
NOTES

*Municipal Imperialism: the Lyon Chamber of Commerce, 1914 - 1925**

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The history of imperialism, a truly global subject, encompasses many more restricted facets, among them a municipal dimension. One has only to consider the role of the great ports in the first age of Western expansion and to weigh the evidence of the continued vitality of municipal imperialism in a later age provided by works like Percy E. Schramm's *Hamburg, Deutschland und die Welt* and Arthur Silver's *Manchester Men and Indian Cotton, 1847-1872* in order to recognize the importance of this aspect of imperialism. The municipal dimension of imperial expansion and development, however, tends to get lost in the history of formal and informal empire during the last two centuries when national and international factors rightly loom large. At least such is the case with French imperialist historiography where a host of elements, ranging from the celebrated *mission civilisatrice* to the genius of Jules Ferry, have been advanced to explain expansion overseas and, not altogether fortuitously, to explain away the possibility of major economic motivation behind such expansion. Yet it can be argued that municipal imperialism played an especially important role in French expansion during the nineteenth century, that the business communities of cities like Bordeaux, Marseille, Lille and Lyon had far more to do with the building of formal and informal empire than military men, or missionaries, or statesmen, and that, allowing for the complex part played by the Parisian banks, the primary explanation of French

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imperialism must be sought in the ties established between specific provincial business communities and particular colonial and semi-colonial regions. Viewed from this perspective, the links of Bordeaux with West Africa and Lyon with the Far East, as well as the interest of Lille in any unclaimed areas where cotton might be grown or cotton textiles sold, take on new importance, and the local Chambers of Commerce emerge as pivotal institutions in forwarding imperialist endeavours.¹

The problems faced by the municipal imperialists grew in complexity during the years between the outbreaks of the twentieth century's world wars. Imperialism had brought about the age of world history, and, in so doing, had created a situation where events and developments of global significance affected much more circumscribed municipal concerns. This study focuses on Lyon, one such centre of imperialist endeavour, during the period between 1914 and 1925, the period between the outbreak of World War I and the emergence of new difficulties posed by the growth of nationalism in the colonial and semicolonial worlds. Although crises of one sort or another dogged the Lyonnais throughout this period, they did not abandon their commitment to imperialism: indeed, they embarked on new adventures overseas, undertook innovations in the organization of local colonial institutions, and won some limited victories. They continued to act, in short, in much the same way as they had in the past, but, whatever their successes, they could not turn Clio's clock back to the relatively safe and secure world of the *belle époque*.

The Lyon Chamber of Commerce, described in 1895 as « the most colonial of the [French] Chambers of Commerce », took advantage of an International Exposition held in the city in 1914 to review a record of support for and participation in imperialist endeavours which reached back to the taking of Algiers or, forcing the matter somewhat, back into the *ancien régime*.² Working through that Chamber, the magnates of the silk industry — the one French industry dominant in the international market throughout the nineteenth century and the mainstay of the city's economic life — met a series of challenges, ranging from the devastation of French sericulture by pebrine to the rise of competing centres of production, by

¹ JOHN F. LAFFEY, « Municipal Imperialism in Nineteenth Century France », *Historical Reflections / Réflexions historiques*, I, 1, (June, 1974), p. 81-114.

² MAURICE ZIMMERMANN, « Lyon et la colonisation française », *Questions diplomatiques et coloniales*, IX (June 15, 1900), p. 705-17, 708. « Exposition internationale urbaine de Lyon en 1914. Section coloniale », *Compte rendu des travaux de la Chambre de commerce de Lyon, Année 1914* (Lyon, 1915), p. 394-407, 394-98. Henceforth this publication will be cited as CRTCCCL. These volumes were always published in Lyon in the year after the deliberations and events they described had taken place. The date include in the citation will be the date in the title and not the date of publication. In those instances where the same topic is cited alone over several years, it will only be identified at the beginning of the citation.

resorting to overseas expansion in quest of new sources of raw silk supplies and new markets. By the early twentieth century imperialism constituted one of the pillars of the prosperity of the industry and, by extension, of the city itself.³

The economic importance of Lyonnais textile production could not be dismissed lightly: its total value reached an unprecedented 467,700,000 francs in 1913, and there seemed every reason to believe that this figure would be matched or exceeded in the following year. But the outbreak of the war in 1914, « like a sabre blow », cut the year in two. If the local chemical and metallurgical industries quickly recovered from the chaos of the conflict's first weeks and entered a period of sharp growth, the textile manufacturers were reduced by late 1914 to taking what scant comfort they could find in the increasing sales of black crêpe. Yet contrary to all expectations, 1915 proved to be a good year for the industry: government contracts, a change in women's fashions, a notable increase in sales to the United States, and the prosperity born for some out of the suffering of others, all contributed to this unanticipated result. The silk industry actually prospered throughout the conflict, an achievement which appears all the more remarkable when measured against the difficulties it had to surmount, for not only were imports of raw silks and exports of silken and blended fabrics hard hit by the loss of some foreign sources of supply and markets, increased freight rates, heightened insurance charges, cargo restrictions, the hazards of submarine warfare, and government regulations, but inflation and spiralling labour costs also complicated matters. The critical year came in 1917 when the expansion of sales in the United States slowed with the American entry into the war and several governments attempted to restrict imports in order to protect their balances of payments.⁴ The silk industry's record, despite

³ JOHN F. LAFFEY, « Roots of French Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century: the Case of Lyon », *French Historical Studies*, VI, 1 (Spring, 1969), p. 78-92. For a more detailed discussion of the vital East Asian dimension of Lyonnais imperialism in the nineteenth century, see JOHN F. LAFFEY, « Les racines de l'impérialisme français en Extrême-Orient », *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, XVI (April-June, 1969), p. 282-99. Studies of the Lyon Chamber of Commerce's role within the more general context of French imperialism during the periods 1900-1914 and 1925-1938 will appear during 1975 in *The Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* and *French Historical Studies*.

⁴ « Exposé de la situation industrielle et commerciale de la circonscription de la Chambre de commerce de Lyon pendant l'année 1914 », CRTCCCL, 1914, p. 1-51. « Exposé de la situation industrielle et commerciale de la circonscription de la Chambre de commerce de Lyon pendant l'année 1915 », CRTCCCL, 1915, p. 1-60; « Desiderata relatifs à la marine », *Ibid.*, p. 130-31; « Régime de sortie des soies et des soieries en raison de l'état de guerre », *Ibid.*, p. 170-93. « Exposé de la situation industrielle et commerciale de la circonscription de la Chambre de commerce de Lyon pendant l'année 1916 », CRTCCCL, 1916, p. 1-54. « Exposé de la situation industrielle et commerciale de la circonscription de la Chambre de commerce de Lyon pendant l'année 1917 », CRTCCCL, p. 1-49; « Régime douanier des soies et des soieries », *Ibid.*, p. 189-99; « Prohibition d'importation des soieries en Angleterre », *Ibid.*, p. 213-16; « Prohibition d'entrée en Italie », *Ibid.*, p. 218-20;

its manifold troubles, remained remarkably good: the worth of Lyonnais silk manufactures stood at 319,550,000 francs in 1915, 411,700,000 in 1916, 548,500,000 in 1917 and 699,500,000 in 1918.⁵

Peace brought an enormous increase in these sums: in 1919 the total value of production reached 1,688,000,000 francs and in 1920 roughly two and a half billion francs.⁶ But from the silk magnates' perspectives, all was not well. Behind these impressive figures lay not only profits, but inflation and increased labour costs.⁷ The metallurgical and chemical sectors of industry had been strengthened during the struggle and, more important, so too had been the position and expectations of the working class. From the perspective of the Chamber of Commerce, the eight hour day was an abomination.⁸ The labour unrest of 1920 multiplied its miseries, though the Chamber took some comfort in knowing that one of its former presidents, Auguste Isaac, served as Minister of Commerce and Industry and argued for draconian measures against the strikers.⁹ Blaming others for economic troubles came easier than recognizing that some of the roots of these problems lay within the business community itself. The Chamber of Commerce had recognized at the height of the war that the transition to peace would be difficult, but in the end local industries refused to make the structural changes which might have allowed them to cope better with the challenges of the post-war world.¹⁰ The Lyonnais industries, especially the silk industry,

« Prohibition d'importation des soieries en Russie », *Ibid.*, p. 220-22. « Exposé de la situation industrielle et commerciale de la circonscription de la Chambre de commerce de Lyon pendant l'année 1918 », CRTCCCL, 1918, p. 1-58; « Prohibitions d'importation et d'exportation », *Ibid.*, p. 188-89; « Régime de sortie des soies et soieries en raison de l'état de guerre », *Ibid.*, p. 191-201.

⁵ « Exposé de la situation industrielle et commerciale de la circonscription de la Chambre de commerce de Lyon pendant l'année 1919 », CRTCCCL, 1919, p. 9-78, 19.

⁶ *Ibid.*; « Exposé de la situation industrielle et commerciale de la circonscription de la Chambre de commerce de Lyon pendant l'année 1920 », CRTCCCL, 1920, p. 9-104, 22.

