

Another issue was that of labour disputes. British workers sometimes agreed their wages in tough negotiations that could involve conflict.⁸⁰ For example, one of the Fourchambault puddlers, Richard Will, rebelled against the rules and the working hours and left as early as 1822. The following year, in October 1823, Rollins Haddock organized the first union in the Fourchambault forges.⁸¹ Haddock was a radical who had been sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment for his role as one of the three leaders of the South Wales strike of 1816, when he was only twenty-two.⁸² Indeed, the organization and the early traditions of the British workers contributed to their being seen as a source of contagion for French workers. As early as 1825, the *sous-préfet* of Saint-Quentin (Aisne) wrote to the director-general of the police in Paris:

Early in August, agitation in a spinning mill of the town. The authorities held firm. But the workers have been affected by the spirit of English workers, who 'are trying to draw our own [French] workers into making claims they had never even thought of, to get them to draw up petitions, to hold meetings to demand an increase in wage rates, to sign agreements whereby the workers consent to a deduction from their wages to provide compensation for those who fall ill or become victims of their devotion when it came to making claims against their masters. A commitment on the latter point was signed by workers, who then ended up in prison'. Nothing has happened yet, but one cannot wish that English workers increase in number, for one fears they may propagate 'principles of liberty that our workers don't understand enough not to abuse them', all the more as Saint-Quentin has no garrison.⁸³

Other British workers went on strike — 150, for example, on the Paris–Rouen line in April 1842, and on 13 April 1844 'about four or five hundred' on the Rouen to Le Havre building site, who

⁸⁰ The Fourchambault ironworks master thus asked about the recruitment of English puddlers: 'Je vous engage à traiter avec eux avant leur départ de Paris, si cela n'a pas été fait, car ces gens une fois rendus ici pourraient, ainsi que William, élever des prétentions ridicules qu'il me serait difficile de régler, au contraire s'ils arrivent avec un traité, nous les tiendrons fermes'. Letter from Dufaud to Boigues, 28 Sept. 1820, AD Nièvre, 22 F, quoted in Thuillier, *Les Ouvriers des forges nivernaises*, 36.

⁸¹ On Richard Will and Rollins Haddock: AD Nièvre, série M. 'Journal de Dufaud', quoted in Le Maitron, *Dictionnaire biographique. Mouvement ouvrier. Mouvement social*, at <<http://maitron-en-ligne.univ-paris1.fr/>>.

⁸² David J. V. Jones, *Before Rebecca: Popular Protests in Wales, 1793–1835* (London, 1973), 78.

⁸³ 'Le sous-préfet de Saint-Quentin au directeur général de la police', 25 Sept. 1825, AN, F⁷ 9786.3, reproduced in *Le Régime de l'industrie en France de 1814 à 1830*, iii, *Décembre 1824 – juillet 1830: recueil de textes publiés pour la Société d'histoire de France*, ed. Georges and Hubert Bourgin (Paris, 1941), 120.

were 'feeling dissatisfied with the wages they were receiving'.⁸⁴ Some unions may have been set up by these migrants. In 1825, it was reportedly agreed at a Nottingham meeting of the bobbin-net hand-workers in support of the eight-hour day 'that a copy of the above resolutions be transmitted to the Bobbin Net Committee at Calais, Lisle and St-Quentin, requesting their assistance in case of need'.⁸⁵ This alarmed the French Ministry of the Interior, which unsuccessfully sought further information from the local authorities.⁸⁶

IV

FRENCH CHARTISM?

The issue of real political exchange, or even transfers, between the French and British radicals in the 1830s and 1840s has already been raised.⁸⁷ But we should not think in terms of systematic, regular and structured exchange before the exile of the last participants in the 1848 revolutions, and probably not before the foundation of the International Workingmen's Association in 1864. However, in the 1830s and 1840s there were *some* political contacts. The Lyon newspaper *L'Écho de la fabrique* took an interest in social struggles in Britain, and published in 1832 a manifesto entitled 'To our Brothers in England'.⁸⁸ In 1834, some workers in Nantes sent an address to the English trade unions which called for a union between English and French workers, which began: 'The working classes of all countries are sisters'.⁸⁹ In 1842, the radical newspaper *L'Atelier* (the workshop) published a manifesto arguing for a 'permanent alliance between workers from France and England'; direct contacts are likely to

⁸⁴ Service historique de l'armée de terre, E5 (Apr. 1842), reference provided by Pierre-Jacques Derainne; *Norman Times*, 20 Apr. 1844, 1.

⁸⁵ *Nottingham Mercury*, 23 Sept. 1825.

⁸⁶ See letters in AN, F⁷ 9787.10, reproduced in *Le Régime de l'industrie en France*, iii, ed. Bourgin and Bourgin, 121–4.

⁸⁷ See, in particular, Arthur Lehning, *From Buonarroti to Bakunin: Studies in International Socialism* (Leiden, 1970), ch. 6; Henry Weisser, *British Working-Class Movements and Europe, 1815–48* (Manchester, 1975).

⁸⁸ *L'Écho de la fabrique*, 9 Sept. 1832. The full contents of the newspaper are available online, at <<http://echo-fabrique.ens-lyon.fr>>.

