colony as railroads, for instance, show the indigenous people some of the benefits of empire.⁵⁸ Railroads also exhibited the technological power of empire to the indigenous people. This emphasis on public works was echoed at the colony level as the following examples from Algeria and Côte d'Ivoire demonstrate. Charles Jonnart, Governor-General of Algeria, stated that the administration would carry out public works projects on railroads, roads and ports to improve transportation at a 16 December 1905 banquet sponsored by the Syndicat Commercial d'Alger.⁵⁹ He further added that they were making improvements to the telegraphs, telephones, and postal service.⁶⁰ At a banquet taking place circa 1912 in Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire, M. Angoulvant, Governor General of Côte d'Ivoire announced that 3,500 kilometers of telegraph lines were set-up enabling rapid communication.⁶¹ Speeches highlighted the importance of public works projects as they enabled the growth of business and displayed to the colonized people examples of Western modernity including the superiority and advantages of French technology and infrastructure.

A component of the economic exploitation of the colonies mentioned at the empire banquets that was profitable for the French empire and abusive towards the indigenous people was the French empire's use of native and penal labor. At the first annual colonial banquet that took place on 6 June 1894, Théophile Delcassé, Minister of the Colonies, instructed colonists to

⁵⁸ Union Coloniale Française. Rapport de L'Exercice 1896-97. Banquet Colonial de 1897, p. 58. Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris, 8°Z2020.

⁵⁹ Discours prononcé par M. Jonnart Gouverneur Général de l'Algérie au Banquet du Syndicat Commercial d'Alger, le 16 Décembre 1905, p. 8. Alger: Imprimerie Administrative Victor Heintz, 1905. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque AOM, B//7722.

⁶⁰ Discours prononcé par M. Jonnart Gouverneur Général de l'Algérie..., p. 16.

⁶¹ Discours prononcé par M. le Gouverneur Angoulvant au banquet de Bouaké, p. 5. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque École coloniale, 12365/1.

put indigenous people to work cultivating land and planting and harvesting agricultural crops for trade.⁶² Furthermore, Émile Mercet called for using prisoner labor to develop the underdeveloped colonies at the second annual colonial banquet held on 8 June 1895.⁶³ General Joseph Galliéni instituted a forced labor program in Madagascar where men had to perform fifty consecutive days (later reduced to thirty days) of unpaid labor on public works projects from 1896 to 1898.⁶⁴ Unpaid or underpaid labor facilitated the French empire's mission of turning their colonies into profitable entities at all moral cost.

In the midst of opulent eating and drinking, banquet participants listened to speeches and discussed issues related to the economic exploitation of the colonies. Capitalism provided an enticing incentive for the French empire as businesses made large amounts of money in the colonies. Speeches at banquets showed that commerce and industry were crucial to the successful establishment and operation of the French empire by highlighting the specific economic gains of certain colonies. The dynamism of private initiative was hailed as instrumental to the development of the colonies. Speakers stressed the necessity of a union between the business community and the colonial government, urging governmental officials to do more to facilitate the successful operation of businesses. Public works projects were heralded as vitally important for the conduct of business and for displaying the power and benefits of the French empire to the colonized peoples. Finally, speakers at banquets encouraged the use of native and penal labor in the colonies that approached slavery conditions to further increase profit, yet the French imperialists did not see this forced labor as slavery.

⁶² Union Coloniale Française. Rapport de l'Exercice 1893-1894. Banquet Colonial de 1894, p. 49. Paris: Librairie coloniale. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque École coloniale, 2104/5.

⁶³ Union Coloniale Française. Rapport de l'Exercice 1894-1895. Banquet Colonial de 1895, p. 74. Paris: Librairie coloniale, 1895. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque École coloniale, 8177/1.

⁶⁴ Gwendolyn Wright, *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991): 254.

At these banquets, reference to the empire bestowing national glory on France and the economic exploitation of the colonies overshadowed the mentioning of the civilizing mission. Reference to the civilizing mission was more common at banquets that had international guests and native local leaders in attendance, such as the Minister of China and a leader of Annam, respectively. With international leaders and native representatives in the audience, speakers were eager to showcase the benefits of the French empire to the world and to the native people of the colonies. Nevertheless, when no one outside the leadership of the French empire and their supporters were watching, mention of the civilizing mission was much less frequent as speakers were free to focus on their true motivations, the empire bestowing national glory on France and the economic exploitation of the colonies. As seen in the speeches at these empire banquets, the civilizing mission was not an integral part of the imperialists' discourse. Rather, it was a rhetorical attempt by France to justify to themselves and the world that their empire was beneficial to the native people and thus to conceal the exploitation and abuses of colonial rule.

Banquets Bolstering the French Empire

Through the gathering of hundreds of people from a wide variety of professions for a communal meal centered on topics relating to the politics of the empire, the attendees became united and emboldened to act resulting in the strengthening of the French empire. The banquet was a powerful political and cultural site as it united the community of empire supporters, provided a space for influencing the policy of the French empire, softened or concealed the harsh aspects of colonial rule, and kept French society informed about the empire. These formal dinners had the effect of reinforcing the operation of the empire. Banquets strengthened the solidarity between various proponents of the empire; enabled people from a wide range of

professions to gather in support of the empire; provided participants access to the Minister of the Colonies and other ministers and thereby an opportunity to influence government policy; advocated for a union between supporters of the empire and the government; promoted stability within colonial politics; conveyed the mission of the empire and sought funding for the mission; informed the French public about the empire; highlighted the ways the French empire benefitted the indigenous people of the colonies; downplayed the use of warfare; yet celebrated war campaigns that led to the expansion of the empire; and defined the relationship between colonizer and colonized as one of superior rulers and inferior subjects.

One key means of strengthening the empire was deepening the solidarity between supporters of the empire. The banquet united advocates of the French empire by gathering them together for a communal meal. The intimacy of eating and drinking together created new bonds between proponents of the empire and strengthened existing ties. Participants recognized the important role played by the banquet in the empire movement as they self-consciously reflected on the significance and impact of the banquets in their speeches. At the second annual colonial banquet held on 8 June 1895, Émile Mercet recounted that the year prior they met at the same banquet hall to profess the unity and dedication of the colonial group.⁶⁵ Language at these dinner events asserted that banquets, alongside increasing solidarity among supporters, led to the growth of the colonial movement. The following year, at the third annual colonial banquet taking place on 17 June 1896, Émile Mercet stated that the supporters of the colonies have gathered at a banquet for the third time and “with this same intimate solemnity” enabled the

⁶⁵ Union Coloniale Française. Rapport de l'Exercice 1894-1895. Banquet Colonial de 1895, p. 73. Paris: Librairie coloniale, 1895. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque École coloniale, 8177/1.

colonial cause to expand.⁶⁶ The decorated space of the banquet hall created an opulent venue that magnified the importance of the banquet. The description of the decorative atmosphere of the 6 July 1906 banquet that was a part of the Congrès Colonial Français – gathered international political colonial leaders in Paris – highlighted the flowers that brightened the palais d’Orsay providing the banquet with a special ambiance, which was appropriate for hosting the distinguished political, foreign and colonial guests and for listening to the Minister of the Colonies announce his program.⁶⁷

The banquet united leaders and supporters of the French empire by bringing them together at a communal meal where they shared food and drinks and thereby galvanized the colonial movement by celebrating the empire’s successes and offering solutions to its major problems. For instance, government ministers, senators, deputies, government employees of the colonies, colonists, explorers, merchants, industrialists, journalists, and members of geographical societies and colonial societies gathered at these banquets.⁶⁸ The banquet also brought together numerous organizations that had various missions. For instance, the following organizations participated in the first annual colonial banquet sponsored by the Union coloniale française that took place on 6 June 1894: Association Tonkinoise, Comité de l’Afrique française, Comité Dupleix, Société académique indo-chinoise de France, Société africaine de France, Société d’Économie industrielle et commerciale, Société des Études coloniales et maritimes, Société française de Colonisation, Chambre de Commerce de Bordeaux, Le Havre, Lyon, Marseille, Nantes, Paris, and Rouen, Société de Géographie de Paris, Société de Géographie commerciale

⁶⁶ Supplément au *Bulletin de L’Union Coloniale Française*. Septembre 1896. *Union Coloniale Française*. Rapport de L’Exercice 1895-96. Banquet Colonial de 1896, p. 50. Paris, Le Siège de L’Union Coloniale Française, 1896. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica. « pour cette même solennité intime »

⁶⁷ Congrès Colonial Français de 1906...Banquet du 6 juillet, p. 349. Paris: Au Secrétariat Général des Congrès Coloniaux Français, 1907. Archives nationales d’outre-mer, Bibliothèque AOM, 41738/1.

⁶⁸ Union Coloniale Française. Rapport de l’Exercice 1893-1894. Banquet Colonial de 1894, p. 33-34. Paris: Librairie coloniale. Archives nationales d’outre-mer, Bibliothèque École coloniale, 2104/5.

de Bordeaux, Le Havre, and Paris.⁶⁹ This long list of associations was comprised of those that were focused on the empire and others that were centered on commerce. The banquet united all of these diverse people and organizations and, therefore, effectively served the needs of the French empire by bringing all of these great minds together.

The diverse composition of the attendees enabled speakers from various professions to influence government policy regarding the French empire by speaking directly to ministers of the government, most notably the Minister of the Colonies who was present at many of the banquets. For example, at a third annual colonial banquet on 17 June 1896 sponsored by the Union coloniale française, Émile Mercet, president of the Union coloniale française, gave his advice on a program for the newly appointed Minister of the Colonies, André Lebon. Mercet suggested the following detailed advice for a plan of action for the colonies: the French government should implement public works projects in the colonies in order to more effectively exploit their natural resources; the government must have respect for local customs; limiting the role of government employees and prioritizing private initiative; promoting colonization and business activity with concessions; and the establishment of a customs system that balances the needs of French industry with those of commerce.⁷⁰ Émile Mercet presented these ideas for a program to the Minister of the Colonies on behalf of the Union coloniale française, an organization mainly composed of businessmen, and suggested policies that would decidedly favor business interests in the French empire. This banquet thereby facilitated direct lobbying by the business community to the Minister of the Colonies.

⁶⁹ Union Coloniale Française. Rapport de l'Exercice 1893-1894. Banquet Colonial de 1894, p. 34-35. Paris: Librairie coloniale. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque École coloniale, 2104/5.

⁷⁰ Supplément au *Bulletin de L'Union Coloniale Française*. Septembre 1896. *Union Coloniale Française*. Rapport de L'Exercice 1895-96. Banquet Colonial de 1896, p. 54-56. Paris, Le Siège de L'Union Coloniale Française, 1896. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

Banquets promoted unity between supporters of the empire and the government. There were many supporters of the French empire who were outside the government as they included businessmen, scientists, colonists, and explorers. Supporters of the empire sought out a union with the government to promote their own interests. The business community was at the forefront of those seeking a close relationship with the government in order to push a business-friendly policy concerning the colonies. At the third annual colonial banquet held on 17 June 1896 in Paris, Émile Mercet, president of the business-oriented Union coloniale française, called for close cooperation between the Union coloniale française and the government.⁷¹ The following year, at the fourth annual colonial banquet taking place on 16 June 1897, Émile Mercet gave a toast to the union of the government and supporters of the empire so that they could work together at developing the colonies.⁷² A speaker at a 28 June 1911 banquet offered to the Minister of the Colonies argued for cooperation between the Union coloniale and the local colonial governments.⁷³ Banquets provided the means for supporters of the French empire to seek out active collaboration with the French government by providing the opportunity to broach their desire for unity in person to the Minister of the Colonies with the objective of furthering their interests, most notably those of a commercial nature. To ameliorate the process of influencing the government on imperial policy, supporters of the French empire also sought out stability within the governance of the empire.