⁷ « La hausse exagérée des prix », CRTCCCL, 1919, p. 519-20; « Opinion de la Chambre de commerce de Lyon sur les causes de la vie chère », *Ibid.*, p. 520-21; « Le problème de la vie chère », *Ibid.*, p. 521-25.

⁸ « Intervention de la Chambre au sujet du vote et de l'application de la loi de huit heures », *Ibid.*, p. 348-49; « Application de la loi de huit heures », CRTCCCL, 1920, p. 482-83; « La revision de la loi de huit heures », CRTCCCL, 1921, p. 524-26; « La Revision de la loi de huit heures », CRTCCCL, 1922, p. 551-55.

⁹ « Nomination de M. Auguste Isaac, député, comme ministre de commerce », CRTCCCL, 1920, p. 650; « Réception de M. François-Marsal, ministre des finances et de M. Isaac, ministre du commerce et de l'industrie », *Ibid.*, p. 651-75. For the tough stand taken by Isaac in face of the strike movement, see ANNIE KRIEGLER, *Aux origines du communisme français, 1914-1920, Contribution à l'histoire du mouvement ouvrier français*, I, (Paris, 1964), p. 458-59, 489, fn. 1.

¹⁰ In 1916 L. Pradel, the head of the Chamber's Legislation Committee, introduced the heretical notion that there was much to be said for cartels and trusts. The Chamber, long a citadel of classical liberalism, approved the idea. By 1918 it had had second thoughts:

entered that world organized along archaic lines and ill-prepared for the economic struggles predicted as early as 1916 by the Chamber's vice-president.¹¹

By 1921 the Lyonnais industries had largely completed the transition to peace. The local metallurgical and chemical industries, on the whole, had weathered the necessary readjustments well. Despite fears of excess productive capacity throughout Europe and complaints about the adverse effects of the Washington Conference on naval armaments, the metallurgical industry found outlets for its products in the reconstruction of the war devastated regions of France and in some overseas orders. The chemical industry, whose major colonial interest lay in the phosphate fields of North Africa, benefited from the increasing production of synthetic fibres and fabrics. So too did the textile industry which regarded these new products, now entering the mass market, as complementary to rather than rivals of the older pure silk and blended commodities. But the full ramifications of the changes being worked within the textile industry by the production of the new synthetics were partially disguised by the problems confronted by its older sector. Acquiring raw silk became more difficult after the war. American consumption increased enormously: the Lyonnais were quite ready to believe in 1922 that the New York silk market had absorbed almost seventy-five per cent of that year's global production. The impact of natural calamity could be as great as that of foreign competition or unsettled political conditions abroad: the Japanese earthquake of 1923 sent Lyonnais imports from Japan plummeting from 1,510,000 kilograms in 1922 to 322,200 kilograms in the following year. Difficulties in Lyonnais export markets became even more acute. After the war tariff barriers rose throughout the world. The old Lyonnais markets in Eastern Europe had disappeared, and those of Central European barely survived. The American industry supplied more and more of its own domestic market. Great Britain remained Lyon's most important foreign market, but by 1925 the Lyon Chamber was denouncing British economic "egoism" and "disguised protectionism". Trade statistics appeared to belie, at first glance, worries about the American and British markets: the value of American purchases of French, largely Lyonnais, silk textiles rose steadily from 130,117,000 francs in 1919 to 419,316,000 francs in 1925, while the British total climbed from 681,871,000 francs in 1919 to 1,695,765,000 francs in 1925. Behind these impressive gains lay inflation and what the silk magnates, living in the overlapping worlds of the franc, the

its liberalism already offended by the role of the State in economic life during the war, it now argued that consortia were too open to governmental control.

« Les trusts et cartells et l'article 419 du code pénal », CRTCCCL, 1916, p. 298-306; « Régime des fabrications de guerre », CRTCCCL, 1917, p. 300-09; « La reprise de la liberté du commerce », CRTCCCL, 1918, p. 201-08.

¹¹ « L'après guerre », CRTCCCL, 1916, p. 469-84.

pound, the dollar, the yen, the piastre and a host of other currencies, could only perceive as monetary chaos. By 1925 the world of the *belle époque* had receded well into the past.¹²

The war entailed unprecedented duties and responsibilities for the Chamber of Commerce and, while its official functions declined in the post-war years, the number of problems confronting it did not. The Chamber tended to respond to new circumstances with reflexes that had proven effective in the past. Neither its duties nor its problems, even at the war's darkest moments, completely diverted its attention away from imperialism. Its imperialist methods and goals, just as in the past, involved three levels of endeavour. At the national level the Chamber's activities ranged from lobbying to the provision of subsidies for imperialist organizations. At the local level it supplied moral and/or financial support for a variety of groups and institutions devoted to the imperialist cause. Finally, the Chamber focused attention on developments in specific colonies and semi-colonial areas considered to be important to Lyonnais interests. While new concerns, opportunities and ideas made their appearances between 1914 and 1925, none of the Chamber's activities in this period constituted a striking departure from past patterns of behavior. Continuity rather than disruption was the key theme of Lyonnais imperialism at a time when disruption rather than continuity characterized the larger currents in the world. The Lyonnais imperialists, consequently, were engaged ultimately in the most futile of dialectical exercises, the squaring of a circle.

The outbreak of the war provided an opportunity to wipe out German competition in the French colonies and protectorates.¹³ The war also brought the president of the Chamber an invitation to join the *Commission consultative coloniale*, a government body concerned with the present and future of the colonies, and, in 1917, appointment to the commercial section of another government body, the *Conférence coloniale*.¹⁴ After the war members of the Chamber served with the *Conseil économique des colonies* and the *Agence*

¹² « Exposé de la situation industrielle et commerciale de la circonscription de la Chambre de commerce de Lyon pendant l'année 1921 », CRTCCCL, 1921, p. 9-114; « Exposé de la situation industrielle et commerciale de la circonscription de la Chambre de commerce de Lyon pendant l'année 1922 », CRTCCCL, 1922, p. 9-128; « Exposé de la situation industrielle et commerciale de la circonscription de la Chambre de commerce de Lyon pendant l'année 1923 », CRTCCCL, 1923, p. 665-787; « Exposé de la situation industrielle et commerciale de la Chambre de Commerce de Lyon pendant l'année 1924 », CRTCCCL, 1924, p. 619-749; « Exposé de la situation industrielle et commerciale de la circonscription de la Chambre de commerce de Lyon pendant l'année 1925 », CRTCCCL, 1925, p. 589-699.

¹³ « Mesures pour supprimer dans les colonies la concurrence austro-allemande », CRTCCCL, 1914, p. 365.

¹⁴ « Commission consultative coloniale », *Ibid.*, p. 359-60; « Nomination à la Conférence coloniale », CRTCCCL, 1917, p. 330.

général des colonies.¹⁵ Throughout the period the Chamber continued to provide annual subsidies for *Union coloniale*, the *Comité de l'Asie Française* and other imperialist groups and also extended patronage and/or representation to metropolitan colonialist undertakings like the *Congrès d'agriculture coloniale* in 1918, the important *Exposition coloniale* held in Marseille in 1922, and the one held in Strasbourg in 1924.¹⁶

Such undertakings in the national arena were dwarfed in significance by the Chamber's support for the realization of Albert Sarraut's comprehensive plan for the development of the empire. Sarraut, a former Governor General of Indochina, presented this plan in 1921, while serving as Minister of Colonies. It aimed at meeting France's post-war needs by substituting « a general and precise method of action » for the « isolated and uncertain directions » hitherto characteristic of France's colonial endeavours.¹⁷ The Chamber immediately backed the project:

The Lyon Chamber of Commerce, which has always been at the head of the colonial movement, cannot remain indifferent to such a complete and methodical programme of works, the need for which has been felt for a long time. The necessity for a coordination of efforts is all the more pressing now that the war is over, when protectionist barriers are rising in all productive countries and when the problem of supplying the national industries with raw materials is more acutely posed than ever before.¹⁸

In the end Sarraut's detailed proposals produced scant results, in part because the major French banks and industrial groupings found far more profit in the reconstruction of the war devastated northern *départements* than in colonial development.¹⁹

¹⁵ « Conseil économique des colonies. Nomination de M. Férier dans la section des textiles », CRTCCCL, 1921, p. 570-71; « Agence général des colonies — Nomination de M. Pradel au Conseil d'administration », CRTCCCL, 1922, p. 605-06.

¹⁶ « Subvention à l'Union coloniale française », CRTCCCL, 1914, p. 366; 1915, p. 294; 1916, p. 405; 1917, p. 333; 1918, p. 332. « Souscriptions coloniales diverses », CRTCCCL, 1914, p. 366; 1915, p. 294; 1916, p. 405; 1917, p. 334; 1918, p. 332; 1919, p. 385; 1920, p. 518. « Souscriptions diverses », CRTCCCL, 1921, p. 573; 1922, p. 615; 1923, p. 431; 1925, p. 387. « Ligue maritime et coloniale française », CRTCCCL, 1924, p. 47; 1925, p. 39. « Congrès d'agriculture coloniale », CRTCCCL, 1917, p. 330-31; 1918, p. 331. « Conférence de M. Artaud, député des Bouches-du-Rhône sur l'expansion coloniale et le commerce extérieur », CRTCCCL, 1921, p. 572. « Exposition coloniale de Marseille — Participation de l'industrie de la soierie », CRTCCCL, 1923, p. 445. « Exposition coloniale de Strasbourg », CRTCCCL, 1924, p. 419-20.

