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RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Making of Counter-Internationalism. Political Violence, Strikebreaking and the Yellow movement in pre-1914 Europe

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ABSTRACT. The term “Yellow” is a synonym for strikebreaker in many European societies (*gelbe, amarillo, giallo, etc.*). In pre-1914 Europe, which remained dominated by monarchies, only in republican France this term was explicitly used by a nationalist armed group of strikebreakers, namely, the Yellow movement. In 1899-1901, the French and industrial society experienced an unprecedented wave of massive strikes. Historians saw this popular mobilisation as a prefiguration of the “great labour unrest”, which subsequently affected the United Kingdom, between 1911 and 1914. The mobilisation of French workers and republican citizens in this *fin de siècle* took place in the industrial stronghold of France, along the German border. As a reaction, powerful industrialists created the first “Yellow” organisations. They explicitly conceived them as their “social movement”. At the turn of the century, these strikebreakers were officially recognised by octroy. This differentiated the Yellow movement (with a capital “Y”) from the many informal yellow organisations which emerged concomitantly, with the same antidemocratic purpose. This article provides an original analysis of the case of the Yellow movement. It explains how this Paris-based organisation developed by practicing political violence through strikebreaking, and why its transnational development was so important.

Keywords: Political Violence, Social Movements, Nationalism, French Republic, First Globalisation

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1. Introduction

In pre-1914 Europe, only in republican France a nationalist armed group explicitly used the term “Yellow” to designate its antidemocratic violence based on strikebreaking. That is why the Yellow movement requires the use of a capital letter, in contrast with the other “yellow” organisations which emerged concomitantly, although they shared the same antidemocratic aim. The industrialists who secretly funded the Yellow movement (or *Fédération Nationale des Jaunes de France*, that is, National Federation of the Yellows from France; FNJF) termed it their “social movement”.¹ This concept was also used by the private companies of the European monarchies dominating pre-1914 Europe. They imported the Yellow movement based in Paris as “the most modern social movement from France” (Bonnet and Caruso 2019).² By analysing this organisation based in Paris, this article provides a cross-disciplinary contribution to the sociology of social movements aiming at “bringing capitalism back” (Della Porta 2015). The chronological focus of my work ranges from 1870 to 1914. This “first globalisation” was characterized by an unparalleled development of the financial flows (Berger 2003). Their transnational dimension echoes the scale of the Yellow movement.

Defining the latter requires to trace its genesis. This movement was created at the turn of the century, in the industrial stronghold of the French society, namely, Montceau-Creusot (Saône-et-Loire, East of France). The first Yellow organisations were conceived there during the unprecedented wave of strikes which marked the turn of the century (1899-1901). These strikes especially affected the East of France, that is, the most industrialised area of this society, whose long-established unification made it the industrial heart of continental Europe (Cameron 1961; Roehl 1976; Cameron and Freedman 1983). Historians have compared the big strikes of the East of France at the turn of the century to the “great labour unrest” which happened between 1911 and 1914 in the United Kingdom (Cronin 2018, 71). “The first Yellow organisations were established in Le Creusot on 1 November 1899. On 1 December those of Montceau-les-Mines were created” observed the republican police.³ In 1902, the FNJF was institutionalised and centralised from Paris, to operate in the industrial cities.

These strikebreakers received a private and yet official unction. On 23 January 1902, the President of the Republic, Émile Loubet, invited the principal leaders of the Yellow movement to the Élysée Palace. The first leader of the FNJF, Paul Lanoir (the son of a

¹ Pierre Biétry, *Le socialisme et les jaunes*, Paris, Plon, 1906, p. 148. The archival sources and documents from the historical libraries are all quoted in footnotes. The author is responsible for all the translations.

² “Die Gelbe Bewegung. Ein Mittel zur Zurückdrängung des sozialistischen Einflusses”, *Mitteilungen der Zeitschrift, Die Arbeit*, Vienna, N. 1004, 1908, p. 2. *Le Jaune*, 21/03/1908, p. 2.

³ Report of the 21/04/1902, Archives Nationales (AN), F/7/12793.

gendarme, who was himself suspected of going undercover among workers) was present at the Élysée, accompanied by his secretary, Pierre Biétry (that republican policemen evoked as “the infiltrated agent of nationalists and clerical reactionaries” during the big strikes of the turn of the century).⁴ There, Lanoir delivered a speech by claiming that there were 215 Yellow organisations in the French industrial cities, and by affirming: “our goal, *Monsieur le Président*, is to create, anywhere there is a factory (...), a union of conciliation (...) between employers and employees”. In turn, President Loubet repeated the words of Lanoir, stating that “our aim is social peace”, before consecrating this nationalist organisation: “How cannot we not approve such a beautiful action? (...) the struggle of classes? What a utopia!”⁵ This official denial of the complex reality of classes was celebrated by the Yellow strikebreakers as “the triumph of the Reason in Paris”.⁶

Lanoir was soon expelled by Biétry, whose financial interests informed all his positions. Undercover policemen observed that the more stable aim of this Yellow leader was “to make money on the back of workers”.⁷ In 1903, Biétry founded the Parti Socialiste National (PSN; National Socialist Party). This nationalist, corporatist and vertical organisation was secretly bankrolled by the antirepublican hierarchs of religious congregations.⁸ The PSN was centralised in Paris too, as “a particularly aggressive phalanx” whose activists were recruited “for policing purposes” in the “industrial cities”, where these antidemocratic activists targeted the “internationalists”.⁹ This anti-internationalist and antirepublican strikebreaking conferred to Biétry the control of the FNJF (created in 1902), and of its newspaper, *Le Jaune* (*The Yellow*, created in 1904). Its nationalist propaganda preached hatred of “State socialism”.¹⁰ It also addressed to “the enemies of Revolution” that these antirepublican strikebreakers termed “independent workers”, since they renounced to practice any democratic citizenship by fol-

⁴ *La lutte sociale de Seine et Oise*, 22/02/1902, p. 1. Commissaire spécial de Montbéliard to the Minister of the Interior, 05/01/1900, AN, F/7/15931/2. *L'Humanité*, 24/12/1908, p. 1.

⁵ The FNJF at the Élysée in the first Yellow organ *L'Union Ouvrière*, 01/01/1902, p. 1, conserved in AN, F/7/12793. See also Report of Louis, “M. Loubet et les Jaunes”, AN, F/7/12793.

⁶ *L'Union Ouvrière*, 01/01/1902, p. 1, AN, F/7/12793. The counterrevolutionary “organisations of corporation” recalling the feudal times attracted the promoters of the Yellow movement, whatever their official political label. See Jules Méline in *La République Française*, 11/03/1906, conserved in AN, F/7/12793.

⁷ “Metz”, 11/10/1904, AN, F/7/15931/2.

⁸ Report of “Naples”, 20/07/1903, AN, F/7/15931/2.

⁹ Manifesto of the PSN in *La Croix*, 09/01/1903, p. 3, *Journal des Débats Politiques et Littéraires*, 05/01/1903, p. 3.

¹⁰ *Le Jaune*, 13/02/1904, p. 1

lowing the antirepublican precept: “take care yourself of yourself alone and not of the others”.¹¹

Monarchists and “big industrialists” provided conspicuous funding to the Yellow movement, and to its nationalist ideology.¹² In late 1909, *Le Jaune* was transformed into *La Voix Française* (*The French Voice*). “Against the monopolies of the State” was its very subtitle. In contrast, these nationalist and counterrevolutionary activists praised the feudal times and the corporations.¹³ These pre-modern associative forms and their corresponding affiliations were “previous to the Revolution of 1789” having imposed the principle of popular sovereignty, and these antirepublican strikebreakers lauded corporatism because it “escaped the control of any public power”, by mechanically reproducing the antidemocratic “hierarchy of classes”.¹⁴ The Yellow movement worked for this established order and its nationalist activists were literally counterrevolutionaries, that is, diametrically opposed to the democratic and popular conquests of the Revolution of 1789, realised through popular mobilisations without precedents in the industrial heart of Europe. Its democratic effects durably radiated throughout the “long nineteenth century” ranging from 1789 to 1914 (Hobsbawm 1989, 1996, 2010).

The Yellow movement was created in *fin de siècle* Paris. The broad scale of action of these antirepublican strikebreakers marked their originality. Indeed, the Yellow membership among the French workers and republican citizens in pre-1914 France was insignificant. At that time, however, the academics (such as Paul Leroy-Beaulieu) linked to the Yellow movement claimed (without sources) that the Yellow movement represented “the Law” and “the number”.¹⁵ The ungrounded claims of this nationalist propaganda have largely been taken for granted by “classical” historiography, especially during the Cold War period. Its geopolitical power relations necessarily weakened the comparative history of European societies, which are so different, as evidenced by the republican singularity in pre-1914 Europe which remained dominated by monarchies (Audoin-Rouzeau 2001, 185).

Scholars have often postulated a link between the FNJF and the “working class”, without being able to prove it. None sources, for example, support the allegation that “no doubt many were drawn into *Les Jaunes*” (Mosse 1972, 200), what logically raises scientific doubts. This never-demonstrated position presuming that the FNJF embodied a “true proletarian dimension” has been repeated and reinforced (Sternhell 1997, 319).

¹¹ *Le Jaune*, 30/04/1904, p. 1

¹² Report of “Metz”, 11/10/1904, AN, F/7/12793

¹³ *Le Jaune*, 01/06/1907, p. 1.

¹⁴ Pierre Biétry, *Les Jaunes de France et la question ouvrière*, Paris, Paclot, 1906, p. 10, 15.

¹⁵ *Le Jaune*, 31/03/1906, p. 2.

