tense without paragraph breaks; I will offer an interpretation of this tense choice on Sartre's part.

Keywords: Sartre, Last Chance, Mathieu, Brunet, Strange Friendship, bad faith

The 'Anti-Existentialist Offensive': The French Communist Party against Sartre (1944–1948)

David Drake

Abstract: This article considers Sartre's relations with the French Communist Party (PCF) in the years immediately following the Liberation when the PCF considered that, of all the prominent French intellectuals, it was Sartre who posed the greatest threat. This article opens by situating the PCF within the French political landscape immediately after the Liberation and addressing its attitudes towards intellectuals. It then examines the main themes of the attacks launched by the PCF, between 1944 and the staging of *Les Mains sales* (*Dirty Hands*) in 1948, on both Sartre and existentialism and the reasons for these attacks. It concludes by noting the differences between the PCF and Sartre on three specific political issues during this period.

Keywords: existentialism, Marxism, intellectuals, French Communist Party (PCF), Jean-Paul Sartre

The 'Anti-Existentialist Offensive':

*The French Communist Party against Sartre (1944–1948)**

DAVID DRAKE

Sartre's relations with the French Communist Party (PCF) were, and indeed continue to be, a controversial issue. Many of Sartre's critics have seized upon statements made by Sartre, particularly during his four-year rapprochement with the PCF (1952–1956), as proof that he was an apologist for Stalinism and/or totalitarianism.[1] Less attention has been paid to the period immediately after the Liberation when the PCF considered that of all the prominent French intellectuals, it was Sartre who posed the greatest threat.[2] This article opens by situating the PCF within the political landscape of France immediately after the Liberation; it then examines the main recurring themes of the attacks launched by the PCF on Sartre and existentialism between 1944 and the staging of *Les Mains sales* (*Dirty Hands*) in 1948 and the reasons for them. It concludes by noting the differences between the PCF and Sartre on three specific political issues during this period.

The post-war political importance of the PCF was demonstrated by its success in the legislative elections of 21 October 1945 when it obtained over a quarter of the votes cast (26.2 per cent), close to double its score in 1936 (14.76 per cent). This gave it 160 seats in the *Chambre des députés*, outstripping not just the smaller parties of the Centre Left, the Centre, and the Right, but also its main rival, the Socialist SFIO (*Section française de l'internationale ouvrière*) which, with less than 25 per cent of the vote, obtained 142 seats. The PCF had become the most powerful force in French politics and secured four ministerial posts in the de Gaulle Government.[3] Communist ministers were to remain in government until they were expelled from office in May 1947. In the legislative elections of June 1946 following a referendum rejecting a new constitution, and those in the autumn of the same year, the PCF continued to attract the support of

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more than one in five registered electors or about one in four of those who actually voted.

There are a number of reasons for this unprecedented success. First, the Party's dubious behaviour between the signing of the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact in August 1939 and the German invasion of the USSR in June 1941 had, for most people, been overshadowed by its subsequent commitment to the Resistance. The PCF's electoral success was thus in part recognition of the sacrifices of *le parti des 75,000 fusillés* [the Party of the 75,000 shot] as the PCF used to like to describe itself.[4] The image of the PCF as 'the Party of the Resistance' had been further boosted during the Occupation by the Vichy Government and the German authorities who, attempting to demonise Communism, tended to ascribe *any* act of resistance to the 'Communists'. Furthermore, thanks to its former membership of the Comintern, dissolved in 1943, the PCF won the admiration of many Frenchmen and women because of the contribution of Communist parties in Italy, Greece and Yugoslavia, and especially of the USSR and the Red Army, to the defeat of Nazism.[5] The sociologist Edgar Morin, for example, would later write of the symbolic importance of the Battle of Stalingrad: 'Stalingrad balayait, pour moi et sans doute pour des milliers comme moi, critiques, doutes, réticences. Stalingrad lavait tous les crimes du passé quand il ne les justifiait pas. La cruauté, les procès, les liquidations trouvaient leur finalité dans Stalingrad.'[6] [For me, and doubtless for thousands like me, Stalingrad swept away criticisms, doubts, and reservations. Stalingrad washed away all the crimes of the past and even justified them. The cruelty, the trials, the purges, all found their *raison d'être* with Stalingrad.]

After the defeat of Nazism, Stalin wished to prolong, for the time being at least, the alliance with the USA and Britain forged during the war. The PCF, the most slavishly loyal of all the Communist parties, was not therefore going to provoke Britain and the USA by transforming the struggle for national liberation against the German occupying forces into a revolutionary struggle aimed at seizing power in France. The PCF opted instead for a strategy of spreading its influence within the social, economic and political structures of the nation state. 'Tout devait être entrepris ou tenté pour qu'il devienne un grand parti de gouvernement capable de contrôler étroitement le pouvoir et même de le conquérir légalement si les circonstances intérieures et *surtout extérieures* venaient à s'y prêter.'[7] [Everything had to be undertaken or attempted in order that it [the PCF] became a great party, and a great party of government, capable of exercising tight control over political power and even taking power legally if

circumstances within the country and *particularly outside the country* should lend themselves to this.] The PCF thus sought to present itself as *the* representative of the national interest and, under this banner, advocated a rigorous purge of all those it considered guilty of collaboration. It hoped that influential figures in the fields of the economy, politics or culture who were imprisoned or who lost their jobs would be replaced by members or sympathisers of the Party. Simultaneously, the leadership of the Party sought to reinforce its power internally. The leadership worked to consolidate its authority over its members, especially those who had rallied to the Party during the War and who, according to the PCF, needed to be initiated into the Party's culture and practice of democratic centralism and its brand of Marxism.

The Party actively worked to enlist the support of intellectuals. It targeted famous professionals from the world of arts and science, calculating that their association with the Party would boost its standing both nationally and internationally. The Party also expended much time and energy recruiting members from the broader socio-economic stratum of 'intellectuals', namely students, school teachers, university lecturers.[8] The Party therefore wooed intellectuals in both senses of the word and in turn many 'intellectuals', again in both senses of the word, were seduced by a party whose Marxism appeared to offer not only an explanation of the pending collapse of the 'old world' of capitalism, but also posited the bases of the new post-capitalist world of socialism. The chaos of the war years had provoked a reassessment of individual behaviour, responsibility and motivation. This soul-searching by intellectuals, famous and otherwise, who were sympathetic to the workers' movement but by definition outside it, had resulted in a determination to put themselves on the side of History, progress and the proletariat who under the leadership of the PCF seemed about to usher in a new era. History was on the march and to align oneself with the Party was to march with it and the proletariat into the new dawn. With its massive working class support, the Party appeared to offer intellectuals the possibility of a link with the class of the future, a reassurance that they were useful and also a sense of belonging: in short, fraternity and solidarity. Referring to the French intellectuals, Jeanine Verdès-Leroux has observed, 'Le parti communiste apportait la rencontre *physique* et *mystique* avec la classe ouvrière."[9] [The Communist Party brought a *physical* and *mystical* encounter with the working class.] This mystical (and sentimental) dimension is well captured by Annie Kriegel, writing as Annie Besse. 'L'humanisme révolutionnaire, c'est

l'amour des ouvriers et des alliés des ouvriers, les intellectuels venus sur les positions de la classe ouvrière. Parce que les ouvriers sont *innocents* .... Parce que les ouvriers sont au coeur du juste combat pour la paix, l'indépendance nationale et les libertés. Parce que les ouvriers sont au coeur du juste combat qui porte en lui l'avenir du monde.'[10] [Revolutionary humanism is the love of the workers and their allies and the intellectuals who have come to support the positions of the working class. Because the workers are *innocent* .... Because the workers are at the heart of the just struggle for peace, national independence and freedom. Because the workers are at the heart of the just struggle which carries within it the future of the world.] Although the PCF appeared to offer intellectuals the possibility of a link with the proletariat, in practice the Party was fearful that contact between intellectuals and workers would result in the latter being contaminated by the petit-bourgeois world view of the former. Even in the early 1950s when Sartre had become a Communist fellow-traveller, he was still treated with suspicion, if not contempt, and had almost no contact with any workers.[11]

