



MARSEILLE, CITY OF REFUGE: INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY, AMERICAN HUMANITARIANISM, AND VICHY FRANCE (1940–1942)

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ABSTRACT

Anchored in the port of Marseille, this article studies encounters between international solidarity, American humanitarianism, and Vichy France's nationalism in times of war and exile. Being the main free harbour in France after the country's defeat against Germany in the spring of 1940, Marseille saw hundreds of thousands of refugees seeking refuge and exile on its shores. This massive flux gave rise to a local internationalism of humanitarian and solidarity networks bonded by an anti-fascist ideology. American humanitarians, diplomats, and radical leftist militants shaped this eclectic internationalism by providing crucial support for European refugees escaping the Nazi-backed state repression in France. Using the local archives of the department of Bouches-du-Rhône, this paper analyses how these actors and their ideologies met in Marseille and interacted with or against Vichy France's nationalism. In the end, the extended historiography on refugees, American humanitarianism, solidarity networks, and French nationalism will be used to analyse global ideologies in a local context during the Second World War.

KEYWORDS

World War II. Refugees. Marseille.

During the Second World War, between 40 to 60 million Europeans fled or were expelled from their homes because of the conflict and the spread of nationalism, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism (ORCHARD, 2014, p. 146; REINISCH, 2013, p. 72). The invasion of the North of France by the German army resulted in an exodus of French people along with Belgian, Luxembourgish, and Dutch nationals towards the South of France. Eventually, they reached Marseille, which became a refugee hub and the main escape port in all of Europe until 1942. In June 1940, in the South of France, there were already the statutory refugees recognized as such by the Third Republic from the dismemberment of the Ottoman and Russian empires (Russians, Armenians, Greeks, etc.). There were also refugees without legal protection, such as Italian anti-fascists, Republican Factions who fled the victory of the Nationalist forces in Spain, and Germans, Czechoslovakians, Poles, and Austrians fleeing the expansion of the Third Reich (MALGAT, 2013). In total, there were about six million *de facto* and *de jure* refugees in the unoccupied zone of France in June 1940 (ZORGBIBE, 2018, p. 152).¹ Most of those who were white and European had hoped to reach the United States (US), a place imagined as the land of the free (PÉREON, 2012).² However, the majority of them were repatriated, and only the most privileged refugees with significant social and economic capitals went into exile to the United States or Latin America, such as Mexico and Brazil. The remaining refugees, which this article focuses on, stayed in Marseille at the mercy of the Vichy regime and the Secret State Police of the Nazi regime, the Gestapo.

From 1940, with the end of the Third Republic and the collaboration with the Nazis, France was no longer a safe place for refugees. At the beginning of the German offensive, which quickly outflanked the French army, Marshal Philippe Pétain was nominated as Deputy Prime Minister by the French government on the 18th of May. A month later, on June 16th, Philippe Pétain was appointed as head of the government, while Paris was already occupied by the German army. On June 22nd, he signed the armistice with the Third Reich, which split the French homeland between a northern and western zone, occupied and administered by the German army, and the “Free zone” in the south. Finally, on the 10th of July Philippe Pétain was invested with full executive and legislative power, therefore abolishing the Third Republic. From then on, and until August 1944, the newly established regime stationed in the city of Vichy was a conjuncture of reactionary, xenophobic, anti-Semitic, authoritarian policies, and active collaboration with the Nazi regime (PAXTON, 1972; BARUCH, 1996).

These policies were gathered in the “National Revolution” program based on the motto “Labour, Family, and Fatherland”. Influenced by the far-right political current of Charles Maurras (1868-1952), the regime of Vichy rejected the political heritage of the Enlightenment (BARUCH, 1996). This “new order” was antiparliamentary and emphasized traditional values symbolized by the rural and Catholic society. Furthermore, the reconstruction of a “new France”, required the – legal, economic, and

¹ This article concerns *de facto* and *de jure*/statutory/legal refugees defined as Europeans exiled in France, because of war, persecutions, or threats due to their Jewish identity or political opinions. Most of the time, this paper will use the term “refugee” to gather the *de facto* and *de jure* refugees to outline their vulnerabilities.

² The positive image of American liberalism did not take into consideration the racial segregation, nor the incarceration in concentration camps of Japanese Americans on the West Coast after the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941.

geographic – exclusion of its enemies gathered under the vague and depreciative term of “undesirable” (already used under the Third Republic), meaning Jews, Freemasons, leftist activists, and foreigners. Those categorized as “foreigners” were especially perceived as an economic, health, security, and cultural threat to the French society (NOIRIEL, 1991). Among them, the statutory refugees from the Third Republic were not protected by the state anymore; instead, they were threatened by its anti-Semitic, xenophobic, anti-communist policies, and collaboration with the Third Reich. The depletion of the refugee protection consequently increased the use of “foreigners” as an administrative category. Moreover, despite the increase of *de facto* refugees in 1939 and 1940, the Vichy regime did not recognize them as refugees. In the end, the nationalism of Vichy regime’s aimed to restore a fictive homogeneous “French identity” based on traditional values and the exclusion of foreigners seen as responsible for the collapse of France.