When supposing the round number of 100,000 Yellow members, however, these same authors acknowledge an “artifice of quantification”, that is hardly justified as being “not completely imaginary” (1997, 319 and 326). The reality is that only 30 delegates representing 50 Yellow organisations took part in the national congress of the FNJF in 1904 (Sternhell 1997, 398). Contrary to the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT), whose democratic institution was created by French workers and republican citizens, and whose federalist organisation created in 1895 had 1791 unions and 600,000 members in 1904, the nationalist groupuscules of the FNJF were organised vertically, from the top of the social ladder.¹⁶ For example, Deguesselle, a foreman in the Tourcoing spinning industry, represented no less than 106 Yellow organisations.¹⁷

Recently, historians have observed that “what characterised the Jaunes was clearly (...) the purpose of preventing and obstructing strikes” (Meriggi 2014, 138). Yet, the violent forms of this Yellow strikebreaking have gone unobserved until now. “The right to strike is not tolerable” confessed the Yellow leader, through a nationalist denial of the national and republican legality.¹⁸ Which were the characteristics of Yellow strikebreaking, and to what extent was this social movement peculiar in pre-1914 Europe? To answer this comparative-as-transnational *problématique*, this case-study-based article focus on Yellow strikebreaking in the French society, by articulating the different scales from the local to the global dimension (Passeron and Revel, 2005). The demonstration, which mobilises a large array of original sources, is divided to three parts. The context of emergence of the Yellow movement is analysed since the counterrevolutionary aftermath of the Commune, before moving on to examine the violent practices of antirepublican strikebreaking deployed in the economic and political fields.

2. Political Violence, Strikes and the Genesis of the Yellow Movement (1870-1914)

The Yellow movement of antirepublican strikebreakers is inseparable from the period stretching from the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871) to the First World War (1914-1918), as well as from the category of the “monopoly of legitimate physical violence within a particular territory”, through which Max Weber (2004, 33) famously defined the “modern State”. He did so during the context of the first post-World War, which

¹⁶ Official statistics quoted in Maxime Leroy, *La coutume ouvrière. Syndicats, Bourses du travail, Fédérations Professionnelles, Coopératives*, Paris, Girard, 1913, p. 32, 476.

¹⁷ André Marsaudon, *Les syndicats jaunes*, Rouen, Guérin, 1912, p. 49.

¹⁸ Pierre Biétry, *Le Trépied*, Paris, Société Française d’Imprimerie et de Librairie, 1911, p. 93.

was characterised by the violent collapse of the monarchies, by reusing a concept which at least dated back from the creation of the German Empire (or *Kaiserreich*) in 1871 in Paris (Anter 2014, 29).¹⁹

During this period linking the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (1870-1914), however, industrialisation increased exponentially, as did imperialism, which prompts us to reconsider the concept of the monopoly. The elites dominating the new German Empire were inseparable from the ones which dominated the French society, and their transnational relations pre-existed. They agreed to merchandise the industrial East of the national territory, shortly before the brutal repression of the popular insurrection of the Commune. The bloody week (21 to 28 May 1871) made thousands and thousands of casualties among the French workers and republican citizens targeted as internal enemies. It constitutes an event of political violence “without parallel in nineteenth century in Europe” (Tombs 1994, 87; Tombs 2012, 682, 699). Indeed, its organised level of lethality directly connects to the twentieth century and this violent reaction was inseparable from internationalism, which was explicitly targeted by this brutality which was reshaping the said monopoly.

On 21 August 1871, the head of the Executive Power of the French Republic, Adolphe Thiers, who commanded the repression, addressed the Parliamentary Commission (then directed by an ex-Foreign Minister of the Second Empire). For the said elites, who protected their interests, anti-internationalism legitimated this organised massacre. Thiers claimed that the International Workingmen’s Association “radiates all over Europe” and “scares the entire Europe”. He predicted that, for “all the friends of social order in Europe”, the “struggle against the International will be long, difficult”. The Commission was hatefully afraid of the between 200,000 and 800,000 estimated internationalists among the French workers and republican citizens, whose solidarity increased “the normal price of manpower”. Thiers targeted one particular *répertoire*: “strike”. Besides, he observed that “never any other insurrection in the world had disposed of equivalent means: 400,000 rifles, 3,000 canons”. Thus, he encouraged “constant surveillance”, through the “*haute police*” (a French term translatable as the governmental police enforcing covertly the *raison d’État*). To legitimate this official and yet obscurantist practice, he turned the social facts upside down, by affirming that internationalism was “very occult”.²⁰

The anti-internationalist and counterrevolutionary dimension of the major event of political violence of the Commune modified the said monopoly (Deluermoz 2012, 360).

¹⁹ Rudolph Sohm, *Die Fränkische Reichs- und Gerichtsverfassung*, Weimar, Hermann Böhlau, 1871, p. X-XIV.

²⁰ All the quotations of Thiers are from *Enquête Parlementaire sur l’insurrection du 18 mars Tome II*, Versailles, Cerf, 1872, 1-21.

The metamorphoses of the control of violence involving with the most emblematic of the armed groups: the Garde Nationale, which was inherited from the Revolution of 1789, as well as the public control on arms (Gainot 2015). In 1871, the Garde Nationale, whose non-revolutionary attempt of late imitation in monarchies proved to be a complete failure (Francia 1999), was prohibited because it had supported the popular insurrection of the Commune.²¹ Recently, comparative historians observing the French society have evoked a “de facto monopoly” (Charles 2001, 256). The latter echoes the concept used by Max Weber to designate the institutionalised effectiveness of the public control of violence, which involves arms, armed practices and armed groups. A broad historiographical consensus exists around the reality of the “de facto monopoly”, which is linked to the durable republican singularity (Johansen 2005; Houe 2010; Deluermoz 2012; Berlière and Lévy 2013; Warfman and Ocqueteau 2011), in contrast with the monarchies which dominated pre-1914 Europe. Between 1789 and 1914, for example, “police” necessarily meant “public”, what stresses the socio-legal existence of the “de facto monopoly” in the industrial heart of Europe.²²

The institutional legitimacy of this public control of violence was shaped by this industrial dimension, whose hyper centralisation had been reinforced by the Jacobins. In agreement with the French and republican citizenship, strikes in the cities of this industrial society happened without violence in two thirds of cases between 1870 and 1890 (Perrot 1975, 568), and in more than 98 percent of cases between 1890 and 1914 (Tilly and Shorter 1975, 103). This sociological regularity, which evidenced the republican and durable control of violence, is all the more noticeable since strikes increased by 1,667 percent between 1866 and 1911 (Perrot 1975, 49). Therefore, the Yellow strike-breakers tried to turn these social facts upside down, by claiming that “French workers are violent”.²³

In so doing, their nationalist propaganda tried to legitimize the illegality of their own violent practices, that they deployed beyond the republican reality of the “de facto monopoly”. Moreover, it is no accident that the leader of the Yellow movement, when this nationalist activist infiltrated the big strikes of the turn of the century, encouraged “to arm the strikers with rifles”, what legitimized their repression.²⁴ Interestingly

²¹ *Bulletin des lois de la République française*, Douzième série, Deuxième semestre de 1871, p. 90, 91. In contrast with industrial France, the Atlantic societies remained deprived of any centralised institution of police, until 1878 for the United Kingdom, and until 1908 for the United States.

²² Albert Strauss, *Des autorités investies d'attribution de police*, Paris, Jouve, 1898, p. 16.

²³ Biétry, *Le socialisme*, 304.

²⁴ *La lutte sociale de Seine et Oise*, 22/02/1902, p. 1. Commissaire spécial de Montbéliard to the Minister of the Interior, 05/01/1900, AN, F/7/15931/2. *L'Humanité*, 24/12/1908, p. 1.

enough, armed practices contrasted with the use of the republican citizenship. The latter was based on the pioneering use of the universal suffrage, by freely deliberating workers accustomed to the contradictory dialogue, which was linked to the democratic enforcement of their peaceful claims. In contrast with this republican legality, jurists praised the monarchies which dominated pre-1914 Europe because they made the violent use of arms juridically more possible.²⁵

In addition, the nationalist activists of the Yellow movement denied the national and republican reality, by praising “the True Foreign organisations” of the most industrial of the monarchies, because “in Germany, in England (...) unions capitalised”.²⁶ In contrast with the democratic character inherent to the republican citizenship, the Yellow movement stated that “the goal of all human practices is to accumulate capital”.²⁷ Their practices were structurally conditioned by this dogmatic belief in an economic determinism, which denied any freedom to the agencies. Antirepublican strikebreaking reproduced and reinforced the nationalist character of this belief, by denying the republican legality. That is why these counterrevolutionary activists pretended to “abolish the so-called workers’ legislation”, and especially “the illegitimate Law of 1884” which legalised the unions of the French workers and republican citizens, that they labelled “stupid”, because their strikes were opposed to “the motor of social inequalities”.²⁸ Indeed, the Yellow movement and its violence aimed at reproducing the anti-democratic “hierarchy of classes”.²⁹ To deny structurally any freedom to the agencies, their nationalism operated violently and beyond the republican reality of the “de facto monopoly”, through a fanaticism anticipating Fascism.

In contrast with this capitalist, individualist and violent *dogma*, French unionism was based on individual volunteerism, which was diametrically opposed to private and immediate benefits. Indeed, the legal struggles conducted by the French workers and republican citizens for better working conditions were potentially applied to all republican citizens, and not only to the members of the unions, in contrast with other associative forms. These immediate objectives were revolutionarily shaping the republican reality, through the main goal of the French workers and republican citizens, that is, to abolish the global domination of the “capitalist class” (Charter of Amiens, 1906). This reality peacefully enforced through strikes was inseparable from an absolute singulari-

²⁵ Cour d’appel de Paris on 22/06/1886, *Répertoire général alphabétique du droit français*, Tome V, Paris, Larose Forcel, 1889, p. 175. Joseph Toinet, *La légitime défense du droit de propriété*, Paris, Bonvalot-Jouve, 1908, p. 5, 6.