The rhetoric proclaimed at banquets aimed to promote stability within colonial politics. Speakers criticized the instability of the French government characterized by frequent changes to

⁷¹ Supplément au *Bulletin de L'Union Coloniale Française*. Septembre 1896. *Union Coloniale Française*. Rapport de L'Exercice 1895-96. Banquet Colonial de 1896, p. 51. Paris, Le Siège de L'Union Coloniale Française, 1896. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

⁷² Union Coloniale Française. Rapport de L'Exercice 1896-97. Banquet Colonial de 1897, p. 53. Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris, 8°Z2020.

⁷³ Banquet offert au ministre des colonies (1911). Banquet colonial du 28 juin 1911, p. 8. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Archives privées, Comité central français pour l'Outre-Mer (CCFOM), 100APOM/217.

the ministers, which included the governance of the empire. At the first annual colonial banquet taking place on 6 June 1894, Émile Mercet, president of the Union Coloniale française, spoke in favor of the Minister of the Colonies having a long tenure as he was worried about instability in the government disrupting the empire.⁷⁴ The following year at the second annual colonial banquet occurring on 8 June 1895, Émile Mercet broached a similar sentiment as he complained that the empire had three leaders in only three months and hoped for stability in the leadership of the future.⁷⁵ The banquet was a cultural space for conducting politics in a safe manner, where criticism of instability and aspirations for stability within the governance of the French Empire were raised in a non-confrontational manner.

The banquet was a venue where the mission of the French empire was addressed and transmitted to the participants. Speakers sought out funding from the government to support the mission. By 1894, speakers recognized that the majority of the French empire had already been attained as the conquering phase was nearing its completion and therefore the major mission shifted to organizing and developing the empire. At the first annual colonial banquet occurring on 6 June 1894, Théophile Delcassé, Minister of the Colonies, stated that the expansion of the empire was coming to an end and the focus needed to be on improving the colonies by, for example, building roads and railroads.⁷⁶ The rhetoric also stressed that although the glorious aspect of conquering was mostly over, an equally important and difficult task remained that of developing the colonies. André Lebon, Minister of the Colonies, spoke at the third annual colonial banquet taking place on 17 June 1896 and proclaimed that the current mission of those

⁷⁴ Union Coloniale Française. Rapport de l'Exercice 1893-1894. Banquet Colonial de 1894, p. 38. Paris: Librairie coloniale. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque École coloniale, 2104/5.

⁷⁵ Union Coloniale Française. Rapport de l'Exercice 1894-1895. Banquet Colonial de 1895, p. 73-74. Paris: Librairie coloniale, 1895. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque École coloniale, 8177/1.

⁷⁶ Union Coloniale Française...Banquet Colonial de 1894, p. 47-48.

who were running the empire was not attempting to equal the conquests of the past but to organize and develop the colonies and make the empire open to future generations.⁷⁷ Speakers pleaded with the French government to continue adequately funding the colonies beyond the conquest. At a 4 November 1899 banquet, Eugène Étienne commented that during military operations the French government spends without keeping track but afterwards considers their work complete; however, the rebuilding phase is the most challenging and thus France must develop a program of support for the colony and fund it adequately.⁷⁸ The banquet was a key cultural site where the change in the mission from conquest to development of the colonies was articulated with high importance as speakers pleaded with the government for adequate funding for the new mission.

Banquets served the role of informing the public about empire both through the people who attended and with newspaper coverage that disseminated the proceedings to millions of readers. The colonies never really received enthusiastic support from ordinary French people.⁷⁹ Speakers at banquets were cognizant about the importance of convincing a largely apathetic public to support the French empire and thereby attempted to use banquets as a public relations instrument. At a 1 March 1886 banquet, De La Porte stated that we must make the colonies public because only then will the empire be valued.⁸⁰ Speakers claimed that banquets increased

⁷⁷ Supplément au *Bulletin de L'Union Coloniale Française*. Septembre 1896. *Union Coloniale Française*. Rapport de L'Exercice 1895-96. Banquet Colonial de 1896, p. 59. Paris, Le Siège de L'Union Coloniale Française, 1896. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica.

⁷⁸ Discours prononcé par M. Eugène Étienne le 4 novembre 1899 au banquet offert par l'Union Coloniale, la Société d'Économie Industrielle et Commerciale et la Société de Géographie Commerciale, p. 15. Paris: Imprimerie Alcan-Lévy, 1899. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque AOM, B//849.

⁷⁹ William B. Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans: White Response to Blacks, 1530-1880* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003 [1980]): 281.

⁸⁰ Discours prononcés au banquet offert par les Membres du Jury et les Exposants des Colonies Françaises à l'Exposition Universelle d'Anvers en 1885 sous la présidence de M. De La Porte à M. Albert Grodet le 1^{er} Mars 1886, p. 19. Paris: Société Anonyme de Publications Périodiques, 1886. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque SOM, C/Br/1741.

the number of supporters of the empire. At the fourth annual colonial banquet taking place on 16 June 1897, Émile Mercet asserted that because of the colonial banquet we have brought more and more people each year to the colonial cause.⁸¹ Organizers regarded the banquet as the most effective means of influencing public opinion on the empire. For instance, since a number of members of the Société d'Économie industrielle et commerciale wanted to inform the public about the political and economic events taking place in the empire, the board of the society decided that holding a banquet for the ministers was the best option to sway public opinion on the empire and therefore organized a banquet on 4 November 1899 alongside the associations of the Union coloniale française and the Société de Géographie commerciale.⁸²

Converting public opinion toward support of the French empire was envisioned as a means of making France truly great. At a 6 July 1906 banquet connected with the Congrès Colonial Français held in Paris, François Deloncle, deputy of Cochinchine, declared: "Our country would be very great and social crises could be avoided, if French opinion could know how great the French colonial empire is, if the hour could come where, under the pressure of public opinion, the entire nation could take an interest in the exploitation of our colonial domain."⁸³ The claim by François Deloncle that merely the French public's knowledge of the vastness of the French empire would avert social crises at home is improbable but illustrative of the way supporters perceived the empire as a way of redirecting social mobilization, tampering

⁸¹ Union Coloniale Française. Rapport de L'Exercice 1896-97. Banquet Colonial de 1897, p. 47. Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris, 8°Z2020.

⁸² Banquet offert le 4 novembre 1899, à l'Hôtel Continental par l'Union Coloniale, la Société d'Économie Industrielle et Commerciale et la Société de Géographie Commerciale, p. 3. Paris: Imprimerie de la Bourse de Commerce, 1899. Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris, 941693.

⁸³ Congrès Colonial Français de 1906...Banquet du 6 juillet, p. 355. Paris: Au Secrétariat Général des Congrès Coloniaux Français, 1907. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque AOM, 41738/1. « Notre pays serait bien grand et bien des crises sociales pourraient être évitées, si l'opinion française pouvait savoir combien grand est l'empire colonial de la France, si l'heure pouvait venir où, sous la pression de l'opinion publique, la nation tout entière pouvait s'intéresser à l'exploitation de notre domaine colonial. »

revolutionary tendencies, or diminishing tension in French society. Attendees were also encouraged to promote the empire to people outside of the banquet setting. René Millet, speaking at a 30 November 1909 banquet, argued that for the French government to act the people need to be behind it so the French people need to know our objective in Morocco and it is our responsibility to spread the word to every village in France.⁸⁴ The banquet was a cultural site that informed the public about the colonies in an effort to simultaneously garner support for the empire and diminish social unrest, encouraged its participants to continue to promulgate information about the colonies throughout France, and claimed to attract more people to the colonial movement.

Banquets celebrating empire bolstered the French empire by softening its harsh aspects and showcasing the benefits of empire to the indigenous people. This is where the civilizing mission entered into the discourse as the French empire was envisioned as bringing democracy to the native people, elevating the welfare of the indigenous, abolishing slavery, building schools, and instilling peace, freedom, and justice in the colonized lands. Léopold Mabillean, the director of the Musée Social – a private organization founded in 1894 and headquartered in Paris that was involved in urban planning and social reform – gave a toast at a 6 July 1906 banquet of the Congrès Colonial Français and asserted that when France incorporates a new colony into the empire, France brings democracy to the people.⁸⁵ Here the French empire is depicted as giving the indigenous people democracy whereas, in reality, they became subsumed under the rule of the French colonial government. At the same banquet, George Leygues, Minister of the

⁸⁴ René Millet. Comité du Maroc. Banquet du 30 novembre 1909. *La France au Maroc*, discours prononcé par M. René Millet, p. 3. Paris: Comité du Maroc, 1910. Bibliothèque nationale de France, 8-LB57-15120.

⁸⁵ Congrès Colonial Français de 1906...Banquet du 6 juillet, p. 358. Paris: Au Secrétariat Général des Congrès Coloniaux Français, 1907. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque AOM, 41738/1.

Colonies, proclaimed that colonization increased the morality and welfare of the native people.⁸⁶ Humanitarian actions such as the elimination of slavery and the building of schools were highlighted. At a 19 October 1882 banquet offered to Henry Stanley, Stanley stated that Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza abolished slavery in western Africa.⁸⁷ Charles Jonnart, Governor General of Algeria, argued at a 6 March 1908 banquet that schools were the most effective tool to assimilate the natives into the French empire, and he announced the founding of 25 new schools in Algeria.⁸⁸ Speakers emphasized the peace, freedom, and justice that France brought to the colonies. At a 30 November 1909 banquet focused on Morocco, René Millet exclaimed: “After centuries of suffering, French peace, French justice, these two inseparable sisters, descend among them.”⁸⁹ A banquet taking place circa 1912 in Bouaké, Côte d’Ivoire was an instance of a banquet held in the colonies, which acted as a transmitter of French culture to Côte d’Ivoire. At this banquet, Gabriel Louis Angoulvant, Governor General of Côte d’Ivoire, argued that France had brought peace to more than 90 percent of Côte d’Ivoire and this peace introduced freedom to the defeated people, emancipated the slaves, ended the civil wars, and enabled people and commercial products to freely circulate.⁹⁰ The historical reality, however, was a brutal military campaign carried out by the French empire that crushed revolts and eliminated resistance to colonial rule. Angoulvant continued by highlighting educational improvements, specifically an increase in the number of indigenous children of Côte d’Ivoire receiving an

⁸⁶ Congrès Colonial Français de 1906...Banquet du 6 juillet, p. 362.

⁸⁷ Banquet offert à Stanley par le Stanley Club et discours de Brazza, 19 octobre 1882, p. 6. Archives nationales d’outre-mer, Archives privées, Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza, PA/16(II)/3.

⁸⁸ Discours de M. Jonnart gouverneur général de l’Algérie au banquet du conseil général de Constantine (6 Mars 1908), p. 22. Alger: Imprimerie Administrative Victor Heintz, 1908. Archives nationales d’outre-mer, Bibliothèque AOM, B/500.

⁸⁹ René Millet. Comité du Maroc. Banquet du 30 novembre 1909. La France au Maroc, discours prononcé par M. René Millet, p. 20. Paris: Comité du Maroc, 1910. Bibliothèque nationale de France, 8-LB57-15120. « Après des siècles de souffrance, la paix française, la justice française, ces deux sœurs inséparables, descendent parmi eux. »

⁹⁰ Discours prononcé par M. le Gouverneur Angoulvant au banquet de Bouaké, p. 3. Archives nationales d’outre-mer, Bibliothèque École coloniale, 12365/1.

education in school as five years ago there were 27 schools with 500 students in attendance and now there are 62 schools (16 regional and 46 village) attended by about 2000 students.⁹¹

Speakers at banquets thereby portrayed the French empire as dramatically improving the lives of the colonized people.