Inside this migratory and political context, this article sheds light on Marseille as a crucial port of transit, refuge, and site for networks of solidarity and humanitarianism under Vichy France’s nationalism. It focuses on American voluntary humanitarian organizations, radical leftist militants, and diplomats in Marseille who were the foremost agents in helping refugees to leave France from 1940 to 1942 (DROZ, 1985; PAXTON, 1972; SÉMELIN, 2008; TEMIME, 2007; VERGNON, 2019). First, in the unoccupied zone of France, the most active towards the expatriation of refugees were the American organizations, such as the American branch of the British Quakers – the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) –, Jewish organizations HICEM³ and Jewish Labour Committee (JLC), and the leftist Centre Américain de Secours (CAS). The second group was composed of revolutionary communists and anarchist militants. They were all faced with the dilemma of fleeing France or joining local solidarity networks. The third group was composed of a few diplomats who launched a set of legal and illegal actions towards their government and Vichy on behalf of the refugees.

Port specificities (maritime and continental crossroads, traffics, immigration) linked to political networks offer a fertile ground to study global ideologies on a local scale (BRASKÉN *et al.*, 2021). American humanitarian organizations had a moderate and state-centred position. Their humanitarianism was close to what Michael Seidman called counterrevolutionary anti-fascism (SEIDMAN, 2018). Their conservative internationalism predisposed them to collaborate with the Vichy regime as their anti-fascist popular front was chiefly against the Nazis. On the other hand, diplomats, leftist militants, and some humanitarians formed international solidarity networks symbolized by resistance against dominant oppressions (GARCÍA *et al.*, 2018). Their actions in harbours, such as Marseille, Casablanca, Tangier, Lisbon, and New York were more anti-fascist than humanitarian at the time. Among them, the action of the most radical left-wing militants towards refugees had a dominant political activity against capitalism, imperialism, colonialism, and fascism. This solidarity from below “forged through political struggle” (FEATHERSTONE, 2012, p.3) vivified on a global scale revolutionary anti-fascism and a subaltern internationalism of solidarity (BAYERLEIN; BRASKÉN; WEISS, 2017). Thus, even though all these actors gathered in Marseille

³ Founded in 1927, the “HICEM, is an abbreviation of the names of three resettlement organisations: HIAS, an American organisation with its headquarters in New York; the Paris-based Jewish Colonisation Association, and Emigdirect, based in Berlin” (BAZAROV, 2009).

helped refugees who were victims of fascism, they were part of different networks, practices, and internationalism.

Despite the multiplicity of their background ideologies, humanitarians, diplomats, and leftist militants had a common goal of solidarity towards refugees and acted as agents of internationalism within localized networks (TAITHE, 2019). In Marseille, these two kinds of internationalism - conservative humanitarianism and leftist solidarity - collaborated to some extent and the boundary between them was not always a clear-cut. The study of these internationalist actors helps one understand the practices and ideologies of these groups towards refugees, as well as the interactions between them and the Vichy regime. On a broader scale, it contributes to think about the collision between internationalism and nationalism in times of war. Therefore, this paper explores, first, the life of refugees in the cosmopolitan city of Marseille under Vichy nationalist laws and practices; and, at a second moment, understanding the significance of American humanitarianism and its interactions with the regime of Vichy in Marseille. Finally, the article will bring a new perspective on the unique experience of international solidarity and its struggle against Vichy's nationalism in Marseille.

This paper provides some new insights, thanks to the local archives from the French department of Bouches-du-Rhône (Archives Départementales des Bouches-du-Rhône — ADBdR). It claims to be part of historiography on refugees, humanitarianism, leftist internationalism, and French nationalism in the context of Marseille to set a path for further investigations. This work is part of a recent shift in the historiography on refugees during the Second World War from mass movements inside Europe to the study of the more peripheral, but significant, exiles of Europeans outside the continent and towards colonies or the Ally countries (JENNINGS, 2018; LOYER, 2005; MARRUS, 1986; SHEPHARD, 2010). Among them, the German exile from the Third Reich was one of the most important in numbers and was essentially composed of intellectuals, political opponents, and Jews (KLEIN, 1997; MÜHLEN, 1992; SAUVEUR-HENN, 1998; WERFEL, 2007). Despite the large portion of the literature on European refugees, this paper will outline the importance of harbours as a place of refuge and transit during the Second World War. Marseille, as pertains to the history of refugees and immigration during the Second World War, has been studied by four pioneer historians, Renée Dray-Bensousan (2004, 2013), Jean-Marie Guillon (2001), Robert Mencherini (2017), and Émile Temime (2007). While these studies have to a great extent analysed the refugee camps and the deportation of Jews to the Reich, they failed to notably address those who were exiled towards the French empire. Furthermore, the famous Varian Fry Committee and its humanitarian actions towards refugees in Marseille has garnered the attention of historians and been followed by a recent study on one of its partners, the Jewish Labour Committee (BÉNÉDITE *et al.*, 2017; COLLOMP, 2016; DRAY-BENSOUSAN, 2004, 2013; MENCHERINI, 2004; RYAN, 1996). Nonetheless, a history of the HICEM and AFSC in a local or national context, both crucial American humanitarian organizations in France at this time, is still yet to be written. Also, little has been written about the link between refugees and revolutionary anti-fascist networks (MENCHERINI, 2014) as most publications emphasize its relations with national resistance (VERGNON, 2019). Indeed, the lack of archives explains why few have published on the radical left political groups in Marseille, such as the revolutionary communists and anarchists (SAHUC, 2008). Finally, Marseille as a place of refuge and friction in times of war between ideologies such as liberalism, anarchism, communism, and nationalism has yet to be studied.