During the war, the PCF had viewed Sartre with extreme suspicion and was responsible for spreading the rumour that the Germans had released him from his POW camp in order to spy on the Resistance.[12] However, in the winter of 1942–1943, the Communist writer Claude Morgan invited Sartre to join the CNE (*Comité national des écrivains*, National Writers' Committee), a Communist-inspired broad-based anti-Nazi organisation of writers and intellectuals, and to contribute to its clandestine publication *Les Lettres françaises* of which he was the *directeur*. Despite the reservations of a number of leading Communists, Sartre attended meetings of the CNE where his interventions were appreciated by Morgan and others.[13] He also contributed four articles to *Les Lettres françaises*.[14] After the Liberation, according to Simone de Beauvoir, Sartre aspired to continue working with the Party, but outside the Party, a position from which he would offer both support and criticism.[15] Or, as Sartre later noted, 'Issus des classes moyennes, nous tentâmes de faire le trait d'union entre la petite bourgeoisie intellectuelle et les intellectuels communistes.'[16] [Products of the middle classes, we tried to be the link between the petit-bourgeois intellectuals and the Communist intellectuals.]

There were two inter-related reasons why Sartre made no attempt to join the PCF. By the Liberation, Sartre had already established a reputation as a writer with the publication of *La Nausée* (*Nausea*, 1938) and *Le Mur* (*The Wall*, 1939), as a playwright with *Les Mouches* (*The*

Flies, 1943) and *Huis Clos* (*In Camera*, 1944) and as a philosopher with *L'Être et le néant* (*Being and Nothingness*, 1943) in addition to his other pre-war philosophical writings. Although by now he was, in his own words, 'un socialiste convaincu, mais anti-hiérarchique – et libertaire – c'est-à-dire pour la démocratie directe'[17] [a committed socialist but an anti-hierarchical and libertarian one – that is to say in favour of direct democracy]. This put him totally at odds with the spirit and practice of the PCF which, according to one historian of the Party, sought to '…faire appliquer dans toute sa rigueur la loi stalinienne fondamentale: Le Parti doit redevenir et demeurer, quoi qu'il arrive, articulé et structuré autour d'un appareil de professionnels qui en constitue le coeur, lui-même monolithiquement unifié derrière le secrétaire général, seul à détenir le pouvoir suprême.'[18] […to apply with all its rigour, the fundamental Stalinist law, namely that the Party must become once more and remain, whatever happens, held together and structured around an apparatus comprising professionals who constitute its core. This core is itself solidly united behind the General Secretary of the Party who alone holds supreme power.] In addition, Sartre refused to accept the Party's interpretation of Marxism which he believed denied human subjectivity. 'Il espérait que les communistes donneraient une existence aux valeurs de l'humanisme; il essaierait, grâce aux outils qu'il leur emprunterait, d'arracher l'humanisme aux bourgeois.'[19] [He hoped that the Communists would accord a place to the values of humanism; and he would try, with the tools they lent him, to tear humanism from the clutches of the bourgeoisie.] It is in this context that we need to place Sartre's remarks made in November 1972: 'Je savais bien que mes objectifs n'étaient pas ceux du P.C. mais je pensais que nous aurions pu faire un bout de chemin ensemble.'[20] [I knew very well that my objectives were not the same as those of the PCF but I thought that we could have travelled part of the way together.]

Needless to say, this was not the PCF's perception. Although the leadership of the PCF, like the early leadership of the Bolshevik Party in Russia, had initially been dominated by intellectuals, an anti-intellectual purge in the late 1920s meant that by 1929 70 per cent of the members of the PCF's Central Committee were of working-class origin. Ever since then, the Party had been determined to safeguard what it saw as its proletarian purity. This is not to say that intellectuals were to be rejected. Indeed at the PCF's Tenth Party Congress in June 1945, Roger Garaudy claimed that the Party's success in urban middle-class districts had been largely due to its growing influence among intellectuals i.e. students and members of the liberal professions, especially teachers.[21]

But the intellectuals had to be held in check by the working class. When viewed through the Party's Marxist prism, the intellectuals – even those within its own ranks – were likely, because of their petit-bourgeois class origins, to be opportunistic and unreliable. In no way could they be allowed to contribute to the formulation of Party policy: their role was simply to popularise it. In all, intellectuals – even Communist intellectuals – were a potential danger against whom the Party had to remain ever vigilant. They were expected to be active within their professional organisations or trade unions and contribute to Party publications – but only after their texts had been closely scrutinised by Party apparatchiks who, only too often, knew nothing whatsoever about the subject matter.[22] There were some Party intellectuals whose loyalty was such that they were appointed as watch-dogs over other intellectuals. One example is Jean Kanapa, who was appointed editor of *La Nouvelle Critique,* where he had the job of correcting the articles of intellectuals much older and more experienced than himself. Another was Laurent Casanova, a former law student at doctoral level who had proved his reliability in the Party's student organisation. He subsequently became a full-time Party member with special responsibility for Party intellectuals and published a number of texts on the Party and intellectuals.[23]

Given the Party's extreme suspicion of intellectuals, it is not surprising that it reacted with extreme hostility to Sartre's aspiration to correct and humanise where necessary the Party's 'scientific Marxism', and to establish himself as an independent critical supporter of the Party. As I shall show, in the Party's eyes Sartre epitomised all that was dangerous about intellectuals – he was a 'degenerate' petit-bourgeois whose philosophical ideas were rooted in the worst form of reaction. He explicitly rejected scientific materialism while embracing bourgeois idealism and individualism, and furthermore had been a friend of the 'traitor' Paul Nizan.

Within a couple of months of the Liberation of Paris in August 1944, the Communist publication *Action* carried an article in praise of Georges Politzer, the Communist philosopher executed by the Nazis, which included criticisms of existentialism, a philosophy which, the author noted, had suddenly appeared in France.[24] However for a short period it would seem that the Party was not quite sure how to deal with Sartre. For example in December 1944, Sartre was given space in *Action* to clarify his philosophical ideas.[25] A response a few months later to Sartre's article by Henri Lefebvre, one of the Party's leading philosophers,[26] again in *Action*, articulated what was becoming the Party line on existentialism but, as the editor Victor Leduc later noted,

'Le ton est rude, mais on en est encore au débat des idées.'[27] [The tone was robust but we were still in the realm of debating ideas.] This was soon to change, especially after the so-called 'existentialist offensive' in the autumn of 1945.[28] But, according to Sartre, even while he was under attack from some elements in the Party, other Communists were asking for Sartre's help to limit the influence of the poet and novelist Louis Aragon within *Les Lettres françaises*, assuring him that existentialism *was* compatible with Marxism and telling him how appalled they were by the attacks on him.[29]

In 1946, Sartre's *Materialism and Revolution* was published. Leduc later described it as 'une critique très vive du néo-marxisme stalinien' [a very lively critique of Stalinist neo-Marxism] and continued that Sartre was now considered to be ideological enemy number one. 'Ce qu'on ne lui pardonne pas c'est de s'adresser constamment aux communistes, de se situer sur leur terrain politique.'[30] [What the Party could not forgive was that he kept on addressing the Communists, kept on placing himself on their political patch.]

Within the Party's onslaught against Sartre there were occasional primarily *philosophical* critiques of Sartre, of which Henri Mougin's is the most substantial.[31] But most of the PCF's attacks on Sartre, even if couched in philosophical language, were essentially *political* attacks aimed at undermining Sartre's personal standing and the popularity of the ideas he was expounding. This primacy of the political was made explicit in 1946 by Leduc, who, writing of Sartre's existentialism commented, 'Nous ne nous occupons pas de savoir si, comme le pensent de bons esprits, cette doctrine n'est pas une variété nouvelle de l'idéalisme philosophique. Ce qui intéresse notre sujet ce sont les interférences possibles des positions de l'existentialisme avec le marxisme, c'est le retentissement *politique* des idées.'[32] [We are not bothered whether, as many people think, this doctrine is just a new variant of philosophical idealism. What concerns us is the possible interaction between existentialism and Marxism, the *political* reverberations of ideas.] Under an ever-increasingly hostile barrage of attacks there were, besides the article in *Action*, two other important texts in which Sartre defended his philosophical ideas.[33] I shall now identify the main themes of the PCF attacks on Sartre and his responses to them.