Another means of softening the harsh aspects of empire was portraying the role of warfare in the French empire as minimal. This is similar to David Livingstone's argument for British African colonization starting in the early 1870s where he came up with the "3C's: Commerce, Christianity and Civilization" rather than warfare as the method of colonization.⁹² According to speakers at banquets, when the French carried out war, it was to free the indigenous people from their oppressive leaders or to hunt slave captors. Joannès Couvert, president of the Société commerciale de Géographie du Havre, spoke at an 8 August 1891 banquet in Le Havre celebrating the return of Lieutenant Colonel Louis Archinard from the French Sudan and argued: "If France has penetrated in these regions, this is not for bringing war; if she (France) wants to establish her influence there, this is not to transform this influence for enslavement; these are of the fertile works that she affirms and produces, fertile not only for herself, but also for the indigenous people, who suffer under the yoke of the fanatical warrior leaders."⁹³ Joannès Couvert portrayed France's military intervention in the colonies not as an aggressive action in support of the French empire but as bringing freedom to the indigenous people by defending them from their oppressors. Lieutenant Colonel Archinard added that the people of the French

⁹¹ Discours prononcé par M. le Gouverneur Angoulvant au banquet de Bouaké, p. 5-6. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque École coloniale, 12365/1.

⁹² Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa 1876–1912* (New York: Random House, 1991): xxii.

⁹³ H. Fénoux, "Banquet d'Honneur offert au Lieutenant-Colonel Archinard," *Le Petit Havre*, 9 August 1891, p. 1. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Ministère des Colonies, Série géographique, Archives Soudan, SOUD/V/1. « Si la France a pénétré dans ces régions, ce n'est pas pour y porter la guerre ; si elle veut y établir son influence, ce n'est pas en transformant cette influence en asservissement ; ce sont des œuvres fécondes qu'elle prétend y produire, fécondes non seulement pour elle-même, mais aussi pour les populations indigènes, qui subissent le joug de chefs guerriers fanatisés. »

Sudan love us as we only conduct war against the tyrants, instigators of holy wars, and slave captors.⁹⁴

Speakers emphasized the peaceful nature of French conquest and the tolerance the French showed toward the people they governed. At an 8 February 1899 banquet organized by the Comité du Congo français, Eugène Étienne recounted the pro-French version of the annexation of the French Congo as he considered the conquest to be peaceful.⁹⁵ Charles Jonnart, Governor-General of Algeria, spoke at a 6 March 1908 banquet and argued that unlike other nations that harshly repress their colonized people, France acts only with tolerance and brings prosperity to the native people.⁹⁶ This was a thinly veiled allusion to the brutal colonization carried out by other empires, e.g. Great Britain and Belgium. Eugène Étienne spoke at another banquet, this one on 4 June 1908 at the Congrès Colonial Français, and reflected on his role in commanding officers who led a conquest by asserting: “Because we do not hesitate to declare that we have not carried out a work of extermination; we have delivered the people from the oppressors who have destroyed and decimated them.”⁹⁷ Étienne portrayed France’s military intervention in the colonies as one of liberation by bringing freedom to the natives. Supporters of the French empire attempted to construct a narrative of France as a liberator that freed colonial peoples from tyrants and removed all blame on France with frequent, adamant denials of repression, aggressive warfare, and extermination.

⁹⁴ H. Fénoux, “Banquet d’Honneur offert au Lieutenant-Colonel Archinard,” *Le Petit Havre*, 9 August 1891, p. 2. Archives nationales d’outre-mer, Ministère des Colonies, Série géographique, Archives Soudan, SOUD/V/1.

⁹⁵ “Le Banquet du Comité du Congo français,” *La Politique Coloniale*, 10 February 1899, p. 1. Archives nationales d’outre-mer.

⁹⁶ Discours de M. Jonnart gouverneur général de l’Algérie au banquet du conseil général de Constantine (6 Mars 1908), p. 23. Alger: Imprimerie Administrative Victor Heintz, 1908. Archives nationales d’outre-mer, Bibliothèque AOM, B/500.

⁹⁷ Congrès Colonial Français de 1908...Banquet du 4 juin. Paris: Au Secrétariat Général des Congrès Coloniaux Français, 1909, p. 587. Archives nationales d’outre-mer, Bibliothèque AOM, 41740. « Car n’hésitons pas à déclarer qu’ils n’ont pas fait une œuvre d’extermination ; nous avons délivré les populations des oppresseurs qui les ruinaient et les décimaient. »

On the other hand, the banquet also highlighted the successes of military war campaigns that brought about the expansion of the French empire and operations that crushed revolts. This directly contradicted the aforementioned discourse that aimed to downplay the role of war. Speakers informed the audience about military victories and celebrated the growth of the empire. At an 8 August 1891 banquet in Le Havre honoring Lieutenant Colonel Louis Archinard, Joannès Couvert praised the military campaigns of Archinard in West Africa by stating Archinard destroyed the power of Ahmadou, captured the cities of Ségou, Ousseboogou, and Nioro and carried out an offensive against Samory Ture that resulted in the raiding of his capital, Bissandugu.⁹⁸ Émile Mercet gave a toast to the former Undersecretary of State Eugène Étienne for increasing the territory of the French empire under his term in office at an 18 November 1893 banquet.⁹⁹ Speakers also celebrated campaigns carried out by French commanders that subdued revolts and resistance in the colonies. At a 4 November 1899 banquet, Eugène Étienne lauded General Joseph Galliéni for successfully pacifying French Sudan and Tonkin, though minimizing the violence of the campaigns.¹⁰⁰ Banquets celebrated General Joseph Gallieni's pacification of Madagascar, where the French committed atrocities against the insurgents.¹⁰¹ Discourse at banquets celebrated the French military as the decisive force that brought about key victories that led to the expansion of the empire. At a 30 November 1909 banquet, René Millet asserted that the French successes in Morocco were not a consequence of international dialogue but the result

⁹⁸ H. Fénoux, "Banquet d'Honneur offert au Lieutenant-Colonel Archinard," *Le Petit Havre*, 9 August 1891, p. 1. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Ministère des Colonies, Série géographique, Archives Soudan, SOUD/V/1.

⁹⁹ "Le Banquet de L'Union Coloniale Française," *La Politique Coloniale*, 21 November 1893, p. 2. Archives nationales d'outre-mer.

¹⁰⁰ Discours prononcé par M. Eugène Étienne le 4 novembre 1899 au banquet offert par l'Union Coloniale, la Société d'Économie Industrielle et Commerciale et la Société de Géographie Commerciale, p. 12-14. Paris: Imprimerie Alcan-Lévy, 1899. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque AOM, B//849.

¹⁰¹ Archives nationales d'outre-mer denied access to me to view four images of four banquets where General Joseph Galliéni was honored for pacifying Madagascar. Archives privées, Maréchal Joseph Galliéni, Action de Galliéni à Madagascar 1896/1905.

of the action of the French army.¹⁰² Here we see France prioritizing unilateral military action over international diplomacy when it came to the expansion of their empire.

Orators at banquets defined the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized within the French empire as one of rulers and subjects, emphasizing the unequal power relationship by considering the indigenous people to be inferior to the French rulers and citizens. Émile Mercet considered the people of the colonies to be « les races inférieures » at the second annual colonial banquet on 8 June 1895.¹⁰³ At a 4 November 1899 banquet, Eugène Étienne established a hierarchy among the indigenous peoples of the colonies as he stated that Indochina has had a civilization for hundreds of years whereas the other colonies have primitive peoples.¹⁰⁴ Discourse emphasized the imbalanced power relationship to deter revolts yet also stressed the bestowing of French justice. Albert Decrais, the Minister of the Colonies, bluntly declared vigorous Social Darwinist ideas at the same banquet: “It is important without a doubt that they feel above all that we are the masters forever, and that to attempt useless revolts they would expose themselves to the harshest punishments. But it is important at the same time, and above all, to make themselves feel, with respect for our strength and the inevitable destiny, the sentiment of our justice and of our affection.”¹⁰⁵ As Decrais stated, the indigenous people should regard the French as their masters and submit peacefully to their rule but also feel grateful that

¹⁰² René Millet. Comité du Maroc. Banquet du 30 novembre 1909. La France au Maroc, discours prononcé par M. René Millet, p. 9. Paris: Comité du Maroc, 1910. Bibliothèque nationale de France, 8-LB57-15120.

¹⁰³ Union Coloniale Française. Rapport de l'Exercice 1894-1895. Banquet Colonial de 1895, p. 75. Paris: Librairie coloniale, 1895. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque École coloniale, 8177/1.

¹⁰⁴ Discours prononcé par M. Eugène Étienne le 4 novembre 1899 au banquet offert par l'Union Coloniale, la Société d'Économie Industrielle et Commerciale et la Société de Géographie Commerciale, p. 16. Paris: Imprimerie Alcan-Lévy, 1899. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque AOM, B/849.

¹⁰⁵ Banquet offert le 4 novembre 1899, à l'Hôtel Continental par l'Union Coloniale, la Société d'Économie Industrielle et Commerciale et la Société de Géographie Commerciale, p. 13. Paris: Imprimerie de la Bourse de Commerce, 1899. Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris, 941693. « Il faut sans doute qu'elles sentent avant tout que nous sommes les maîtres, et pour toujours, et qu'à tenter d'inutiles révoltes, elles s'exposeraient aux plus rudes châtiments. Mais il faut en même temps, et surtout peut être, leur faire sentir, avec le respect de notre force et de l'inéluctable destinée, le sentiment de notre justice et de notre affection. »

they are a part of French justice. At a 1 March 1886 banquet, Fleury proclaimed that France is the mother and the colonies are the daughters, thereby explicitly stating the inequality between the metropole and the colonies.¹⁰⁶ The French also saw their indigenous subjects as backwards and in need of guidance, a typical paternalistic discourse of the time. Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza spoke at a 10 August 1886 banquet offered to him in Le Havre and considered the people of the French Congo to be ignorant of their own land as they did not know that their trees produced rubber and their farmland could produce cotton until de Brazza showed them.¹⁰⁷ This prejudicial view of the indigenous people of the French Congo was predicated on a Western bias toward the value of land. As a means to justify the French empire, speakers portrayed the indigenous people of the colonies as inferior in an effort to define the relationship between colonizer and colonized as that of superior rulers and inferior subjects. Nevertheless, taken as a whole, the emphasis on race was otherwise quite rare at these banquets.

The cultural institution of the banquet served as a site that defended, justified, strengthened, and galvanized the French empire. Banquets bolstered the French empire by strengthening the solidarity between various proponents of the empire as banquets enabled people from a wide range of professions to gather in support of the empire around a communal meal, providing participants access to the Minister of the Colonies and other ministers and thereby producing an opportunity to influence government policy related to the French empire, advocating for a union between supporters of the empire and the government, promoting stability within colonial politics and the leadership of the empire, conveying the mission of the empire

¹⁰⁶ Discours prononcés au banquet offert par les Membres du Jury et les Exposants des Colonies Françaises à l'Exposition Universelle d'Anvers en 1885 sous la présidence de M. De La Porte à M. Albert Grodet le 1^{er} Mars 1886, p. 12. Paris: Société Anonyme de Publications Périodiques, 1886. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque SOM, C/Br/1741.

¹⁰⁷ Société de Géographie Commerciale du Havre. Bulletin 1886. Banquet offert par la Société à M. Savorgnan de Brazza, p. 167. Havre: Imprimerie de la Société des Anciens Courtiers, 1886. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque AOM, 21457/1886.

and seeking funding from the government, informing the French public about the colonies, highlighting the ways the empire benefitted the indigenous people of the colonies, downplaying the use of warfare and violence toward the native peoples, yet celebrating war campaigns that led to the expansion of the empire, and defining the relationship between colonizer and colonized as one of superior rulers and inferior subjects. The banquet was an important support network for the French empire as it rallied advocates to support key issues related to the empire whether it was promoting the stability of the leadership of the empire or seeking funding from the government.