LAW, POLICE, AND DENUNCIATION IN THE COSMOPOLITAN CITY OF MARSEILLE: BEING A REFUGEE UNDER VICHY'S NATIONALISM

First of all, before getting into the local case of Marseille, it is crucial to understand the level of protection of refugees under Vichy France's nationalism. The collapse of the French state during the German attack in 1940 and the rise of the Vichy regime disrupted the legacy of the interwar period on refugee protection. In April 1941, François Darlan, the head of the French government (February 1941 to April 1942) withdrew France from the League of Nations (LoN) followed by the suspension of previously ratified international agreements relating to the protection of refugees (the League of Nations refugee arrangement of 1928 and the Convention of 1933). Their withdrawal from liberal internationalism under the leadership of LoN was part of a nationalist policy on refugees. In January 1942, a centralized body of the Special Office for Stateless persons replaced the numerous refugee offices for each nationality (KUNTH, 2017; CHIBRAC, 2004). The legal protection of specific nationalities under the Third Republic was then greatly diminished by Vichy France.

In the unoccupied zone, depending on their Jewish identity or political opinion, refugees did not have the same level of protection. Through the "national revolution", Philippe Pétain positioned himself as the defender of true French culture and identity. His desire for "national unity" did not include refugees, seen as political subversive actors. All refugees were not equal, whether they had legal protection or not, and the Jews or the radical leftist were directly threatened by the Vichy regime and its collaboration with the Gestapo. Article 19 of the Franco-German armistice stated that the French government had to surrender German citizens on the demand of the Nazi authorities (MAURY, 2006). This clause used to deport German Jews and political opponents increasingly concerned other foreigners (interned, prisoners, *de jure* refugees, etc.). Among the European refugees (*de jure* and *de facto*), the ones who were unemployed, or already interned in camps (i.e., Spanish Factions) were committed to forced labour in specific places, called Groupement de travailleurs étrangers (GTE), which were camps inherited from the end of the Third Republic (39,000 persons in GTEs in 1941, PESCHANSKI, 2002, p. 138). Independently of their legal status, the refugees who could avoid the French and Nazi repression were the ones already well settled with a work and residence permit, who could financially sustain themselves, and who were neither Jews nor far-leftists. Among those refugees, most of them did not have any other choice than to stay in Marseille at the mercy of Vichy France's repression.

Marseille as a border-city of the Mediterranean Sea was a place subjecting its refugee population to extensive controls. After the First World War, Marseille was one of the most well-known zones of refuge and transit for Europeans, because of its maritime infrastructure, geographic localization, and the availability of menial work (DIAMOND; KITSON, 2005). The refugees were principally located in the northern district of the city, as well as in the inner-city with the French working class (KITSON, 2014). Following the "massive and sudden" (MARION, 1940, author's translation) influx of refugees in spring 1940 in Marseille, the local authorities considered them as



a security threat.⁴ Refugees, in their large majority, were seen as politically subversive actors affiliated with leftist networks, which led Adolf Hitler, the dictator of the Third Reich, to name Marseille the “asylum for the international underworld” (JENNINGS, 2018, p. 32). Theoretically, as of the autumn of 1940, foreigners (as an administrative category including *de facto* and *de jure* refugees) had to report to the police monthly or bimonthly (MARION, 1940). Moreover, the authorities struggled against this marginal leftist subaltern internationalism by forbidding all foreigners from leaving their commune of residence or bordering ones (decree of the October 25th of 1940). They could only come to Marseille if they had an appointment at a consulate and had to return to their department of residence afterward (PUCHEU, 1942). Nonetheless, throughout the war, the refugee population was large and constantly changing in Marseille, which made it hard for the police to keep track of all of them. The Police Chief of Marseille himself recognized the “effective surveillance [of militants] is almost impossible” in Marseille (RISPOLI, 1941). This containment policy explains also why refugees chose to stay in Marseille, where they could easily reach the consulates to get visas.