⁸⁹ 'Address of the Workmen of Nantes to the English Trades' Unions', *Pioneer*, 7 June 1834. This was followed by 'The Reply of *The Pioneer* to the Address of the Workmen of Nantes', *ibid.*, 14 June 1834, as quoted in Lehning, *From Buonarroti to Bakunin*, 152.

have lain behind this proposal.⁹⁰ Some travellers, such as Flora Tristan, played their part: after crossing the Channel in 1839, she became interested in British labour and Chartism, and this led her in her book *Union ouvrière* to call for an international organization of workers.⁹¹ Between 1842 and 1844, the Scottish surgeon and leading Chartist Peter McDouall came to France after several warrants had been issued against him.⁹² He collaborated with the French utopian socialist Étienne Cabet, whom he had met in 1839 at the end of Cabet's own exile in London. McDouall wrote in Cabet's paper *Le Populaire*, and was said to be the translator of Cabet's book into English 'at the author's especial request'.⁹³ In his publications, Cabet himself spoke of the '8 million Chartists . . . who were communists', and he had English followers who created an Icarian Committee for England in the mid 1840s.⁹⁴ The Chartist Julian Harney also had some interest in Cabet and was instrumental in forming the Fraternal Democrats, who, from 1845 to 1848, brought several Chartists into contact with refugees from the Continent, including some French exiles.⁹⁵ In March 1848, some Chartist delegations went to Paris, including one from the National Charter Association, which included Harney, Ernest Jones and Philip McGrath; these delegations probably met Louis Blanc, A. A. Ledru-Rollin and other French socialist leaders. Robert Owen spent several months

⁹⁰ 'Aux Chartistes, les Ouvriers Français', *L'Atelier*, 30 Oct. 1842 (vol. i, p. 13).

⁹¹ Flora Tristan, *Promenades dans Londres: ou, l'Aristocratie et les prolétaires anglais* (2nd edn, 1842), ed. François Bédarida (Paris, 1978); Flora Tristan, *Union ouvrière* (1843-4), ed. Daniel Armogathe and Jacques Grandjonc (Paris, 1986).

⁹² See Owen R. Ashton and Paul A. Pickering, *Friends of the People: Uneasy Radicals in the Age of the Chartists* (London, 2002), ch. 1: 'The "People's Advocate": Peter Murray McDouall (1814-1854)'. Most of what follows on McDouall is derived from this.

⁹³ No copy of the *Adventures of William Carisdale in Icaria* has survived. It was published by Hetherington in 1845 and was advertised, for example, in *Morning Star, or Herald of Progression*, 17 May 1845. This was the journal of the Tropical Emigration Society, of which Chartist Thomas Powell was secretary. The advert appeared only once. I owe this reference to Malcolm Chase.

⁹⁴ Étienne Cabet, *État de la question sociale en Angleterre, en Écosse, en Irlande et en France* (Paris, 1843), 18; Ashton and Pickering, *Friends of the People*, 17; W. H. G. Armytage, *Heavens Below: Utopian Experiments in England, 1560-1960* (London, 1961), 205-7.

⁹⁵ See, for example, his letters in *The Harney Papers*, ed. Frank Gees Black and Renee Métivier Black (Assen, 1969); Lehning, *From Buonarroti to Bakunin*; Weisser, *British Working-Class Movements and Europe*, 134-78; and entries on Camille-Louis Berrier-Fontaine, Jacques Chilmann and Jean Michelot, in *Le Maitron, Dictionnaire biographique* (see n. 81 above).

in Paris in the spring of 1848 and was in contact with several French socialists, including Cabet, whom he had met in London and at whose club he spoke. Many more contacts could be mentioned. Even if the impact of internationalism at this stage should not be overestimated in either of the two countries, these examples show that those named above were not lone voices: among British and French activists as among German ones, the international liaison that came into being in 1864 was in its infancy in the 1830s and 1840s.

Did economic migrants play a part in these contacts? Although they may not have had a 'revolutionary tradition', British workers may be said to have been, on the whole, better organized than French workers, partly because they could, up to a point, claim rights which the French largely lacked, such as the right to hold large public meetings, to set up trade unions and to publish newspapers. Organization was more difficult among migrants, especially among temporary or itinerant migrants like the railway navvies, whose involvement in Chartism was limited even in Britain. However, there is evidence that the migrants had a social and political life in France. They created friendly societies, like the British Benefit Society of Rouen and its Environs in 1836.⁹⁶ In Boulogne and Calais, several Odd Fellows societies were also created. In Saint-Pierre-lès-Calais two British workers' societies that met on a weekly basis were founded in 1834. Eight similar French Odd Fellows societies were then created, which consisted of only French workers. These brought together certain republicans and served as cover for political activities that caused the authorities to scrutinize them, especially under Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte's presidency (1848–52). 'The friendly societies of the Boulogne district are allegedly led by men belonging to the anarchist party', the local *procureur* wrote in September 1851;⁹⁷ and after Bonaparte's coup, all the friendly societies of Saint-Pierre, both French and British, were dissolved.

Migrants also set up in France the only branches of the Chartist association known outside Britain and Jersey. Although sections of the Land Plan Company (LPC) were mentioned in Calais,

⁹⁶ AD Seine-Maritime, 4 X 207.

⁹⁷ AD Pas-de-Calais, Arras, M7427, Sept. 1851, quoted in William Maufroy, 'Les Odd Fellows de Saint-Pierre-lès-Calais ou la première rencontre de la mutualité et du mouvement ouvrier dans le Pas-de-Calais au XIX^e siècle', *Bulletin de la Commission départementale d'histoire et d'archéologie du Pas-de-Calais*, xv (1997), 281.