In conclusion, the banquet serves both as a lens to view the nature of the French empire and as a political cultural site that influenced the empire by facilitating lobbying for different interests that congregated around the empire. With this dual function of the banquet as a historical topic, I have argued two distinct points about empire banquets. First, the discourse at banquets revealed the two primary motivations of the French empire, the empire bestowing national glory on France and the economic exploitation of the colonies, which overshadowed mention of the civilizing mission. Second, the banquet was a cultural institution that significantly bolstered the French empire. Concerning the first argument, nationalism and capitalism fueled the growth and development of the French empire according to speeches presented at banquets. After France's humiliating defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, a focus on expanding the French empire restored national glory and elevated France to a major world power. Participating in the conquering of new territories to be added to the empire was considered a patriotic duty. Likewise, the banquet served to rally private economic interests and direct them towards the cause of empire. Commerce and industry drove the French empire's successful operation. Speakers praised private initiative as being the most successful agent for

the development of the colonies. Regarding the second argument, the banquet strengthened the French empire by unifying supporters from a diverse set of professions. Speakers advocated for stability within the governance of the empire and portrayed the empire as beneficial to the native people of the colonies yet defined the relationship between the French and the indigenous people as one of superior rulers and inferior subjects.

The banquet strengthened the French empire as it was a unique meeting space that combined political speeches and discussion with an intimate, communal meal that firmly unified supporters of the empire. More than just a political meeting, eating and drinking together fueled the political aspects of the banquet by drawing new people into the imperial cause, influencing existing supporters to be more invested, and uniting proponents of the French empire into a powerful community. An invitation to a French empire banquet dinner was therefore also an invitation into the community of French empire supporters. The entertaining and embracing aspects of the banquet kept attendees returning to these banquets and thus remaining actively engaged in the cause of the French empire.

Discourse at banquets envisioned the French empire as a permanent entity that would last forever. The empire was depicted as being securely established and effectively run. Although there was talk of revolts in the colonies, speakers did not imagine the possibility of a full-scale revolutionary independence movement. In addition, speakers at banquets did not express any semblance of a guilty conscience in regard to their colonial rule nor question the bad consequences of their policies toward the indigenous people. Rather, they saw the French empire as not only having the right to exist but also as beneficial to the native people of Africa and Asia. Even more so, speakers considered the French empire to be beneficial to France, specifically to France's national prestige and economic interests.

At the heart of these empire banquets, the imperialists' drive to use nationalism and capitalism to expand and later consolidate the empire was strongly infused with greed, power, and domination over the peoples of Africa and Asia. As seen in the language of these empire banquets, race was not used as a major category to mobilize support for the French Empire. This stands in contrast to the British Empire. This is not to say that there was no racism in the French Empire but that the elite circle of the imperialists that gathered in these banquets saw money, power, and national glory as larger motivations than racial differences. These banquets not only had men nearly exclusively in attendance, but speakers also used masculine discourse, that of honor, glory, conquest, aggression, and national prestige to further the French Empire. Now we have seen the banquet's role in three distinctly different political areas: commemorations of the Paris Commune, the royalist movement, and the French empire. Up next, I will evaluate how the banquet served the feminist movement in France.

CHAPTER 4: « NON, NON, PAS DE GALANTERIE, DE LA JUSTICE ! »¹: FEMINIST BANQUETS, 1898 – 1914



Figure 9: Banquet au château de Madrid, 20 Juillet 1898²

¹ René Everard, “Pas de galanterie, la justice ! disent les Féministes,” *Le Rappel*, 6 July 1914, p. 3. In response to a male speaker’s assertion at a feminist banquet that Parliament would grant women the right to vote out of gallantry, one woman yelled: « Non, non, pas de galanterie, de la justice ! »

² Cautin et Berger. “Banquet au château de Madrid, offert à Mme Marguerite Durand par la rédaction et l’administration de *La Fronde* à l’occasion de sa fête.” 20 juillet 1898. Bibliothèque Marguerite Durand. [image]. Banquet organized by the administrators and editors of *La Fronde* in honor of Marguerite Durand on 20 July 1898.

Olympe de Gouges: « La Femme naît libre et demeure égale à l'homme en droits. Les distinctions sociales ne peuvent être fondées que sur l'utilité commune. »³

With the aim of transforming French society, feminists mobilized banquets along with other cultural gatherings from 1898 to 1914. Marie Bonneviel made a case to the audience at an 11 June 1909 banquet, organized by the Ligue française pour le droit des femmes (LFDF), not to be content with partial reforms but to seek a larger objective: “the task incumbent upon us is higher, it is nothing less than a regeneration of the masses, of the human species, obtained by the formation of individuals, men *and* women, equally strong, and fraternally united.”⁴ Bonneviel’s call to action implied that the repression of women caused a stagnation in the development of humankind and the dire necessity of a biopolitical rejuvenation of men and women. During the period 1898 to 1914, the feminist banquet came into being as an explicit feminist cultural event that was advertised by newspapers as « banquet féministe »⁵. I argue that banquets were an integral part of the feminist movement of early Third Republic France as they provided a forum for feminists to voice their political concerns. The banquet enabled feminist women and men to talk about important issues related to the feminist movement in an intimate setting over food and drink, thereby putting on the table the issue of the advancement of the women’s rights movement in France and Europe. Feminists, at these banquets, debated major issues such as the vote for women, internationalism, female worker pay, limitation of hours of work per week, women’s involvement in the running of a city, affordable housing, education, alcoholism, infant mortality, tuberculosis, hygiene, peace, and anti-prostitution. Banquets were not the only forum for

³ Olympe de Gouges, *Déclaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne*, Article Premier, 1791. “Woman is born free and remains equal to man in her rights. Social distinctions should be based only on the common good.”

⁴ “Le Banquet de la Ligue du Droit des Femmes,” *La Française*, 20 June 1909, p. 2. « la tâche qui nous incombe est plus haute, ce n’est rien moins qu’une régénération de la masse, de l’espèce, obtenue par la formation d’individus, hommes *et* femmes, également fort, et fraternellement unis. » Italics added by *La Française*.

⁵ For instance, “Un Banquet Féministe,” *Le Rappel*, 13 March 1912, p. 3.

feminists during the years 1898 to 1914. Michelle Perrot argued that feminists created a “gender consciousness” through multiple cultural forms of expression: petitions, processions, commemorations, funerals, banquets, conferences, meetings, and, according to Perrot, most importantly national and international congresses.⁶ Nevertheless, since banquets had become an important cultural vehicle for expressing concerns in the public sphere, female feminists and their male counterparts organized banquets as well to intervene in the public sphere. Feminist banquets did make a difference in the feminist movement as these cultural events united feminists over a communal meal and were semi-private spaces within the public sphere,⁷ which enabled feminist discourse to be heard and debated by not only the attendees but also readers of newspapers.

In this chapter, I will explain the gender situation in France prior to 1898, lay out the responses by the feminist movement, and analyze the speeches and the cultural atmosphere of the feminist banquets paying special attention to the rhetoric of female and male feminist speakers and the women’s rights associations that organized the banquets. Women organized banquets to campaign for reforms in the society of Third Republic France. French feminists utilized banquets as a forum to fight for women’s equality as they envisioned it. Feminist banquets were held because there was little space for a feministic critique within other banquets. Women did not have as much a voice in the other banquets of early Third Republic France. Of the other three banquets studied in this dissertation – commemorations of the Paris Commune, royalist, and empire – the empire banquets were the most masculine as they had the least female participation. No women spoke at the empire banquets and only one woman, Madame Adam,

⁶ Michelle Perrot, “Préface,” in Laurence Klejman et Florence Rochefort, *L’Égalité en marche : Le féminisme sous la Troisième République* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1989): 15.

⁷ Maria Todorova’s characterization of banquets in early Third Republic France as she explained at my dissertation pre-defense.

appeared on the lists of the prominent attendees that included about a 100 people per event, and she attended only two banquets, the first and second annual colonial banquets of 6 June 1894⁸ and 8 June 1895,⁹ respectively. The royalists had some women's participation, but it was limited to the years 1908 to 1913. The Paris Commune commemorative banquets had the most women's involvement of these three genres, occurring most prominently between 1880 and 1901. During these years, socialist and anarchist feminists spoke at the banquets commemorating the Paris Commune, revealing the strength of socialist feminism during the late nineteenth century. Nonetheless, the number of women who spoke at the Paris Commune banquets paled in comparison to the number of male speakers. Women, thus, needed a cultural venue to get them into the public sphere, and the banquet became a prominent one of these spaces. Feminist banquets, along with other cultural venues, succeeded in bringing ideas concerning women's rights and involvement in French society into the public sphere as important issues to debate.

Women's Condition and Gender Situation in Early Third Republic France

The French Revolution of 1789 to 1799 brought about an explosion of revolutionary feminist ideas but, at the same time, a reification of patriarchy in France. Under the *ancien régime* (Old Regime), women did not have equal rights compared to men under the French monarchy, and France was not a democratic government under the Bourbon kings, yet French women did indeed vote for the first Estates General of 1302 and continued to have regional and national voting rights until the French Revolution, which explicitly removed political rights from

⁸ Union Coloniale Française. Rapport de l'Exercice 1893-1894. Banquet Colonial de 1894, p. 35. Paris: Librairie coloniale. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque École coloniale, 2104/5

⁹ Union Coloniale Française. Rapport de l'Exercice 1894-1895. Banquet Colonial de 1895, p. 70. Paris: Librairie coloniale, 1895. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Bibliothèque École coloniale, 8177/1.

women.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the French Revolution created a political situation that enabled the rise of feminism as women publicly demanded equal rights.¹¹ The attainment of women's rights in France, therefore, cannot be seen as linear progress and should not be depicted as entirely produced by the French Revolution.

Women, men, and children of the working classes withstood inhumane working conditions in order to sustain minimal living standards during nineteenth-century France.¹² Under laissez-faire capitalism, hunger, polluted drinking water, disease, and poor housing were daily realities for the Parisian lower classes.¹³ There was a substantial pay gap between female and male workers. In Paris in 1870, for example, the mean female daily salary was 2.14 francs while men earned an average of 4.75 francs per day.¹⁴ Likewise, in Amiens, women earned between 1.25 and 2 francs a day whereas men were paid between 2.5 and 3.5 francs for the same work.¹⁵ In male wages, subsistence and the cost of caring for one's wife and children were included in their pay; however, female wages were below the subsistence level.¹⁶ An average Parisian working-class woman's annual income from both work and Public Assistance aid was only 600 to 675 francs while the cost of living in Paris was 850 to 1200 francs a year.¹⁷ Therefore, no matter how hard women worked they were not able to escape their economic situation and frequent pregnancies ensured that women would constantly struggle to feed

¹⁰ Steven C. Hause with Anne R. Kenney, *Women's Suffrage and Social Politics in the French Third Republic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984): 3-5.

¹¹ Steven C. Hause with Anne R. Kenney, 5.

¹² Michael P. Hanagan, *Nascent Proletarians: Class Formation in Post-Revolutionary France* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, Ltd, 1989): 208.

¹³ Leonard R. Berlanstein, *The Working People of Paris, 1871-1914* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984): 48, 52-59.

¹⁴ Evelyne Sullerot, *Histoire et sociologie du travail féminin* (Paris: Éditions Gonthier, 1968): 103.

¹⁵ Sullerot, 103.

¹⁶ Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History, revised ed.* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1999): 144-145.