From 1940 to spring 1942, complementary to the control of refugee movements in the French homeland, Vichy France adopted an emigration policy to expel them for ideological and economic reasons. Following social classes, the refugees who could afford an entry visa to a host country and who could financially support themselves were temporarily placed under house arrest, but the destitute were strategically gathered in transit camps near the port of Marseille. The camp of Les Milles located in a former tile factory was only for men, whereas the hotels Bompard, Terminus des Ports, Levant, and Atlantique were exclusive to women and children (CHIBRAC, 2004). This policy of emigration was a source of tensions between the central authority of Vichy and the prefect of Marseille. In November 1940, an exchange of letters between the prefect of Bouche-du-Rhône and the interior ministry (PEYROUTON, 1940) reveals disagreements on who was responsible for approaching foreign governments and convincing them to open their immigration policy. After conceding its responsibility in this task, the minister ordered the prefect to collaborate with private humanitarian organizations to look for available merchant ships which dropped off their cargo in Marseille, and who could embark foreigners on their way back. It would eventually “guarantee the embarkation of a significant number of foreigners” (PEYROUTON, 1940, author's translation). Despite the loyalty of the prefect chosen by Philippe Pétain, we can imagine the dearth of time and resources needed to devote to such matters. This lack of administrative zeal explains – among other reasons such as the cost of traveling, the lack of ships, the British blockade, and restrictive immigration policies – why this policy of emigration was not efficient (LABERNÈDE, 1990). With the invasion of North Africa by the Allies (cf. “Operation Torch”, November 8, 1942), Vichy France stopped its emigration policy to avoid Resistance fighters joining the Allies. In the end, between 1940 and 1942, most of the refugees got blocked in France at the mercy of the Vichy regime’s “culture of war” (NIVET, 2004). As the historian and anarchist, Marianne Enckell stressed, “France was a trap in a bigger European trap closing up. And Marseille was a rat trap” (ENCKELL, 1978, p.14, author’s translation).

⁴ This article uses the seasons of the Northern Hemisphere as the reference of time, i.e.: spring (March-June) and summer (June-September).

These xenophobic policies targeting refugees were amplified by a specific context of war. The German seizure, the British naval blockade, as well as the lack of workforces and an agricultural hinterland, provoked a shortage of food, electricity, and coal in the 1940s in the unoccupied zone of France and especially in cities such as Marseille (CHADWICK, 2016; FOGG, 2009; PAXTON, 1972). Starting in September 1940, to deal with these shortages, the population was subjected to ration cards, including one only for bread. It came with the proliferation of ersatz goods, denominating anything fake or made of poor quality as “national”. For example, the “café national” was made of sawdust. The quotation below from an unidentified German worker of the semi-public French organization, Service social d’aide aux Émigrants, appropriately portrays the social context of Marseille in 1941.

Following rather pleasant customs formalities, I venture out of Marseilles’s railway station, around 7 am. I stroll down large stairs to a café, where I find the first sleepy customers. I haven’t yet received the bread ticket so I satisfy myself with a “café national”. [...] Finally, the first light appears, and I continue my way to find the ‘Service social d’aide aux Émigrants’, my new workplace. I go down the Canebière, passing people in a hurry, struggling against the mistral hitting me with strength, and a deafening noise of klaxons and newsdealers [...] The fishermen are sitting by the dock, devouring their breakfast of bread and wine. [...] My path brings me to the ‘Consigne maritime’ where I find the social service. [...] Many people have appointments, a labyrinth of languages, nationalities, ages, and appearances, and many new problems: visa, consulate, passage, repatriation, emigration, residence permits, camps, expulsion, etc. [...] Workers, factory managers, professors and students from a forbidden time meet in this waiting room. Everyone is united in this unique place, having struggled before and now resigned and tired, without a place of origin, often without a goal ahead [...]. (EINDRÜCKE..., 1941, author’s translation)

With food and material shortages, an increase in population and unemployment, bombardments (Italian and German in June 1940 and American in May 1944), as well as police and Gestapo repression, the mortality rate in Marseille increased by 57% during the war (JENNINGS, 2018). Nevertheless, as shown by Robert Paxton (1972), despite a sentiment of lassitude and humiliation linked to material and food deprivations, the public opinion and the local police were still loyal to Philippe Pétain until the occupation of southern France by the Wehrmacht.