Mantes (Seine-et-Oise) and Evreux (Eure), it is doubtful whether they continued,⁹⁸ whereas the existence of groups in Boulogne and Rouen, which were represented in the 1845 Land Plan conference, is certain. Little is known about the membership of these sections, their actual activity, or their links with the National Charter Association (NCA) and with the LPC. Probably the most prominent activist in France was John Sidaway, who lived in Rouen with his father Thomas.⁹⁹ Thomas Sidaway, a nail and chain manufacturer who also ran a pub, a radical since Peterloo and an active Chartist speaker since 1838, had become secretary of the Gloucester branch of the NCA. He was supposedly compelled to leave Gloucester and go to France. In Rouen, John and Thomas Sidaway opened the 'Nailer's Arms Inn', where the Chartist press was available, and where contributions to funds to help those victimized were collected.¹⁰⁰ In 1845 John formed a local branch of the LPC which had six shareholders, and he was appointed the agent for France.¹⁰¹ He then toured, lecturing in praise of the Land Plan, notably in Mantes (Seine-et-Oise) and in Navarre, near Evreux (Eure), where some British workers were employed by Mackenzie and Brassey in an iron foundry:¹⁰²

Several meetings have been held and addressed by Mr John Sidaway. Navarre is a small village, surrounded by small allotments, which afford practical proof of the value of the land. Navarre some time since was a dark spot, but within the last few months it has been illumined with NORTHERN STARS, and consequently the inhabitants have become alive to the value of co-operation for the obtainment of the land, and have this day (25th of August) remitted £12 9s. 2d. for shares in the Chartist Co-operative land Society. The office of Mr John Sidaway, No. 2, Navarre Press, Evereux [Evreux], is continually besieged for prospectuses, rules, cards and Northern Stars.¹⁰³

⁹⁸ *Northern Star*, 13 Dec. 1845; 29 Aug. 1846; 29 May 1847. I am indebted to Malcolm Chase and Mark Crail for several of the references to the Chartist press.

⁹⁹ 'Death of a Patriot', *Northern Star*, 15 Jan. 1848, 7.

¹⁰⁰ 'Advertisements: Mr SEDAWAY, Nailer's Arms . . . He hopes his Brother Odd fellows will support him. They will find the *Norman Times*, the Dispatch and Northern Star', *Norman Times*, 13 July 1844, 4; 'Received by Mr O'Connor . . . From a few friends at the Nailors' Arms, Rouen, France, per John Sidaway', *Northern Star*, 8 Mar. 1845.

¹⁰¹ *Northern Star*, 19 July 1845, 6. John Sidaway was allocated 4 acres of land at Snig's End in April 1846: *Northern Star*, 25 Apr. 1846.

¹⁰² The *département* of Eure, which was crossed by the Paris-Rouen line, was one in which many British had settled. An official document mentioned the presence of 592 'Anglais' there in November 1846. AN, F⁷ 12338: 'États numériques du mouvement des étrangers'. See also Jean Vidalenc, *Le Département de l'Eure sous la monarchie constitutionnelle, 1814-1848* (Paris, 1952), 541-3.

¹⁰³ [John Sidaway?], *Northern Star*, 29 Aug. 1846, 8.

Thomas Sidaway died early in 1848. His widowed daughter took on his Land Plan plot, while John Sidaway returned to his earlier job as a smith in Gloucestershire and was supposedly the secretary of the NCA for Gloucestershire and Worcestershire in 1848.¹⁰⁴

Economic migration and political exile were therefore not always separate categories, as also exemplified by Ralph Kerfoot, who had left his native Chowbent, near Manchester, following the Lancashire demonstrations of September 1839 and was also a member of the first Rouen group.¹⁰⁵ Boulogne-sur-Mer and its district also had a branch of the Land Company.¹⁰⁶ In August 1846, a 'soirée' gathered

upwards of 130 . . . to partake of the good things of this life, and to hear the speeches of Messrs. O'Connor and Jones read from the *Star* . . . The song the 'People's First Estate' was sung in fine style, and enthusiastically chorused by the whole company. A number of other appropriate songs were sung by the female part of the company, and also a number of the most patriotic and soul-stirring recitations were delivered.¹⁰⁷

This suggests that the Chartists tried to reproduce, as much as possible, modes of organization which they were accustomed to in Britain: itinerant agitation, meetings, and the public reading of newspapers.¹⁰⁸ At the same time, they had to adapt to the different usages and legal constraints operating in France, where for example a protest march would have been hard to imagine. Meetings of more than twenty people were illegal, and it is significant that the Boulogne soirée took place in a British factory. The Odd Fellows were also used as a cover, for example for Chartist meetings in Rouen.¹⁰⁹ Some isolated radicals can also be found in other areas, where they sometimes took part in French political agitation. In 1848, a tribute was paid to George Good, a young English printer who was the son of a 'well-known Chartist from

¹⁰⁴ The 1851 census records for Barton St Mary (Gloucestershire) list John Sidaway as living with his family, including a niece born in France (I owe this reference to Mark Crail); *Northern Star*, 18 Mar. 1848, 5.

¹⁰⁵ *Northern Star*, 25 Apr. 1846; his allotment number is mentioned *ibid.*, 1 Aug. 1846; his death *ibid.*, 18 Dec. 1847.

¹⁰⁶ Thomas Blyth, 30 rue du Moulin à Vapeur, Capecure, Boulogne, *Northern Star*, 19 July 1845.

¹⁰⁷ *Northern Star*, 29 Aug. 1846, 8.

¹⁰⁸ Humphrey Southall, 'Agitate! Agitate! Organize! Political Travellers and the Construction of a National Politics, 1839-1880', *Trans. Inst. Brit. Geographers*, new ser., xxi (1996).

¹⁰⁹ *Norman Times*, 13 July 1844, 4.

Brighton' and who was supposedly shot in Paris in the attack on the Palais Royal, during the February 1848 Revolution that overturned the July Monarchy.¹¹⁰ We are dependent on scarce sources, the main one being the *Northern Star*. It seems that the French police were not particularly interested in Chartism, which was seen as something alien rather than a domestic threat.