²⁶ Biétry, *Les Jaunes*, 34, 55, 57.

²⁷ Biétry, *Le socialisme*, 15.

²⁸ Biétry, *Le Trépied*, 79, 57, 109.

²⁹ Pierre Biétry, *Les Jaunes de France et la question ouvrière*, Paris, Paclot, 1906, p. 10, 15.

ty of French unionism in pre-1914 Europe, namely, the revolutionary independence of the CGT from any political party (Febvre 2012).³⁰ Thus, the democratic and peaceful spirit of French unionism was condemned by the nationalists of the Yellow movement as deriving from “their great ancestors the Jacobins”.³¹ “Public pensions mean trickery” stated the antirepublican strikebreakers about the popular conquests.³²

In contrast with the republican reality, the Yellow propaganda presented the nationalist and counterrevolutionary movement as an “anti-State”, by asking more and more openly for “the death of the Republic”.³³ To reinforce the antidemocratic aspect of the State, and to protect the interests of the industrialists, they affirmed that “the respect of the State develops the race of sub-humans”.³⁴ This corresponded perfectly to their *dogma* of economic liberalism (*laissez faire laissez passer*), which increasingly contradicted the democratic principles inherent to political liberalism (freedom of opinion, of expression, etc.). The latter was inseparable from the republican citizenship practiced by the French workers through their unions. In contrast with this democratic reality, during the big strikes of the turn of the century, the mentor and sponsor of Biétry in the industrial East of France, the industrialist Gaston Japy (nicknamed “Whip the First” and “the Yellow industrialist”, because of his violent absolutism) used a whip to badly beat his own cousin during a board of directors, because the latter recognised “unambiguously the Law of 1884 legalising unions”.³⁵

These antirepublican strikebreakers were part of a broad antidemocratic reaction which involved the centralisation of the bosses (the term “patron” is hard to render in English, which has also imported the concept of “bourgeoisie”; Fraboulet 2007). Interestingly enough, this centralisation proceeded from the industrial centre of Le Creusot, which was dominated by the international arms merchant Schneider, who also created the Yellow movement. To create the Union des Industries Métallurgiques et Minières (UIMM; Union for the Metallurgical and Mining Industries), Eugène II Schneider urged bosses to “unify in committees” for the “defence of our interests”, and he referred to the big strikes of the turn of century by affirming that “by defending the factories of Le Creusot, I was defending the French industry” (Parize 2009, 197). Parallely, Schneider-

³⁰ “Socialism imbricated to unionism just means profit” commented witnesses on this pre-1914 reformism, whose falsely subversive rhetoric durably served the counterrevolutionary and nationalist positions, Luigi Fabbri, *La Contro-Rivoluzione Preventiva*, Bologna, Cappelli, 1922, p. 45.

³¹ Biétry, *Les jaunes*, 80.

³² *La Voix Française*, 09/04/1910, p. 1.

³³ *Le Jaune*, 04/12/1909, p. 1. *La Voix Française* 23/04/1910, p. 1.

³⁴ *Le Jaune*, 13/09/1906, p. 1.

³⁵ *Le Petit Comtois*, 23/10/1899, p. 3. Conseil de Gérance Japy, 21/11/1899, Archives du Musée Japy de Beaucourt. Archives Départementales du Doubs, U5089. AN, F/7/12793, Report of “Lazare”, 15/12/1905.

Creusot created the first Yellow organisation of the Nouveau Syndicat des Corporations Ouvrières (NUWC; New Union of Working Corporations). On 15 December 1899, the prefect observed that its few followers were “obeying the boss”, whose antidemocratic and antirepublican end was “to perturb the action of the union” (Parize 1970, 171).

That is why the Yellow movement was immediately identified as a “counter union” by the republican forces of police of Le Creusot, as well as by those of the neighbouring Montceau where this antidemocratic organisation instantly expanded.³⁶ The term “counter union” had been forged by the Schneider company itself, when its hierarchs secretly created this Yellow movement of antirepublican strikebreakers.³⁷ Yet, this umbilical link relating them to the very top of the social ladder was carefully and durably concealed by the nationalist propaganda of the Yellow movement, although witnesses observed that it was “obviously created by the bosses”.³⁸ This is exactly why the ideology of these counterrevolutionary and antirepublican strikebreakers tried to turn the social facts upside down. They invoked a popular legitimacy which, in fact, did not exist, in order to assault the French workers and republican citizens, by covertly using small forms of violence beyond the socio-legal reality of the “de facto monopoly”.

As well as the industrialists, who were behind their secret creation and who funded them, these Yellow strikebreakers claimed that they acted for the “French industry”.³⁹ Indeed, their antidemocratic purpose of illegal and yet unpunished violence required the rhetorical usurpation of this national dimension, in order to deny its republican legality and in agreement with the Yellow dogmatic belief: “the goal of all human practices is to accumulate capital”.⁴⁰ This nationalist *dogma* was inseparable from the counterrevolutionary creation of these antirepublican strikebreakers in the industrial center of Le Creusot dominated by an international arms merchant. In 1898, the personal wealth of Henri Schneider reached the sum of 110,000,000 Gold Francs (De Brissac 2007, 78), especially thanks to the Law of 1885. The latter created a turning point in pre-1914 Europe. For the very first time, it liberalised the industrial production of the arms in France, as well as their international trade.⁴¹ As early as in 1890, Schneider-Creusot equipped the armies of 22 States (Beaucarnot 1986, 190), it exported 90,000

³⁶ Commissioner of Montceau, 28/04/1900, Archives Départementales de Saône-et-Loire (ADSL), M 3296. Gendarmerie Nationale Section of Le Creusot to Préfet, 13/01/1900, ADSL, M 3288.

³⁷ Note de Saint Girons à Schneider, 19/10/1899, Académie François Bourdon (AFB), SS0199.

³⁸ Félicien Challaye, “Le syndicalisme jaune”, *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, t. 20, n. 2, 1912, pp. 256-263, p. 256.

³⁹ Biétry, *Les Jaunes*, 102.

⁴⁰ Biétry, *Le socialisme*, 15.

⁴¹ *Proposition de loi sur la libre fabrication des armes et le commerce des armes et munitions de tir*, Paris, Quantin, 03/07/1884. *Bulletin Officiel du Ministère de l'Intérieur*, n. 11, 1885, pp. 281-284.

canons between 1885 and 1914 and, in 1898, 80 percent of its arms production (De Brissac 2007, 113 and 149). “This always works, this is boundless this thing!”, commented the industrialist on this private accumulation inseparable from violence.⁴²

This international development of capitalism resisted any public control of the democratic and republican legality. “I don’t admit any intervention of a Prefect in the strikes”, declared Henri Schneider in the 1890s.⁴³ “It is full of spies here” proudly testified one of his foremen about this illegal and concealed surveillance, shortly before the big strikes of the turn of the century.⁴⁴ He acknowledged this antidemocratic violence linked to blackmail employment. It was constantly and covertly practiced against the French workers and republican citizens of the industrial centre. There, their private life was denied, as well as the republican reality of “de facto monopoly”. “Those who tried” to applicate their democratic rights were subjected to illegal persecutions, he testified.⁴⁵ At the turn of the century, the French workers and republican citizens massively mobilised against this omnipresent and yet concealed violence based on illegal surveillance.

“We don’t care about the guards!” and “we will have a union” screamed the citizens who massively mobilised in the industrial stronghold of Le Creusot during the big strikes of the turn of the century.⁴⁶ In 1899, the workers of Le Creusot mobilised with the explicit demand of the “recognition of the union” and of “the suppression of occult police”, exactly like those from the neighbouring Montceau, who denounced the “occult police charged by the Company to exert surveillance on workers in all the acts of their private life” (Tartakowski 2016).⁴⁷ This is confirmed by the sub-prefect of Chalon-sur-Saône who, writing about Montceau on 14 August 1900, explicitly referred to “the occult police of the Company”.⁴⁸ This obscurantism is confirmed by the fact that, since the aftermath of the Commune, this private company used secretly and illegally organised crime as its “private police” (Marchandau 1981). Interestingly enough, this anti-republican practice of illegal surveillance and blackmail employment in the economic field involved a “reactionary committee” in the political one.⁴⁹ At the turn of the centu-

⁴² Jules Huret, *Enquête sur la question sociale en Europe*, Paris, Perrin, 1897, 32.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 11 and following.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Report of the Chief of the Guards, 16-29 Mai 1899, AFB, 01L0075-02.

⁴⁷ *Documents officiels sur la grève du Creusot du 20 au 28 Septembre 1899*, p. 3, FFB, SSa207, *Statistiques des grèves et recours à la conciliation et à l'arbitrage survenus pendant l'année 1901*, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1902, p. 235.

⁴⁸ ADSL, M 3296.