This context of war shortage linked to patriotism, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism led French nationals (co-workers, neighbours, landlords, etc.) to denunciate foreigners, including legal refugees, anonymously (FOGG, 2003; NIVET, 2004). The perception of foreigners, and especially of Jew as “a drain on resources was particularly important in Marseille” (KITSON, 2014, p. 115). As an outcome, French residents sent between three and five million denunciation letters to Vichy authorities and even directly to Philippe Pétain (FOGG, 2003, p. 274). One example is an anonymous letter written by a group of workers concerning their Spanish colleague in Marseille. In the letter, they accused him of having said, “The French army is good at nothing, and we’ve seen



it" (LETTER..., 1940, author's translation). As insignificant as it seems, for them, this insult was especially detestable "on the brink of the cruellest mourning that our country has had to endure" (LETTER..., 1940, author's translation). In that time, when the embers of defeat were still warm, their national pride was thin-skinned. This defensive reaction shows the lack of tolerance towards "anti-French" discourse, the need to find scapegoats, and the competition for scarce resources. This xenophobia spread in the population at large and was even more present in the police (KITSON, 2014).

The police were a key actor of Philippe Pétain's nationalism on the ground. Although the denunciation letters were anonymous and very elusive, each case involved an order from the Prefect of Bouches-du-Rhône to the Chief of Police of Marseille, and then to the mobile police for investigation. This demonstrated the strong respect of hierarchy between the prefect and the mobile forces, who were particularly zealous in controlling foreigners. In doing so, police agents were both a direct partner of the regime's nationalism and a symbol of its sovereignty against the Nazi regime. Despite this, denunciation of foreigners by French citizens was counterproductive and the ratio between time and efficient results was largely deficient (FOGG, 2003). Moreover, according to Simon Kitson (2014) following a brief period of enthusiasm, the local police of Marseille became more and more hostile to Vichy, notably because of its increasing collaboration with the Third Reich. To sum it up, this "culture of war" was embodied in xenophobic and anti-Semitic policies and practices that made refugees, seen as political activists, particularly vulnerable. That is how Vichy France's nationalism stood against the cosmopolitanism of refugees in Marseille. Nonetheless, Philippe Pétain's pragmatism did not prevent him from collaborating with American humanitarianism in Marseille.

AMERICAN HUMANITARIANISM IN MARSEILLE: FROM COLLABORATION TO CIVIL RESISTANCE

Since the thirties, the influx of refugees in France attracted dozens of American humanitarian organizations, playing a significant role in sustaining refugees. Their humanitarianism was part of charity practices inherited from European empires of the second half of the eighteenth century and integrated into the American imperialism of the nineteenth century (BAUGHAN, 2013; CABANES 2014; CURTI, 1963; GO, 2013; MONIZ, 2016; SKINNER; LESTER, 2012). In 1917, while the Bolshevik Revolution occurred in Russia, the president of the United States, Woodrow Wilson (1913-1921) had committed his country to a broad policy of liberal internationalism supported by an organized worldwide peace (CABANES, 2014; JOSEPHSON, 1974; ROSENBERG, 2017). In doing so, the United States assumed for themselves the "burden" of fair world leadership based on liberal democratic policies, anti-communism, and global capitalism (BARNETT, 2011; PARIS, 1997, p. 56). This mission led the American government under Woodrow Wilson to initiate an "international humanitarian awakening" (IRWIN, 2017, p. 187) compatible with the US worldview (DONINI, 2010). During the Second World War, the US government promoted and increased control over the unprecedented overseas spread of private humanitarian organizations (MCCLEARY, 2009). In short, American humanitarian activities were entirely part of American liberal internationalism, which was also conservative.



In 1940, in the unoccupied zone of France, most of the American humanitarian organizations, such as the HICEM and the AFSC were part of this liberal and conservative internationalism and became valuable partners to Vichy's "national revolution". The American organizations gathered in the Committee of Nîmes to centralize their collaboration with the Vichy regime until 1943 (KÉVONIAN, 2015; GRYNBERG, 1990; SUBAK, 2010). They were part of the American Foreign policy of the anti-fascist front against the Nazis but were not officially opposed to the Vichy regime. They supported refugees (food, medical, and material supplies) who were free, or forcibly moved to camps. They also helped them leave the camps, and to emigrate from France (LABERNÈDE, 1990). Until the invasion of French North Africa by Anglo-American forces in November 1942, Franklin D. Roosevelt, his secretary of state, Cordell Hull, and his close diplomatic team in France and French North Africa (William C. Bullit, William Leahy, and Robert Murphy) maintained a diplomatic bond with the Vichy regime. The main objectives were to collect intelligence and exert a hold over Philippe Pétain to compete with the Nazis and ensure that France's naval forces and its empire stayed neutral (BÉZIAT, 1997). Thus, even after the American entry into the war against the Axis (December 1941), or the comeback of Pierre Laval at the head of a government engaged in an extreme form of collaborationism (April 1942), the United States maintained diplomatic relations with the French government of Philippe Pétain (BARUCH, 1996; BÉZIAT, 1997, PÉREON, 2012). That is how American humanitarianism was part of a pragmatic foreign policy and used as propaganda to win French public opinion against German influences (BÉZIAT, 1997).