However, some French sources testified to the politicization of British migrants, for instance those of the Société linière du Finistère in Landerneau (Brittany), where some 150 Dundee women, about twenty Ulster Irish and a few English mechanics worked. The arrival of these workers had been announced in the local Finistère newspaper:

It was not without deep sadness that [*L'Atelier*] has read of an event publicized in nearly all the newspapers . . .

'The steamship the *Finistère* has recently disembarked in Morlaix thirty-eight Scottish women who are destined for the Landerneau mill. These women are intended to form the core of the workers of the Société linière du Finistère. They have worked in manufactories since they were children; they obey any voice or sign, with a precision that would shame an élite battalion. When they left the steamship they lined up on the wharf waiting for the order to set off. Although they were allowed to walk around Morlaix in the two or three hours before they departed, none had the curiosity to do so and all got into the carriages that were due to take them to Landerneau with the imperviousness and silence of a machine obeying its motor'.¹¹¹

. . . If our Anglomaniacs have brought this sample of Britons to France with the aim of provoking and generally promoting a similar result among us then they would do extraordinary violence to our national spirit. To mould human nature to the point where it is reduced to the state of a machine, to reduce it to the passive role of a beast that one commands is repellent to this spirit. One can only speak with pity of the conditions of manufacturing workers on whom our modern lords of capital have practised for so long the disastrous theories of the English economists. Would one promote to the limit so abominable a system?¹¹²

L'Atelier reflected the vision of the French left — that Britain was a materialistic and selfish society. French Anglophiles were usually liberals who were seen as wanting to import the inhuman factory system into France. Republicans and socialists for their part considered British emigrants as incarnating this degrading system. *L'Atelier's* criticism may also be related to the Landerneau

¹¹⁰ *Northern Star*, 1 Apr. 1848.

¹¹¹ This paragraph was originally reported in *L'Impartial du Finistère*, 3 Nov. 1847.

¹¹² The whole extract is taken from 'Faits divers', *L'Atelier*, Nov. 1847 (vol. iii, p. 32).

workers being women for it objected to female paid work. In fact, all direct evidence available contradicts *L'Atelier*: the British workers employed in Landerneau were more skilled than the Bretons recruited in this very rural area which had no industrial tradition, and were well integrated. They trained their French fellow-workers, some of them married Frenchmen, and in 1848 there were no riots against them, unlike in other parts of the country.

In 1849, a report, probably by Max Radiguet, a publicist who happened to be the son of the manager of the plant, was published in *L'Illustration*. The pictures of the factory included the public reading of a Chartist newspaper (see Plate 4):

Today, all [Scottish, English and Bretons] are mixed together. Thus, in our drawing representing the linen-hackling workshop, you can see the Breton with his wide-brimmed hat working alongside the English worker. This workshop displays a rather curious feature. About 50 Englishmen who are cool, phlegmatic and as hard-working as one can imagine, divide their attention between their work and the reading of an English Chartist newspaper undertaken by one of their comrades who is paid by them to do this. These men, who have left their country for the lure of a high wage, seem to attach a religious significance to this piece of paper that comes from their country and is read by one of their fellow-citizens. This is a touching reminder of their homeland which thus is never absent.¹¹³

Radiguet commented elsewhere:

Not a single syllable is uttered during the twelve hours of the working day; only in the centre of the room, a reader, concealed behind the broadsheet format of the *Times*, with a powerful voice which seems to echo the voice of a locomotive, declaims to his fellow-workers, all of them fervid Chartists, the content of the enormous newspaper from the date to the name of the publisher.¹¹⁴

This only known illustration of the Chartist practice of public reading, probably from the *Northern Star*, points to the circulation of the Chartist press in France, which could be traced back to at least 1841.¹¹⁵

Like most of the British workers in France, Chartists were temporary migrants and saw themselves as such. Their hopes were to return to Britain, which may explain why one of the main forms of their activity in France was the Land Plan. Chartist William Peddie described the Boulogne meeting of 13 August 1846 in a

¹¹³ [Max Radiguet?], 'Grands établissements industriels de la France (1). Filature de lin', *L'Illustration*, 27 Oct. 1849, 141.

¹¹⁴ Max Radiguet, *À travers la Bretagne: souvenirs et paysages* (Paris, 1865), 247.

¹¹⁵ An editorial in the Scottish *Chartist Circular*, 18 Sept. 1841, noted that the paper circulated in France 'whither a number of our countrymen have gone to fill situations'.

way that may have caught the mood of the most politicized of these British emigrants to France:

At half past eleven the company dispersed, every face radiant with joy at the success that has already attended the Land Society, and full of high hopes that the time will soon come where every man will have a home which he can call his own, and not as now be driven from his native land to seek employment under a foreign despotism.¹¹⁶

This echoed Chartist assumptions about English liberties. When French 'despotism' was brought down in February 1848, this provoked widespread excitement in Chartist circles in Britain.¹¹⁷ However, 1848 provoked mixed feelings.

V

1848 — OR THE END OF THE BRITISH MIGRANT IN FRANCE?