Sartre's Communist critics liked to claim that Sartre's existentialism was directly linked to Nazism. They pointed out that Martin Heidegger, the German existentialist, had been a member of the Nazi Party and at the end of 1944 Sartre was already having to reject this accusation. In his article in *Action*, Sartre wrote that while he regretted

that Heidegger had aligned himself with Nazism, he believed that this could be explained by fear, perhaps opportunism and certainly a wish to conform, but insisted that Heidegger had been a philosopher long before he became a Nazi.[34] Furthermore Sartre stressed that 'Si nous découvrons notre propre pensée à propos de celle d'un autre philosophe, si nous demandons à celui-ci des techniques et des méthodes susceptibles de nous faire accéder à de nouveaux problèmes, cela veut-il dire que nous épousons toutes ses théories? Marx a emprunté à Hegel sa dialectique. Direz-vous que *Le Capital* est un ouvrage prussien?'[35] [If we find our own thought through that of another philosopher, if we find this person has techniques and methods likely to help us address new questions, does that really mean that we agree with all their theories? Marx borrowed the dialectic from Hegel. Do you say that this means that *Capital* is a Prussian work?]

Clearly Sartre failed to convince his Communist critics. In a reply to Sartre's article, Henri Lefebvre sneered, 'Ne reprochons pas à M. Sartre d'avoir été le disciple du nazi Heidegger'[36] [Let us not reproach Monsieur Sartre for being a disciple of the Nazi Heidegger], while a few months later another Party intellectual, the poet Georges Mounin, accused Sartre of dismissing Heidegger's commitment to the Nazi cause as 'un manque de caractère'.[37] [a personality defect]. Other Communists were more specific. During the Occupation, Dominique Desanti had been a member of Socialism and Freedom, the resistance group founded by Sartre and fellow philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty. In 1943 she went on to join the PCF for whom she worked as a journalist. In August 1948, shortly before leaving France to cover the World Congress of Intellectuals in Wroclaw,[38] Desanti published an article, again in *Action*, in which she referred to Heidegger as the father of existentialism, and likened *Les Temps Modernes* to the *Nouvelle Revue française* during the Occupation when it was edited by the arch-collaborationist writer Drieu la Rochelle.[39]

The Party's attempt to establish a link between Sartre's existentialism and Nazism was not simply a way of discrediting existentialism; it was integral to the PCF's strategy of promoting itself as the sole and authentic embodiment of the national interest. Even if Marxist theory had been formulated by a German and put into practice (according to the PCF) in the USSR, Marxism was scientific and had a *universal* application. The Party also devoted much time and effort to promoting the Russian Revolution as the continuation of the French Revolution of 1789. The roots of Sartre's existentialism, on the other hand, were not just 'foreign', they were German (Husserl) and fascist (Heidegger).

The PCF also attacked Sartre's existentialism as the latest manifestation of philosophical idealism, the very antithesis of Marxist dialectical and historical materialism, and for its individualism. For example, in his reply to Sartre's article in *Action*, Lefebvre accuses Sartre of posing the question of what it means to be human as 'une question individuelle, abstraite et théorique' [an individual, abstract and theoretical issue], adding that existentialism is a powerful advocate 'd'une recherche *individuelle*, d'une aventure et d'une réalisation du possible *individuel*.'[40] [of an *individual* pursuit, the quest for, and the realisation of, *individual* possibilities.]

In *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme* (*Existentialism Is a Humanism*) Sartre insisted, 'Notre point de départ est en effet la subjectivité de l'individu, et ceci pour des raisons strictement philosophiques' [Our starting point is indeed the subjectivity of the individual and this is for strictly philosophical reasons]. But, he continued, with a dig at the Communists' interpretation of Marxism, 'Non parce que nous sommes bourgeois, mais parce que nous voulons une doctrine basée sur la vérité et non sur un ensemble de belles théories, pleines d'espoir mais sans fondements réels.'[41] [This is not because we are bourgeois, but because we want a doctrine based on truth and not a collection of fancy theories, full of hope but without any real foundation.]

Another dimension of the 'abstract individualism' of existentialism attacked by the PCF was the cornerstone of Sartre's thought, namely his notion of freedom. In his tribute to Polizer, Caillois described existentialism as the latest form of obscurantism, adding that 'Non, la liberté n'est pas un attribut abstrait de l'homme abstrait'[42] [No, freedom is not an abstract attribute of the abstract man]. For the critic and writer Pol Gaillard, 'tout l'existentialisme découlait, se déduisait d'une certaine conception métaphysique-mystique de la Liberté avec un très grand L'[43] [the whole of existentialism flowed from, and was based on, a particular abstract and metaphysical-mystical conception of Liberty with a very big L]. Roger Garaudy, a leading Party polemicist, attacked Sartre's view of freedom as meaningless since it was divorced from any social, economic, political or historical context.

> 'DERACINEE DE L'HISTOIRE LA LIBERTE N'EST QU'UN ERSATZ SANS EFFICACITE. Nous ne sommes pas des sauvages tout nus et sans passé arrivant dans une forêt vièrge pour y "choisir" d'être libres. L'histoire existe et nous sommes au bout de sa rigide trajectoire. Elle est notre tremplin pour aller vers une liberté plus haute. Les "chemins de la liberté", nous ne sommes ni les seuls, ni les premiers à les parcourir.'[44]

> [Uprooted from History, freedom is nothing but an ineffective ersatz version of the real thing. We are not naked savages without a past who have arrived in a virgin forest in order to 'choose' to be free. History exists, and we are the end of its fixed trajectory. It is our spring-board from which we will launch ourselves towards a greater freedom. We are neither the only ones nor the first to travel the 'roads of freedom.]

From the Communists' perspective, in a class society based on exploitation, the proletariat cannot be free while it is engaged in a struggle for its own freedom and the freedom of all humanity. To insist that every individual was already 'free' therefore threatened to undermine the struggle for emancipation. Jean Kanapa was a former student of Sartre's, who joined the PCF where he became one of its most slavish, zealous and dogmatic voices.[45] In his view, 'La liberté pour Sartre n'est que la liberté de Sartre. L'abstraction n'est, une fois de plus, que la transposition métaphysique d'un privilège exclusif de la bourgeoisie et *en même temps* un appareil destiné à désarmer la classe montante dans sa lutte: "Pourquoi revendiquez-vous la liberté? dit l'existentialiste au prolétaire. Vous l'avez!"'[46] [Sartre's freedom is only freedom for Sartre. Abstraction is simply, yet again, the metaphysical transposition of a privilege enjoyed only by the bourgeoisie and, *at the same time*, a means of disarming the rising class in its struggle. 'Why are you demanding freedom?' asks the existentialist of the worker, 'You've already got it!']

Sartre forcefully rejected this abstract and individualistic notion of freedom which the Communists tried to attribute to him. He insisted that freedom was the foundation of all other values, adding, 'mais cette liberté se veut dans le concret. Nous voulons la liberté et à travers chaque circonstance particulière. Et en voulant la liberté, nous découvrons qu'elle dépend entièrement de la liberté des autres, et que la liberté des autres dépend de la nôtre.'[47] [but this freedom is concrete. We will freedom for freedom's sake, and in every particular circumstance. And in willing freedom, we discover that it is entirely dependent on the freedom of others, and that the freedom of others depends on our own freedom.]

Lefebvre was so keen to demolish existentialism that he devoted a whole book to it, in which he too attacked Sartre's conception of freedom, claiming it was flawed because Sartre offered no indication of how we were to use our freedom, no criteria for making our choices.