The HICEM and the AFSC internationalism – disregarding race and religion – had to juggle between the respect of the protectionist and neutral American foreign policies (until December 1941) and the xenophobic and anti-Semitic law of the Vichy regime. The HICEM was the main emigration organization, with a staff of about eighty people, which handled 30,000 individual cases and are alleged to have saved 24,000 people (BAZAROV, 2009). To fit into Vichy's policy and be authorized to work without being subject to suspicion, the HICEM wove links between the refugee crisis and the national economy. Writing to Vichy's authority, they emphasized their will to struggle against illegal emigration by cooperating with the prefecture and facilitating legal emigration to avoid a cumbersome mass of refugees in the labour market. Even after the United States declared war, at the beginning of 1942, the HICEM and the prefect collaborated to organize convoys of refugees from Marseille to Casablanca where they could embark on a transatlantic steamer (PUCHEU, 1942). Following the same agenda as the HICEM, the director of the AFSC wrote to the prefect of Marseille in January 1942 to express his willingness "to collaborate intimately and amicably with them" (KERSHNER, 1942, author's translation). However, this collaboration was not a blank check, and humanitarian actors suspected of illegal actions were subjected to regular police investigations (PEYROUTON, 1940).

Despite this collaboration on behalf of refugees, the HICEM and the AFSC also engaged in a certain dissidence towards the Vichy regime. After the conference of Wannsee in January 1942 and the systemic German deportation of Jews to extermination camps, the Vichy regime reinforced its anti-Semitic policies (multiplication of house arrests, followed by deportations to the Third Reich starting in the summer of 1942). In this context, notwithstanding the official rhetoric of collaboration, humanitarian organizations such as the HICEM and AFSC started to work closely with underground networks such as the *Groupe d'action contre la déportation*, known as Service André (HERSCO, 2006;



LABERNÈDE, 1990).⁵ Failing to save entire families, one of the main purposes was to save children from deportation and organize their escape from concentration camps. Because of the lack of support from the United States government and their restrictive border policy, one of the options was to bring the children to Switzerland. In October 1942, knowing what was at stake and facing her helplessness to save more children, Edith Mary Pye (member of the Famine Relief Committee, London) commented in a letter to Suzanne Ferrière (secretary-general of the International Migration Service, Geneva), “it will at least save some of them” (MARY PYE, 1942).

With the deportation of Jews to the Third Reich and the invasion of North Africa by Anglo-American forces, the collaboration with the Vichy regime became almost impossible. The day following the beginning of the “Operation Torch”, the 9th of November, the Bouches-du-Rhône prefect forbade American and British citizens – including the diplomatic personnel – to leave the French territory. The next day, they had to leave the city of Marseille to specific departments in the countryside with a residence permit limited to one department (RIVALLAND, 1942). From then on, they were repatriated, incarcerated in Germany (Baden-Baden), or went into exile in Switzerland, Portugal, or Italy (SUBAK, 2010; LABERNÈDE, 1990). Both the HICEM, until its dissolution in March 1943, and its successor of the AFSC, the Secours Quaker, continued their work without American employees (KÉVONIAN, 2015). In spring 1943, the Secours Quaker was still trying to collaborate with the prefect, “as far as possible” (COHU, 1943, author’s translation). In the end, because of political considerations and conservative anti-fascism, there was close cooperation between American humanitarian organizations and the representatives of the Vichy regime. This pragmatic policy ultimately saved thousands of refugees but resulted in a limited space for civil resistance.

ANOTHER INTERNATIONALISM: LEFTIST INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY NETWORKS IN MARSEILLE

Vichy France’s nationalism and conservative American humanitarianism were challenged in Marseille by radical leftist militants, diplomats, and two American humanitarian organizations - the Emergency Rescue Committee (ERC) and the Jewish Labour Committee (JLC) - who had an outrightly leftist political agenda. The ERC sent the American and communist journalist Varian Fry to Marseille. He brought with him a list assembled by the US State Department of famous intellectual and artist refugees to be saved, such as Hannah Arendt, Jean Malaquais, and Anna Seghers. For that purpose, as early as the summer of 1940 he established the Centre Américain de Secours (CAS). On the other hand, the JLC focused its actions on personalities from trade unions, and Russian social democrats (COLLOMP, 2016). Both the CAS and the JLC allowed their leftist ideology to determine the course of their actions, making them more anti-fascist than humanitarian.⁶ Indeed, with the cooperation of consulates, they

⁵ The service André (not to be confused with the anarchist André Arru) was a clandestine network created by Joseph Bass, a Russian Jew, to save Jews from deportation through the production of fake identity cards and sheltering.