The 1848 demonstrations and riots seem to contradict the relatively successful integration of most British workers into local communities. Indeed, they have been presented as the reasons for the departure of British workers from France. In fact, there had already been some xenophobic incidents. For example, in Fourchambault (Nièvre) in August 1837, the British workers — called the *loups* (wolves) by local workers, who accused them of taking their well-paid jobs in the ironworks — were the target of a series of violent incidents; it was said of one riotous night that 'such was the hostility directed against the workers of their nation that it also hit those who refused to hand them over to their enemies; [Mrs] Gardiennent and her husband were threatened with being *bled like pigs* if they dared to *welcome wolves* (Englishmen)'.¹¹⁸ This did not prevent several French people from trying to protect the English, and the Garde Nationale intervened to stop the riot. Several violent episodes against British workers have been cited, especially in the context of job shortages.¹¹⁹ In March 1844, near Rouen

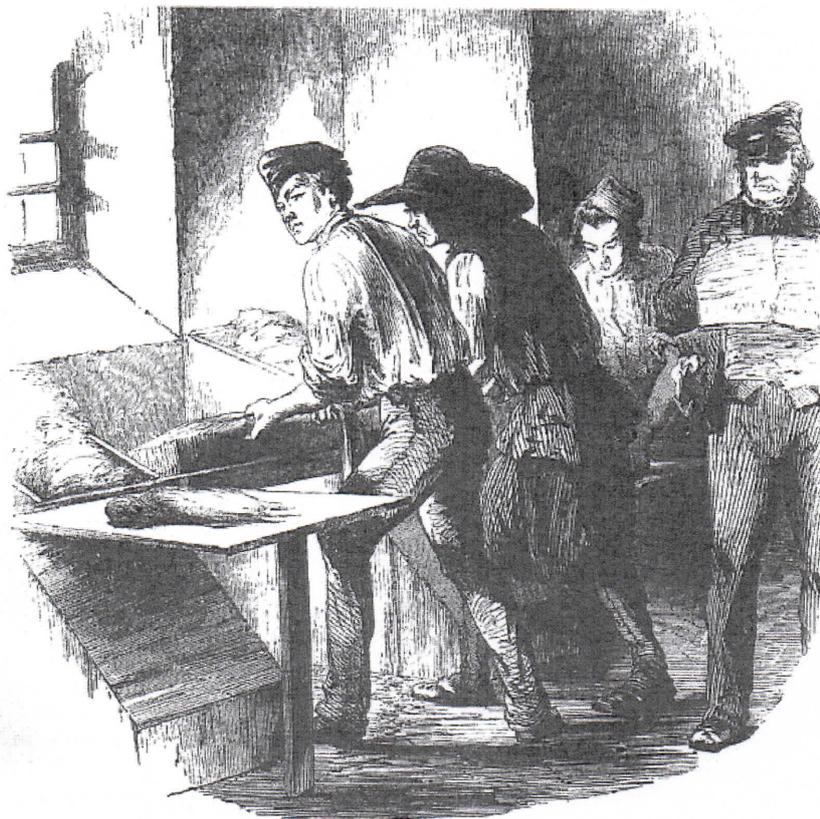
a number of the hands who are thrown out of employment at the fabriques on the Deville, Maromme and Malaunay road assembled in groups in

¹¹⁶ *Northern Star*, 29 Aug. 1846, 8.

¹¹⁷ See John Saville, *1848: The British State and the Chartist Movement* (Cambridge, 1987); Fabrice Bensimon, *Les Britanniques face à la Révolution française de 1848* (Paris, 2000).

¹¹⁸ 'Rapport du procureur du Roi à Nevers', 27 Aug. 1837, in Thuillier, *Les Ouvriers des forges nivernaises*, 90; emphasis in original.

¹¹⁹ Derainne, 'Le Travail, les migrations, les conflits en France', 163–78.



4. [Max Radiguet?], 'Grands établissements industriels de la France (1). Filature de lin', *L'Illustration*, 27 Oct. 1849, 140.

several places about Maromme and Deville, and demanded to be taken on to work at the railway works just commenced in that neighbourhood. They expressed much dissatisfaction that Englishmen should be employed while they were out of work.¹²⁰

Fights were also reported in villages along the line, where young Irish, Scottish and English workers would 'unite on Sundays to confront young Normans in the pays de Caux'.¹²¹ However, these local clashes were commonplace and not specifically aimed at the English. Pierre-Jacques Derainne has noted many others

¹²⁰ *Norman Times*, 30 Mar. 1844, 1.

¹²¹ *Journal du Havre*, 17 Oct. 1844, cited in Jean Le Guen, '1847, l'arrivée du chemin de fer au Havre', *Cahiers havrais de recherche historique*, liv (1995), 23.

throughout the July Monarchy against the 'Germans', the Belgians, the Swiss and the Piedmontese. And no pitched battles were reported, unlike those between English and Irish workers in England, which might involve as many as a thousand — or even two thousand — workers.¹²²

Nevertheless, the 1848 demonstrations seemed to confirm that some form of widespread Anglo-French hostility was just waiting to erupt. Soon after the fall of the July Monarchy, in several areas (Northern France and Normandy), riots occurred against British workers, sometimes compelling them to leave. These demonstrations provoked outcries in Britain. Consular correspondence contains many letters from workers or technicians who had been chased as they were trying to recover their personal belongings or, above all, their money from the savings banks. The owner of the cotton factory, Thomas Waddington (Saint-Rémy-sur-Avre), reported:

Disillusioned workers [weavers] in Macquedieu found a new pretext to impose their will on me: they tried to expel eight Scottish women workers who had lived in this country for six years, including one or two who had married Frenchmen, because one of them, who had been publicly insulted by a weaver, supposedly made a dishonest reply. As I refused to sacrifice these foreigners, they left their frames again and, despite my repeated promises to get the guilty worker to repair her misdeed, if it was due, or to lay her off if she refused, they stayed on permanent strike.¹²³

Waddington eventually gave in and laid off the Scottish female weavers. He organized a collection to pay for their return trip and gave them compensation, but one refused to leave as she was about to marry a French worker. Elsewhere, Anglophobia took a different form: in Granville (Manche), the 'mob' reportedly gathered on the quay 'hindered the exportation of provisions' to Britain, as they were convinced that the export of cattle resulted in higher prices.¹²⁴ Evictions even occurred in distant places like Decazeville (Aveyron) from which iron-workers from Merthyr Tydfil and Pontypool and their families — a total of thirty-eight

¹²² See, for instance, the February 1846 confrontations between English and Irish navvies on the Lancaster–Carlisle line building site: Brooke, *Railway Navvy*, 113.