¹⁷ ALBERT SARRAUT, *La Mise en valeur des colonies françaises* (Paris, 1923), p. 25.

¹⁸ « Projet de loi relatif à la mise en valeur des colonies françaises », CRTCCCL, 1922, p. 606-13, 609.

¹⁹ Sarraut's plan deserves closer scrutiny than it has hitherto received. Its originality lay less in his concrete proposals than in the idea of a comprehensive approach to colonial development. At the moment the possibility should not be ruled out that behind the programme's impressive facade lay visions of rich picking in the colonies for supporters of the Radical party.

The Chamber's efforts, as one would expect, were more effective at the local rather than at the national level. Although enrollments declined, the colonial education programme, which the Chamber had founded in 1899, limped forward during the war years.²⁰ The *Musée colonial*, closely associated with this program, also continued to benefit from the Chamber's support.²¹ The Chamber put its weight behind another educational endeavour: teaching some elementary French to Arabs attracted to Lyon by war work.²² It lent at least moral support to the transformation in 1917 of the *Association coloniale de l'Afrique française* into the *Association coloniale de Lyon*.²³ The war, of course, imposed harsh constraints on what could be accomplished during its duration and only after its conclusion could the Chamber do more for local imperialist undertakings.

The colonial education programme remained the focal point of attention on the local scene. Early in 1914 plans had been made for its incorporation into the offerings of Lyon's *Ecole supérieure de commerce*, but the outbreak of the war led to the indefinite postponement of this scheme.²⁴ By 1922 colonial education once again received serious consideration. The Chamber noted the existence in France of several educational undertakings devoted, in one fashion or another, to the colonies.²⁵ It went on to take up the question of what more might be done with colonial education in Lyon. Two years elapsed before its final decision. The Chamber planned an *Ecole de préparation coloniale*, which would be housed in the *Ecole supérieure de commerce*. It reserved to itself the right to name the administrators of the colonial school. The new institution's board of directors would be made up, at least in large part, by members of the Chamber's own Colonialism Com-

²⁰ « Enseignement colonial », CRTCCCL, 1914, p. 348-56; 1915, p. 275-83; 1916, p. 381-89; 1917, p. 332-30; 1918, p. 323-31.

²¹ « Musée colonial », CRTCCCL, 1914, p. 357; 1915, p. 283; 1916, p. 389; 1917, p. 330.

²² « Enseignement donné aux indigènes », CRTCCCL, 1917, p. 357-58. Note that the colonial labor force in France remained "natives".

²³ « Association coloniale lyonnaise », *Ibid.*, p. 333; « Congrès colonial organisée par l'Association coloniale de Lyon », CRTCCCL, 1918, p. 331.

²⁴ « Ecole supérieure de commerce », CRTCCCL, 1914, p. 367-69.

²⁵ Two were State schools: the *Ecole coloniale pratique* at Joinville-le-Pont, an institution devoted to the training of master workers and colonial employees, and Paris' *Ecole coloniale*, dedicated to the training of administrators. A command of colonial medicine could be acquired in Bordeaux and Paris. The *Ecole forestière* at Nancy included a section concerned with colonial forestry. Attention was paid to agricultural problems at the *Jardin colonial* at Nogent-sur-Marne. Programmes roughly comparable to Lyon's were in existence in such old centres of municipal imperialism as Marseille, Bordeaux, Le Havre and Nantes.

« Notice sur l'organisation et le fonctionnement des cours d'enseignement colonial », CRTCCCL, 1922, p. 591-92; « Développement possible de l'Enseignement colonial à Lyon », *Ibid.*, p. 595-97; « Documentation sur l'Enseignement colonial », *Ibid.*, p. 597-98.

mission.²⁶ The school's curriculum was to include the following courses in the 1924-1925 academic year: Colonial Hygiene and the Prevention of Exotic Diseases, Colonial History and Geography, Colonial Legislation and Economy, Colonial Cultivation and Products, Sericultural Studies, Far Eastern Civilizations, Moslem Civilization and Sociology, and three languages, Chinese, Japanese and Arabic.²⁷ Although the curriculum of the new school remained that of the old programme, the Chamber looked forward to adding new courses having to do with tariffs and transport, mineral production, and the Vietnamese language.²⁸

Two other undertakings, both closely allied to colonial education, also preoccupied the Chamber. The grants to the *Association des anciens élèves de l'enseignement colonial*, which the Chamber had dropped during the war, were revived at its conclusion.²⁹ The local Colonial Museum, enriched by exhibits from the Marseille Exposition and other sources, was moved into the *Ecole supérieure de commerce*.³⁰ Edouard Daladier, the Minister of Colonies, attended the museum's new opening on November 24, 1924. L. Pradel, the Chamber's president, reviewed for Daladier the story of the Lyonnais commitment to empire and stressed the need for colonial development.³¹ Daladier, in replying, attempted to give the impression of being a hardheaded man of affairs, a politician seriously committed to the development of the empire. Adroitly evading the issue of State recognition of the diplomas of the new colonial school, he assured his audience:

I have received, with delight, Lyonnais merchants in close touch with the French colonies. But when they call my attention to a particular point, I only half listen to them. I tell them: « You are from Lyon. That's enough for me. I am persuaded you are right. The matter is settled and you can count on my support ». I prefer to speak with them about the ways in which they conceive colonial development.³²

From the Lyonnais perspective, these beautiful sentiments, unfortunately, had far more to do with politics than with policy. The Colonial School and the Colonial Museum were not the only imperialist institutions patronized by the Chamber on the local scene, but most of the others had specific ties to particular colonies or semi-colonial areas and should more properly be considered in connection with the activities of the Chamber in regard to these regions.

²⁶ « Ecole de préparation coloniale », CRTCCCL, 1924, p. 583-601, 583-84.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 594-98.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 590-91.

²⁹ « Association des anciens élèves de l'Enseignement colonial », CRTCCCL, 1919, p. 378-79; 1920, p. 514-15; 1921, p. 558-59; 1922, p. 602-04; 1923, p. 426-28; 1924, p. 395-96; 1925, p. 382-83.

³⁰ « Musée coloniale », CRTCCCL, 1922, p. 598-602; 1923, p. 420-25.

³¹ L. PRADEL, *Discours*, « Inauguration du Musée colonial — Réception de M. Daladier, ministre des colonies », CRTCCCL, 1924, p. 601-13, 604-08.

³² E. DALADIER, *Discours*, *Ibid.*, p. 608-12, 612.

Sub-Saharan Africa had never ranked very high on the list of Lyonnais imperial concerns. The Lyon Chamber, however, occasionally occupied itself during the war with matters affecting it: maritime transport, possible industrial uses for banana fibre, the completion of the Thiès-Kayes railway and Ivory Coast timber.³³ It showed more interest after the war. The Chamber looked into the opportunities for the development of sericulture in Upper Senegal and Niger and cotton cultivation in the French Sudan.³⁴ It welcomed the establishment in Paris of a West African Economic Agency.³⁵ Two years later the Chamber played host at a reception for Victor Augagneur, the Governor General of French Equatorial Africa and a former mayor of Lyon.³⁶ It did the same for the Governor General of French West Africa when he, along with the Governors General of Indochina and Madagascar, visited Lyon on June 2, 1923.³⁷ In the same year the Chamber also provided a grant for the Lyon based *Société des Missions africaines*. The thousands francs was in itself a trifling sum, but the reasons behind the grant made good business sense: the missionaries' lessons prepared the natives for minor positions in French commercial houses, on the railways and in the administration, and their model farms introduced the natives « to more rational methods of cultivation » and led them to adopt crops which were « more remunerative » and « more useful to the mother country ».³⁸ Two years later the Chamber welcomed, along with the Governor General of Indochina, the Governor General of French Equatorial Africa to the city.³⁹ Offices representing the interests of French Equatorial and French West Africa, which were supported and staffed by the Chamber of Commerce, appeared in Lyon in the same year.⁴⁰

³³ « Commission consultative coloniale — Services de la côte d'Afrique », CRTCCCL, 1915, p. 283-84; « Utilisation des fibres d'ananas », CRTCCCL, 1917, p. 332-33; « Achèvement du chemin de fer de Thiès-Kayes », CRTCCCL, 1918, p. 157; « Enchantillons de bois », *Ibid.*, p. 331.

³⁴ « Envoi à la Chambre d'enchantillons de cocons du Haut-Sénégal et du Niger », CRTCCCL, 1920, p. 152; « L'opportunité du développement de la culture cotonnière au Soudan Français », CRTCCCL, 1921, p. 563-70; 1922, p. 614-15.

³⁵ « Création d'une agence économique de l'Afrique Occidentale française », CRTCCCL, 1920, p. 516.

³⁶ « Réception de M. Augagneur, gouverneur général de l'Afrique équatoriale française, le 23 janvier 1922 », CRTCCCL, 1922, p. 613-14.

³⁷ « Réception de M. Merlin, gouverneur général de l'Indochine; de M. Garbit, gouverneur général de Madagascar, et de M. Carde, gouverneur général de l'Afrique occidentale française », CRTCCCL, 1923, p. 558-72.