> 'L'existentialisme se donne pour théorie de la liberté, donc du choix. Le drame de l'existentialisme serait donc celui du choix. La liberté "existerait" comme nécessité du choix, nécessité incessante et pérpetuelle. Mais que

représenterait un homme qui choisirait tous les matins entre le fascisme et l'antifascisme? Ce cas serait peut-être très pittoresque et intéressant, mais en quoi cet homme serait-il supérieur à celui qui aurait choisi une fois pour toutes la lutte contre le fascisme, ou qui n'aurait même pas à choisir? – Et n'est-ce pas là un exemple typique de faux problème, de problème spéculatif et métaphysique?'[48]

[Existentialism says that it is a theory of freedom, thus of choice. Existentialism's big idea is therefore choice. Freedom is said to "exist" as a necessary requirement of choice, a constant and perpetual necessity. But what is the significance of someone who every morning chooses between fascism and anti-fascism? It might be very picturesque and interesting but in what way would this person be better than somebody who had chosen, once and for all, to engage in the struggle against fascism, or who didn't even have to choose? Is that not a typical example of a false problem, of a speculative and metaphysical problem?]

But Lefebvre makes no reference to the moral dimension of choice advanced by Sartre in *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme*.[49]

'Choisir d'être ceci ou cela, c'est affirmer en même temps la valeur de ce que nous choisissons … ce que nous choisissons, c'est toujours le bien, et rien ne peut être bon pour nous sans l'être pour tous … Ainsi je suis responsable pour moi-même et pour tous, et je crée une certaine image de l'homme que je choisis; en me choisissant, je choisis l'homme.'[50]

[To choose to be this or that is to affirm at the same time the value of the choice we are making … what we are choosing is always what is good and nothing can be good for us if it is not good for all of us … Thus, I am responsible for myself and for all, and I am creating a certain image of humankind as I would choose it to be. When I choose, I am choosing for humankind as a whole.]

Sartre's Communist critics claimed that his notion of the individual and individual freedom inevitably led him to defend 'quietism', i.e. letting others do what I cannot do. Garaudy, for example, claimed that, 'Après avoir tourné le dos à la science, Sartre ne peut plus revenir vers l'action. Il ne peut ni fournir, ni même accepter une méthode efficace de transformation de la réalité.'[51] [Having turned his back on science, Sartre can no longer return to action. He can neither provide nor even accept an effective method for transforming reality.] Sartre rejected the accusation that his philosophy led to quietism, arguing that the core of his philosophy, namely that existence preceded essence, meant the exact opposite, writing, '[L]'homme n'est rien d'autre que son projet, il n'existe que dans la mesure où il se réalise, il n'est donc rien d'autre que l'ensemble de ses actes.'[52] [Individuals are nothing but their projects. They only exist in so far as they realise themselves; they are nothing but the sum total of their actions.] In his article in *Action*, Sartre goes

further and insists that his view of the individual 'ne s'éloigne pas beaucoup de la conception de l'homme qu'on trouverait chez Marx. Marx n'accepterait-il pas, en effet, *cette devise de l'homme qui est la nôtre: faire et en faisant se faire et n'être rien que ce qu'il s'est fait.*'[53] [is not very far from the conception of the individual found in Marx. Would Marx not accept, in effect, this formulation of the individual which is my own, namely: do and in doing make oneself, and be nothing but what one has made of oneself.]

Sartre also made clear that, contrary to the assertions of his Communist critics, he did not rule out collective action. In *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme*, for example, he writes, '...je compterai toujours sur des camarades de lutte dans la mesure où ces camarades sont engagés avec moi dans une lutte concrèt et et commune...'[54] [...I will always count on my comrades-in-arms, in so far as they are committed with me in a concrete and common struggle...] but, Sartre adds, given that everybody is free, he cannot rely on other people on the basis of human goodness or the good of society. So, irrespective of any contribution he might make during his lifetime to the advancement of progressive politics, this will in no sense be binding on the freedom of those who come after him since they will be free to make their own choices. '[D]emain après ma mort, des hommes peuvent décider d'établir le fascisme, et les autres peuvent être assez lâches et désemparés pour les laisser faire; a ce moment-là, le fascisme sera la vérité humaine et tant pis pour nous; en réalité, les choses seront telles que l'homme aura décidé qu'elles soient.'[55] [Tomorrow after my death, people may decide to establish fascism and others may be cowardly and troubled enough to let them. At that point fascism will be human truth and too bad for us. In reality, things will always be as people have decided they shall be.]

Even if Sartre told his readers that he subscribed completely to the view that the class struggle was a fact,[56] his philosophical commitment to human freedom and choice made it impossible for him to subscribe to the Communists' 'historical truths' and future 'inevitabilities' like the *inevitable* overthrow of capitalism, the *inevitable* victory of the proletariat and the emancipation of humanity. Indeed it could be argued that Sartre was closer to classical Marxism than was the PCF in that Marx and Engels' *The Communist Manifesto* and Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire* show no belief in historical inevitability. Although Sartre, like many progressive intellectuals in post-war France, found much to admire in the Russian Revolution and in what appeared to be the construction of socialism in the USSR, the final outcome of the process could not be determined ('Je ne sais ce que deviendra la

révolution russe'[57] [I don't know what will happen to the Russian Revolution]). This attitude confirmed for the Communists, if indeed confirmation was required, that Sartre was a typical individualistic intellectual wedded to his own abstract ahistorical notion of the individual and freedom and who refused absolutely to accept the truths of scientific Marxism. As has been noted, the Communists were further enraged by what they saw as Sartre's pretentious (and dangerous) aspiration to 'complete' Marxism by introducing a subjective dimension.

In the Manichean world inhabited by the Communists, the guiding philosophy of scientific, historical and dialectical materialism was the philosophy of the universal class; since Sartre's philosophy was deemed to be unscientific, ahistorical and idealistic, it was by definition a philosophy which served the interests of the class enemy, the bourgeoisie. In Garaudy's view, 'L'existentialisme ne complète pas le marxisme, il le contredit.' [Existentialism does not complete Marxism, it contradicts it.][58] Or, as Henri Mougin wrote in 1946, 'Tout ce qui est nouveau dans la querelle de l'existentialisme … c'est que la lutte y est plus ouverte contre le matérialisme ennemi.'[59] [The only new thing in the argument around existentialism … is that with existentialism the struggle against its enemy, materialism, is more overt.]

Communist orthodoxy held that rationalism had been the ideology of the bourgeoisie when it was a progressive force locked in class conflict with the aristocratic ruling class under feudalism. The bourgeoisie emerged victorious, replacing the aristocracy as the new dominant class. Now defender of the new (capitalist) status quo, it jettisoned rationalism and embraced positivism. Faced with the rise of the proletariat, the bourgeoisie became a reactionary class which was doomed to disappear and in its decline turned to idealism, of which existentialism was the latest expression. Existentialism reflected the decadent bourgeoisie in post-war France which, because of the ever-increasing internal contradictions of capitalism, was no longer capable of managing the forces of production. Sensing that its own stability was compromised, and aware that its days were numbered, the bourgeoisie, claimed the Communists, was fleeing reality and finding refuge in a philosophy which reflected its irreversible and immanent decline.[60]

This worldview allows us to better contextualise the attacks of the Party against what it considered to be the sordid and morbid aspects of Sartre's writings; if the decadent bourgeoisie was on its way to the dustbin of history so too was bourgeois culture of which Sartre was allegedly one of the leading figures. As Garaudy wrote, 'Chaque

classe a la littérature qu'elle mérite. La grande bourgeoisie agonisante se délecte avec les obsessions érotiques de Miller ou les fornications intellectuelles de Jean-Paul Sartre.'[61] [Every class has the literature it serves. The decaying big bourgeoisie delights in the erotic obsessions of [Henry] Miller or the intellectual fornications of Jean-Paul Sartre.]