¹²³ AD Eure, 27 / 1 M, dossier Coalitions ouvrières: letter from Waddington, 21 June 1848, quoted in Dufresne-Seurre, 'Les Waddington, sept générations de cotonniers', 316; Jean Vidalenc, 'Les Étrangers en Seine-Inférieure jusqu'au milieu du XIX^e siècle', *Études normandes*, special issue (1979), 148.

¹²⁴ Letter from the consul in Granville, John Turnbull, to Lord Normanby, British ambassador, 4 Mar. 1848: PRO, FO 146/350.

people — had to leave because of the hostility from the local workers.¹²⁵

The British press was indignant about the expulsions, which were blamed on the Revolution and the Republic (see Plate 5). The Chartists were accused of wanting to imitate the French republicans.¹²⁶ The British ambassador protested to Lamartine, although, in fact, this issue was secondary for the British authorities, who mostly focused on Irish and Chartist threats and did not bother too much about the fate of British workers abroad.¹²⁷

Anti-English rioting possibly reached a peak in Rouen. The textile industry employed a third of the population of the area, and Rouen in particular was an important cotton centre. Weaving was becoming mechanized and was seriously hit by the industrial and commercial crisis from late 1847.¹²⁸ This largely accounted for the riots which took place following the February 1848 Revolution. From 25 February onwards, demonstrators went around Rouen ‘to hail the victory of the revolution, and sing the Marseillaise, the song of the Girondins, alternating this with cries of “Vive la République, à bas les Anglais!”’¹²⁹ These anti-English slogans can initially be interpreted as reflecting an urge to blame English machines for having taken away work and created poverty.¹³⁰ Other trades, such as the postilions, the bargees and the dockers were victims of the railway line, and they also demonstrated. The two railway stations were attacked, and the railway bridge across the Seine, called the ‘pont aux Anglais’, was burnt down, as were several other bridges near Paris.¹³¹ On 28 February, as many as 238 Scottish and Irish workers from La Foudre, the linen factory in Petit-Quevilly, had to leave in a

¹²⁵ ‘Expulsion of Welsh Workmen from France’, *North Wales Chron.* (Bangor), 16 May 1848, 1105.

¹²⁶ See, for instance, the anonymous anti-Chartist pamphlet in which the author claims he has just been ‘expelled from France by the ferocious cries of the disciples of “Fraternity”’: *What the Chartists Are: A Letter to English Working-Men by a Fellow-Labourer* (London, 1848).

¹²⁷ Marquis of Normanby, *Year of Revolution*, i, 178–9.

¹²⁸ André Dubuc, ‘Les Émeutes de Rouen et d’Elbeuf en 1848 (27, 28 et 29 avril 1848)’, *Études d’histoire moderne et contemporaine*, ii (1948), 243. On these riots, see also Florencia Peyrou, ‘Autour des émeutes rouennaises d’avril 1848: réalité et représentations d’une insurrection ouvrière’, *Annales de Normandie*, v (1998).

¹²⁹ *Mémorial de Rouen*, 27 Apr. 1848.

¹³⁰ Dubuc, ‘Les Émeutes de Rouen et d’Elbeuf’, 245.

¹³¹ See evidence given by Quenet (Jean de Dieu), a manufacturer appointed colonel in the Garde Nationale, in the Caen trial (13 Nov. – 7 Dec. 1848): AN, BB30 365/2.

hurry, some leaving their personal belongings, when a demonstration was heading towards them.¹³²

Charles Cord'homme, a socialist and republican activist, was indignant: 'the linen factory *La Foudre* was invaded in order to drive out the English who worked there, forgetting that the worker should be an internationalist — isn't his land where he finds his work, life and existence?'¹³³ While some female workers left Rouen, others came back to the factory, and groups attended the planting of liberty trees in early April.¹³⁴ During riots which culminated in late April, when about thirty people were killed by the Garde Nationale, no anti-English slogans were reported, and Anglophobia was never mentioned again as a reason for mobilization. In this context, hostility against the English appears to have reflected the shortage of work rather than a deep antagonism. Dozens of petitions were signed in March 1848 in Rouen by spinners, dyers, drapers, masons, soap-makers and bakers. These demanded the right to work, an end to fines, and a ten-hour working day, but none mentioned English machinery, workers or manufacturers.¹³⁵ So, it may be suggested that Anglophobia was not the driving force of the riots but a transient element in the rhetoric of workers seriously hit by the crisis. Work-related strategies should not be confused with broader social attitudes. While the English were attacked in Normandy, the Belgians were targeted in Lille, and the Savoyards, the Italians and the Auvergnats in Lyon.

Most of the British workers who left in 1848 did so because they were laid off, rather than because of public hostility. Two hundred or so Rouen–Dieppe railway workers had to leave, but 'It does not appear that in this instance there was any injustice or cruelty, the railroad works having now been for some time stopped for want of

¹³² *L'Impartial de Rouen*, 5 Mar. 1848, 2; AD Seine-Maritime, 10 M 324: 'Mouvement et émigration de la main-d'œuvre . . . Renvoi d'ouvriers étrangers 1848', with the details of demands for damages; correspondence of the Le Havre consul, Featherstonehaugh, with British ambassador in Paris, Normanby: PRO, FO 146/350 (in particular letter dated 4 Mar. 1848).