⁴⁹ *Rapports du Commissaire Spécial de Montceau-les-Mines, 25/06/1890, 08/08/1895*, ADSL, M 147.

ry, besides, the counterrevolutionary and antirepublican dimension of this secret associative form centralised their counterrevolutionary nationalism in Paris.⁵⁰

On 22 April 1901, an engineer of the mining company of Montceau, Jacques Gautier de Bellefond, was invited to speak at the Société d'Économie Sociale (SES). This Paris-based international organisation had been created in 1856 by Frédéric Le Play. Historians have insisted on the central role of this other industrial engineer, to understand the durable counterrevolutionary dimension inseparable from the social and political control characterising the antirepublican elites (Duroselle 1951, 672). They protected their private interests behind a halo of institutionalised sacredness, whose symbolic brutality was politically oriented in this antidemocratic and counterrevolutionary way. "Social Peace" was therefore the leitmotiv of Le Play.⁵¹ De Bellefond was the representative in Montceau for the Union pour la Paix Sociale (UPS; Union for Social Peace), a counterrevolutionary organisation created by Le Play in 1872.

Like the Yellow movement, to which it was linked since its genesis at the turn of the century, the Paris-based UPS was transnational. In the aftermath of the Commune, besides, the right-hand man of Le Play, Émile Cheysson, another industrial engineer, had been the director of the Schneider-Creusot factories.⁵² While the industrial stronghold of Montceau-Creusot became the birthplace of the Yellow movement at the turn of the century, De Bellefond avowed at the SES that the industrialists systematically used of "private policing" and illegal surveillance, "almost everywhere although we don't always have the courage to confess it".⁵³ Indeed, the antidemocratic concealment of this non-lethal, and yet omnipresent form of violence which assaulted the private life of the French workers, was imposed to these dominant and industrial elites by the republican reality of the "de facto monopoly".

One week after De Bellefond, the SES welcomed Monsieur Chambodu, who was introduced by Count Albert de Mun as the representative for the first Yellow organisations of Montceau-les-Mines. Chambodu defined its strikebreakers "a group of vanguard" comprised of "soldiers of the army of Social Peace", by condemning "strike, revolution, internationalism" as a whole.⁵⁴ During the antidemocratic reaction against the popular insurrection of the Commune, Count Albert de Mun addressed the Oeuvre des Cercles Catholiques d'Ouvriers (Charity of the Catholic Circles of Workers, created

⁵⁰ Report 04/03/1905, AN, F/7/12793.

⁵¹ Frédéric Le Play, *L'école de la paix sociale*, Paris, Larcher, 1881. *L'Union Ouvrière*, 01/01/1902, p. 1, conserved in AN, F/7/12793.

⁵² SSa207, AFB.

⁵³ *La Réforme Sociale*, 16/05/1901, p. 793.

⁵⁴ All the quotations are from Chambodu in *Ibid.* p. 777, 776, 778.

in 1871) as “the first volunteers (...) for the defence of social order” and as “the vanguard of counterrevolution”.⁵⁵ In his talk condemning strikes, this aristocrat introduced Chambodu at the SES (created by Le Play) by complaining that the unions of French workers and republican citizens were an effective “tool of resistance against the capital”.⁵⁶ The genesis of the Yellow movement, which is inseparable from the latter, signals that the industrial (Le Play) and the spiritual (De Mun) tendencies of social Catholicism were integrated at the turn of the century. This enriches our knowledge of the political and counterrevolutionary commitment involving institutionalised sacredness (Levillain 1983).

Interestingly enough, Count de Mun had a private correspondence with the industrialist Schneider, who created the Yellow movement. After the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891), which preceded the political recognition of the French Republican State by the hierarchs of the age-old Rome-based institution of the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church (1892), the industrialist wrote to the aristocrat: “there is no longer any difference between us”, and proclaimed: “the Encyclical! Read the Encyclical! All is there”.⁵⁷ Parallely, the industrialist affirmed as an antirepublican *dogma* his “absolute right” based on the fact that “the Law does not constrain me to recognise the union”.⁵⁸ And indeed, the industrial centre was a space of exception avoiding the democratic practice of the republican citizenship. This denial of justice through juridicism tended to paralyse the socio-legal reality of the “de facto monopoly”. The democratic control of violence ceased in the industrial centre as if there was an imperceptible barrier.

From that point of view, this republican situation was not so different from the monarchies which dominated pre-1914 Europe. Interestingly enough, Schneider noiselessly blackmailed the official recognition of these Yellow strikebreakers to Pierre Waldeck-Rousseau, who headed the government of “republican defence”, thus increasingly voided of social content.⁵⁹ Subsequently, the industrialist canonised the politician as “that great jurist”, since he ratified “the method conceived by us”, by imposing “direct relationships between bosses and workers”, instead of “asking from the Laws more than they can give”.⁶⁰ Meanwhile, the Yellow movement made its counterrevolutionary way by practicing antirepublican strikebreaking in the industrial centres.

⁵⁵ Albert De Mun, *La question sociale*, Paris, Œuvre des Cercles Catholiques d’Ouvriers, 1877, 11, 28.

⁵⁶ *La Réforme Sociale*, 16/05/1901, p. 754, 759, 753.

⁵⁷ Huret, *Enquête*, 25, 35. *Annales Catholiques: revue religieuse de la France et de l’Église*, 27/08/1892, pp. 471-474.

⁵⁸ Letter of Eugène II Schneider to Waldeck-Rousseau, 08/10/1899, AFB, SS0199. Note on the visit of Schneider to the President of the Council Waldeck-Rousseau, 06/10/1899, FFB, SS0199.

⁵⁹ Meeting between Monsieur Lichtenberger and Monsieur Waldeck-Rousseau, 11/10/1899, AFB, SS0199.

⁶⁰ *Revue des deux mondes*, 14/11/1930, p. 374, 387.

3. Yellow Violence in the Economic Field: Strikebreaking

Paris was the capital of the Yellow movement, whose antirepublican strikebreakers aimed at accumulating capital, in agreement with their nationalist and counterrevolutionary *dogma*.⁶¹ The French capital, which only three decades earlier had seen the popular and internationalist insurrection of the Commune, had meanwhile become the stronghold of antirepublican nationalism in pre-1914 Europe, which remained dominated by monarchies. In 1899, the violent groupuscules linked to the Paris-based Ligue des Patriotes (LP; League of Patriots) attempted an antirepublican *coup d'État*.⁶² In 1900, the Municipal Council of Paris became an institutional stronghold for these nationalist, antirepublican and counterrevolutionary fanatics. In 1902, this capital institution granted 38,500 Francs to the emerging FNJF.⁶³ Concomitantly, the Yellow command post in Paris received “conspicuous funding allowed by the industrialists”, among whom Gaston Japy, who provided 500,000 Francs to the Paris-based centre of the Yellow movement (Sternhell 1997, 337).⁶⁴ Its first leader and ex-member of the Boulangist movement (which attempted an antidemocratic *coup d'État* in 1889 with the nationalist support of the LP), Paul Lanoir, received 200,000 Francs from the Duchess of Uzès (who was the main supporter of the failed *coup* of 1889, Sternhell 1997, 337). Lanoir acknowledged this financial support “of the most intelligent and clever industrialists”, by affirming “needless to tell their name”, on behalf of his interpretation of “independence” (Sternhell 1997, 324).⁶⁵ This meant concealed dependence on capital.

From its Parisian stronghold, the Yellow movement infiltrated the “industrial cities” throughout the national territory.⁶⁶ The FNJF aimed to spread “anywhere there is a factory”, in agreement with the nationalist strategy elaborated in its Parisian command post.⁶⁷ In 1902, the antirepublican strikebreakers claimed to have 215 groups spread throughout the cities of the national territory.⁶⁸ This broad scale of action determined the importance of the Yellow movement, in spite of its tiny membership. The sources remark that “the number of adherents does not matter”, whereas the territorial scale did, through the “industrial cities” infiltrated by the nationalist cells of Yellow strike-

⁶¹ Biétry, *Le socialisme*, 15.

⁶² *Affaire de la place de la Nation, Procès Déroulède*, Paris, Drapeau, 1899.

⁶³ Biétry, *Le socialisme*, 74.

⁶⁴ Louis Le Theuff, *Histoire de la bourse du travail de Paris*, Paris, Rousseau, 1902, p. 90.

⁶⁵ Biétry, *Le socialisme*, 74, 75.

⁶⁶ *Le Ralliement*, 01/01/1902, p. 1.

⁶⁷ *L'Union Ouvrière*, 01/01/1902, p. 1.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

breakers.⁶⁹ This territorial and quantitative dimension was secretly indicated by the Yellow command post to the antirepublican industrialists, and to the monarchists of the “political bureau of the Duc d’Orléans” which was based in Paris too.⁷⁰ The Yellow movement was systematically inseparable from the very top of the social ladder, which agglomerated several factions of counterrevolutionary, antirepublican and nationalist activists.

In 1904, the Yellow organisation could only count on 35,000 nationalist fanatics, who were distributed “all around the industrial centres”.⁷¹ In these industrial cities, the Yellow cells were nothing less but nationalist groupuscules, whose insignificant membership was systematically below a dozen of members.⁷² “We say clearly that Yellow organisations are ghost entities” confessed their own activists.⁷³ “Yellow organisations, in fact, are non-existent” avowed these strikebreakers.⁷⁴ That is precisely why the nationalist activists of the Yellow movement were so obsessed by the numerical dimension, that they systematically inflated, in agreement with their antidemocratic aim, that is, to practice brutality beyond the republican control of violence.⁷⁵ The Yellow strikebreakers confessed that “to provide employment, industrialists oblige workers to sign a card pledging adherence to the Yellow organisation”, thus revealing the illegal practice of blackmail employment.⁷⁶ This omnipresent and yet concealed violence linked to surveillance was inseparable from the Yellow movement, whose centralised strategy of concealment through the numerical propaganda was systematically used.