In 1945 Lefebvre, who liked to refer to existentialism as 'excrementalism', admitted that he had not read Sartre's *L'Âge de raison* (*The Age of Reason*) or Beauvoir's *Le Sang des autres* (*The Blood of Others*), but this did not stop him declaring, '...il est évident que les oeuvres de Sartre – *L'Etre et le Néant* particulièrement – donnent une importance spéciale à ce qui incline du côté de la douleur, et non du côté de la joie. Cette tendance me semble révélatrice de quelque chose de morbide, et me paraît témoigner d'un phénomène de pourriture qui est tout à fait dans la ligne de décomposition de la culture bourgeoise.'[62] [...it is obvious that the works of Sartre, and especially *Being and Nothingness*, attach special importance to that which leans towards sorrow and not towards joy. This tendency seems to me to reveal a certain morbidity and to be evidence of a phenomenon of rottenness which is absolutely in line with the decomposition of bourgeois culture.] Garaudy described Sartre's existentialism as 'une maladie' [a sickness], adding that Sartre's thesis in *Being and Nothingness* never goes beyond the domain of metaphysical pathology. 'La philosophie de l'homme sain commence au delà'[63] [The philosophy of a healthy person begins beyond that point].

Elsewhere Garaudy criticised Sartre 'de ne peindre dans ses romans que des dégénérés, des épavés.' [for depicting only degenerates and human wrecks in his novels.] He refers to Sartre taking as his 'triste [sic] héros' [sad heroes] '... que des hommes en train de se dégrader, des âmes qui se dégragrègent' [only men on the road to degradation, souls in disintegration]. They were modelled, according to Garaudy, on the sort of people Sartre mixed with at the Café de Flore and in the nightclubs of Montparnasse or Montmartre, where 'pullulent peut-être ces âmes mortes, ces vies sans but, ces intoxiqués qui ne peuvent que ruminer leurs impuissances et leurs deceptions.'[64] [these dead souls, these aimless existences, these debauchers who can only brood over their impotence and their frustrations might congregate.]

In his reply to the accusations that '...l'existentialiste se complaît dans l'ordure et montre plus volontiers la méchanceté des hommes et leur bassesse que leurs beaux sentiments'[65] [...existentialism revels in filth and is keener to show the wicked side of people and their despicable behaviour than their noble feelings], Sartre replied, 'Héroïsme, grandeur, générosité, abnégation, j'en demeure d'accord,

il n'y a rien de mieux et, finalement, c'est le sens même de l'action humaine.' [Heroism, grandeur, generosity, selflessness. I agree there is nothing better, and ultimately this is the very purpose of human action.] However, he insisted, eyeing perhaps those who loved the proletarian heroes of orthodox Communist literature and drama, '... je me méfie des gens qui réclament que la littérature les exalte en faisant étalage de grands sentiments, qui souhaitent que le théâtre leur *donne le spectacle* de l'héroisme et de la pureté.'[66] [...I am suspicious of people who want literature to inspire and uplift them by parading noble feelings, and who want the theatre *to give them a show* of heroism and purity.]

In an article published in May 1947, Cécile Angrand, a secondary school teacher close to the PCF, took up many of the themes already identified in this article. She stressed what she considered to be the scandalous aspects of Sartre's novels, writing 'Sartre se plaît à décrire les nuits de Montmartre, les boîtes de Montparnasse, les casinos de la Côte d'Azur, les moeurs des invertis, les épisodes érotiques. ... Les romans existentialistes qui respirent le mépris de la famille, l'horreur du mariage, les moeurs "libres", peuvent exercer sur les jeunes gens une influence dissolvante.'[67] [Sartre takes great pleasure in describing nights in Montmartre, the nightclubs of Montparnasse, the casinos on the Côte d'Azur, the lifestyle of homosexuals, erotic episodes ... The existentialist novel, which is full of contempt for the family, the ghastliness of marriage, and "free" morals, can have a corrupting influence on young people.] Besides being an attack on existentialism, this article is a good indicator of the Party's moral and sexual puritanism which consisted in opposing any deviation from conventional 'conservative family' morality. For the Party, homosexuality was a bourgeois sexual deviation. The PCF was vehemently opposed to birth control (illegal until 1967) and to feminism since it considered that both undermined the class struggle. Angrand quoted from Heidegger and Kierkergaard ('ces deux maîtres obscurantistes' [those two obscurantist masters]), whom she considered were the true fathers of the existentialists, and referred to 'les prédications d'Heidegger pour une soumission aveugle à la force nazie, pour une foi ardente dans le pouvoir magique du führer de la grande Allemagne.'[68] [Heidegger's calls for people to submit themselves blindly to Nazi power and to have total faith in the magical power of the Führer of Greater Germany.] She also contributed to the now familiar Communist refrain that existentialism was but the latest guise of philosophical idealism.

She did however bring a new element to the anti-existentialist offensive. Without naming Sartre, she painted a picture of the typical

existentialist which fitted Sartre in every particular. 'Les existentialistes sont, pour la plupart, des agrégés de philosophie ou de littérature; beaucoup sont anciens élèves de l'Ecole Normale Supérieure, presque tous ont été professeurs de l'enseignement secondaire.'[69] [For the most part, the existentialists are people who have passed the *agrégation* exam in philosophy or literature; many are former students of the *École Normale Supérieure*, almost all have been secondary school teachers.] However, according to Angrand, although most of them came from middle-class families, they had had to face harsh disappointment after graduation when they were forced to confront the contradiction between their appreciation of their own individual worth and their feelings of social inferiority arising from the realisation that a job in education did not allow teachers to share in the privileges of the property-owning classes. Teachers despite themselves, the existentialists were keen to abandon a profession that did not pay well. They looked down on their colleagues who were willing to accept their situation as subordinates, and 'ont découvert l'existentialisme pour se tailler une place au soleil du régime capitaliste. L'existentialisme fut leur entreprise commerciale.'[70] [discovered existentialism as a way of carving out their place in the sun in the capitalist regime. Existentialism was their commercial enterprise.]

As I have shown, a common theme of the Communists' onslaught on Sartre was the alleged link between existentialism on the one hand, and the bourgeoisie, its culture and its philosophy on the other. However, Roger Vailland, writing as a Communist sympathiser before joining the Party in 1950, insisted on the *petit*-bourgeois dimension of existentialism. In his contribution to a volume on existentialism he argued that the petit-bourgeois was a member of a class that had abandoned all hope of rising to power, since the consolidation of capital and companies meant that power in a capitalist society was concentrated in the hands of a privileged minority. As a result the petite-bourgeoisie had become 'une classe *délaissée* et *anxieuse* de son délaissement.' [a *forsaken* class and one that was *anxious* about being forsaken.] 'Ce sont les termes mêmes qu'utilisent les existentialistes pour définir la condition humaine. Ils ne font que définir leur condition de petits-bourgeois.'[71] [The terms *forsaken* and *anxious* are the very terms used by the existentialists to define the human condition. All they are doing is defining their own petit-bourgeois condition.]

Having identified the main themes of the attacks on existentialism and Sartre by his Communist critics, I shall now examine briefly the reasons for this extended and violent offensive. It was Sartre himself

who gave a brief but telling explanation some twenty-five years later when he told John Gerassi in December 1971, 'They [the Communists] didn't accept that we had quite a following in 1945, which made them feel we were competitors for that limelight. So they tried to ostracize us.'[72] The Communists were especially threatened by Sartre's popularity and influence among the younger generation and feared that Sartre's 'philosophy of freedom' would draw its recent recruits away from the Party and deter others from joining. As Sartre later noted, 'Un des dirigeants me dit alors que je freinais le mouvement qui entraînait les jeunes intellectuels vers le Parti.'[73] [One of the leading members [of the PCF] told me at that time that I was a brake on the movement which was drawing young intellectuals towards the Party.] There is an echo of this concern in Angrand's article where she admits that the bulk of the readers of existentialist novels in France were young secondary school students who read Sartre secretly without their parents' knowledge. Angrand expanded on the corrupting influence of existentialism among young people in the top forms in French *lycées*; she identified an additional problem, namely that those who didn't read the books carefully enough and those she called 'the young and innocent' were making the serious mistake of taking existentialism to be a progressive and left-wing movement.[74]

In 1946, Raymond Aron described the relations between Sartre and the PCF as 'Etrange dialogue, dans lequel l'un des interlocuteurs affirme son amitié et ne reçoit que des rebuffades en retour.'[75] [A strange dialogue in which one of the participants affirms his friendship and receives nothing but rebuffs in return.] Sartre himself echoed this observation.