¹³³ Yannick Marec, *1848 à Rouen: les mémoires du Citoyen Cord'Homme, oncle de Maupassant* (Luneray, 1988), 55. Cord'homme was later represented by his nephew Maupassant in his *Boule de Suif* as Cornudet, the 'terror of respectable people'.

¹³⁴ Dubuc, 'Les Émeutes de Rouen et d'Elbeuf', 249. In 1851, fifty-five English lived in Petit-Quevilly, mostly working at La Foudre.

¹³⁵ AD Seine-Maritime, 10 M 330: 'Coalitions, grèves, manifestations, an XI-1848'.



5. 'A Specimen of French "Fraternité" — English Labourers Driven out of France', *Punch*, 11 Mar. 1848, 120.
Private collection of Goulven Guilcher.

funds, and all workmen having been alike discharged'.¹³⁶ The Scottish female workers of Haubourdin (Nord) were also ruthlessly laid off:

there are about 140 or 150 of us in all men women and children, not one of us excepting the before mentioned individual is able to speak more than a few words of the language, not one is able to ask a summons against this unjust company, many of the girls from the fines they are imposed and the reductions that have been made on their wages are in utter poverty and the company are constraining some of them to leave the work next week, having given them notice to quit telling them to get to Boulogne and that the British Consul there will send them home, the company always retaining their 50 francs.¹³⁷

In Calais, the situation of the more than a thousand British was critical: the tulle industry had virtually come to a halt, and the tulle-workers were the targets of xenophobic demonstrations. The British consul reported:

On Sunday the cries of 'A bas les Anglais' were first heard in the Basse ville, these were redoubled yesterday and accompanied by much occasional abuse towards English workmen in the streets on the part of the lowest rabble. Some placards were posted, calling a meeting for last night to petition for work, bread and the expulsion of the English workmen: this meeting was attended by about 200 of the lowest of the mob.¹³⁸

The state of the industry ruined dozens of businesses and led hundreds of workers to lose their jobs. Some left and went back home. But there was no work available in and around Nottingham: 'No regular sales of either hosiery or lace were made in the home markets from October, 1847, to April, 1848, and much distress was produced by hands being very partially employed'.¹³⁹ A total of 642 distressed Calais lace-makers and their families applied to the Colonial Office for assisted emigration to Australia:

We, your memorialists, . . . pledge ourselves to be men of good moral characters and industrious habits, in full possession of health and strength, and men whose feelings revolt at the idea of becoming a burden to their native land.

¹³⁶ Marquis of Normanby, *Year of Revolution*, i, 266.

¹³⁷ Their daily working hours had been reduced from twelve to nine and their wages diminished in proportion: letter to Lord Normanby, 21 Mar. 1848: PRO, FO 146/350.

¹³⁸ Letter from the consul in Calais to Palmerston, Foreign Secretary, 21 Mar. 1848: PRO, FO 146/350. The local press argued that the protest did not happen: for example *L'industriel calaisien*, 15 Apr. 1848, 3.

¹³⁹ William Felkin, *A History of the Machine-Wrought Hosiery and Lace Manufactures* (London, 1867), 378.

If therefore, you can provide us with the means of free emigration, we shall cheerfully and gratefully accept them.¹⁴⁰

A relief committee had been created in London to support British workers expelled from France, and it contributed to the emigration scheme. Nottingham bankers and businessmen were not enthusiastic at the prospect of several hundred workers coming to the local workhouses, and so they also contributed. The emigrants embarked on three ships to Sydney and Adelaide. Once in Australia, they mostly found employment as servants and labourers, while some of them took part in the gold rush of 1849–50. Within a few months, they had spread across South Australia and New South Wales.¹⁴¹

VI

CONCLUSION

The 1848 crisis marked, in a sense, the end of a golden age for the British worker in France. In many occupations, the gap in skills was disappearing, and competition from local or other foreign workers diminished the superiority of the British. 'Cheaper' French, Belgian or German workers had now been trained for those occupations for which British workers had previously been so much in demand. Many Britons assimilated, or returned home only much later, like train driver Henry Dove who worked in France from 1843 to 1880.¹⁴² Yet the number of British workers definitely declined. In the 1851 French census, the first one in which the question of nationality was asked, 20,357 British were registered, which is a reduced proportion of 5.4 per cent within a total of 379,289 foreigners.¹⁴³ New British businesses did appear in the 1850s and 1860s but the British were now outnumbered by the Belgians, the Italians, the Germans and the Swiss.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ PRO, FO 27/813, quoted in Gillian Kelly, *Well Suited to the Colony* (Queanbeyan, 1998), 97. The document was also published in the *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle* (Portsmouth), 22 July 1848.

¹⁴¹ For a detailed history of this group, see Kelly, *Well Suited to the Colony*.

¹⁴² See *Memoirs of Sir Edward Blount*, ed. Stuart J. Reid (London, 1902), 74–82.

¹⁴³ Jacques Grandjonc, 'Les Étrangers à Paris sous la monarchie de Juillet et la Seconde République', *Population*, xxix, special issue (Mar. 1974).

¹⁴⁴ See, for example, Henderson, *Britain and Industrial Europe*, ch. 4, on Samuel Cunliffe Lister and Isaac Holden, who set up a wool-combing factory in Paris in the autumn of 1848.