¹⁷ Rachel G. Fuchs, *Poor and Pregnant in Paris: Strategies for Survival in the Nineteenth Century* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992): 165.

themselves and their children. A single working woman could not have survived in nineteenth-century French society without membership in a family with the alternatives being either dire poverty or prostitution.¹⁸ Among working men and women, class took priority over gender. Class and gender interests collided when the question of male and female wages arose. Socialists never considered women's political rights to be a priority.¹⁹ Likewise, feminist socialists envisioned socialism as the best opportunity for women's emancipation.²⁰

On the other hand, bourgeois women did not face the dire poverty of female workers and did not have to endure sexual assault and/or harassment at the level of their proletarian counterparts.²¹ Compared to men of their class, middle-class women did not have equal academic education. Although the Camille Sée law (21 December 1880) sanctioned *lycées* and *collèges* for women, an important distinction was the *lycées* for girls did not train them for the *baccalauréat* exam that was a requirement for attending university. The Camille Sée law did greatly increase women's educational opportunities yet it was not the result of feminists' campaigning but instead was because of the efforts of anti-clerical republicans who wanted to laicize the French educational system and, therefore, strengthen the republic.²²

Women of the bourgeoisie carried out their lives largely separated from men. Whereas in eighteenth-century France when businesses were mainly run out of the home or farm, the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century created a separation between work and home. The middle-class ideal of the nineteenth century became a strict doctrine of separate spheres,

¹⁸ Fuchs, 9, 34.

¹⁹ Helen Harden Chenut, *The Fabric of Gender: Working-Class Culture in Third Republic France* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005): 12.

²⁰ Carolyn J. Eichner, *Surmounting the Barricades: Women in the Paris Commune* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004): 10-12, 182.

²¹ Claire Goldberg Moses, *French Feminism in the Nineteenth Century* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1984): 31.

²² James F. McMillan, *Housewife or Harlot: The Place of Women in French Society, 1870-1940* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981): 50.

divided between the public sphere (men, business, politics, competition) and the private sphere (women, family, morality, harmony). The ideal life-calling for bourgeois women in the early Third Republic was to be a housewife and mother. French society, especially novels, constructed an ideal version of women that promoted the inequality of women with respect to men.²³ The *belle époque* (1890 – 1914) was less *belle* for women as for men because French society withheld political rights from women and restricted their social and economic liberty.²⁴ As the nineteenth-century progressed, however, urban women of the bourgeoisie increasingly wanted to tap into the public sphere to allow their voices to be heard. Feminist banquets became one integral means to do so.

Mary Louise Roberts investigated the influence of the *femme nouvelle*, mainly urban, bourgeois women, who started to emerge in the 1890s and early 1900s and worked in diverse professions such as women's rights activists, doctors and nurses, lawyers, journalists, secretaries, clerks, saleswomen, cashiers, and teachers. A professional woman lived outside of the "traditional" roles of domestic wife and mother and thus was perceived to threaten patriarchal ideals and institutions.²⁵ The lasting legacy of these professional French women was to make normative femininity an option rather than a woman's sole fate.²⁶ On the other hand, Karen Offen demonstrated the similarity between Catholic and the republican ideal conceptions of women in France and showed the only major difference being that religion and faith was

²³ Claire Goldberg Moses, *French Feminism in the Nineteenth Century* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1984): 17.

²⁴ Diana Holmes and Carrie Tarr, "Introduction," in Diana Holmes and Carrie Tarr, eds., *A 'Belle Epoque'?: Women in French Society and Culture 1890-1914* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006): 2-3.

²⁵ Jennifer Waelti-Walters and Steven C. Hause, "Introduction," *Feminisms of the Belle Epoque: A Historical and Literary Anthology*, Jennifer Waelti-Walters and Steven C. Hause eds. (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1994): 2-3.

²⁶ Mary Louise Roberts, *Disruptive Acts: The New Woman in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002): 17.

replaced by science and reason.²⁷ In other words, republicans still firmly upheld the doctrine of separate spheres but created a new idealization of mothers who remained in the private sphere yet used science and reason in the raising of their children. Up against a firmly entrenched patriarchal system of early Third Republic France, women and men who held sympathies with women's rights began to expand feminism in a public manner.

Feminism in Early Third Republic France

Karen Offen defined feminism as “a comprehensive critical response to the deliberate and systematic subordination of women as a group by men as a group within a given cultural setting,” and she considered this definition to be applicable to Europe from the years 1700 to 1950.²⁸ The word *féministes* had a particular origin in France. The first use in printed form dated back to 1872 where it was used in a disparaging manner by Alexandre Dumas (fils); however, in 1882 Hubertine Auclert used *féministes* with a positive connotation in the newspaper *La Citoyenne*.²⁹

Compared to Britain and the United States of America, the feminist movement in France had tougher obstacles to overcome in the form of the Catholic Church, laws, and political governance that included conservative governments of the nineteenth century as well as the instability of the Third Republic.³⁰ Michelle Perrot argued that these obstacles were overcome after 1878 as the feminist and workers' movements brought women into the public sphere and

²⁷ Karen Offen, *Debating the Woman Question in the French Third Republic, 1870-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018): 72.

²⁸ Karen Offen, *European Feminisms, 1700 – 1950: A Political History* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000): 20.

²⁹ Karen Offen, *Debating the Woman Question in the French Third Republic, 1870-1920*, 157-159.

³⁰ Jennifer Waelti-Walters and Steven C. Hause, “Introduction,” *Feminisms of the Belle Epoque: A Historical and Literary Anthology*, Jennifer Waelti-Walters and Steven C. Hause, eds. (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1994): 2-3.

thus a hold on public power in France.³¹ A distinctive feature of Third Republic feminism was its stability and steady growth as the movement became more than a brief eruption during a turbulent time of revolution.³² Similar to republicanism, the major difference between feminist agitation during the first two French Republics and the Third was that, with the former, there were short, episodic spurts of reformist activity for two or three years, which were then suppressed. Concerning feminism under the Third Republic, it was a multi-decade, accumulating and diversifying movement that eventually was successful on multiple legislative fronts. Laurence Klejman and Florence Rochefort argued that the leading feminists succeeded in forging a connection between the women's movement and the Republic by interlocking equality for females with democracy.³³

French feminism of the nineteenth and early twentieth century was not pervasive throughout France. Claire Goldberg Moses wrote that feminism was not widespread throughout France in the nineteenth century but was essentially an urban movement that was mostly centered in Paris.³⁴ Likewise, Anne-Sarah Bouglé-Moalic claimed that the debates on women's right to vote between 1848 and 1944 was a republican and Parisian phenomenon.³⁵ The location of the feminist banquets from 1898 to 1914 confirm these theses as the majority of the banquets were held in Paris and only a few others were held in other large regional cities.

The main objectives of French feminists in the nineteenth century were the following: obtaining political and civil rights that men had attained but women were excluded from having,

³¹ Michelle Perrot, *Les Femmes ou les silences de l'Histoire* (Saint-Amand-Montrond, France: Flammarion, 1998): 259-266.

³² Laurence Klejman and Florence Rochefort, *L'Égalité en marche : Le féminisme sous la Troisième République* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1989): 23.

³³ Laurence Klejman and Florence Rochefort, 339.

³⁴ Claire Goldberg Moses, *French Feminism in the Nineteenth Century* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1984): x.

³⁵ Anne-Sarah Bouglé-Moalic, *Le vote des françaises : Cent ans de débats 1848-1944* (Rennes, France: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2012): 9-10, 317.

sexual equality, more rigorous education for women, and more opportunities for careers.³⁶ Feminists also heavily campaigned for moral reforms, such as against alcoholism, tobacco use, pornography, and prostitution as well as in favor of peace and pro-natalism.³⁷ Men's involvement in the feminist movement diminished towards the end of the nineteenth century, and women took hold of the leadership and became the vast majority of members prior to the First World War.³⁸

The *fin de siècle* period has been called “a golden age of French feminism” with as many as seventeen major feminist organizations that held an impressive diversity of stances on how to promote women's rights and debated what egalitarian agendas to pursue.³⁹ These feminist organizations ranged across the political spectrum from republican to Catholic to socialist.⁴⁰ In terms of total members in the feminist organizations, the republican faction had a 1900 – 1901 membership at c. 22,625 (including 21,000 from the Conseil national des femmes françaises (CNFF)) and a 1910 – 1914 Parisian membership rising to 103,325 – 113,875 (90,000 – 100,000 from the CNFF and 12,000 from the Union française pour le suffrage des femmes (UFSF)); while enrollment of Catholic feminists in 1897 – 1904 was only 100 in terms of progressive feminists, yet 355,100 moderate feminists (350,000 from the Fédération Jeanne d'Arc), and 320,000 conservatives (Ligue patriotique des françaises (LPF)); and, finally, feminist socialists had less than 100 members between 1900 and 1914.⁴¹ The disparity between republican feminists and socialists increased during the Third Republic.⁴² Republican feminists remained

³⁶ Moses, x-xi, 226.

³⁷ Steven C. Hause with Anne R. Kenney, 23, 25.

³⁸ Steven C. Hause with Anne R. Kenney, 44.

³⁹ Jennifer Waelti-Walters and Steven C. Hause, eds., *Feminisms of the Belle Epoque* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1994): 4-5.

⁴⁰ Steven C. Hause with Anne R. Kenney, 41-42, 63, 134-135.

⁴¹ Steven C. Hause with Anne R. Kenney, 41-42, 63, 134-135. Membership is a useful metric, yet it does not show the total feminists involved in the women's rights organizations and the feminist movement.

⁴² Moses, 223.

faithful to the Republic and differentiated their movement with that of both Catholic feminism and socialist feminism.⁴³ The republican feminists supported the Third Republic and believed that reforms could be enacted within the existing political system; whereas, socialist feminists felt that feminism could only thrive under a new, social Republic.⁴⁴ In general, Catholic feminists worked to support the Catholic Church in the face of the Third Republic's rigorous program of secularization.⁴⁵

It was not until the end of the nineteenth century when feminist organizations began to form a coherent program to achieve their objectives of mainly political and civil rights.⁴⁶ After the law on associations enacted in France on 1 July 1901, many women's rights organizations emerged.⁴⁷ The following are some of the important feminist associations that organized banquets. Ligue française pour le droit des femmes (LFDF), established in 1882 by Maria Deraismes, placed women's right to vote at the center of its politics. The Conseil national des femmes françaises (CNFF), founded in 1901, worked in France to transform the demands of French women into legislation and was affiliated with the International Council of Women (ICW).⁴⁸ The Ligue patriotique des françaises (LPF), founded in 1902, was a conservative women's association that exhibited a Catholic and monarchist political bent. Finally, the Union française pour le suffrage des femmes (UFSF), founded in 1909 and led by Cécile Brunschvicg, focused on gaining the right to vote for women.

⁴³ McMillan, 86.

⁴⁴ Steven C. Hause with Anne R. Kenney, *Women's Suffrage and Social Politics in the French Third Republic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984): 10.

⁴⁵ Steven C. Hause with Anne R. Kenney, *Women's Suffrage and Social Politics in the French Third Republic*, 43.

⁴⁶ Moses, 226; *Feminisms of the Belle Epoque: A Historical and Literary Anthology*, Jennifer Waelti-Walters and Steven C. Hause, eds. (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1994): 4.

⁴⁷ Karen Offen, *Debating the Woman Question in the French Third Republic, 1870-1920*, 302.

⁴⁸ Karen Offen, *Debating the Woman Question in the French Third Republic, 1870-1920*, 308-311.

Suffragists were committed to the legislative process to secure the vote for women.⁴⁹ A parliamentary vote in favor of women's suffrage, however, was not an easy feat as no political party had a majority during this time period, and the Senate was very conservative. According to Steven C. Hause and Anne R. Kenney, three developments between 1896 to 1901 propelled the movement for rights for women: women's congresses held in Paris, founding of the feminist daily newspaper *La Fronde* by Marguerite Durand in 1897, and the establishment of the Conseil national des femmes françaises (CNFF) by Protestant women (only two percent of France's population) in 1901 that united a wide variety of feminist associations.⁵⁰ Women obtained the following important, progressive legal rights during the early Third Republic in spite of great opposition from the Catholic Church: Naquet law legalizing divorce (1884), medical services in public hospitals (1885),⁵¹ single women received the right to witness public acts (1897), vote for judges to fill the *tribunes de commerce* (1898), practice law (1900), mothers given the same authority as fathers over their minor children and for married women to be in charge of their income (1907), and the right to file a paternity suit (1912).