³⁸ « Société des Missions africaines de Lyon », *Ibid.*, p. 430-31, 431.

³⁹ « Réception de M. Alexandre Varenne, gouverneur général de l'Indochine, et de M. Antonetti, gouverneur général de l'Afrique Equatoriale française », CRTCCCL, 1925, p. 368-70.

⁴⁰ « Création des Offices de l'Afrique Occidentale française et de l'Afrique Equatoriale française », *Ibid.*, p. 365-67; « Office de l'Afrique occidentale française », *Ibid.*, p. 577-78; « Office de l'Afrique équatoriale française », *Ibid.*, p. 579-80.

Although the possibility of a market for Lyonnais silk in Ethiopia was not dismissed, interest in East Africa was minimal.⁴¹ The islands of the Indian Ocean provoked more concern. An old theme made one of its periodic appearances: the potential for the development of sericulture on Réunion.⁴² Madagascar, ignored during the war, received more attention after its end. The Chamber found time to consider such matters as its coffee, cocoa, silk and meats.⁴³ It also fought a losing battle, on behalf of the *Compagnie Lyonnaise de Madagascar*, against the prohibition on the export of the island's uranium to countries other than France.⁴⁴ Such matters were discussed with Governors General of the island at the receptions held by the Chamber in their honour in 1919, 1920, 1923 and 1924.⁴⁵ An economic bureau, devoted to Madagascar's affairs and aimed at strengthening the bonds between the city and the colony, was established in Lyon in 1924 under the joint patronage of the colony's administration and the Chamber of Commerce.⁴⁶

Although the postwar period saw a slight but perceptible shift in the direction of increased interest in African development, neither sub-Saharan Africa nor Madagascar constituted central concerns of the Lyonnais imperialists. That honour fell to the Far East, the world's greatest silk producing region, where, during the nineteenth century, the Lyonnais had carved out extensive interests for themselves. Although they became involved with other types of undertakings in East Asia, the silk trade remained especially important for them. Lyon's dependence on the silks of Japan and China produced adverse balances in France's trade with these countries, and these balances, in turn, became one of the factors leading the Lyon Chamber to argue for the acquisition of Indochina. The development of Indochinese sericulture supposedly would have lessened dependence on other East Asian sources of supply, while the export of Indochinese rice to China and Japan would have also helped to reverse the adverse trade balances. These dreams were not to be realized, and by the first decade of the twentieth century even the

⁴¹ « Fournitures de soieries pour Dirré-Daoua (Ethiopie) », CRTCCCL, 1920, p. 157-58.

⁴² « Etablissement de la sericulture à la Réunion », CRTCCCL, 1922, p. 195.

⁴³ « Desiderata du commerce lyonnais au sujet des cafés et de cacao de Madagascar », *Ibid.*, p. 604-05; « Utilisation des soies de Madagascar », CRTCCCL, 1923, p. 30; « Importation de viandes frigorifiées de Madagascar », CRTCCCL, 1925, p. 385-86.

⁴⁴ « Extraction des minerais d'urane de Madagascar — Exportation de ces minerais », CRTCCCL, 1924, p. 194-96.

⁴⁵ « Réception de M. Garbit, Gouverneur de Madagascar », CRTCCCL, 1919, p. 383-84; « Réception de M. Garbit, gouverneur général de Madagascar », CRTCCCL, 1920, p. 675-80; « Réception de M. Merlin, gouverneur général de Madagascar; de M. Garbit, gouverneur général de Madagascar, et de M. Carde, gouverneur général de l'Afrique occidentale française », CRTCCCL, 1923, p. 558-72; « Réception de M. Olivier, gouverneur général de Madagascar, le 16 août 1924 », CRTCCCL, 1924, p. 385-93.

⁴⁶ « Projet de création d'une sous-agence économique de Madagascar à Lyon », CRTCCCL, 1923, p. 429-30; « Sous-agence économique de Madagascar à Lyon », CRTCCCL, 1924, p. 393-94; « Office de Madagascar », CRTCCCL, 1925, p. 581-82.

Lyonnais had to take into account differences in the political status of Japan, China and Indochina: the aggressively exploitative policies which could be pursued in colonial Indochina and even semi-colonial China could not be applied to a fully sovereign Japan. To complicate matters all the more, even prior to the outbreak of the war Japanese and Indochinese affairs had tended to become interwoven in important respects.

The war prevented the Lyon Chamber from following Far Eastern developments with its usual close attention, but the war did not substantially interfere with relationships established earlier. Despite the difficulties of maritime transport, the flow of raw silk from the Far East to Lyon continued. In 1915 52.45 per cent of the silks reaching Lyon's *Condition des Soies* came from China; in 1916, 44.78 per cent; in 1917, 50.53 per cent; and in 1918, 45.62 per cent. In the same years Japanese contributions constituted, respectively, 14.59 per cent, 14.51 per cent, 23.36 per cent, and 32.98 per cent of all the silks received at the *Condition des Soies*. The fluctuations in the Japanese percentages continued into the postwar years: Japan provided the Condition with 22.32 per cent of its silks in 1919 and 9.58 per cent in 1925. In the same years China supplied the Condition with 49.99 per cent and 47.94 per cent of its silks.⁴⁷

If the war largely diverted the Lyon Chamber's attention from what had come to be regarded as a peculiarly Lyonnais colony, one wartime decision of the Chamber in regard to Indochina assumed extraordinary importance. The minimum duties provided for in the Franco-Japanese commercial accord of 1911 were immediately applicable to France and Algeria and, after negotiation, might possibly be extended to other French colonies. During the course of the war Japan, now France's ally, asked for their extension to Indochina. The request provoked a storm of protest in France and Indochina. The Chambers of Commerce of Paris, Rouen, Nantes, Marseille and Beauvais, the *Union coloniale*, the *Comité des forges*, the *Chambre syndicale des constructeurs d'automobiles*, the *Chambre syndicale de bonneterie de Troyes*, the Chambers of Commerce of Saigon and Hanoi, and the government of Indochina, all came out against it. The bag of protesters was mixed: among them could be found traditional proponents of neo-mercantilism and former advocates of freer commercial policies. The Lyon Chamber, a bastion of free trade sentiment in the past, had wavered when the accord of 1911 was being negotiated. Now it decisively reversed its position. The types of arguments it had once scorned were invoked to justify a refusal to fulfill the Japanese request. France would soon reacquire the Alsatian cotton industry and it would need colonial markets. The Japanese favoured in their domestic market rice from their Korean and Formosan colonies at the expense of Indochinese rice. Japanese bankers were expected to follow

⁴⁷ « Mouvement de la Condition des Soies de Lyon », CRTCCCL, 1919, p. 82; 1927, p. 827. The Chinese percentages included small amounts of Indochinese silks.

Japanese merchants into Indochina. Inability to cope with the Japanese economic offensive there would discredit the French in front of the native populations. A special tariff arrangement was required that would favour French commodities in Indochina and Indochinese products in France.⁴⁸

The Chamber was too new to protectionism — or too flexible — to remain entirely consistent. In 1919 it backed the stand taken by MM. Michelin et Cie against favours for Cochinchinese rubber at the expense of foreign rubber entering France.⁴⁹ Three years later, with its eyes undoubtedly fixed on what could happen to silk imports from abroad, it reaffirmed this position.⁵⁰ But if Indochinese products did not necessarily receive favours in France, the market for French products in Indochina was to be protected from foreign competition.⁵¹ The Japanese were regarded as more of a threat than the British and, when rumours began to circulate that the latter intended to take advantage of the Washington Conference to renew their earlier request in regard to Indochina, the Chamber reaffirmed the position espoused in 1916.⁵² The Japanese introduction in 1924 of a one hundred per cent *ad valorem* surtax on imported luxury goods, as well as the prospect of negotiations over the renewal of the treaty of 1911, also worried the Chamber.⁵³ It continued to insist that the French minimal duties should not be applied to Japanese commodities entering the Far Eastern colony.⁵⁴ If disputes over tariff matters complicated Franco-Japanese relations, they did not prevent the Lyon Chamber from providing some support for French cultural activities in Japan, or expressing regrets about the consequences of the 1923 earthquake, or supplying a subsidy of 20,000 francs for an economic mission sent to Japan.⁵⁵ Economics, international politics and culture were nicely blended in 1921 when the Chamber held a reception for Paul Claudel, France's

⁴⁸ « Régime douanier applicable en Indo-Chine aux produits japonais », CRTCCCL, 1916, p. 232-37.

⁴⁹ « Régime douanier du caoutchouc de provenance étrangère », CRTCCCL, 1919, p. 254-55.

⁵⁰ « Régime douanier du caoutchouc », CRTCCCL, 1922, p. 408-12.

⁵¹ « Application à l'Indochine des coefficients de majoration des droits de douane », CRTCCCL, 1921, p. 385; « Application des coefficients de majoration des droits de douane à l'Indochine », CRTCCCL, 1922, p. 425-28.

⁵² « Régime douanier applicable en Indochine aux produits japonais », CRTCCCL, 1921, p. 383-84.