> 'Je n'ai jamais attaqué les communistes avant un article intitulé *Matérialisme et Révolution,* paru en 1947[76], et qui traitait uniquement, et courtoisement, de problèmes philosophiques et idéologiques, et non pas la politique du parti. Il y avait déjà deux ans et demi à ce moment-là, que j'étais traité de traître, qu'on déclarait que j'étais payé par l'Ambassade américaine ou que je soutenais une bourgeoisie mourante.'[77]
>
> [I never attacked the Communists before an article entitled *Materialism and Revolution* which appeared in 1947 and which, in a courteous manner, addressed only philosophical and ideological problems, and not the Party's policies. By then I had been treated as a traitor for two and a half years and it was said that I was in the pay of the American embassy and that I supported the bourgeoisie which was on its last legs.]

Sartre did indeed adopt a relatively courteous tone in 'Materialism and Revolution' in which his critique of the 'scientific' bases of

dialectical materialism as promoted by the PCF was followed by an exposition of his own philosophy of freedom. But we find a much more robust tone in *What is Literature?* (*Qu'est-ce que la littérature?*)[78] In this text, Sartre had no hesitation in asserting that 'le sort de la littérature est lié à celui de la classe ouvrière'[79] [the fate of literature is linked to that of the working class], but he expressed his frustration at his inability to gain access to the bulk of the French proletariat which was 'corsetée par un parti unique, encerclée par une propagande qui l'isole, forme une société fermée, sans portes ni fenêtres.'[80] [constricted by a single party, encircled by propaganda which isolates it forms a closed society without doors or windows. The only way in, a narrow one at that, is through the Communist Party.] He criticises the Party for its conservatism and opportunism and also for its desire to go easy on the bourgeoisie. Sartre famously stated that the politics of Stalinist communism were incompatible with the honest practice of being a writer and continued by denouncing the ways in which the Communists conducted themselves.

> '[O]n persuade par répétition, par intimidation, par menaces voilées, par la force méprisante de l'affirmation, par allusions énigmatiques à des démonstrations qu'on ne fait point en se montrant d'une conviction si entière et si superbe qu'elle se place d'emblée au-dessus de tous les débats … On ne répond jamais à l'adversaire : on le discrédite, il est de la police, de l'Intelligence Service, c'est un fasciste.'[81]
>
> [[T]hey persuade by repetition, by intimidation, by veiled threats, by forceful and contemptuous affirmation, by enigmatic allusions to proof that never materialises and by putting themselves forward with such complete and superb conviction that they place themselves above any debate … They never reply to their opponents, they just discredit them. Their opponents belong to the police, or the Intelligence Service or they are fascists.]

The vehemence of Sartre's prose was not just a reaction to the Party's antagonism towards him but also linked to the PCF's campaign of vilification against Paul Nizan. Nizan had been Sartre's friend through secondary school and into their time as students at the *École normale supérieure*. In 1927, Nizan had joined the Communist Party and became foreign affairs editor on the newspaper *Ce Soir,* edited by Louis Aragon. Nizan resigned from the Party in 1939 over the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact and was killed in combat near St Omer in May 1940. After his death the PCF spread the rumour that Nizan had been an informer within the Party in the pay of the French police. The attacks on Nizan were reiterated in Lefebvre's 1946 book on existentialism and, according to Sartre, Aragon had told him that

Nizan had provided the Ministry of the Interior with information about the activities of the Communist Party.[82] In April 1947, a declaration signed by 25 intellectuals, including Sartre, demanded that the PCF provide evidence to support their allegations of Nizan's 'treachery'.[83] The Party failed to produce any evidence and the public calumnies stopped. As Sartre later commented, '[S]ommés publiquement de produire leurs preuves, ils se débandèrent en nous reprochant de ne jamais leur faire confiance et de n'être vraiment pas gentils.'[84] [Called upon to produce their proof, they caved in and reproached us for never trusting them and for really not being very nice.] This episode obviously did nothing to improve relations between Sartre and the PCF.

Relations between Sartre and the Party deteriorated further following Sartre's decision in 1948 to join the newly formed RDR (*Rassemblement démocratique révolutionnaire*).[85] This movement, founded by former Trotskyist David Rousset, Jean Rous and Gérard Rosenthal, saw itself as an alternative both to the rottenness of capitalist democracy and to Stalinist Communism. The RDR aspired to attract Communists from the PCF and Socialists from the SFIO, without their needing to renounce their party membership; it also welcomed those of no party. It was naive in the extreme to think that the PCF would tolerate its members affiliating to the RDR while remaining members of the Party. From the very start the PCF considered the RDR to be a rival and yet another threat and, in Sartre's words, made the RDR the target of 'leurs flèches les plus vénimeuses'[86] [their most poisonous arrows]. Pierre Hervé, journalist on *L'Humanité* after the Liberation and subsequently editor of *Action* between 1949 and 1952, described an RDR meeting held at the end of December 1948 as 'un meeting antisoviétique organisé … à Paris par une clique d'intellectuels dont les généralités clinquantes et les slogans de chapelle littéraire dissimulent mal une acceptation délibéré du régime capitaliste.'[87] [an anti-Soviet meeting organised … in Paris by a clique of intellectuals whose flashy superficial generalities and slogans of a literary clique barely concealed a deliberate acceptance of the capitalist regime.] This article also took the opportunity once again to link Sartre and his ideas with those of the far Right, this time by linking them with the theses of Marcel Déat, a former leading socialist, who had subsequently become an enthusiastic pro-Nazi collaborator during the Occupation.

Elsewhere Sartre and Rousset, the two most celebrated members of the RDR leadership, were presented as pawns of the government and Wall Street.[88] This particular accusation was linked, in part at

least, to differences between Sartre and the PCF over the Marshall Plan. In September 1947, a year before the founding of the Cominform, the man who would become its main organiser, Andrei Zhdanov, announced a new aggressive anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist strategy posited on the division of the world into two blocs. One bloc, representing peace, progress and democracy, was headed by the USSR, while the other, headed by the USA, represented imperialism, war, reaction and exploitation. As part of the new strategy, the PCF, along with other Communist parties, mounted an all-out campaign against the Marshall Plan, the USA 'rescue package' for Europe. Sartre's position and that of the RDR was much more equivocal. The RDR dismissed the PCF's outright rejection of the Plan as 'une attitude stérile d'hostilité négative'[89] [a sterile attitude of negative hostility]. Sartre, flying in the face of one aim of the Marshall Plan – to combat socialist and Communist influence within Europe – proposed that '...l'apport américain doit être contrôlé et distribué par des organismes européens et socialistes et qu'il doit être utilisé pour la construction de l'Europe socialiste...'[90] [...American aid should be controlled and distributed by European and socialist organisations and that it should be used to build a socialist Europe...]

Sartre and the RDR were also attacked by the PCF for allegedly remaining silent over the big 1948 miners' strike in France, an accusation which Sartre and the RDR leadership vehemently rejected at some length.[91] Finally mention should be made of the hysterical reaction in the Communist press to Sartre's play, *Les Mains sales* (*Dirty Hands*) which opened on 2 April 1948.[92] In spite of Sartre's vigorous protestations that it was in no way a political play, but rather a play about politics, Sartre was accused of 'anticommunisme militant'[93] [militant anti-Communism]. A few months later, the Soviet author Ilya Ehrenbourg described *Dirty Hands* as an anti-Communist and anti-Soviet pamphlet which was the result of long reflection on Sartre's part, adding, 'Le fait que Sartre ait écrit "Les Mains sales" au moment de la chasse aux communistes, au moment de la campagne antisoviétique acharnée qui n'est rien d'autre que la préparation de la guerre, ce fait signifie qu'il lie son sort au sort de M. Jules Moch, au sort de M. Dulles, de M. Churchill et des autres inspirateurs de la "croisade".'[94] [The fact that Sartre had written *Dirty Hands* at a time when Communists were being hunted down, at a time when a vicious anti-Soviet campaign which is nothing put preparation for war was unleashed, shows that Sartre has thrown his lot in with Messers Jules Moch, Dulles, Churchill and others behind this 'crusade'.]