These antirepublican strikebreakers sought to act covertly, that is, beyond the effective control of violence linked to the republican reality of the “de facto monopoly”. In 1904, the Yellow Parisian headquarter claimed to have intervened against the masses

⁶⁹ 11/10/1904, AN, F/7/15931/2.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Report of the 22/11/1904, AN, F/7/15931/2.

⁷² Report of the 21/01/1908, AN, F/7/12793.

⁷³ Jean Gauthier, *Le clergé, les royalistes et les jaunes*, Paris, Imprimerie spéciale d’édition, 1907, 51.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ The inflated numbers produced by the Yellow propaganda were systematically linked to the journalistic and to the academic field fields: Auguste Pawlowski, *Les syndicats jaunes*, Paris, Alcan, 1911, p. 42, 46, 49. Marsaudon, *Les syndicats*, 45, 49, 51. Maurice Gros, *Étude du mouvement syndical ouvrier en France: syndicats “jaunes ou indépendants”*, Paris, Jouve, 1905, p. 309, 293. Robert Warin, *Les syndicats jaunes. Leur histoire. Leurs doctrines. 1899-1908*, Paris, Jouve, 1908, p. 296. They would require at least one another article. The point of this demonstration is not to present the few adherents of the Yellow movement as tools of the counterrevolutionary, nationalist and privileged activists, although they are omnipresent in the large array of original sources mobilised here. The point of this article is to analyse the practices of antirepublican strikebreaking, since this violence signals the Yellow ideology in action through time and space.

⁷⁶ Gauthier, *Le clergé*, 52. *Chambre des députés*, 03/11/1905, p. 3021.

of French workers and republican citizens in 800 industrial cities in France. “We are armed (...) and we will fire on our aggressors in self-defence”, they said.⁷⁷ To be able to attack more violently those who legally practiced their republican citizenship, these nationalists tried to turn the social facts upside down, by claiming that they were acting in defence. From the industrial harbour of Marseille, the leader of the Yellow movement himself defined his troops as “rude boys” and “volunteers to attack (...) with the stick in hand”.⁷⁸ Yet, as time passed, the Yellow strikebreakers became prisoners of their own ideological contradictions, that is, the absence of any popular support behind them. Shortly before 1914, their calls to take up firearms more and more openly replaced calls to wield sticks. In 1911, Biétry encouraged his nationalist groupuscules to “make people respect, with the revolver in hand”, what he called “the Freedom of Work”.⁷⁹ In agreement with his counterrevolutionary *dogma*, this meant to illegally accumulate capital beyond the republican reality of the “de facto monopoly”.

During the summer of 1905, Biétry took the train from Paris to Longwy (Meurthe-et-Moselle, on the Franco-German border, in the industrial East). He was accompanied by rude fellows. A meeting was organised in a factory of Longwy, whose director had called on and paid the Paris-based strikebreakers (Gordon 1996a, 96; Bonnet 1981, 139).⁸⁰ In the industrial centre of Longwy, the nationalist leader of the Yellow movement introduced a certain Monsieur Mangematin, as a memorial symbol. Mangematin, according to Biétry, was the historical founder of the first Yellow organisation created in 1899 in Le Creusot.⁸¹ In fact, Mangematin worked at that time as a private guard for the industrialist Schneider, when this worldwide arms merchant created the Yellow movement, to void the democratic dialogue with the French workers and republican citizens.⁸² Interestingly enough, the blackmail-employment-style system of surveillance, whose omnipresent form of antidemocratic violence was developed by Schneider-Creusot in the counterrevolutionary aftermath of the Commune, received a public unction of institutionalised sacredness to which contributed the neighbouring abbot of Autun, Jean-Alphonse Mangematin.⁸³ The forms of legitimacy privately invoked by the

⁷⁷ Report of the 9/06/1905, Executive Commission of the Jaunes to the Minister of the Interior, Eugène Étienne, AN, F/7/12793.

⁷⁸ *Le Jaune*, 18/06/1904, p. 1.

⁷⁹ *La Voix Française*, 02/06/1911, p. 1.

⁸⁰ Gauthier, *Le clergé*, 84 and following.

⁸¹ *Le Jaune*, 03/06/1905, p. 3.

⁸² Report of the Chief of the Guards, 16-29 Mai 1899, AFB, D1L0075-02. Gendarmerie Nationale Section of Le Creusot to Préfet, 13/01/1900, ADSL, M 3288.

⁸³ *La semaine religieuse du diocèse de Rouen*, 01/01/1876, p. 22. *Documents Officiels sur la grève du Creusot du 20 au 28 septembre 1899*, p. 3, AFB, S5a207. On the political use of institutionalised sacredness

Yellow movement to act beyond the socio-legal reality of the “de facto monopoly” were not so subtle.

In 1905, Baron Alexandre Dreux, the industrialist who dominated Longwy, who contributed to the centralisation of the industrialists by Schneider-Creusot through the UIMM (Fraboulet 2007, 58), and who called on and paid the Yellow strikebreakers created by the latter, published in the organ of the French industrialists an article on “How to avoid a strike”, although he signed it under pseudonym (Gordon 1996b, 152). This concealment signals the republican reality of the control of violence. “In each workshop, let’s appoint an anti-strike guard, a dozen henchmen among the rudest persons (...). Now, let’s create our own union, blue, green, yellow, whatever you want”, thus targeting the “Social Republic”, through a violence that he called an “energetic medication”: such were his words.⁸⁴ Interestingly enough, the democratic reality of the “Social Republic” (invoked by the French workers since the European Revolution of 1848 and inseparable from the practice of the republican citizenship) was also targeted by the other industrialists from the East, when these nationalist activists promoted the Yellow movement of antirepublican strikebreakers.⁸⁵

The brutality of the Yellow movement was always linked to the very top of the social ladder. That is precisely why, in order to create an artificial semblance of popular legitimacy and to act covertly and beyond the republican reality of the “de facto monopoly”, the nationalist ideology of these antirepublican strikebreakers needed to allege that they came from the bottom of the social ladder. Their nationalist ideology tried to turn the social facts upside down, to deny the national and republican reality. They were deprived of any popular support, but the semblance of the latter was necessary, to privately act violently beyond the republican control of violence, with a public appearance of justification. Interestingly enough, the nationalist strikebreakers who came from Paris to Longwy used also pseudonyms.⁸⁶ This allowed to maintain the effective illusion of a movement having emerged locally and from below, whereas, in fact, this counterrevolutionary and antirepublican organisation was centralised in Paris, and inseparable from the nationalist elites dominating the industrial society.

The republican and democratic legality of the “de facto monopoly” forced them to conceal their umbilical link with this counterrevolutionary movement of antirepublican

to support these counterrevolutionary strikebreakers, see Luis Renshaw de Orea y de Ascanio. Camérier Secret de Cape et d’Épée de sa Sainteté, *Le Saint Siège et le modernisme*, Paris, La Voix Française, 1910, Don Flavio Settin, *La Chiesa Cattolica e la Proprietà Privata*, Bassano, Fontana-Minchio, 1911.

⁸⁴ All the previous quotations are from *L’écho des mines et de la métallurgie*, 29/06/1905, pp. 779-781.

⁸⁵ Gaston Japy, *Les idées Jaunes*, Paris, Plon, 1906, p. 284.

⁸⁶ Report of “Naples”, 01/08/1905, AN, F/7/12793.

strikebreakers. In addition, it obliged these nationalist activists to prevalently use small arms. On 5 July 1905, Pierre Biétry and his brutish henchmen went to the Café Boutin in Longwy. They were armed with sticks, that they used to cruelly beat Edmond Backès, who was responsible for a team of workers at the steelworks of the industrial centre of Longwy.⁸⁷ In this industrial agglomeration of the East, indeed, the baron Dreux had illegally decreed that no democratic dialogue would take place with the French workers and republican citizens. After this brutal expedition, Biétry convinced the police, which investigated timidly, that the “obscurity was complete, and that it was impossible to see who was slugging”.⁸⁸ This counterrevolutionary and violent obscurantism was reinforced by Edgard Laroche-Joubert, a big industrialist, rightist representative from Charente (western France) and member of the Yellow headquarter in Paris, who applied pressure on the investigators, by writing directly to the Minister of Justice to deny any implication of Biétry and even his presence in Longwy, in spite of evidence.⁸⁹ In the same counterfactual way, the Yellow activist Richaud accepted, in exchange for money, to cover the right-hand man of Dreux, Georges Vallot, after the latter badly beat another French worker and republican citizen.⁹⁰

Interestingly enough, the republican reality of the “de facto monopoly” obliged the Yellow strikebreakers to act covertly, and to use small arms like sticks. This signals that armed violence was effectively controlled in pre-1914 France. This institutionalised effectiveness forced these antirepublican fanatics to conceal their violent practices. In 1905, the industrialists of Longwy, who called on and paid the handfuls of Yellow strikebreakers who came from Paris, received six Lebel rifles, six model 1892 revolvers and around one hundred packets of war ammunitions.⁹¹ Yet, this violence based on firearms remained potential. Indeed, these unused firearms were immediately confiscated by the republican authorities, though these elites controlling the juridical institutions concealed the armed brutality envisaged by the industrialists.⁹² The systematic strategy of illegal concealment was imposed by the effective control of violence, which was inseparable from the democratic character inherent to the republican citizenship. Consequently, it is no accident that the nationalist strikebreakers of the Yellow move-

⁸⁷ *L'Humanité*, 02/06/1906, with the police material in AN, F/7/15931/2.

⁸⁸ Procureur Général à Garde des Sceaux de la Cour d'Appel de Nancy, 10/01/1906, AN, F7, BB/18/2293/1.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Official Declaration at the Tribunal Correctionnel, *L'Humanité*, 02/07/1908, p. 2. *Chambre des Députés*, 03/11/1905, p. 3022.