British historian James F. McMillan writes that the French public intensely discussed gender inequality prior to the First World War as a result of the feminist movement.⁵² Similarly, Karen Offen argued that almost all the major issues of "male-female relations" were heatedly discussed in France by the year 1920.⁵³ I argue that banquets contributed to the development of the feminist movement by propagating feminist ideas into the public sphere.

⁴⁹ Steven C. Hause with Anne R. Kenney, 10.

⁵⁰ Steven C. Hause with Anne R. Kenney, 28.

⁵¹ In 1869 under the Second Empire, Madeleine Brès became the first French woman to be accepted into medical school in France.

⁵² James F. McMillan, *Housewife or Harlot: The Place of Women in French Society, 1870-1940* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981): 76.

⁵³ Karen Offen, *Debating the Woman Question in the French Third Republic, 1870-1920*, x.

Feminist Banquets, 1898 – 1914

Women have been gathering among themselves well before the advent of the French Third Republic. The following image engraved by Abraham Bosse, from 1635 during the reign of King Louis XIII, depicts a banquet in an exquisite room with only women present. We can see the artist depicting women without their husbands in a private setting, an early incarnation of female sociability. Nevertheless, this was not a feminist banquet as the purpose of the banquet and the conversation would have had to be centered around a feminist issue.



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Figure 10: Abraham Bosse, *Les femmes à table en l'absence de leurs maris*, 1635⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Abraham Bosse [graveur], *Les femmes à table en l'absence de leurs maris* [estampe], 1635, Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon, BnF Gallica.

The major change in the feminist banquets from 1898 to 1914 with respect to the women's banquets of the Old Regime is the emerging political feminist factor. A precursor to the feminist banquets of 1898 to 1914 occurred on 9 June 1872 in Paris. Léon Richer organized this banquet to support the rights of women at the Corazza Restaurant, Palais-Royal, which was presided by Edouard Laboulaye and had Maria Deraismes in attendance. There were 150 French men and women present, and Victor Hugo mailed a letter that was read at the banquet in which he stated that women were slaves under the law. The men and women who attended this banquet did not challenge the patriarchal system as they agreed that women should be "citizen-mothers" of the Republic.⁵⁵ Moving forward to the year 1898,⁵⁶ women played a more significant role in shaping the politics and the agenda of the feminist banquets.

In terms of quantity, there were considerably fewer feminist banquets from 1898 to 1914 as compared to royalist and commemorations of the Paris Commune banquets and somewhat fewer than empire banquets.⁵⁷ Based on my archival and newspaper research, I have identified 23 banquets (18 mainstream feminist, two of them conservative feminist, and three instances where feminists gave meaningful speeches at other banquets) that occurred between 1898 to 1914. Feminist newspapers were a significant media outlet for not only the advertising of banquets but also the propagation of feminist ideas discussed at these lunch and dinner events. *La Fronde*, *La Française*, *L'Action féminine*, and *L'Action féministe* actively reported on feminist banquets. More than 40 feminist periodicals were created during the period 1890 to 1914. The feminist newspaper *La Fronde*, founded by Marguerite Durand in 1897, was named

⁵⁵ Karen Offen, *Debating the Woman Question in the French Third Republic, 1870-1920*, 15-18.

⁵⁶ There certainly could be women's rights banquets between 1872 and 1898 but they were not called feminist banquets per se and thus are difficult to identify in the primary sources.

⁵⁷ See the Dissertation Introduction for a comparative analysis of the quantity of banquets at their high points across these four genres.

after the French word *fronde*, which has two meanings. First, it refers to *La Fronde*, the aristocratic rebellion against Louis XIV from 1648 to 1653. Therefore, the newspaper was envisioned as leading a feminist rebellion. Second, *fronde* means sling and refers to the sling that David used to kill Goliath, implying the newspaper was a weapon for the underdog feminists against the firmly entrenched, powerful patriarchal system. An all-female staff ran *La Fronde* and produced fine journalism on par with the top newspapers of the day. Maggie Allison argued that there was a contradiction between Marguerite Durand's emphasis on her beauty and the newspaper's coverage of controversial feminist issues, yet Allison did not see this as jeopardizing the mission of *La Fronde* but rather as symbolic of the situation of women in French society at the time.⁵⁸ Among other cases, Joan Scott conveyed a dramatic case study of the radical feminist Madeleine Pelletier, a psychiatrist, who successfully campaigned between 1902 and 1903 to take the required examinations in order to work as an intern in a mental institution. Pelletier thought that femininity was a psychological characteristic.⁵⁹ She advocated that women dress their daughters “ ‘en garçon’ ” as well as women should be trained in firearm usage and generally to act as men.⁶⁰ Beauty or femininity – like age, class, gender, religion, and nationality – could also be a factor on how women were perceived and a useful category for analyzing the impact of Marguerite Durand's feminist agenda or that of Madeleine Pelletier. Therefore, a nineteenth to early twentieth-century feminist woman could be either so-called feminine or masculine.

⁵⁸ Maggie Allison, “Marguerite Durand and *La Fronde*: Voicing Women of the Belle Epoque,” in *A 'Belle Epoque'?: Women in French Society and Culture 1890 – 1914*, Diana Holmes and Carrie Tarr, eds. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006): 40, 47.

⁵⁹ Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996): 135.

⁶⁰ Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man*, 135-137.

French feminists both spoke out against the exclusion of women at other banquets and criticized the practice of inviting women to banquets only because of their beauty as some sort of adornment to be idealized and desired by men. The feminist Hubertine Auclert wrote a letter to the municipal councilors of Paris protesting the decision of excluding women from an 1882 banquet inaugurating the Hôtel de Ville. She argued that the government did not have the right of prohibiting women from attending this banquet where women's taxes have paid for the food and drink.⁶¹ In another case, a female journalist Jéanne Deflou criticized the wording of the invitation for a 24 February 1911 banquet in Paris organized by the new weekly newspaper *Les Droits de l'homme* that invited women in this manner: « Les dames aussi belles que possible. » (“Women as beautiful as possible.”)⁶² Joan Scott argued that during the period from 1789 to 1944 French feminists aimed to obtain citizenship for women in a paradoxical manner by both affirming and disputing the orthodox gender stereotypes justified as natural by French society.⁶³ Feminist women criticized the exclusion of women at banquets as well as a misogynist attendance policy of which beautiful women were encouraged to attend to satisfy the desires of male attendees. Yet some feminist banquets exhibited a characteristically feminine character.

Feminists made sure banquets were feminine not just in discourse but in appearance as well. Feminist banquets were exquisitely and gracefully decorated. In general, French feminists of the Third Republic sought not to make women masculine; rather women's rights activists encouraged a relationship between mothers and fathers that was more of a team effort striking a balance between motherhood and intellectual and professional capabilities.⁶⁴ There was a

⁶¹ “Le Banquet de l’Hôtel de Ville,” *La Presse*, 27 June 1882, p. 2-3. Archives de la Préfecture de Police, BA 885, Auclert, Marie Anne Hubertine.

⁶² Jéanne Deflou, “Aussi belles que possible...,” *Le Féministe*, 5 March 1911, p. 2. Bibliothèque nationale de France.

⁶³ Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man*, ix-xi.

⁶⁴ Karen Offen, *Debating the Woman Question in the French Third Republic, 1870-1920*, 622.

beautiful ambiance at a lavish 20 July 1898 banquet organized by the administrators and editors of the feminist daily newspaper *La Fronde* to honor Marguerite Durand on her saint's day that took place at the château de Madrid in a Parisian park, the Bois de Boulogne, where the table had white and pink roses as well as daisies, ribbons, fruit baskets, and lovely silverware underneath a veranda of stained-glass windows.⁶⁵ The elegant décor of a 31 May 1914 banquet taking place in Lyon organized by the Union française pour le suffrage des femmes (UFSF) was described thus: "The room is pleasant under the lights, with flowers on the tables, the lovely menus, of which some have been painted."⁶⁶ The ticket price to attend a feminist banquet ranged between 4 and 10 francs, and the majority of the feminist banquets took place in Paris.

How many women were typically present at the feminist banquets of the late nineteenth to early twentieth century? This question does not have a straightforward answer but some commentary by contemporary journalists shed some light on this question of the gender composition of the audience. There was an instance where only two women (Madame de Peretti della Rocca, director of the newspaper *Nice-Littéraire*, and Madame Anne de Réal, founder of the periodical, *Le Féministe*) were present for a 17 December 1906 feminist banquet, which had the purpose of promoting a newly created feminist newspaper in Nice, France based off of a previous newspaper in Florence, Italy.⁶⁷ On the other hand, the annual banquet of the Conseil national des femmes françaises (CNFF) that took place on 11 March 1912 at l'Hôtel Continental had 200 people present, and two thirds of them were women.⁶⁸ Another banquet organized by the Ligue française pour le droit des femmes (LFDF) took place on 5 July 1914 and had 500

⁶⁵ Jeanne Landre, "La Sainte Marguerite," *La Fronde*, 21 July 1898, p. 1.

⁶⁶ Déroulement et travaux, 1914, p. 1. Banquet de l'U.F.S.F. (31 mai 1914). Centre des Archives du féminisme, Archives Brunshvieg, Cécile. 1 AF 15, Congrès national de l'UFSF tenu à Lyon du 31 mai au 1 juin 1914. « La salle est riante, sous les lumières, avec les fleurs sur les tables, les jolis menus dont quelques-uns ont été peints. »

⁶⁷ "Un Banquet Féministe," *Le Féministe*, 1 January 1907, p. 33. Bibliothèque nationale de France.

⁶⁸ "Le Mouvement Féministe : Conseil National des Femmes Françaises: Banquet annuel," *La Française*, 17 March 1912, p. 2.

women in attendance and only a few dozen men.⁶⁹ The person presiding at the feminist banquets (also known as the president of the banquet) was typically a man. Of the banquets analyzed, there were 14 banquets where the sources revealed the president of the banquet: nine of them had men presiding, four banquets had women presiding, and one had a joint male/female presidency. However, both men and women spoke at feminist banquets at approximately the same frequency. For instance, male politicians and feminist organizational leaders spoke regularly. Despite the significant participation by men, these banquets were indeed feminist and feminine as the following images show (as well as Figure 9 on the cover of the chapter).



Figure 11: Au château de Madrid, 20 July 1898 (Same banquet as Figure 9)⁷⁰

⁶⁹ René Everard, “Pas de galanterie, la justice ! disent les Féministes,” *Le Rappel*, 6 July 1914, p. 3.

⁷⁰ Au château de Madrid, le jour du banquet de la Sainte Marguerite, 20 juillet 1898. Photographe. Bibliothèque Marguerite Durand.



Figure 12: Pensionnat de Mademoiselle Poineau. Banquet de l'Association, 2 July 1903⁷¹

One key theme replicated by speakers at feminist banquets was that the victory of feminism was an inevitable outcome – eventually feminist ideas and policies would win out over the patriarchal system. Mrs. Corbett Ashby, an English feminist, asserted that the ultimate victory of feminism throughout the world could only be delayed by obstinate parliaments.⁷² The rhetoric at feminist banquets was varied as the following themes were most prevalent: question of women working in business, industry, education, and government; women in the public sphere; unity between men and women; campaign for women's suffrage; international participation and unity between feminists of Britain, continental Europe, and Russia; and rhetoric in favor of peace and public demonstrations.

The question of why women were working and what societal forces led them into the workforce was brought up by speakers and presumably intensely discussed by the participants at

⁷¹ Pensionnat de Mademoiselle Poineau. Banquet de l'Association (2 juillet 1903). Bibliothèque Marguerite Durand. Carte postale. This banquet at a private school directed by Mademoiselle Marie Agathe Poineau took place in Angers in western France.