At the Liberation, Sartre had hoped to collaborate with the PCF, believing that his existentialism could contribute to injecting a much needed human and subjective element into the Party's 'scientific' Marxism. The Party, for reasons which have been outlined above, considered Sartre's offer to improve Marxism to be not only naïve, arrogant and presumptuous but also a threat, especially to its ability to recruit young people into the Party and to hold on to those who had already been recruited. Existentialism as the antithesis of Marxism is a leitmotif running through this period, a view boosted by the staging of *Les Mains sales*. Not only did Sartre's wish to make a vital philosophical contribution to Marxism remain unfulfilled during this period, Sartre also realised that the only way for him as a writer to reach the working class was through the PCF. However, the Party had absolutely no intention of running the risk of 'its' workers being contaminated by the writings of somebody whom it saw as a counter-revolutionary and cultural representative of the decadent and moribund bourgeoisie. By the end of the 1940s the PCF was lumping Sartre together with three of the Party's *bêtes noires*, Jules Moch, the French Minister of the Interior, John Foster Dulles, a leading American hawk, and Winston Churchill, cold warrior par excellence. It was not until 1951 that there was a rapprochement between Sartre and the PCF. This was when Sartre campaigned for the release of Henri Martin, a Communist sailor who had been jailed for campaigning against the war in Indochina, and between 1952 and 1956 Sartre became a Communist fellow-traveller.

Notes

*All translations from French are mine unless otherwise indicated.

1. See for example, Ingrid Galster, 'Images actuelles de Sartre' in *Romantische Zeitschrift für Literaturgeschichte*, Nos 1–2 (1987): 215–244. For a rigorous and powerful critique of the portrayal of Sartre as a Stalinist, see Ian H. Birchall, *Sartre against Stalinism* (New York & Oxford: Berghahn, 2004).
2. The most comprehensive analysis is to be found in Mark Poster, *Existential Marxism in Postwar France: From Sartre to Althusser* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), esp. 109–144, which focuses mainly on the philosophical aspects of the relations between Sartre's existentialism and the Party's Marxism.
3. Serge Berstein and Pierre Milza, *Histoire de la France au XXe siècle, Vol III, 1945–1958* (Brussels: Éditions Complexe, 1991), 24.
4. In the context of the Second World War, the word '*fusillé*' suggests 'shot in front of a firing squad'. The figure of 75,000 thus appears at first sight to be very questionable given that the official figure for people shot in France by the

Germans was 29,620. However, if we take the formula also used by Maurice Thorez, the PCF leader, namely '75,000 Communists who died for France and freedom', this would include not just those who were executed, but those who died in combat, who died in deportation and under torture. Thus, the number of 75,000, while still an exaggeration, is less unrealistic.

5. In September 1944, in response to the question in an IFOP opinion poll 'Which country contributed most to the defeat of Germany?', 61 per cent of French people quizzed replied 'the USSR', compared with only 29 per cent who gave 'the USA' as their answer. Pascal Ory and Jean.-François Sirinelli, *Les Intellectuels en France de l'Affaire Dreyfus à nos jours* (Paris: Éditions Perrin, 2004), 234.
6. Edgar Morin, *Autocritique* (Paris: Éditions du seuil, [Collectuion 'Politique'],1975), 47.
7. Jacques Fauvet, *Histoire du Parti communiste français* (Paris: Fayard, 1977), 341–342. My emphasis.
8. For more on the PCF and intellectuals during this period see David Caute, *Communism and the French Intellectuals* (London: André Deutsch, 1964), 147–197, and David Drake, *Intellectuals and Politics in Post-War France* (Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave/Macmillan), 9–63. See also Jeannine Verdès-Leroux, *Au Service du parti: Le parti communiste et les intellectuels et la culture (1944–1956)* (Paris: Fayard/Minuit, 1983).
9. Verdès-Leroux, *Au Service*, 77. Emphasis in the original.
10. Annie Besse, 'Sur l'humanisme socialiste', *La Nouvelle Critique* 45 (April –May 1953): 43, quoted in Verdès-Leroux, *Au Service*, 78.
11. In conversation in November 1972, Sartre recalled this period. '...nous n'avions aucun rapport avec les ouvriers communistes. Or, si tu te mets en rapport avec le plus grand parti ouvrier de France, comme on disait à cette époque, c'est tout de même que tu veux entrer en contact avec des ouvriers. Tu voyais des intellectuels communistes – ou ce que j'appellerais des bourgeois communistes – ou des responsables du Parti, des ouvriers rarement ou alors triés sur le volet comme au Congrès de Vienne. Ces ouvriers-là, on leur avait donné de la méfiance envers nous. ... La conséquence de cette méfiance, c'est qu'on nous traitait en potiches. On nous asseyait sur des chaises, derrière une table, sur une estrade. Nous y allions d'un petit discours, nous nous rasseyions, et c'était tout. Ou alors , on signait un manifeste.' [...we had no relations whatsoever with Communist workers. Now, if you make a link with the greatest workers' party in France, as they used to say in those days, it's because you want to make contact with the workers. You would rarely see the Communist intellectuals – or bourgeois Communists as I would call them – Party leaders or any workers; and any workers you did meet had been handpicked as happened at the Congress of Vienna. And even those workers whom you did meet had been taught to be suspicious. ... The result of this suspicion was that we were just figureheads. They sat us on chairs behind a table, on a stage. We gave our little speech, sat down again and that was it. Or we signed a manifesto.] (see Philippe Gavi, Jean-Paul Sartre, Pierre Victor, *On a raison de se révolter* [Paris: Gallimard, 1974], 32-33.)
12. Jean-Paul Sartre, David Rousset and Gérard Rosenthal, *Entretiens sur la politique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1949), 71.
13. John Gerassi, *Jean-Paul Sartre, Hated Conscience of His Century*, Volume 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 180.

14. Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Drieu la Rochelle ou la haine du soi', *Les Lettres françaises*, No. 6 (April 1943); 'La Littérature, cette liberté', *Les Lettres françaises*, No. 15 (April 1944): 8; 'Un film pour l'après-guerre', *Les Lettres françaises*, No. 15 (April 1944): 3–4; 'L'Espoir fait l'homme', *Les Lettres françaises*, No. 18 (July 1944): 2. There was another article, 'Alphonse de Châteaubriant ou la peur d'être libre', probably penned in the spring of 1943, which, according to Michel Contat, was doubtless destined for *Les Lettres françaises*. The text and commentary by Contat was distributed at the colloquium on Sartre (Cerisy-la-Salle, 22 June 2005) by Jacques Lecarme as part of his paper on 'Sartre et *Les Lettres françaises*'.
15. Simone de Beauvoir, *La Force des choses* (Paris: Gallimard, 1963), 18.
16. Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Merleau-Ponty', in Jean-Paul Sartre, *Situations IV* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), 219.
17. Gavi et al, *On a raison de se révolter*, 26.
18. Philippe Robrieux, *Histoire intérieure du parti communiste, Tome 2, 1945–1972* (Paris: Fayard, 1981), 22.
19. Beauvoir, *Force des choses*, 18.
20. Gavi et al., *On a raison de se révolter*, 26.
21. See Caute, *Communism and the French Intellectuals*, 28.
22. See, for example, Dominique Desanti, *Les Staliniens; Une Expérience politique 1944/1956* (Paris: Fayard, 1975), 510–511.
23. See, for example, Laurent Casanova, *Responsabilités de l'intellectuel communiste* (Paris: Éditions de la Nouvelle Critique, 1949); Laurent Casanova, *Le Parti communiste, les intellectuels et la nation* (Paris: Éditions sociales, 1949).
24. Roland Caillois, 'Georges Politzer et la critique des mythes', *Action* (20 October 1944): 5.
25. Jean-Paul Sartre, 'A propos de l'existentialisme: Mise au point', *Action*, No. 17 (29 December 1944): 11, reproduced in Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka, *Les Écrits de Sartre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), 653–658.
26. Henri Lefebvre (1901–1991) worked in the 1920s with other young left-wing philosophers including Paul Nizan and Georges Politzer on a number of radical philosophical journals. He joined the PCF in 1928 and was responsible for popularising the early works of Marx, a number of which he translated into French. He was expelled from the Party in 1958.
27. Victor Leduc, 'Soupçon, défiance et haine', in *Le Matin*, Special Issue on Sartre (April–May 1980): 15.
28. A term used to describe the explosion onto the Parisian literary scene of 'existentialist' publications, notably: Beauvoir's *Le Sang des autres* (*The Blood of Others*), an existentialist novel set during the Occupation, appeared in September 1945; Sartre's *L'Âge de raison* (*The Age of Reason*) and *Le Sursis* (*The Reprieve*) were both published a few weeks after Beauvoir's novel; a lecture on existentialism was given by Sartre at the Club Maintenant on 28 October, and later published as *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme*, (Paris: Éditions Nagel, 1946); and in the same month, the first issue of the review *Les Temps Modernes* went on sale.
29. See Sartre et al, *Entretiens sur la politique*, 70–75.
30. Leduc, 'Soupçon'.
31. Henri Mougin, *La Sainte Famille existentialiste* (Paris: Éditions sociales, 1947). The relatively measured tone adopted by Mougin can be explained by the fact that the book was written before the Party's attacks on Sartre gathered