⁵³ « Institution d'une taxe de 100% "ad valorem" sur les marchandises de luxe importées au Japon », CRTCCCL, 1924, p. 229-31; « Eventualité de renouvellement de la considération de commerce entre la France et le Japon », *Ibid.*, p. 205-08.

⁵⁴ « Eventualité du renouvellement de la convention du commerce entre la France et le Japon », CRTCCCL, 1925, p. 198-204.

⁵⁵ « Athénée français de Tokio », CRTCCCL, 1923, p. 50; « Cataclysme du Japon », *Ibid.*, p. 525-26; « Mission économique au Japon », CRTCCCL, 1924, p. 403; « Mission économique au Japon », CRTCCCL, 1924, p. 397; « Désignation d'un pensionnaire à la maison franco-japonaise de Tokio », *Ibid.*, p. 443-45.

ambassador to Japan. An Old China Hand as well as a writer of distinction, Claudel referred back to his contacts with members of the mission the Chamber had sent to China at the end of the Sino-Japanese War.⁵⁶

If silk production in Indochina could be developed substantially, Lyonnais dependence on Japanese sources of supply would be lessened. Hence, the Chamber turned its attention to this matter in the post-war years.⁵⁷ It also considered the question of the renewal of the privileges of the Banque de l'Indochine. The Lyonnais had been among the first to invest in this institution, and the Chamber naturally enough favoured the renewal of its privileged status as a colonial bank.⁵⁸ It welcomed the emperor of Annam to the city in 1922, but far more significant than this act of courtesy were the receptions held for Governors General of Indochina after the war.⁵⁹ Courtesies were exchanged at these affairs, but they were not allowed to get in the way of more serious business.

Discussion at the reception held for Maurice Long on January 7, 1921 embraced the past, the present and future of Indochina. Senator Jean Coignet a former president of the Lyon Chamber, reviewed the ties of the city with Indochina, the colony's brilliant prospects, the Chamber's gratitude for the continuing subsidy for its Chinese language course provided by the Indochinese government, and recent Lyonnais undertakings in regard to Japan and China.⁶⁰ Long stressed Indochina's current prosperity, the importance of rice in the colony's economy, the role of the Lyonnais in developing its coal resources, and its stable social order at a time when "anarchy" reigned in Russia and the Japanese confronted troubles in Korea. He ended with the observation that, just as the Mediterranean area had once been the region where the destinies of the world were determined, the Pacific area would come to play this role.⁶¹ Auguste Isaac, a former president of the Lyon Chamber and now Minister of Commerce and Industry, agreed that the specific interests of

⁵⁶ PAUL CLAUDEL, *Discours*, « Réception de M. Paul Claudel, ambassadeur de France au Japon », CRTCCCL, 1921, p. 720-26, 721-22, 722. Claudel's career in the Far East calls for further investigation. GILBERT GADOFFRE's, *Claudel et l'Univers chinois* (Paris, 1968), provides an excellent account of Claudel's close relations with Philippe Berthelot, the head of the Quai d'Orsay's Service d'Asie, but Gadoffre neglects such matters as Claudel's role in recruiting Chinese coolies for the murderous work on the Hanoi-Yunnan-fu railway.

⁵⁷ « Exposé sur la sériculture en Indo-Chine », CRTCCCL, 1920, p. 153-54; « Développement de la sériculture en Indochine », CRTCCCL, 1922, p. 408-12; 1923, p. 49; 1924, p. 29-30.

⁵⁸ « Renouveau du privilège de la Banque de l'Indochine », CRTCCCL, 1922, p. 572-73. For early Lyonnais investment in this bank, see HENRY BAUDOIN, *La Banque de l'Indochine* (Paris, 1903), p. 25.

⁵⁹ Visite de l'Empereur d'Annam au Musée des tissus », CRTCCCL, 1922, p. 805.

⁶⁰ JEAN COIGNET, *Discours*, « Réception de M. Maurice Long, Gouverneur général de l'Indochine, le 7 janvier 1921 », CRTCCCL, 1921, p. 697-711, 698-701.

⁶¹ MARICE LONG, *Discours*, *Ibid.*, p. 701-06.

the French in Indochina could not be separated from their more general interests in the Far East. He emphasized the need to develop the production of raw materials — for instance, cotton and silk — in the colonies in order to keep the home industries supplied. Isaac also condemned, in passing, those who in the dark days of 1916 had suggested turning over Indochina to Japan in return for the despatch of Japanese divisions to the West.⁶² All three speakers paid tribute to the memory of Ulysse Pila, the Lyonnais entrepreneur who had so much to do in the nineteenth century with the development of France's interests in the Far East.⁶³

Two years later the Chamber entertained Martial Henri Merlin. Its president, L. Pradel, outlined Lyon's interest in Indochinese silks.⁶⁴ Merlin paid tribute to past Lyonnais accomplishments in the colony and promised « the most complete support and the surest advice » for others willing to carry « their capital, their experience, their intelligence to the colony ».⁶⁵ Alexandre Varenne, a newly appointed Governor General, arrived in Lyon on October 20, 1925. The Chamber's president was quick to point out to him the extent of Lyonnais interests in Indochina and the need to encourage the development of sericulture there.⁶⁶ Varenne promised to pay attention to Lyonnais concerns before beginning an analysis of the problems awaiting him. Unrest born of the war troubled Asia and created a situation in Indochina which, if not yet dangerous, was « delicate ». Those who had unleashed the World War, « a civil war among Europeans », had overlooked the fact that others, Asians and Africans, would be drawn into it, some as spectators, others as participants. Discontent and misunderstandings had resulted. While Varenne believed that the bulk of the Indochinese populations was unwilling to attempt to throw off French domination, he also thought the situation called for changes. He expected to walk a narrow line: reform must not be allowed to become a matter of too little too late nor too much too soon.⁶⁷

Sufficient conditions for unrest existed in Indochina alone, but developments there were also influenced by events taking place to its north. Despite some new departures, the Chamber insisted on trying to treat China as it had done in the past. Although it was prepared to accept changes in

⁶² AUGUSTE ISAAC, *Discours, Ibid.*, p. 706-11.

⁶³ For Pila's career, see LAFFEY, *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, p. 295, fn. 7. One of his sons, later a French ambassador to Japan, was serving as minister to Siam when the Chamber held its reception for Long.

⁶⁴ L. PRADEL, *Discours*, « Réception de M. Merlin, gouverneur général de l'Indochine; de M. Garbit, gouverneur général de Madagascar, et de M. Carde, gouverneur général de l'Afrique occidentale française », CRTCCCL, 1923, p. 558-72, 559-65.

⁶⁵ MARTIAL HENRI MERLIN, *Discours, Ibid.*, p. 570-72.

⁶⁶ L. PRADEL, *Discours*, « Réception de Alexandre Varenne, gouverneur général de l'Indochine, et de M. Antonetti, gouverneur général de l'Afrique Equatoriale française », CRTCCCL, 1925, p. 368-80, 369-74.

⁶⁷ ALEXANDER VARENNE, *Discours, Ibid.*, p. 376-80.

the Chinese tariff that would bring duties into line with its purported five per cent *ad valorem* level, it continued to protest against *likin* charges, the irregular exactions on goods already subjected to customs charges.⁶⁸ When the Minister of Commerce and Industry consulted with the Chamber in 1923 about possible revisions of the Chinese tariff, it responded with four observations: specific duties were acceptable as long as they met the five per cent general standard; the reduction of duties on goods crossing the Tonkin-China border had not appreciably benefited Indochina; a five per cent surtax on luxury items was completely unacceptable; and *likin* charges should be abolished.⁶⁹ Economic ties between Lyon and China were also discussed when a Chinese mission, made up largely of Shanghai merchants, visited the city in 1921.⁷⁰ Two years later the Chamber entertained a Chinese mission headed by the aging Chang Chien, the most prominent Chinese to visit the city since Li Hung-chang.⁷¹

Concern with China lent impetus to two other undertakings backed by the Chamber in the post-war period. Replying to government inquiries as to what should be done with a medical and technical school founded prior to the war by Germans in the French Concession at Shanghai, the Chamber suggested that, like the medical school and technical school in Beirut, it should be attached to the University of Lyon. After the acceptance of this suggestion, the Chamber agreed to provide a 6000 franc subsidy for what became Shanghai's *Institut franco-chinois d'industrie et de commerce*.⁷² More ambitious was the idea of founding a « Chinese University » in Lyon itself. Prior to the establishment of what became Lyon's *Institut franco-chinois*, an *Association universitaire franco-chinoise* was set up, with a member of the Chamber of Commerce serving as its vice-president.⁷³ The Chamber, however, cited its commitment to the support of Chinese and Japanese language courses in the city when in 1923 it refused a request from Edouard Herriot, acting in his capacity of mayor, for a 25,000 franc grant for the new *Institut franco-chinois*.⁷⁴

The following year the Chamber had more to worry about in China itself. It informed Herriot, then serving as Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs, that the strike of Chinese employees of European commercial houses

⁶⁸ « Relèvement du tarif douanier chinois », CRTCCCL, 1919, p. 268-69.

⁶⁹ « Revision du tarif douanier chinois », CRTCCCL, 1923, p. 246-48.

⁷⁰ « Mission chinoise en France », CRTCCCL, 1921, p. 166-67.