However, the British migrant workers have not been forgotten. The French language has retained traces of this British presence ('rail', 'wagon', 'train', 'tunnel' and 'terminus'), just as toponymy has,¹⁴⁵ while Barentin, which is still proud of its viaduct, celebrates Joseph Locke's memory with a statue. In small towns or villages, local literati also maintain the memory of the British immigrants. Pissy-Pôville has recently restored one of the rare British tombstones still standing — that of two Welsh brothers who died in 1845 (see Plate 6).¹⁴⁶

In the southern hemisphere, a few genealogist descendants of the Calais lace-makers started trying to contact others in the early 1980s. They created the Australian Society of the Lacemakers of Calais, which is alive and well and still publishes the journal *Tulle*.¹⁴⁷ In addition, literature and the arts have bequeathed a memory not only of the works — as in the case of the Paris–Le Havre line represented in paintings by Monet, Caillebotte and Manet, as well as in Zola's *La Bête humaine* (1890) and the film Jean Renoir derived from it (1938) — but also of the migrant communities themselves, as illustrated by the short story written by Julian Barnes about the building of the Rouen–Le Havre line.¹⁴⁸ And, unlike French cars, French trains are still driven on the left-hand side — an enduring legacy of their British origins.

With the exception of those involved in the building of the Paris–Rouen line, and the Calais tulle-workers, British communities of workers were indeed small when compared with the larger incoming flows of Belgians, Germans, Italians and Savoyards in the same period, and in contrast to the larger emigrating flows from Britain to the United States and the white

¹⁴⁵ For example: 'rue Buddicum' [Buddicom] in Sotteville-lès-Rouen; 'rue Davey' in Petit-Quevilly; 'rue aux Anglais' in Rouen; 'Cité anglaise' in Malaunay.

¹⁴⁶ Pissy-Pôville cemetery. The reverse of the tombstone reads: 'Sacred to the memory of M^r Tho^s JONES, native of Tryddin county of Flint North Wales, who departed this life in the commune of Pissy Poville, April 13th 1845 Aged 39 Years — Likewise to the memory of his brother Mr Wm JONES native of the same place who also died in the above named commune June 5th 1845 Aged 52 Years'. The same can be read in French on the front (Plate 6). This restoration in the spring of 2007 was due to the initiative of retired primary-school teacher Nicole Duboc.

¹⁴⁷ See <<http://www.angelfire.com/al/aslc/>>. The Society also published Kelly's *Well Suited to the Colony* (see n. 140 above). See also *The Lacemakers' Story: Loughborough, Luddites and Long Journeys. Souvenirs of an Exhibition by Audrey Carpenter, John Carpenter and Tony Farram, Friends of Charnwood Museum* (Loughborough, 2007).

¹⁴⁸ Barnes, 'Junction', in his *Cross Channel*.



6. Tombstone of Thomas and William Jones, Pissy-Pôville (Seine-Maritime).
Private collection of Nicole Duboc.

colonies. However, the migrations of British workers to France had certain specific features. In many respects, these skilled workers resembled the tramping artisans of the early modern period. Yet at the same time the migrants studied here definitely belonged to the industrial era, and they exploited the technological gap between the two countries. In France, the British who came during this period often had the familiar features of the *étrangers* (foreigners) of the *Ancien Régime*, yet sometimes also, as in the case of the navvies, they more closely resembled the first *travailleurs immigrés* (immigrant workers) of the modern age.

The traditional assumption of popular Anglophobia as opposed to elite Anglophilia is often debunked by the study of interpersonal relations. It appears that in most circumstances, the local populations were neither 'Anglophile' nor 'Anglophobic' and that this traditional dichotomy has to be replaced by a more historicized study of integration and conflict in specific contexts. Whereas there may have been particular bouts of 'xenophobia' during the 1847–8 economic crisis, these should be understood as a rhetorical strategy rather than as an unchanging atavism.

In Britain, since no restrictions applied to the emigration of workers to the Continent after 1824, nor to the export of machines after 1843, these movements had less and less in common with the eighteenth-century industrial espionage studied by John Harris, although free trade and mass migrations did not mark any end to it. On top of that, the problematic of technological transfer still operates here: in linen, cotton, iron technology, mechanics and the railways, the period 1815–48 was one in which the industrialization of western Europe largely relied on British know-how. But in many ways, by the middle of the century, when the star of British engineering was declining in France, Belgium and Germany (and the USA), it was just starting to rise in the rest of the world. The number of British professional engineers grew from about a thousand in 1850 to some forty thousand in 1914, and it was common for them to spend at least part of their careers abroad. This diffusion of British technology was instrumental in the expansion of the formal and informal Empires, and railway-building loomed large in this expansion. In Canada, Central and South America, the Middle East, central and southern Africa, Australia and most of Asia —

including non-colonial countries such as Japan — the period 1850–1914 was the heyday of British engineering.¹⁴⁹

Knowing more about these migrations may also help us to bridge the gap between the local and the global. Migrants traversed a world very different from that of tourists or books, with connections more complex than the traditional Paris–London axis.¹⁵⁰ Consider, for instance, the industrial connections between South Wales and French iron centres, between Nottinghamshire, Calais and Australia, and between Ulster, Dundee and French linen plants; or, via the shipping routes across the Channel, between England on the one hand and Northern France and Normandy on the other. Practicalities are, therefore, essential in understanding the cartography of exchanges: migrations were seldom individual, became increasingly large-scale and were often organized by employers. The role of the consulates in these migrations has not been examined here, but they too provided information, advice and sometimes relief; similarly, work also needs to be done on the part played by recruiters, agents and various mediators. Certainly, early nineteenth-century Franco-British relations were neither just a love/hate relationship, nor a tale of two cities.

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¹⁴⁹ R. A. Buchanan, 'The Diaspora of British Engineering', *Technology and Culture*, xxvii (1986); Shelton Stromquist, 'Railroad Labor and the Global Economy: Historical Patterns', in Jan Lucassen (ed.), *Global Labour History: A State of the Art* (Bern, 2006).

¹⁵⁰ See Hancock, *Paris et Londres au XIX^e siècle*.