⁶ This situation echoes the political position of Pia Klemp, the current captain of the rescue boat called “Louise Michel”, who recently declared: “I don’t see sea rescue as a humanitarian action, but as part of an antifascist fight” (TONDO; STIERL, 2020).

went beyond their prerogatives by helping mostly political refugees using illegal actions which brought tensions between them and the Committee of Nîmes (GRYNBERG, 1990). Eventually, the CAS was excluded from the committee, as their actions were prejudicial to the American collaboration with the Vichy authorities (BÉNÉDITE *et al.*, 2017). Varian Fry was finally expelled from France on September 6, 1941 (MALGAT, 2013). According to Varian Fry (1945) and Susan E. Subak (2010), the American Embassy did not want Varian Fry's illegal activities to jeopardize the "friendly relations with the French government" (FRY, 1945, p. 128). His partner, the Frenchman Daniel Bénédite, took over the head of the organization and radicalized its activities. Promoting more revolutionary anti-fascism, he refused to help Stalinist refugees escape France (BÉNÉDITE *et al.*, 2017). The CAS was finally shut down by the local prefect in June 1942, while after the invasion of the unoccupied zone in France the JLC joined the armed resistance (COLLOMP, 2016). Despite the lack of support from the American government, the radical leftist internationalism of the CAS and the JLC respectively helped around 1200 and 300 refugees flee France (JACQUIER; PAULHAN, 2018)

Both organizations were part of a combined elite and subaltern internationalism embodied in more radical anti-fascism compared to other American humanitarian organizations. Within their limited economic means, they mostly helped privileged refugees who were able to afford their expatriation. Although, on a marginal scale they financially supported the most destitute or helped them find work. The travel costs were high, especially for refugees who had recently arrived in France and were excluded from the national labour market (cf. the 27th of September 1942 law concerning "Les étrangers en surnombre dans l'économie nationale"). For example, Rosenberg Ludwig, a German Jew who was arrested by the police of Marseille in 1940, declared that travel tickets cost around 1000F, the destination visa (Siam, or China) and transit visa costs (Spanish and Portuguese) around 100F each, plus the cost of taxes and bribes to consulates (COMMISSAIRE SPÉCIAL..., [1940?]). This sum was non-negligible, for example, the minimum authorized wages in urban areas in the department of Rhône was 1100F for men and 775F for women per month in 1941 (BEAU, 2001). With visas from Siam (ex-Thailand) or China, the refugees could go to Lisbon where they would await an American visa in a safer context (FRY, 1945). Rosenberg Ludwig also wanted to reach the United States but was ultimately deported to Algiers by the French authorities where he died in 1943 (ROSENBORG, s. d.). The CAS and JLC challenged the more conservative American humanitarianism of the HICEM and the AFSC by bringing a strong leftist political bias to their practices.

In their early civil resistance, the CAS and the JLC found support among diplomats stationed in Marseille. Diplomats in Marseille helped refugees escape France, stepping into a blurred zone of legal and illegal actions. After the armistice was agreed upon in France, and the demarcation line was established, most governments moved their consulates to Marseille. To immigrate to the United States, refugees needed an affidavit, attesting to close connections there, such as a family member. Yet, the vice-consul in charge of the visa procedure, Hiram Bingham, cooperated with Varian Fry to illegally deliver American visas for refugees (FRY, 1945; SUBAK, 2010). Soon, the State Department discovered the violation of its immigration policies and transferred H. Bingham to Brasília. He was replaced with a vice-consul who refused "as many visas as he possibly could" (FRY, 1945, p. 215; SUBAK, 2010, p. 57).

Moreover, the Consul General of Mexico in Marseille, Gilberto Bosques, provided refugees of all nationalities with around 100,000 entry visas, Mexican passports, and

forged identity cards, allowing at least 20,000 refugees to emigrate (MENCHERINI, 2014, p. 118). G. Bosques provided special aid mostly to Spanish Republicans and rented two castles placed under diplomatic protection until March 1941. With the collaboration of the CAS, these places were self-managed by leftist refugees and became locales of an unexpected experience of collectivism and international solidarity in the middle of Pétain's "national revolution" (MENCHERINI, 2004). This was made possible by the will of G. Bosques and his team, who used international law to provide spaces of freedom protected by their consulate until 1942. These cases exemplify, on a more global scale, how diplomats in several places, with or without authorization from their governments, helped refugees escape fascism in Europe. Their internationalism was based on solidarity and their anti-fascism defied differences in religion or political affiliation. According to Eric Saul, around the world, between 250,000 and 350,000 lives were saved by diplomatic rescue (SAUL, 2017). The role of these diplomats can be summed up by a quote from G. Bosques: "Sometimes you have to step outside of legality to enter the realm of rights... Which rights? The human rights to liberty." (MENCHERINI, 2014, p. 119, author's translation).