⁷² André Moufflet, "Le Mouvement Féministe : La Ligue Française pour le Droit des Femmes," *La Française*, 10 March 1912, p. 3.

banquets. At the fourth annual banquet of the Ligue française pour le droit des femmes (LFDF) occurring on 1 March 1912, Paul Henri Benjamin Balluet d'Estournelles de Constant, Senator of the Sarth who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1909, highlighted the important role women held in education, commerce, and agriculture.⁷³ Immediately following, Margery Corbett Ashby, a British suffragist, proclaimed: "It is not feminism that will remove the woman from her foyer, where she prefers to remain without a doubt, it is the economic evolution."⁷⁴ Ashby, in effect, removed some of the "responsibility" for the drastic changes taking place regarding middle-class women entering the workforce in the beginning of the twentieth century by placing the blame on the economy and minimizing the influence of feminism on women's desire to work. Yet, other speakers such as M. Herriot, the mayor of Lyon and the senator of the Rhône who presided at a 31 May 1914 UFSF banquet in Lyon, informed the audience that he incorporated women into the operation of city services including at an orphanage and restaurants for working mothers.⁷⁵ Thereby, he implied that women made significant contributions to key public services of the city of Lyon.

Women's rights activists expressed a concern for working-class women's conditions at feminist banquets and female workers had an opportunity to speak. Madame Dalby, a typesetter for *La Fronde*, spoke at the 20 July 1898 banquet honoring Marguerite Durand and stated her appreciation for the opportunity that Durand has provided for female workers of *La Fronde* by carrying out the motto « à travail égal, salaire égal ».⁷⁶ Jules Siegfried, deputy of Seine-

⁷³ André Moufflet, "Le Mouvement Féministe : La Ligue Française pour le Droit des Femmes," *La Française*, 10 March 1912, p. 3.

⁷⁴ André Moufflet, "Le Mouvement Féministe : La Ligue Française pour le Droit des Femmes," *La Française*, 10 March 1912, p. 3. « Ce n'est pas le féminisme qui arrachera la femme à son foyer, où elle préférerait sans doute rester, c'est l'évolution économique. »

⁷⁵ Déroulement et travaux, 1914, p. 4. Banquet de l'U.F.S.F. (31 mai 1914). Centre des Archives du féminisme, Archives Brunshvicg, Cécile. 1 AF 15, Congrès national de l'UFSF tenu à Lyon du 31 mai au 1 juin 1914.

⁷⁶ Jeanne Landre, "La Sainte Marguerite," *La Fronde*, 21 July 1898, p. 1.

Inférieure, called for women to be admitted to offices at the local level that dealt with improving the condition of inexpensive public housing at a 1912 annual CNFF banquet occurring in Paris.⁷⁷ Mlle Marie Bonneval spoke later at the same banquet on behalf of female workers.⁷⁸ Marie Bonneval, who took part in the Commune of Lyon (1871), was a socialist, feminist, and freemason. She worked as a teacher, nurse, journalist for *La Fronde*, was in the leadership of the feminist organization LFDF, served on the High Labor Council, and held the position of administrator of educational funding. In her text “Le Mouvement syndical féminin en France” (1901), Bonneval stood up for women’s socio-economic freedom despite the economic situation: “even if economic necessities did not impose work on a woman outside the home, it is her full right to direct her efforts where she chooses.”⁷⁹ Thus, some feminists were concerned about the social and economic situation of working women and a woman’s fundamental right to work.

At banquets in France, feminists provided their thoughts about how women should act in society, including the promotion of a woman’s right to enter and be active in the public sphere. Caroline Rémy de Guebhard (pennname Madame Séverine) was a feminist and anarchist journalist who had the unique distinction of interviewing the socially progressive Pope Leo XIII in 1892. At a 11 March 1912 banquet in Paris commemorating the eleventh anniversary of the founding of the CNFF, she presented eloquently the two paths women could take in the world

⁷⁷ “Le Mouvement Féministe : Conseil National des Femmes Françaises: Banquet annuel,” *La Française*, 17 March 1912, p. 2.

⁷⁸ “Le Mouvement Féministe : Conseil National des Femmes Françaises: Banquet annuel,” *La Française*, 17 March 1912, p. 2.

⁷⁹ Marie Bonneval, “The Women’s Trade-Union Movement in France,” in *Feminisms of the Belle Epoque: A Historical and Literary Anthology*, Jennifer Waelti-Walters and Steven C. Hause, eds. (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1994): 128.

that of acting like Helen or Penelope⁸⁰ and the corresponding decision between following the ways of the goddess Venus or Minerva,⁸¹ hinting women had an important choice to make with their lives whether to use their beauty for ‘immoral’ acts or for women to use restraint and be a source of stability and wisdom.⁸² Around this time in France, bourgeois women were beginning to gain the freedom to decide whether they wanted to have a career or not as a result of the influence of banquets in the feminist movement.

The banquet provided a cultural atmosphere that united feminists of both sexes and strengthened their ability to achieve their objectives. Feminists recognized the need to reconcile and harmonize the strands of feminism and thus to avoid the fragmentation of the movement, which has so bedeviled leftwing movements throughout history. For instance, at a 7 June 1913 CNFF banquet, the British feminist and philanthropist Lady Aberdeen (Isabel Maria Hamilton-Gordon), commented on the power of feminists gathering: “We all will remain when together, as a large family, in the work that unites us.”⁸³ In addition, speakers at feminist banquets frequently pushed for unity between male and female feminists and between men and women in general in order to achieve the goals of feminism. D’Estournelles de Constant presided at the fourth annual LFDF banquet occurring on 1 March 1912 in Paris, and he proclaimed the need for unity in the feminist movement among female feminists and between men and women and added that it was

⁸⁰ According to Ancient Greek legend, Helen of Troy was considered by Homer to be the most beautiful woman in the world and she was either abducted or escaped with the character Paris. On the other hand, Penelope of Ithaca was the devoted wife of Odysseus who remained faithful to her husband despite the advances of 108 suitors.

⁸¹ The Roman goddess Venus was the equivalent of the Greek goddess Aphrodite who was the goddess of love and sex whereas the Roman virgin goddess Minerva had the attributes of wisdom and poetry and was based on the Greek goddess Athena.

⁸² “Un Banquet Féministe,” *Le Rappel*, 13 March 1912, p. 3.

⁸³ J. M., “Les Grands Congrès : Congrès Féministe à Paris, Organisé par le Conseil National des Femmes Françaises: Le Banquet,” *La Française*, 14 June 1913, p. 3. « Toutes nous resterons quand même ensemble, comme une grande famille, dans l’œuvre qui nous unit. »

the task of mothers to raise the male feminists of the future.⁸⁴ Mme Séverine called for all of the feminist organizations to unite at an annual banquet of the LFDF on 6 March 1914 in Paris.⁸⁵ Another example from a 31 May 1914 UFSF banquet in Lyon with more than 200 people in attendance, Cécile Brunschvicq poetically stated in the name of the Ligue d'Electeurs: "in the same way as the Rhône, a sometimes brutal force, and the Saône, gentle and peaceful, unite for the greater good of the Lyonnais region, man and woman could know how to get along for organizing a better city."⁸⁶ As a cultural event that naturally brought men and women together over food and drink, the banquet created a powerful solidarity between women and men in support of the feminist cause.

Speakers from France and other nationalities campaigned for women's suffrage at feminist banquets. Senator Ferdinand Dreyfus, at a 7 June 1913 CNFF banquet, declared:

The air in the Parliament...is not always very pure and it is good for them to open the windows...You [feminists] are like the ardent young nations...who go from conquest to conquest. But your conquests do not cost a drop of blood...feminism must take its courageousness to this prudent Senate.⁸⁷

Anne-Sarah Bouglé-Moalic asserted that, specifically during the Third Republic, the major resistance to the right to vote for women emanated from conservative republicans.⁸⁸ At the same banquet organized by the CNFF and after speeches by German and Italian delegates, a Russian

⁸⁴ André Moufflet, "Le Mouvement Féministe : La Ligue Française pour le Droit des Femmes," *La Française*, 10 March 1912, p. 3.

⁸⁵ "Pour les Droits Politiques de la Femme," *L'Humanité*, 8 March 1914. Archives nationales, F/7/13266, Vote des Femmes. Extrait de presse concernant les revendications féminines. 1908-1928.

⁸⁶ "Pour le Suffrage des Femmes : Le Congrès de Lyon," *La Française*, 6 June 1914, p. 2. « de même que le Rhône, d'une force parfois brutale, et la Saône, douce et paisible, s'unissent pour le plus grand bien de la région lyonnaise, l'homme et la femme sauraient s'entendre pour organiser une cité meilleure. »

⁸⁷ J. M., "Les Grands Congrès : Congrès Féministe à Paris, Organisé par le Conseil National des Femmes Françaises: Le Banquet," *La Française*, 14 June 1913, p. 3. « L'air du Parlement...n'est pas toujours très pur et il lui est bon d'ouvrir les fenêtres...Vous êtes comme les jeunes nations ardents...qui vont de conquêtes en conquêtes. Mais vos conquêtes ne coûtent pas une goutte de sang...le féminisme doit pourtant aux hardiesses de ce prudent Sénat. »

⁸⁸ Anne-Sarah Bouglé-Moalic, *Le vote des françaises : Cent ans de débats 1848-1944* (Rennes, France: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2012): 9-10, 317.

delegate proclaimed that the movement for women's suffrage has intensified the alliance between Russia and France.⁸⁹ At an annual banquet of the LFDF taking place on 6 March 1914 at the restaurant Maubant, rue de Richelieu, in Paris, Maria Verone declared that women's political rights would be advanced during the upcoming electoral campaign.⁹⁰ Marcel Sembat followed and asserted that the often cited objection to women voting, that of their close connection to the Catholic Church, was not a sound argument.⁹¹

Alongside frequent international attendance and participation, internationalism was a prominent theme at feminist banquets. At a foreign press banquet on 25 April 1902 at the Palais d'Orsay in Paris, Marguerite Durand stated that feminism was intrinsically international: "As Art, as Charity, as Love, Feminism has no country, it claims responsibility for all, and this is to unite women of all nations, this is for the improvement of their lot that it does not cease to work for the good of humanity, without being delayed over questions of borders and nationalities."⁹² Durand gave a toast to the victory of feminism and the participants responded with a standing ovation.⁹³ Isabelle Bogelot, the honorary president of the CNFF, sent a letter that was read at the 1908 annual banquet of the CNFF. In her statement, Bogelot praised the CNFF for being the largest advocate for French women and being affiliated with the International Council of Women.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ J. M., "Les Grands Congrès : Congrès Féministe à Paris, Organisé par le Conseil National des Femmes Françaises: Le Banquet," *La Française*, 14 June 1913, p. 3.

⁹⁰ "Pour les Droits Politiques de la Femme," *L'Humanité*, 8 March 1914. Archives nationales, F/7/13266, Vote des Femmes. Extrait de presse concernant les revendications féminines. 1908-1928.

⁹¹ "Pour les Droits Politiques de la Femme," *L'Humanité*, 8 March 1914.

⁹² Parrhisia, "Banquet de la Presse Etrangère," *La Fronde*, 27 April 1902, p. 2. « Comme l'Art, comme la Charité, comme l'Amour, le Féminisme n'a pas de patrie, il les revendique toutes, et c'est à unir les femmes de toutes nations, c'est à l'amélioration de leur sort qu'il ne cesse de travailler pour le bien de l'humanité, sans s'attarder aux questions de frontières et de nationalités. »

⁹³ Brécy, "Le Banquet de la Presse étrangère," *Le Figaro*, 26 April 1902. Dossier Marguerite Durand, boîte 2, Durand (Marguerite) à *La Fronde* 1897 - 1905. Bibliothèque Marguerite Durand.

⁹⁴ "Le Banquet Annuel du Conseil National," *La Française*, 21 June 1908, p. 2.