⁷¹ « Réception de la mission commerciale chinoise », CRTCCCL, 1923, p. 578-79. For Chang Chien, see Samuel C. Chu, *Reformer in Modern China, Chang Chien, 1853-1926* (New York, 1958).

⁷² « Création d'une école d'enseignement technique à Shangai », CRTCCCL, 1919, p. 473-75; 1920, p. 549-52.

⁷³ « Création d'une Université chinoise à Lyon », CRTCCCL, 1921, p. 629-30.

⁷⁴ « Institut franco-chinois », CRTCCCL, 1923, p. 495.

in Canton was interfering with the silk trade and jeopardizing the lives and goods of Canton's French community. Herriot replied that the French consul at Canton was working, along with other foreign diplomatic representatives, to end the strike. He assured the Chamber that French lives were not endangered.⁷⁵ Such assurances were worth little in face of the unfolding of the Chinese revolution. In 1925 the Chamber lent its support to complaints from Lyon's *Union des Marchands de soie* to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Commerce that trade was still being disrupted at Canton and behind the actions of the Chinese revolutionaries lay the sinister influence of the Russian government.⁷⁶

The troubles of the Chinese republic reached back to its founding in 1911, but the Lyonnais had been preoccupied with Moroccan affairs when the first Chinese revolution broke out. While ties with the Far East became more tenuous during the war years, the concern with Morocco deepened. A Lyonnais group with a special interest in the new protectorat was formed in 1916.⁷⁷ The Chamber made special efforts to collect information with regard to Morocco.⁷⁸ The most important of its fact-finding endeavours involved the despatch of M. Levrat, the director of Lyon's *Laboratoire d'études de la soie*, to Morocco. He concluded that sericulture might be developed there, but that it would require everything from the provision of mulberry plants to the technical education of the natives. More generally, his conclusions followed the lines of the professed convictions of Morocco's Resident General, General Lyautey: the artistic, familial and pastoral aspects of Moroccan production should be preserved and France should exchange its manufactured commodities for Moroccan artisanal creations and raw

⁷⁵ « Protestation du commerce de la soie contre la grève des Chinois de Canton », CRTCCCL, 1924, p. 30-31.

⁷⁶ « Entraves au commerce de la soie à Canton », CRTCCCL, 1925, p. 27-28.

⁷⁷ « Groupement lyonnais du Maroc », CRTCCCL, 1916, p. 403-04.

⁷⁸ « Renseignements économiques sur le Maroc », CRTCCCL, 1914, p. 288-89; « Enquête sur le commerce austro-allemand au Maroc, en vue de le remplacer », *Ibid.*, p. 364-65; « Mission de M. Lauret », CRTCCCL, 1916, p. 404; « Conférence sur les ressources du Maroc », *Ibid.*, p. 463; « Culture du coton au Maroc », CRTCCCL, 1917, p. 331-32; « Documents sur le Maroc », CRTCCCL, 1918, p. 332.

⁷⁹ « Prix Edouard Duseigneur — Kléber — Voyage d'études au Maroc — Délégation de M. Levrat, directeur du Laboratoire », CRTCCCL, 1916, p. 558-62. Lyautey's ideas about preserving the pre-colonial character of Moroccan society were at best confused and at worst disingenuous and represented a doomed attempt to pursue ultimately contradictory courses: the preservation of Morocco's traditional ruling class and the economic development of the protectorate. Adulatory accounts of Lyautey's undertakings clutter the field of French imperial history, but a substantial scholarly account has yet to appear. Such an account will have to take into consideration Lyautey's relations with municipal centres of imperialism and especially his ties with the imperialists of Marseille.

materials.⁷⁹ Lyautey's efforts to encourage such trade, most clearly manifested in a series of Expositions and Fairs, attracted Lyonnais attention.⁸⁰

The Chamber had an opportunity to discuss the Moroccan situation with him directly when the Resident General and members of his staff visited Lyon in 1916. The exchanges were reasonably frank, that is, nobody indulged in excessive optimism. The Chamber's president, Jean Coignet, expressed its long standing interest in Morocco. Lyautey pointed to the market for silk fabrics in Morocco and the efforts of its administration to revive Moroccan sericulture. Coignet suggested that, if Moroccan silk would never be able to compete with that of the Far East, it might still compete successfully with that of the Levant. A representative of the local leather industry complained about American purchases of hides in Morocco and suggested that the administration favour the export of hides to France. M. de Sorbier, a member of Lyautey's diplomatic staff, replied that international treaty commitments required commercial equality in Morocco and thus limited what the administration could do for French interests. The discussion also touched upon questions of wool, mines, railways and roads, with the Chamber's president, a magnate of the local chemical industry, emphasizing the advantages which the exploitation of phosphate deposits might bring.⁸¹

Lyautey stopped in Lyon once again in 1919 and discussed with the Chamber the establishment there of an *Office marocaine*. He offered the Chamber an annual subsidy of 24,000 francs for the Office and suggested that Marcel Chabert, a Lyonnais, might serve as its director. The Chamber agreed to take care of the director's salary. By the end of 1920 a majority of the Lyonnais industries were making use of the services of the new bureau.⁸² While the Office seems to have functioned well in supplying Lyonnais firms with information about the protectorate, the Chamber did not confine itself to relying solely upon its activities. Trade, education, transport and tariffs received separate attention on occasion.⁸³ The Chamber also took

⁸⁰ « Exposition des produits allemands vendus au Maroc », CRTCCCL, 1915, p. 289; « Exposition de Casablanca », *Ibid.*, p. 289-90; « Musées commerciaux au Maroc », *Ibid.*, p. 403; « La Foire de Fez — Délégation de la Chambre », CRTCCCL, 1916, p. 404-05; « Foire de Rabat », CRTCCCL, 1917, p. 331. For other undertakings in Morocco, see « Développement des relations commerciales avec le Maroc », CRTCCCL, 1915, p. 287-88; « Comité des intérêts économiques de la région de Meknès (Maroc) », CRTCCCL, 1916, p. 404.

⁸¹ « Réception de M. le général Lyautey, résident général de France au Maroc », CRTCCCL, 1916, p. 389-403.

⁸² « Cratlon d'un Office marocaine à Lyon », CRTCCCL, 1919, p. 382-83; « Office de Maroc de Lyon et de la région », CRTCCCL, 1920, p. 626-28. See also « Office du Maroc de Lyon et de la région », CRTCCCL, 1922, p. 739-41; 1923, p. 590-91; 1924, p. 615-17; 1925, p. 571-75.

⁸³ « Participation marocaine à la Foire de Lyon », CRTCCCL, 1920, p. 515-16; « Organisation de l'enseignement au Maroc — Mission d'études de M. Busques », *Ibid.*, p. 553-54; « Projet de construction du port de Tanger-Fez », CRTCCCL, 1921, p. 559-63;

special care to cultivate its relations with Lyautey, congratulating him on his promotion to Marshal and on the attainment of fifty years of service in the army.⁸⁴

Lyautey was the honored guest at a reception held by the Chamber on July 5, 1922. Its president used the occasion to inquire about the worsening economic situation in Morocco.⁸⁵ The Marshal and his Director General of Agriculture, Commerce and Colonization explained it in terms of delayed reaction to the global post-war crisis. They also insisted upon the importance of Morocco's native clientele.⁸⁶ Sericulture, transport and phosphates were also discussed.⁸⁷ At lunch L. Pradel reviewed Lyon's colonial achievement before yielding the floor to the Resident General. Lyautey went out of his way to be cordial, embracing the Lyonnais as fellow men of action, perhaps stretching the truth somewhat in describing his good relations with Herriot when both were serving in a wartime government, and recalling his personal ties with such prominent municipal colonialists as Marseille's Jules Charles-Roux and Lyon's Edouard Aynard.⁸⁸ The warm words and memories served as a preface to a blunt statement of fact: « Whether in Marseille, or Paris, or Lyon, people tell me: you have pacified Morocco. No, no, no, Morocco is not pacified ».⁸⁹ Within two years Lyautey's judgment had been confirmed. While the Chamber's president was impressed with what he saw in Morocco, by 1925 the Riffian War already creating complications for the Lyonnais.⁹⁰ Morocco's Director General of Agriculture, Commerce and Colonization had to reassure the Chamber about the security of conditions there.⁹¹ Lyautey was a casualty of the conflict and there was a certain poignancy about the Chamber's expression of regret at his resignation.⁹² His reply acknowledged that « from the beginnings of the protectorate » he had found in the Chamber

« Conférence de MM. Vattier et Rolun sur le Maroc », *Ibid.*, p. 571-72; « Régime douanier des dérivés du blé en provenance du Maroc », CRTCCCL, 1922, p. 406-07; « Visite à Lyon de la Mission économique marocaine », CRTCCCL, 1923, p. 437-38; « Invitation adressée à M. le Président pour l'inauguration du chemin de fer de Rabat à Fez et du Port de Casablanca », *Ibid.*, p. 590; « Ligne aérienne France-Maroc », CRTCCCL, 1924, p. 156-59; « Augmentation du contingentement des semoules en provenance du Maroc », *Ibid.*, p. 199-200.