The internationalism of diplomats and humanitarian organizations was associated with international radical leftist political groups in Marseille. According to Pierre Lanneret (1995, p. 54), there were around 10,000 leftists (anarchists, communists, and socialists) in France in 1940. Among them, several clandestine extreme leftist groups of diverse geographical and ideological origins formed the "Third Camp". These internationalists represented an alternative to the French patriotic resistance and the imperialist capitalism of the Allies and the Axis (LANNERET, 1995). In Marseille, this "Third Camp" formed a radical subaltern internationalism, a melting pot of anarchists and revolutionary communists such as the *Gauche Communiste Internationale* founded by Marc Chirik, the *Groupe révolutionnaire prolétarien* (GRP), and the *Revolutionären Kommunisten Deutschlands- Communistes révolutionnaires français* (RKD-CR). During the war, GRP published the newspaper *Réveil prolétarien* ("Proletariat Awakening") calling for a general strike:

This war is not yours, it is the war between Anglo-American capitalists full of gold and raw materials and the capitalists from the Axis who are looking into the same resources. [...] Even Stalin drove his entire country into war only to save the interests of its bureaucracy. Whether you are a Parisian striker, an American minor, an Italian labourer, or a British steelworker, you are part of the same struggle. Only a gathered proletariat, organized by peasants and labourer councils will fulfil the Proletarian Revolution and with it, the victory of socialism. (GRP/UCI, 1943, author's translation)

Indeed, they defended a third path defined by the international solidarity of proletarians calling for a general strike to "transform the imperialist war into a class war" (BOURRINET, 2008, author's translation). They were not part of the nationalist anti-fascist popular front from the 1930's and wanted to take advantage of the war to trigger a civil war. In Marseille, the anarchists from France, Spain, and Italy organized themselves into a small committee centred on Jean-René Saulière, alias André Arru. They printed a newspaper *La Raison* and organized "balades champêtres" ("bucolic

walks”) in Marseille to stick tracts, stickers, and posters despite the curfew (CIRA, 1984). One of the posters was entitled “Death to Cows” in reference to Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin, Pétain, Hitler, Mussolini, Franco, and their generals (CIRA, 1984, p. 4). Through their actions between 1940 and 1942, these extreme leftist groups refused to sacrifice the class struggle on the altar of the war against the Nazis and to be part of a national anti-fascist common front.

This revolutionary internationalism was no mere political propaganda, but also an expression of international solidarity towards refugees. Despite their limited organizations and numbers, some radical leftist internationalists found a way to help Jews and refugees outside the networks of the patriotic resistance. The anarchist André Arru and his libertarian resistance movement in Southern France falsified identity documents for Jews or political refugees, providing shelters for some of them (CIRA, 1984). As political opponents in France, they were also threatened by the French police and the Gestapo. Those militants, mostly political refugees, were part of radical subaltern international solidarity movements looking for support in France through clandestine networks or by moving abroad. Those who were able to leave, spread their revolutionary and libertarian internationalism in exile and created cells throughout Europe, North Africa, and the United States. For example, the anarchist Pio Turroni, close to André Arru, escaped from Marseille to reach Casablanca thanks to anarchist cells in Algeria and Morocco. He fled from Casablanca to New York aboard a Portuguese ship organized by the International Red Cross in Geneva (FONTANELLI MOREL, 2014). In the end, the encounter between local and international networks of humanitarians, militants, and diplomats saved thousands of lives on the fringes of the repressive Vichy and Nazi systems, but the most radical anti-fascists were powerless to change the system itself.

CONCLUSION

Anchoring itself in the harbour of Marseille from 1940 to 1942, this article has demonstrated how a local study of individuals and networks can highlight a more global analysis of the collision between internationalism and nationalism in times of war. The specificities of Marseille as the main harbour of unoccupied France enabled the encounter of eclectic anti-fascist internationalism brought by American humanitarians, leftist militants, and diplomats. Despite differences in means and ideologies, these actors had a common goal towards refugees: solidarity. Vichy’s “national revolution” and its phantasmagoric ideology of a homogeneous French identity transformed Marseille as a pivotal point for the expulsion of foreigners until November 1942. Refugees were then subdued both by the strict control of their movements and denunciation by French citizens. The extreme shortage of food and raw materials in Marseille increased this double surveillance and the tensions between natives and foreigners. In harmony with the US State Department, American humanitarianism did not stand against Vichy’s policies but collaborated to save thousands of refugees. From the spring of 1942 and the increased persecution of Jews, American humanitarian organizations increasingly moved towards a mix of collaboration and civil resistance. In parallel, and as early as 1940, a leftist internationalism was vivified by individuals engaged in clandestine or semi-clandestine networks for the sake of refugees against Vichy France’s nationalism. In Marseille, these personalities and their networks developed radical anti-fascism



against Vichy France and saved refugees by sending them to Allied countries or their colonies. Vichy France partially authorized these internationalist movements to sustain its emigration policy and discharged its regime from economic and humanitarian weights. The invasion of the unoccupied zone by the Nazis in November 1942 progressively put an end to the American humanitarianism collaboration with Vichy France and pushed the internationalists into an underground and desperate struggle for human solidarity.

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