Women also declared their opposition to war at banquets and supported women's right to public protest. Paul B. Miller demonstrated that antimilitarism was a strong suit not a vulnerability of the political left.⁹⁵ Likewise, some feminists strongly condemned war at banquets. For instance, Maria Vérone spoke out in favor of peace at a 22 February 1913 banquet organized by the Délégation permanente des sociétés françaises de la Paix: "We do not raise our children for the nation to send them to the fields of carnage, neither do we raise them for making them assassins."⁹⁶ She added that the social movements against alcoholism and for improved hygiene and morality were what really made France a great nation rather than the death and destruction of warfare.⁹⁷ Mme Séverine, at a 5 July 1914 banquet organized by the LFDF with 500 people in attendance, referenced the power of feminist public protest, specifically, the thousands of people that gathered at the Tuileries Garden in central Paris on 5 July 1914 in support of women's suffrage who marched to the left bank.⁹⁸ Mme Séverine developed the idea and plan for this public march that had the public intention of honoring the Marquis de Condorcet because of his and his wife Sophie's support for women's rights in the 1790s yet had the result of bringing 5,000 to 6,000 people into the street in support of feminism and women's right to vote.⁹⁹

In the final analysis, feminists used banquets in a multitude of different ways. Feminists from Britain, Germany, Italy, and Russia spoke at feminist banquets in France and were united by a common goal, bringing the ideas of feminism into fruition. Although there were some

⁹⁵ Paul B. Miller, *From Revolutionaries to Citizens: Antimilitarism in France, 1870-1914* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002): 2.

⁹⁶ "Chronique des Œuvres et Institutions : Délégation des sociétés de la Paix," *La Française*, 1 March 1913, p. 3. « Nous n'élevons pas nos enfants pour que la Patrie les envoie sur les champs de carnage, nous ne les élevons point non plus pour en faire des assassins. »

⁹⁷ "Chronique des Œuvres et Institutions : Délégation des sociétés de la Paix," *La Française*, 1 March 1913, p. 3.

⁹⁸ "Le banquet féministe," *L'Intransigeant*, 7 July 1914, p. 3.

⁹⁹ Steven C. Hause with Anne R. Kenney, *Women's Suffrage and Social Politics in the French Third Republic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984): 184-188.

sentiments favoring peace at these feminist banquets and reference to the large-scale public march at the Tuileries Garden in support of women's suffrage; as a whole, unfortunately, the feminists prioritized nationalism over feminism in the wake of the First World War as they put the women's rights movement on hold as France entered the war. Nevertheless, the most important contribution of the feminist banquets was bringing women's rights ideas into the public sphere to be debated in a democratic fashion by the women and men of France and Europe.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has investigated a highly important cultural site, the formal lunch or dinner banquet, which a great diversity of French groups deployed as a forum to commemorate past events as well as to promote their own contemporary political and cultural agendas. At these events, different political groups promoted specific agendas that were always polemical, oftentimes subversive, and even revolutionary. Commemorators of the Paris Commune and royalists held socially inclusive banquets to promote their revolutionary causes to the lower classes. Imperialists and feminists congregated to celebrate the French empire and to fight for female equality, respectively. Because banquets attracted typically between 500 and 1000 people from across the socio-economic spectrum, they constituted an early form of mass culture in France. In addition, banquets thrust new political ideas into the public sphere and influenced various political agendas on the left, right, in favor of empire, and securing women's rights. From the governing leadership of Third Republic France's perspective, banquets were an effective safety valve, enabling there to be enough freedom for French citizens to express their political voices and, thereby, to avoid revolutionary violence that could have happened if the authorities stamped out all democratic liberty. Banquets provided a culturally powerful forum for various political movements and, in doing so, they became a key instrument in the process of democratization in early Third Republic France. I have argued that the banquet, as a semi-private space within the public sphere, became a key site for the construction of political and cultural power by creating robust communities that galvanized a diverse set of causes across the entire political landscape.

In Chapter 1 “« Un nouveau monde émerge à l’horizon »¹: Banquets Commemorating the Paris Commune, 1878 – 1914,” I demonstrate that a multitude of groups including veterans of the Commune, workers, republicans, international socialists, feminists, anarchists, nationalists, and anti-Semites gathered around the memory of the Paris Commune at anniversary banquets held annually on or about 18 March. Displaying symbols of the Paris Commune, banquet participants ate and sang together and listened to speeches about the Commune and contemporary politics. Beginning in 1878, the banquet served as a rallying point for the campaign for the amnesty of the members of the Paris Commune and to commemorate the Commune. After the granting of full amnesty in 1880, the banquet was a key cultural site that welcomed back the imprisoned and exiled Communards as heroes and helped to reintegrate them into French society. The banquets from 1878 to 1887 were also characterized by strong unity among the commemorators and revolutionary rhetoric that sought to establish a future Commune. From 1888 to 1901, a rise of disunity rocked the banquets as the result of the opposing stances commemorators took on the Boulanger crisis and Dreyfus Affair. In addition, reformism that was manifested chiefly in the promotion of electoral politics challenged the revolutionary discourse. The Paris Commune banquet declined in the period 1902 to 1914, mainly because of a loss in the banquet’s connection to the veterans of the Commune as they became older and some died and the rising nationalism prior to the First World War. I argue that banquets from 1878 to 1901 were *milieux de mémoire* as these were events that initially kept the memory of the Paris Commune alive and later actively contested its meaning. Nevertheless, after 1901, the banquets became *lieux de mémoire* as they were less connected to the Paris Commune and thus more symbolic of the actual historical event.

¹ *Le Droit Sociale*, “Le 18 Mars A Paris,” 26 March 1882, p. 1. Speech by Louise Michel.

Chapter 2 “« À mort les républicains ! »²: Royalist Banquets, 1879 – 1913” illustrates how royalists used the banquet, a historically leftist cultural site, for their own political ambitions. After the failure of the two pretenders and a royalist majority in the National Assembly to restore the monarchy in the 1870s, royalists turned to the banquet to rejuvenate the movement by integrating peasants and workers into a nationwide banquet campaign. Through the lens of the banquet, we can see how royalism drastically changed over time throughout the early Third Republic. I argue that royalist banquets from 1879 to 1882 during the time of the Comte de Chambord exhibited a revolutionary discourse that sought to overthrow the Third Republic and restore the monarchy. On the other hand, banquets from 1885 to 1888 under the Comte de Paris operated within the democratic institutions of the Third Republic by focusing on electoral politics in an attempt to get monarchists elected to the National Assembly. Finally, royalist banquets from 1908 to 1913 under the Action Française organization expressed extreme nationalism as they promoted a war with Germany and proclaimed an exclusionary politics by propagating malicious anti-Semitic rhetoric.

Chapter 3 “« Les serviteurs d’une même et grande cause »³: Empire Banquets, 1882 – 1912” investigates French empire banquets, thereby revealing the motivations behind the French empire and demonstrating the banquet to be a cultural site that strengthened the French empire. First, I argue that speeches presented at banquets emphasized two chief motives for the French empire, that of economic exploitation of the colonies and increasing French national greatness. Thus, discourse at empire banquets rarely mentioned the civilizing mission. From this inside vantage point, we see the focus of French imperialists not on the colonized people of Africa and

² *Le Rappel*, 25 August 1882, p. 2. The audience shouted this provocative statement at a 19 August 1882 banquet at Challans in western France.

³ Union Coloniale Française. Rapport de L’Exercice 1896-97. Banquet Colonial de 1897, p. 47. Liste des Membres. Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris, 8°Z2020. “We are servants of the same great cause.”

Asia but directed inward toward increasing the commerce and national grandeur of France. Second, I argue that the banquet fortified the French empire by bringing together the main proponents of empire around an intimate meal, providing a venue where businessmen, governors, military leaders, and other supporters could become informed of the French empire's mission and in turn influence French imperial policies, and conveying the French empire's accomplishments to the public.

Chapter 4 “« Non, non, pas de galanterie, de la justice ! »⁴: Feminist Banquets, 1898 – 1914,” depicts female and male feminists organizing banquets with speeches and discussion around a communal meal. I argue that feminists utilized the banquet as a cultural and political institution to bring their political ideas up for discussion in the public sphere of French society. Although there were other means for women to participate in the public sphere, the banquet was especially instrumental in the feminist movement as the beautifully decorated banquet halls and dining together created an atmosphere that united feminists and galvanized their cause. At these banquets, feminists discussed issues ranging from women entering the workplace and the vote for women to uniting women and men in support of women's rights and international cooperation between feminists.

A number of themes appear across these four types of banquets: women's participation,⁵ involvement of the lower classes, verbal expressions of anti-Semitism, views on the French empire, and nationalism versus internationalism. Peasants and workers were very prominent in royalist banquets, workers were involved in Paris Commune commemorative banquets, and

⁴ René Everard, “Pas de galanterie, la justice ! disent les Féministes,” *Le Rappel*, 6 July 1914, p. 3. In response to a male speaker's assertion at a feminist banquet that Parliament would grant women the right to vote out of gallantry, one woman yelled: « Non, non, pas de galanterie, de la justice ! »

⁵ I have already comparatively analyzed women's involvement across the four genres of banquets. See Chapter 4, pages 180 to 181.

workers participated to a lesser extent in the feminist banquets. Concerning the incorporation of women, peasants, and workers – albeit to different extents in the commemorations of the Commune, royalist, and feminist banquets – these three types of banquets worked to further social democracy in the Third Republic. Speakers at both the commemorations of the Paris Commune and royalist banquets spouted hateful anti-Semitic rhetoric; the former from 1898 to 1902 and the latter from 1911 to 1913. By all accounts, both the so-called left and right were vulnerable to the infiltration of anti-Semitism. In addition to the empire banquets that commented favorably on the French empire, one speaker at a banquet commemorating the Paris Commune opposed the actions of the French empire in southeast Asia. Whereas orators at royalist banquets criticized the Third Republic government's handling of Algeria, a colony conquered by the monarchy, they chastised the government for wasting money on imperial ventures in Africa. French nationalism and internationalism made waves in all four types of banquets. Communards and royalists, for instance, both expressed nationalism and internationalism. On the other hand, imperialists supported international involvement in so far as it brought glory to the French nation and revenue to businessmen. French feminists and other feminists from abroad expressed the least degree of nationalist fervor, instead expressing international cooperation between women of all nations to achieve equality.

Why do banquets decline after 1914? Roger Shattuck ends his book *The Banquet Years: The Origins of the Avant-Garde in France 1885 to World War I* in 1914 but does not offer any explanation for the waning of banquets. I offer three theories to explain why banquets decrease and lose their significance after 1914. First, the joyous and opulent nature of banquets became less appropriate following the death and destruction of the First World War. Second, people turned to other forms of sociability and the banquet lost its singular dominance. The height of

the banquets under Third Republic France occurred during the 1880s and thereafter other cultural spaces such as congresses, conferences, meetings, and demonstrations competed with the banquet and this trend continued after the First World War. Third, 1878 to 1914 was a period of vigorous sociability. After the First World War, the individualism associated with capitalism increasingly degraded the sociability that was intrinsic to banquets. Although there are still banquets today, they no longer are imbued with revolutionary power nor wield the same political dynamism as those from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century.

W. Scott Haine envisioned the internet as a “technological tavern” that could be the future hope of returning to a sociability characteristic of the nineteenth-century Parisian café and could produce a legitimate “public sphere.”⁶ Although the internet does offer some positive characteristics such as social media connecting people across the globe, I, on the other hand, see renewed face-to-face sociability such as banquets to fight for what we believe in and to unite across the globe regardless of our many differences.

⁶ W. Scott Haine, *The World of the Paris Café: Sociability Among the French Working Class, 1789-1914* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996): 239.

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Le Figaro

Le Féministe

La Française

La Fronde

Le Gaulois

L'Humanité

L'Hydre Anarchiste

L'Intransigeant

Le Jura Socialiste

La Lanterne

Le Midi Social

Ni Dieu Ni Maître

L'Œuvre Socialiste

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