⁸⁴ « Félicitations adressées au général Lyautey pour sa nomination du Maréchal », CRTCCCL, 1921, p. 570; « Félicitations adressées au Maréchal Lyautey », CRTCCCL, 1923, p. 590-91.

⁸⁵ PRADEL, « Réception offerte par la Chambre de commerce de Lyon à M. le Maréchal Lyautey, résident général de la République française au Maroc, le 5 juillet 1922 », CRTCCCL, 1922, p. 784-805, 791.

⁸⁶ LYAUTEY and MALET, *Ibid.*, p. 791-92.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 793.

⁸⁸ LYAUTEY, *Discours*, *Ibid.*, p. 800-05, 800-02.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 802.

⁹⁰ « Voyage de M. le Président Pradel au Maroc », CRTCCCL, 1925, p. 361-64.

⁹¹ « Sécurité du commerce français au Maroc », *Ibid.*, p. 364.

⁹² « Démission du Maréchal Lyautey », *Ibid.*, p. 364-65, 364.

« a constant, enlightened and efficacious support ».⁹³ Although one might quarrel with two of the adjectives, there could be no question of the constancy of that support.

The North African possessions to the east of Morocco were less troubled. The Chamber had ignored them during the war. The post-war concern with the development of sericulture within the empire brought its attention back to them.⁹⁴ The pre-war pattern, in which Tunisia received more consideration than Algeria, re-emerged. Tunisian tariff affairs roused concern.⁹⁵ The Chamber held a reception in 1923 for the Bey of Tunis.⁹⁶ Two years later plans were being made for the establishment in Lyon of an *Office tunisien*.⁹⁷ Yet all in all, North African affairs, aside from those of Morocco, were eclipsed in importance in these years by developments elsewhere in the world of Islam.

The Levant had been a source of silk for Lyon since the nineteenth century.⁹⁸ While the war substantially reduced Lyonnais consumption of Levantine silks, at the same time it opened the door to the prospect of new territorial expansion in the eastern Mediterranean region. The bonds between Lyon and the area were not completely broken during the conflict: the Minister of Commerce, replying to an inquiry from the Lyon Chamber, noted that the law of April 4, 1915 was directed against French nationals in commercial contact with Germans and Austro-Hungarians and did not apply to relations with Ottoman subjects.⁹⁹ As early as June 7, 1915 the Chamber presented the Minister of Foreign Affairs with the results of its deliberations on « Syria », an area which the Lyonnais, like other Frenchmen, defined in terms sweeping enough to embrace Palestine, Lebanon and what in fact became Syria. Rumours about the future status of the region prompted the Chamber's intervention. It suggested that the war should lead to the reinforcement of traditional French ties with the Levant. The Lyonnais not

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 364-65.

⁹⁴ « La sériciculture en Algérie », CRTCCCL, 1920, p. 152-53; « Ressources séricicole de la Kabylie », CRTCCCL, 1923, p. 41-42; « Développement de la sériciculture en Tunisie », *Ibid.*, p. 42-46; « Développement de la sériciculture en Algérie », CRTCCCL, 1924, p. 18-21; « Développement de la sériciculture en Tunisie », *Ibid.*, p. 21-23; 1925, p. 24-27.

⁹⁵ « Entrée en France des lingots d'argent en provenance de Tunisie », CRTCCCL, 1922, p. 405-06; « Union douanière entre la France et la Tunisie », CRTCCCL, 1923, p. 209-10.

⁹⁶ « Réception du Bey de Tunis », *Ibid.*, p. 572-74.

⁹⁷ « Projet de création d'un Office tunisien à Lyon », CRTCCCL, 1925, p. 367-68.

⁹⁸ M. EMERIT, « La Crise syrienne et l'expansion économique française en 1860 », *Revue historique*, CCVII (April-June, 1952), p. 211-32; DOMINIQUE CHEVALLIER, « Lyon et la Syrie en 1919; les bases d'une intervention », *Ibid.*, CCXXIV (Oct.-Dec., 1960), p. 275-320. The latter article is of fundamental importance, though I believe it slights in some important respects the connections between the economic and ideological preoccupations of the Lyonnais.

⁹⁹ « Relations commerciales avec les sujets ottomans », CRTCCCL, 1915, p. 238-39.

only imported silk from the region, but they had also established spinneries in Lebanon. Great Britain had taken advantage of the war to consolidate its position in Egypt, and the Lyonnais had no objection to the establishment of the Russians on the Bosphorus or the Italians in Smyrna, but Syria, they insisted, should go to France.¹⁰⁰

The British were hardly prepared to content themselves with a strengthened hold over Egypt. In face of what was depicted as a British desire to confine the French to a narrow strip of Levantine coast, the Chamber participated, in October, 1918, in the setting up of a *Comité lyonnais des intérêts français en Syrie*, an organization supposed « to defend the moral and material situation which our country occupies in the Levant ». The honorary presidents of this group were men of political importance: Edouard Herriot and Auguste Isaac. The Chamber despatched a letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, with copies to other members of the government. It urged a revision of the Anglo-French accord of 1916 and insisted that the possession of Damascus be reserved to France. The argument ran that British domination of the major holy cities of Islam — Mecca, Bagdad, Cairo and Damascus — could produce unfortunate repercussions among the Moslems of France's North African possessions. The government, in response, assured the Lyonnais of its concern with « the safeguarding of French interests and prestige » in the Levant.¹⁰¹

A congress on Syria, held in Marseille in January, 1919, under the patronage of the city's Chamber of Commerce, decided on the need for an investigation of economic conditions in the Levant. The model for this undertaking was the mission sent to China by the Lyon Chamber after the Sino-Japanese War. Henri Brenier, one of the leaders of that mission, now headed the secretariat of the Marseille Chamber and played a major role in working out the details of an undertaking backed by the two Chambers of Commerce and the government. Three delegates, one of them an agent of the firm of Veuve Guérin et Fils, a Lyonnais house with old Levantine ties, represented the Chambers on the staff of the mission. Three more Lyonnais — a professor of law, a professor of geology and an archeologist — were attached to it in other capacities.¹⁰²

The mission left France in early May and most of its members returned by early September. Paul Huvelin, the professor of law, summed up their findings on November 6 before a meeting of the *Comité lyonnais des intérêts français en Syrie*. Huvelin noted the difficulties encountered by the « twelve apostles » of empire and warned of the dominant role being played by the

¹⁰⁰ « Droits et prérogatives de la France en Syrie », *Ibid.*, p. 291-93.

¹⁰¹ « Création du Comité lyonnais des intérêts français en Syrie », CRTCCCL, 1918, p. 350-54.

¹⁰² « Mission en Syrie. Réception du Général Gourand », CRTCCCL, 1919, p. 400-55, 401-02.

British in the region.¹⁰³ He analysed the value of Syria in terms of three factors. First, there was its economic worth. While its mineral resources had been exaggerated, its agricultural resources, including its sericulture, were important.¹⁰⁴ But Syria's worth as « a country of influence », that is, as a centre of ideological influence, outstripped its economic importance. Here Huvelin became mechanistically rhapsodic.

While Beirut, devoted since the Byzantine period to the propagation of Greco-Latin culture, continues to spread Western thought and science in the Levant, Damascus, the old Omayyad capital, remains the intellectual pole towards which all Islam turns; and Jerusalem, rich in religious memories, serves as a common foyer for Christians, Jews and Moslems. Such centres of influence have, for the power which possesses them, an incalculable value. From Syria one controls the currents of belief which animate the world; one interrupts them or excites them.¹⁰⁵

The third factor pales somewhat beside the image of the Levant as a cultural powerhouse, staffed by French ideological engineers. Still Syria's geographical position, according to Huvelin, was also of value, and, because of it, Aleppo, along with its port of Alexandretta, was destined to become one of the great cities of the world.¹⁰⁶

The content of Huvelin's report had been revealed to the Chambers of Commerce immediately after the return of the mission. On October 4 the presidents of the Lyon and Marseille Chambers discussed the situation in the Levant with the premier, Georges Clemenceau. Four days later General Gouraud was named High Commissioner in Syria and Commander of the Army of the Levant.¹⁰⁷ On November 11, 1919, a year to the day after the guns had fallen silent, the Lyon Chamber discussed Levantine affairs with the new proconsul. Huvelin and other members of the mission summarized their findings for him, and M. Gueneau, speaking on behalf of the Chamber, presented him with a list of Lyonnais desiderata: the reestablishment of transport links with the interior, the regularization of maritime bonds between Beirut and Marseille, the provision of a stable currency, the increase of fuel supplies, information about the peace treaty to be concluded with Turkey, the settlement of war claims, and the general development of the area in line with French interests.¹⁰⁸ Gouraud was courteous and cautiously optimistic: Clemenceau handled political matters, wartime circumstances had inflated the British role in the area and that would now decline, and, drawing upon his experience under Lyautey in Morocco, he would do what he could

¹⁰³ PAUL HUVELIN, *Rapport. Ibid.*, p. 403-19, 408, 413-19.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 410-11.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 411.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 412-13.

¹⁰⁷ « Mission en Syrie. Réception du Général Gouraud », *Ibid.*, p. 420.