⁹¹ “À Monsieur le Garde des Sceaux, le Procureur Général près de la Cour d'appel de Nancy”, 08/08/1905, AN, F7, BB/18/2293/1. Corroborated in Gauthier, *Le clergé*, 113, 116.

⁹² “À Monsieur le Garde des Sceaux, le Procureur Général près de la Cour d'appel de Nancy”, 08/08/1905, AN, F7, BB/18/2293/1.

ment also targeted the latter, by using the same forms of small and centralised violence.

4. Yellow Violence in the Political Field: Anti-Republicanism

The Yellow command post was based in Paris. This European city was the capital of anti-republicanism. Indeed, it was the best place to assault the democratic character inherent to republican citizenship in pre-1914 Europe which remained dominated by monarchies. At the turn of the century, the nationalist and monarchist groupuscules radicalised. Among other matters, these counterrevolutionary activists and antirepublican fanatics did not accept the democratic and republican rehabilitation of Captain Dreyfus. In 1899, these nationalist minorities attempted an antirepublican *coup d'État* from the streets of Paris, ten years only after the antidemocratic *coup* of Boulanger.⁹³ Those who defended the democratic character inherent to the republican citizenship, by contributing to the rehabilitation of Dreyfus, denounced the “false interests unchained” by the “nationalist reaction”.⁹⁴ Thus, a nationalist activist close to the Yellow command post (and son of Joseph-Marie Lecocq, general of the Second Empire) went until Bordeaux, to spit in the face of the general Picquart, since this republican officer of the Army contributed to the democratic rehabilitation of Dreyfus.⁹⁵ “Nationalism means monarchy” stated the antirepublican activists inseparable from the Yellow movement and from its capital, in this context of imperialist rivalry which was marked by the scandal of military-industrial espionage.⁹⁶

On 28 February 1901 in Paris, the reactionary ideologue François Coppée took the floor at a meeting of the nationalist and Paris-based organisation Patrie Française (PF; French Fatherland) to brandish “the Yellow flag”.⁹⁷ Like the Yellow strikebreakers in the industrial centres, the privileged minorities of the PF sent their brutish henchmen in the cities of the French territory.⁹⁸ For example, the bands of Marius and of Dauville came from the Parisian slums, and they worked as violent henchmen for the antidemocratic PF.⁹⁹ “The whoremongers of the Faubourg Montmartre, Savoyard and his friends,

⁹³ *Affaire de la place de la Nation, Procès Déroulède*, Paris, Drapeau, 1899.

⁹⁴ Jean Jaurès, *Les deux méthodes*, Lille, Lagrange, 1900, p. 4, 7.

⁹⁵ *La Lanterne*, 13/08/1907, p. 2. *Le Temps*, 13/08/1907, p. 4.

⁹⁶ *Le Soleil*, 20/05/1900, p. 1.

⁹⁷ Report of “Drome”, 01/03/1901, AN, F/7/1279.

⁹⁸ Report of “Lazare”, 15/12/1905 and report of “Meuse”, 16/11/1905, AN, F/7/12793.

⁹⁹ Report of “Rennes”, 12/04/1902, AN, F/7/12793.

who frequent the café Fin de Siècle close to the one Chez Brébant, are all engaged by the *Patrie Française*” reported a covert policeman.¹⁰⁰ “They are three or four bands, most of them are armed”, he added.¹⁰¹ Coppée did in fact frequent the luxurious café Brébant in Paris, which was very close to the more shady Fin de Siècle.¹⁰² Furthermore, his elitist sociabilities linked him to the powerful industrialists from the East, such as the Japy family, whose nationalist members funded and promoted the Yellow movement.¹⁰³

On 23 February 1902, during the national campaign for the legislative elections, the nationalist PF organised a meeting in Belfort, at the Franco-German border. This industrial centre of the East of France was also the birthplace of the Yellow leader, and of his mentor and sponsor, the industrialist Gaston Japy.¹⁰⁴ The meeting in Belfort took place in a Yellow institution, that is, the counter-*Maison du Peuple* founded by Armand Vielard, another big industrialist and rightist representative of the industrial and dominant interests of Eastern France.¹⁰⁵ “Seventy bodyguards, well paid, have been sent from Paris in groups”, an undercover policeman from Paris reported.¹⁰⁶ “Their numbers will be tripled for the next travels”, he added, to explain this nationalist coordination, between Paris and the industrial cities characterising the French territory, and which were concentrated in the East.¹⁰⁷

The undercover policemen who observed these nationalist and counterrevolutionary activists also described their concealed rituals of gifts and counter-gifts, whose armed dimension was inseparable from the republican reality of the “de facto monopoly”. Indeed, this republican control of violence forced these nationalist activists to avoid the use of firearms, and to conceal the small ones. “The squad leaders bear sticks called bullwhips (*nerfs de boeuf*) which are amongst the most dangerous arms; the weight of these sticks is around two kilograms”, and the nationalist henchmen were initiated by their superiors, who showed them “how to do”, reported an infiltrated policeman.¹⁰⁸ Two clubs, six leaded canes and one leather strap with a metal head were seized by the republican police to these nationalists in arms sent in Belfort, where they used these

¹⁰⁰ 17/04/1902, AN, F/7/12793.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Auguste Lepage, *Les dîners artistiques et littéraires de Paris*, Paris, Frinzine, 1884, p. 101.

¹⁰³ Marguerite Steinheil, *My Memoirs*, New York, Sturgis Walton, 1912. Japy, *Les idées*.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ *Le Ralliement* (Belfort), 16/02/1902 and 28/02/1902, p. 2.

¹⁰⁶ Report of “Rennes”, 10/09/1902, AN, F/7/12793.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

small arms.¹⁰⁹ The French workers and republican citizens, who resisted against the attack of this “guard of honour coming from the slums of Paris”, labelled its nationalist activists “fake patriots”.¹¹⁰ Indeed, these armed minorities were covertly paid to act beyond the republican control of violence inherent to the French society and to its democratic citizenship. Thus, their nationalist and counterrevolutionary propaganda tried to turn the social facts upside down. By invoking rhetorically and artificially the national dimension, these nationalists hoped to conceal their self-serving *dogma*.

“The reactionary party is happy to have found a man who performs the role of worker as certain actors interpret the crowd”: such were the comments of republican policemen on the leader of the Yellow movement.¹¹¹ Biétry effectively simulated a working-class identity just as Yellow propaganda claimed a popular support which did not exist. Its semblance, however, contributed to conceal effectively the umbilical link relating systematically these antirepublican strikebreakers to the very top of the social ladder, and to the Paris-based capital of nationalism, which tried to covertly and violently deny the socio-legal reality of the “de facto monopoly”. Yellow meant nothing less but systematic falsification, which was necessary to use violence beyond the republican control of violence. Accordingly, the non-lethal use of a revolver in the industrial city of Tourcoing by Biétry in 1906 was concealed by two local hierarchs of the Yellow movement, who were traders in the spinning industry, and respectively the son and the nephew of a General Councillor.¹¹²

What is more, the counterrevolutionary dimension inherent to the Yellow movement and to its violence largely overflowed the national borders. Paradoxically, the French Republican State had an alliance with the monarchy which best embodied the early modern (that is, previous to the Revolution of 1789) and violent remanence of the feudal times: tsarist Russia. The Franco-Russian alliance, which was officially stipulated in 1894 (although it had been prepared since the counterrevolutionary aftermath of the Commune) was both a financial and military bloc. It was the most important imperialist trust that the world had ever seen. It linked the biggest oversea Empire (after the British one) with the most important continental one, for a total of around 40,000,000 square kilometres in 1914 (Jarrige and Fureix 2015, 329; Rey 2014). Militarily, the Franco-Russian alliance aimed to surround the *Kaiserreich* with two main military fronts (France on the west side, and Russia on the east side), in the violent per-

¹⁰⁹ *Le Ralliement* (Belfort), 28/02/1902, p. 2. *La Frontière* (Belfort), 27/02/1902, p. 1.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ Report of the “Commissaire Spécial”, 05/03/1906, AN, F/7/12793.

¹¹² *La Libre Parole*, 10/04/1907, p. 1. Note in “Département Nord”, AN, F/7/12793. *La Croix*, 06/11/1906, p. 3. Report of the “Commissaire Spécial”, 06/04/1902, 12/04/1902, AN, F/7/12793.

spective of the revanche so actively desired by the nationalist activists linked to militarism. Besides, the unparalleled military and imperialist dimension of the Franco-Russian alliance was inseparable from the most important financial flows of the time. Before 1914, indeed, 11,719,638,666 Francs were sent from republican and industrial France to rural and absolutist Russia (Girault 1973, 24).