¹⁰⁸ « Réception du Général Gouraud, *Ibid.*, p. 421-46, 430-31.

for the Lyonnais.¹⁰⁹ Much the same sentiments were expressed at a banquet held in his honour by the Chamber.¹¹⁰ Its members, who in 1919 also renewed their ties with the *Comité d'expansion universitaire en Orient* and Beirut's technical school, had some cause for satisfaction that evening.¹¹¹

Satisfaction soon dissipated. Lyonnais territorial demands could not be completely realized. Levantine sericulture, moreover, was in trouble.¹¹² In 1922 General Gouraud despatched M. Bereil, an official of the Tunisian government temporarily working with him, to explain to the Lyon Chamber problems which included the destruction of mulberry plants during the war, the decline in the population of the area and increasing indigenous consumption of silk. In the fall of the same year the Chamber added a local sericultural expert to the *Mission française d'études économiques en Orient*, a group being sent to investigate conditions in the Levant.¹¹³ His report confirmed the decline in raw silk production and the decrease in the rural population. The report stressed the fellahs' lack of capital, the alienation of small properties during the war and, conversely, the spread of large estates, worked by what amounted to serf labour. Other factors, including the lack of security in some areas, were analyzed and suggestions were made for the improvement of the situation.¹¹⁴

The Chamber had an opportunity to consider the more general situation in the Levant when General Gouraud visited the city in the same year. The president of the Chamber, L. Pradel, once again reviewed Lyon's ties with the Levant. He pointed out that imports of raw silk from the region now constituted roughly one fifth of their pre-war annual totals.¹¹⁵ Gouraud, in reply, outlined what had happened since his last visit to Lyon: the military campaigns, the political organization of the mandated areas, the Arab, Turkish and British intrigues, the complications introduced by the refusal of the Turks to accept the treaty of Sèvres, the problems with ethnic and religious minorities, and the ramifications religious developments in Turkey might have in France's North African possessions. He refused to exaggerate the

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 433-35.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 436-46.

¹¹¹ « Comité d'expansion universitaire en Orient », CRTCCCL, 1919, p. 469-70; « Ecole technique de Beyrouth (Association lyonnaise pour le développement à l'étranger de l'enseignement supérieur et technique) », *Ibid.*, p. 470-71.

¹¹² Despite the war 6.06 per cent of the silks reaching Lyon's Condition des Soies came from the Levant in 1915. Ten years later, when the sum stood at 4.59 per cent, this percentage had yet to be bettered whereas before the war it had usually hovered around ten per cent. « Mouvement de la Condition des Soies de Lyon », CRTCCCL, 1919, p. 82; 1927, p. 826.

¹¹³ « Développement de la sériciculture en Syrie », CRTCCCL, 1922, p. 175-94, 175-76.

¹¹⁴ JEAN PELOSEE, *Rapport*, *Ibid.*, p. 176-94.

¹¹⁵ L. PRADEL, *Discours*, « Réception du général Gouraud, haut commissaire de la République française en Syrie, à l'occasion de son passage à Lyon », CRTCCCL, 1922, p. 628-40, 629-30.

agricultural worth of the region, but he recognized the importance of sericulture in Lebanon and thought that cotton cultivation might be developed in Syria.¹¹⁶ A question-and-answer period allowed members of the Chamber to voice complaints and suggestions.¹¹⁸ Like the earlier speeches, questions and responses revealed the extent to which uncertainties stalked France's new possessions.

Uncertainties had never constituted major obstacles to the Lyonnais pursuit of imperial goals. They continued to concern themselves with the new holdings. Much attention, of course, was devoted to sericulture. Educational ties were not neglected: the Chamber approved the transformation in 1924 of the old *Comité d'expansion universitaire en Orient* into the *Société lyonnaise pour le développement à l'étranger de l'enseignement supérieur et technique*.¹¹⁹ It also protested against an increase in Syrian duties from an eleven to a fifteen per cent *ad valorem* level.¹²⁰ In the same year an *Office économique de Syrie et du Grand-Liban*, organized along the lines of the *Office du Maroc*, was established in Lyon.¹²¹

The Chamber had another opportunity to discuss the affairs of the Levant when it held, on May 26, 1924, a reception for General Weygand, who was then serving as imperial proconsul in that region. In the morning Weygand met with the Chamber and, having heard what it wanted in and from the Levant, naively agreed with the Chamber on all the points raised.¹²² At the end of the following lunch the Chamber's president outlined Lyon's ties with the Levant and the objectives still to be achieved in the region. He also complimented Weygand on the security reigning in the domains he governed.¹²³ The General indicated his awareness of the Lyonnais role in the Levant and his willingness to provide « moral and material aid » in the development of sericulture. He drew attention to the economic benefits rendered France by the use of her currency in those Mandates that were open to the free

¹¹⁶ Général GOURAUD, *Discours, Ibid.*, p. 630-37.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 637-40.

¹¹⁸ « Développement de la sériciculture en Syrie », CRTCCCL, 1923, p. 36-40; 1924, p. 23-27; 1925, p. 20-24. « Délai d'importation des graines de vers à soie en Syrie — Obligation d'un certificat d'origine de production pour les graines importées », CRTCCCL, 1923, p. 336; « Demande de concours pecuniaire pour l'État du Grand Liban pour le développement de la sériciculture », *Ibid.*, p. 40; « Délai d'importations des graines de vers à soie en Syrie », CRTCCCL, 1924, p. 28-29; « Droit de sortie sur les soies grèges de Syrie », CRTCCCL, 1925, p. 196-97.

¹¹⁹ « Association lyonnaise pour le développement à l'étranger de l'enseignement supérieur et technique — Ecoles de Beyrouth », CRTCCCL, 1924, p. 446-48.

¹²⁰ « Relèvement des droits de douane en Syrie », *Ibid.*, p. 196-99.

¹²¹ « Création d'un Office économique de Syrie et du Grand-Liban », *Ibid.*, p. 394-95.

¹²² « Réception de M. le général Weygand, haut commissaire de la République Française en Syrie et au Liban », *Ibid.*, pp. 506-14, 506.

¹²³ L. PRADEL, *Discours, Ibid.*, pp. 507-11.

competition of all members of the League of Nations. He also pointed out, in passing, that Germany's exclusion from the League allowed her exports to the Levantine Mandates to be subjected to a thirty per cent duty. Weygand ended by urging the need for a speedy ratification of the treaty of Lausanne in order to regularize relations with Turkey.¹²⁴ The hopes of the general, like those of the Lyonnais, were disappointed the following year when disorders broke out in Syria and the conclusion of the Locarno accords opened the way to Germany's admission into the League of Nations.

When the Chamber of Commerce came to evaluate local economic conditions in 1925, it remarked that the current troubles in Morocco and Syria would not have merited mention in earlier accounts of its activities.¹²⁵ True enough in itself, the observation formed part of a dawning realization that no way could be found back to the now idealized world of the *belle époque*. But in fact by 1925 the situation was less grim than the Chamber inclined to portray it: even the textile magnates, given to the loudest complaints in the postwar period, derived increasing profit from the production of synthetic commodities and the crushing of the militancy of the labour force. If neither the war nor its immediate aftermath brought complete disaster to the Lyonnais industries, they did force some changes within the local business community. These changes, however, did not correspond to the sweeping nature of larger transformations elsewhere. Like the organizational structures of the Lyonnais industries, the imperialist undertakings in the city witnessed some innovations but more basically reflected the limits of change.

World War I led to a monetary loosening of Lyon's bonds with some colonial and semi-colonial areas and to a reinforcement of its concern with Morocco. The war also catalyzed a decisive change in the Lyon Chamber's attitude in regard to colonial tariffs: it abandoned its free trade stance. Finally, the global conflict provided the opportunity for the formulation of new imperialist goals in the Levant. These aims, in so far as they involved the acquisition of territory, were realized in part at the war's end. The post-war years witnessed new departures on the local scene, notably the transformation of the colonial education programme into a Colonial School and the establishment in the city of Offices representing the interests of various segments of the empire. Although these undertakings often represented efforts in the direction of more effective organization, they did not constitute striking changes. The Lyonnais imperialists' aims, institutions, and patterns of behaviour remained much the same as they had been prior to the outbreak of the war. The implementation of Albert Sarraut's programme for colonial development might

¹²⁴ M. WEYGAND, *Discours*, *Ibid.*, pp. 511-14.

¹²⁵ « Exposé de la situation industrielle et commerciale de la circonscription de la Chambre de Commerce de Lyon pendant l'année 1925 », CRTCCCL, 1925, pp. 589, 699, 512.

have altered this, but, like the more modest Lyonnais plans for the development of sericulture within the empire, it came in the end to very little. Despite such disappointments, the Lyonnais continued with their imperial house-keeping, and it may very well be that their mundane activities, like those of other centres of municipal imperialism, had as much to do with the upkeep of formal and informal empire as the more spectacular decisions taken in Paris. The problems they confronted, however, became more complex. The ravages of the war were never completely repaired, and by 1925 new currents, manifested in unrest in China, Morocco and Syria, along with the "delicate" situation in Indochina, had begun to complicate further the lives of the municipal imperialists of Lyon. Imperialism continued to thrive, but the importance of municipal imperialism, essentially a phenomenon of the nineteenth century, began to decline. Much effort and limited successes at the municipal level could not entirely disguise the differences in the world before and after 1914.