On this transnational basis, a Yellow alliance developed from the Atlantic to the Urals. It linked the Paris-based FNJF with the Union for the Russian People (URP).¹¹³ This monarchist organisation was inseparable from violence, whose antidemocratic character linked to the Russian Empire traditionally denied any political liberalism. After the latter had been finally imposed in Russia, through the Revolution of 1905, the URP tried “to give a political content to the reaction” (Girault and Ferro 1989, 90). What is more, the Yellow alliance between the FNJF and the URP was officially sanctioned in 1907 in Fribourg (Switzerland).¹¹⁴ This was exactly where an antidemocratic, secret, transnational and counterrevolutionary “reaction against (...) the modern Nation State” was politically organised in the aftermath of the Commune, on behalf of Rome-based institutionalised sacredness (Lamberts 2002, 72). “Monarchism will re-emerge in France (...) only if it also develops everywhere” affirmed the URP.¹¹⁵ These counterrevolutionary activists linked to the FNJF labelled themselves “Black Hundreds” (or *tchernossotensy*, because this paramilitary armed group reproduced the organisation of the tsarist Cossacks, or *sotnias*), by affirming that they were “self-organised monarchists”.¹¹⁶

Meanwhile, the international arms merchant and Yellow promoter Schneider developed financial and industrial partnerships in tsarist Russia, thus contributing to reinforce the financial, industrial and military dimension of the Franco-Russian alliance.¹¹⁷ In addition, Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, a member of the Yellow command post in Paris, was secretly paid by the tsarist authorities to praise the financial basis of this imperialist trust.¹¹⁸ His own brother contributed to the Franco-Russian alliance, by praising “the

¹¹³ Pawlowski, *Les syndicats*, 137. *Москóвские вéдомости (Moskovskiye Vedomosti, Moscow Gazette)*, 23/08/1907, p. 1. *Le Jaune*, 14/09/1907, p. 1.

¹¹⁴ *La Libre Parole*, 14/08/1907, p. 1. *Le Jaune*, 31/07/1908, p. 1. Pawlowski, *Les syndicats*, 138.

¹¹⁵ *Collection of articles by Wladimir Gringmuth (Собрание Статей В. А. Грингмута)*, Moscow, Russian Press, 1910, pp. 392-397.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ AS, 01G0030-05, AS, 187AQ536-86 and 187AQ072-06, AAB.

¹¹⁸ *L'Abominable Véralité de la Presse d'après les Documents des Archives Russes*, Paris, Librairie du Travail, 1931, 184.

paternalistic and religious character” of absolutism.¹¹⁹ “Popular sovereignty is one of the most dangerous ideas”, he also deplored about the democratic effects of the Revolution of 1789, because “on behalf of religion (...) we cannot admit the Law enforcement by the masses”.¹²⁰ In addition, he invoked politically institutionalised sacredness, to encourage the “global expansion” through the transnational export of “our capital and our missionaries”, for what he called the “the time of universal rivalry”.¹²¹ This imperialism was inseparable from the Yellow movement, and it was complexifying the republican and industrial reality of the “de facto monopoly”.

Interestingly enough, the French workers and republican citizens from Le Creusot termed this industrial centre a “State within the State”, and a “capitalist fiefdom”.¹²² This evoked a remanence of the feudal times, that the Revolution of 1789 started to abolish by imposing popular sovereignty and a democratic citizenship inseparable from the republican control of violence. Paradoxically, this reference to the feudal past characterising the industrial centre of Le Creusot was inseparable from the most modern, financial and industrial forms of imperialism, as evidenced with the activity of Schneider in Morocco at the turn of the century (Guillen 1976), concomitantly to the creation of the antirepublican strikebreakers. In 1900, interestingly enough, the first Yellow activists of Le Creusot paraded throughout the town by agitating “small yellow flags with the emblems of tsarist Russia”, which republican policemen had great pains to explain.¹²³

In 1906, the leader of the Yellow movement met in secret the ambassador of tsarist Russia in Paris, the Count Nelidoff.¹²⁴ Until 1914, his office was the “command post in Europe” for tsarist secret services.¹²⁵ A handful of republican representatives, such as Jean Jaurès, the internationalist intellectual who created *L’Humanité* (The Mankind), denounced in the *Assemblée Nationale* the fact that this foreign police acted from Paris “as on conquered territory”.¹²⁶ In contrast with the socio-legal and republican reality of the “de facto monopoly”, indeed, none legal public control was exerted on these agen-

¹¹⁹ *Banquet Franco-Russe du 26 Octobre 1893. Discours*, Paris, Colin, 1893, pp. 43-46. *Voyage en Orient de Son Altesse Impériale le Césarevitch*, Paris, Delagrave, 1893, p. I.

¹²⁰ Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, *Le christianisme et la démocratie*, Paris, Retaux, 1904, p. 17.

¹²¹ Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, *Les congrégations religieuses et l’expansion de la France*, Paris, Bloud, 1904, p. 13, 23.

¹²² Jean-Baptiste Dumay, *Un fief capitaliste: Le Creusot*, Paris, Fédération des Travailleurs Socialistes de l’Est, 1891, p. 2.

¹²³ Report of the 22/04/1900, ADSL, M3288.

¹²⁴ Pawlowski, *Les syndicats*, 137.

¹²⁵ Interview with Vladimir Burtzev, *La Lanterne*, 09/07/1914, p. 1.

¹²⁶ *Chambre des Députés*, 15/07/1909, p. 2076.

cies inseparable from imperialism and from the Franco-Russian alliance (Berlière and Lévy 2013, 672). This monarchical intrusion on the French and republican soil was also condemned by policemen. They denounced the increasing denial of a republican and democratic control of violence since the turn of the century, in relation with the First International Conference of Social Defence against the Anarchists, which took place in 1898 in Rome.¹²⁷

“Jaurès serves the police” affirmed the Yellow movement, by imagining a Franco-Russian connection between the internationalist intellectual and Yevno Azev.¹²⁸ The lethal and terrorist violence of the latter, in fact, served tsarist police. In agreement with its nationalist *dogma*, the Yellow movement turned the social facts upside down. “The situation is better in Russia (...) we ask freedom like in Russia” also said these antirepublican strikebreakers, by targeting “the liberals”.¹²⁹ In agreement with their counterrevolutionary ideology, “freedom” meant “dictatorial and antirepublican oppression”. Biétry worked “for an international organisation”, observed the republican policemen.¹³⁰ In 1904, while the active minorities of the Yellow movement created its newspaper (and main symbolic source of artificial legitimacy), the Second International Conference of Social Defence against the Anarchists was organised in Saint Petersburg (Berlière and Lévy 2013, 672). Contemporary witnesses commented on the emergence of the Yellow movement, by observing “the most disgusting wheeling and dealing involving companies and Government polices”.¹³¹

In 1906, interestingly enough, the first promoter of these counterrevolutionary strikebreakers in the Russian Empire was an engineer, who wrote to the Yellow command post in Paris from the capital of Saint Petersburg.¹³² Interestingly enough, this transnational and Franco-Russian export of the Yellow movement was realised through the counterrevolutionary UPS, that the other engineer Le Play had created in 1872. Indeed, like the promoters of the Yellow movement in its birthplace of Montceau-Creusot at the turn of the century, Nicolas de Zvorikine was a member of the Paris-based UPS. It is also in this European capital of anti-republicanism that his industrial

¹²⁷ “Note sur les polices étrangères en France”, Police Report, 19/06/1914, AN, F/7/14605. *Conférence Internationale de Rome pour la Défense Sociale contre les Anarchistes*, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 1898.

¹²⁸ *Le Jaune*, 24/04/1909, p. 1. Jaurès denounced “a conspiracy organised by policemen”, which served the “reaction”, while he was ready “to publicly denounce them here, with their names, addresses and other details”, *L’Humanité*, 22/04/1909, p. 1.

¹²⁹ *Le Jaune*, 09/10/1909, p. 1.

¹³⁰ Report of the 25/03/1907, AN, F7/15931/2.

¹³¹ Challaye, “Le syndicalisme”, 263.

¹³² *Le Jaune*, 09/06/1906, p. 2.

company, which was located in Siberia, had its financial basis.¹³³ In addition, the political control of institutionalised sacredness involved the prosecutor of the Saint Petersburg-based Holy Synod, Constantin Pobiedonotsev, who contributed to create the financial basis of the Franco-Russian alliance (Girault 1973, 141). Consequently, the Yellow movement signals a counterrevolutionary and nationalist connection of institutionalised sacredness inseparable from imperialism, whose transnational dimension was modifying the republican and national reality of the “de facto monopoly”.

In 1907, the Yellow command post in Paris privately received nationalist activists from the Russian Empire, headed by the Vice President of the Central Office of the Monarchist Circles of Students from Russia, Nicolas Soutchkoff.¹³⁴ In 1911, the nationalist leader of the Yellow movement referred to the URP and to the Black Hundreds as models for the secret “legion” created “in prevision of the war”, against the “enemies terrorised” by these nationalists in arms.¹³⁵ It “won’t be talked anymore” about these “rude volunteers armed and disciplined”, whose sleeping cells “will act when the time will have come”, explained Biétry, who explained that the internationalist intellectual Jean Jaurès would be “the first to be executed”.¹³⁶ Jaurès, whose pacifism operated peacefully in the industrial heart of Europe, was hated by the nationalist activists because encouraged the democratic action “on both sides of the Franco-German border”, to create “the same resistance against the danger of war”, by using one repertoire: “the general and simultaneous strike”.¹³⁷ On 31 July 1914, he was assassinated, shot twice in the head by a nationalist activist. In 1919, the assassin was acquitted by a judge so marked by the illegal aspiration of counterrevolutionary and imperialist violence, that he deemed this nationalist activist to be a “patriot”.¹³⁸

During his trial, the murderer of Jaurès invoked the historical notion of time, to explain how strikes scared him several months before the outbreak of the First World War: “I had the presentiment that the glorious time, which would in fact come afterwards, could occur if we wanted it” and “I was afraid that everything happened differently than expected”, in consequence of “the strike against military mobilisation”.¹³⁹ Interestingly enough, the origins of the unusual firearm lethally used by this strike-

¹³³ *La Réforme Sociale*, 07/1895, p. 928. *Revue financière (supplément à la science française)*, 05/08/1898. *Journal des Chemins de fer et des progrès industriels*, 1898, p. 718. *Gelbe Arbeiter Zeitung* (Zurich), 17/06/1906, p. 2. *Revista Católica de Cuestiones Sociales*, 01/1923, p. 47.

¹³⁴ *Le Jaune*, 20/07/1907, p. 2. *Action Française*, 30/03/1908, p. 2.

¹³⁵ *La Voix Française*, 25/08/1911, p. 1, 01/09/1911, p. 1.

¹³⁶ *La Voix Française*, 25/08/1911, p. 1.

¹³⁷ *L’Humanité*, 18/07/1914, p. 1.

¹³⁸ *Le Procès de l’Assassin de Jaurès (24-29 mars 1919)*, Paris, L’Humanité, 1920, p. 33.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 23, 31, 33.

breaker unpunished by the State authorities have never been ascertained.¹⁴⁰ Consequently, this void regarding armed violence and nationalist sociabilities should call for future investigation, as recent historiography suggests (Lalouette 2014). Since the Yellow movement delivered detailed instructions, and since its violence was specialised in antirepublican strikebreaking, logic dictates to consider the nationalist sociabilities linking this group to the counterrevolutionary elites confiscating capital.

A few months prior to the First World War, which he campaigned for vociferously, the Yellow leader moved to Indochina, to lead the Rubber Company and Diverse Cultivations from Cam Tien (Dang-Khé), whose capital was of 1,600,000 Francs.¹⁴¹ In this colony, he continued to “commit frequent atrocities” against workers, what he tried to justify by invoking an “insufficiency of police forces”, and by using an “imperishable stick, of which it is preferable not to say nothing more”.¹⁴² He practiced this obscurantist violence against the workers in the colonial reality, as he had done before in the metropolitan one and against the French workers and republican citizens. In addition, this nationalist activist took charge of the *Financial and Economic Newsletter of Indochina* (*Bulletin Financier et Économique de l’Indochine*, which was later directed by his wife), and became a banker.¹⁴³

5. Conclusion

The FNJF was a fraudulent organisation. At the turn of the century, the Yellow movement was created from the top of the social ladder. Conversely, its nationalist ideology never ceased to claim an origin from below. Yet, these antirepublican strikebreakers never enjoyed a popular support. This contradiction has gone unobserved until now. Indeed, classical historiography has used the national and dominant prism by mainly focusing on the discourses. Conversely, this cross-disciplinary article has examined these antirepublican strikebreakers as a social movement, by analysing their violent practices and their discourses trying to justify them. The Yellow movement was literally counterrevolutionary, that is, diametrically opposed to the democratic conquests begun with the popular mobilisations of the Revolution of 1789, and inseparable from the democratic citizenship. Interestingly enough, the Yellow movement shared the same nationalist, counterrevolutionary and antirepublican conception than the Second Empire with regard to the juridical dimension. Indeed, these strikebreakers invoked

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 28.

¹⁴¹ *La Voix Française*, 20/04/1912, p. 1.

¹⁴² Report of the 17/02/1914, GGI//4534, Note, GGI//872, Archives Nationales d’Outre-Mer.

¹⁴³ *Le Rappel*, 11/05/1918, p. 1.

“their legality and ours” until 1914, exactly like the imperial dictatorship (1852-1870) claimed to “have abandoned the legality in order to impose the Law”.¹⁴⁴

Thus, this analysis of the Yellow movement deepens our knowledge of the democratic character inherent to the republican citizenship (Agulhon 1978, 844; Weber 1976). The Yellow movement based in Paris and developed transnationally illustrates how “the organisations of workers are inseparable from their symmetrical opposite” (Delalande 2019, 133). That is why these nationalist activists affirmed that the French workers and republican citizens, that they tried to infiltrate, and against whom they used violence, were “tricked by internationalism”.¹⁴⁵ This counterrevolutionary ideology aimed at accumulating capital, by denying the republican institutions, and the democratic principle of the right of the soil. In contrast, these antirepublican activists evoked ethnocentrically a *ius sanguinis* based on the most archaic and dogmatic beliefs, through the obscurantist and antidemocratic statement: “few members of mankind are good except your own family (...) your own blood”.¹⁴⁶ On the ideological basis of this counterrevolutionary and nationalist *dogma*, the Yellow movement affirmed its “impartiality” when imbricating “religion and fatherland” to condemn “the monopolisation of the State”, that is, to deny the national and republican reality based on democratic citizenship.¹⁴⁷

This counterrevolutionary *forma mentis* linked to the top of the social ladder was shaped by a fanaticism literally xenophobic, that is, based on hatred of the masses. On behalf of this profound antidemocratic belief, these antirepublican strikebreakers connected far-right radicalisation to institutionalised sacredness. Their nationalist violence was practiced against the French workers and republican citizens with the pretention of denying the socio-legal and institutional reality of the “de facto monopoly”. The cross-disciplinary use of sociological concepts signals its historical existence in the industrial heart of pre-1914 Europe.¹⁴⁸ The republican control of violence forced the Yellow minorities to act covertly. In addition, their violence was non-lethal and mainly based on the use of small arms in the economic field (strikebreaking), as well as in the

¹⁴⁴ *La Voix Française*, 21/06/1912, p. 1. *Discours et proclamations de Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte*, Paris, Plon, 1852, p. 221.

¹⁴⁵ Biétry, *Le socialisme*, 249.

¹⁴⁶ Biétry, *Le Trépied*, 182.

¹⁴⁷ Pierre Biétry, *La séparation des écoles et de l'État*, Paris, Jouve, 1910, p. I, IV, 2.

¹⁴⁸ The monopoly of legitimate physical violence within a particular territory, whose socio-legal reality is historiographically and empirically evidenced for the French and republican society, does not mean that this was its exclusive prerogative with regard to strikes. Nor does this mean that all the other societies of pre-1914 Europe which remained dominated by monarchies were characterised by an institutionalised effectiveness with regard to the public control of arms, armed groups and armed practices.

political one (anti-republicanism). The French capital was the best place in which to assault the democratic citizenship. That is why Paris was the command post of the Yellow movement in pre-1914 Europe, which remained dominated by monarchies until the first post-World War.

These antirepublican strikebreakers corresponded to a counter-internationalism in the making, whose violence was created by an international arms merchant. Indeed, the Yellow movement penetrated systematically in the dominant monarchies (Castillo 1977, 42-51; Maillard 2006, 297-303), by stating: “Socialist internationalism is destructive for patriotism. Conversely, Yellow internationalism is profitable” (Bonnet and Caruso 2019).¹⁴⁹ This antidemocratic *dogma* based on capital was the denial of republican unionism. “Internationalism means war” also said the nationalist activists inseparable from the capital of the Yellow movement, while they never ceased to act for the *revanche*.¹⁵⁰ They targeted the “German Jewish Karl Marx” and the “pacifist (...) Jaurès”, that they accused of “germanistation” because he never ceased to act for peace in the industrial heart of Europe.¹⁵¹ Shortly before 1914, the leader of the Yellow movement tried to ponder the counterrevolutionary profitability of an unparalleled and anti-European violence, by anticipating: “The declaration of a war would destroy the internationalist perspectives”.¹⁵²

In addition, the most important transnational connections of the Yellow movement were inseparable from the gigantic financial flows which benefited the counterrevolutionary activists of the Russian Empire. Their nationalist violence “set the style ten years before Fascism” (Rogger 1964, 399). In this rural monarchy dominated by the great property, they could commit their brutal and illegal aggressions with impunity (Girault 1973, 430), through concealed collusions with the official elites (far-right policemen, officials, politicians, judges, scholars, etc.). Before 1914, interestingly enough, the representative from the Italian monarchy in the Parisian command post of the Yellow movement was a covert policeman. Enrico Insabato then lived in rue de la grande chaumière in Paris, not that far from the Yellow command post located in Boulevard des Italiens.¹⁵³ As early as in 1906, this imperialist activist explicitly encouraged massive violence, that his fanaticism tried to legitimate by arguing that his lately unified country was “not brutal enough to enjoy the colonial glory”.¹⁵⁴ During the first post-World War,

¹⁴⁹ *Der Bund*, 14/12/1906, p. 3.

¹⁵⁰ Henri Galli, *L'Internationalisme c'est la Guerre*, Paris, Garnier, 1906.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 77, 84, 90.

¹⁵² Biétry, *Le Trépied*, 98.

¹⁵³ *L'Action française*, 01/11/1909, p. 3, *Le Soleil*, 02/11/1909, p. 3. Archivio Storico, Università di Bologna, F. 576. Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Casellario Politico Centrale, B. 2639.

¹⁵⁴ *Prealpe*, 02/02/1906, p. 1.

Fascism emerged by provoking an unparalleled and unpunished peak of lethal violence, which targeted a popular mobilisation without precedents in this rural society dominated by the great property (Tilly 1975, 126; González Calleja 2015, 57). During the interwar period, Insabato contributed covertly to the imperialist expansion that this monarchy finally realised through Fascism (Vento 2010, 110 and 383).¹⁵⁵

Its armed subjects also supported transnationally the illegal violence of the *coup d'État* of 1936, by targeting the Spanish workers and republican citizens, that the counterrevolutionary organisations assaulted, on behalf of a nationalist sacredness deriving from the Yellow movement (Castillo 1977 and 1979; Preston 2012). Hence, its increasing violence inseparable from imperialism invites to deepen the comparative and explanatory history of European societies, before and after 1914 (Bloch 1928).¹⁵⁶

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¹⁵⁵ Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Casellario Politico Centrale, B. 2639. *Atti Parlamentari*, Legislatura XXVII, 03/06/1924, p. 89.

¹⁵⁶ This research on the case of France before 1914 has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (ERC-StG project 2015 "The Dark Side of the Belle Époque. Political Violence and Armed Associations before the First World War" - G.A. No 677199).

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