momentum. Mougin, severely weakened by five years spent in a German POW camp, died in July 1946 aged 34.

32. Victor Leduc, *Le Marxisme est-il dépassé?* (Paris: Éditions Raison d'Être, 1946), 157. My emphasis.
33. Sartre, *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme*; and 'Jean-Paul Sartre répond à ses détracteurs', in Colette Audry ed. *Pour et contre l'existentialisme* (Paris: Éditions Atlas, 1948), 181–190. The latter is a text based on the radio programme 'Lettres d'auditeurs et définition d'existentialisme' [Letters from Listeners and a Definition of Existentialism], broadcast on 3 November 1947 as part of the series of programmes *La Tribune des Temps Modernes*.
34. Sartre, 'À propos de l'existentialisme', 654.
35. Idem.
36. Henri Lefebvre, '"Existentialisme" et Marxisme: Réponse à une mise au point', *Action,* (8 June 1945): 8.
37. Georges Mounin, 'L'Existentialisme est-il un humanisme?', *Action*, (29 March 1946): 13.
38. It was at this congress that Aleksandr Fadeyev launched a blistering denunciation of the decadence of Western art and literature in general and of Sartre in particular, characterizing him as 'a hyena with a typewriter, a jackal with a pen'. (See Desanti, *Les Staliniens*, 115).
39. Dominique Desanti, 'Le Paté "cheval-alouette" ou le "dialogue" des Temps Modernes', *Action*, (18 August 1948): 8.
40. Lefebvre, '"Existentialisme" et Marxisme', 8. My emphasis.
41. Sartre, *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme*, 63.
42. Caillois, 'Georges Politzer', 5.
43. Pol Gaillard, 'Pour qui écrit Sartre ?', *La Pensée* (November/December 1947): 110.
44. Roger Garaudy, 'Un Faux Prophète : Jean-Paul Sartre', in Roger Garaudy, *Une Littérature de fossoyeurs* (Paris: Editions sociales, 1947), 14. First sentence in capital letters in the original text.
45. For more on Kanapa during this period, see Gérard Streiff, *Jean Kanapa: de Sartre à Staline (1921–1948)* (La Dispute: Paris, 1998).
46. Jean Kanapa, *L'Existentialisme n'est pas un humanisme* (Paris: Éditions sociales, 1948), 84.
47. Sartre, *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme*, 83.
48. Henri Lefebvre, *L'Existentialisme* (Paris: Éditions du Sagittaire, 1946), 62–63.
49. It is of course possible that Lefebvre's book was in production by the time Sartre gave his lecture.
50. Sartre, *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme*, 25–27.
51. Garaudy, 'Un Faux Prophète', 21.
52. Sartre, *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme*, 55.
53. Sartre, 'A propos de l'existentialisme', 657.
54. Sartre, *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme*, 51–52.
55. Ibid., 53–54.
56. Sartre, 'A propos de l'existentialisme', 657.
57. Sartre, *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme*, 52.
58. Garaudy, 'Un Faux Prophète', 22.
59. Henri Mougin, 'Courte Histoire de l'existentialisme', *La Pensée*, No. 8 (July–August–September 1946): 27.

60. For a more extended exposition of these ideas, see A. Cornu, 'Bergsonianism and Existentialism', in Marvin Farber ed. *Philosophic Thought in France and the United States: Essays Representing Major Trends in Contemporary French and American Philosophy* (Buffalo, New York: University of Buffalo Publications in Philosophy, 1950), 151–168.
61. Roger Garaudy, 'En guise de conclusion: Défense de la culture française', in Garaudy, *Littérature de fossoyeurs,* 89.
62. Quoted in Aury, 'Qu'est-ce que l'existentialisme?', 5.
63. Garaudy, 'Un Faux Prophète', 12.
64. Garaudy, 'En guise de conclusion', 87.
65. Sartre, 'A propos de l'existentialisme', 653.
66. Ibid., 658.
67. Cécile Angrand, 'L'Existentialisme philosophie antidémocratique', *Démocratie nouvelle,* No. 5 (May 1947): 243.
68. Ibid., 244.
69. Ibid., 242.
70. Ibid., 242.
71. Roger Vailland, 'Un Phénomène de classe qui sert la réaction', in Audry ed. *Pour et contre l'existentialisme* (Paris: Éditions Atlas, 1948), 178.
72. John Gerassi, *Talking with Sartre*: *Conversations and Debates* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2009), 133.
73. Gavi et al., *On a raison de se révolter*, 26.
74. Angrand, 'L'Existentialisme', 243.
75. Raymond Aron, 'Marxisme et existentialisme', text of a paper given at the *Collège philosophique* in 1946, reproduced in Raymond Aron, *Marxismes imaginaires* (Paris: Gallimard [Collection Idées], 1970), 27.
76. In fact, this article appeared in *Les Temps Modernes* No. 9 (June 1946): 1537–1563 and *LesTemps Modernes* No. 10, (July 1946): 1–32.
77. Sartre et al, *Entretiens sur la politique*, 74–75.
78. *Les Temps Modernes* 17 (February 1947): 769–805; 18 (March 1947): 961–988; 19 (April 1947): 1194–1218; 20 (May 1947): 1410–1429; 21 (June 1947): 1607–1641; 22 (July 1947): 77–114. Reproduced in Jean-Paul Sartre, *Situations II* (Paris: Gallimard, 1948).
79. Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Qu'est ce que la littérature?', in Sartre, *Situations II*, 277.
80. Ibid., 277.
81. Ibid., 280.
82. 'Le Cas Nizan', *Les Temps Modernes*, No. 22 (July 1947): 183.
83. Ibid., 181–182.
84. Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Préface' to Paul Nizan, *Aden Arabie*(Paris: François Maspero, 1960), 7.
85. For a detailed analysis of the RDR, see Ian H. Birchall, 'Neither Washington nor Moscow? The Rise and Fall of the Rassemblement démocratique révolutionnaire', *Journal of European Studies* Vol. 29, (1999): 365–404.
86. Sartre et al., *Entretiens*, 203.
87. Pierre Hervé, 'La Clique de ceux qui ont "rejeté en bloc la révolution"', *L'Humanité* (15 December 1948): 3.
88. See Michel-Antoine Burnier, *Les Existentialistes et la politique* (Paris: Gallimard [Collection Idées], 1966), 67.
89. *La Gauche-RDR* No. 3 (June 1948): 4, quoted in Birchall, 'Neither Washington nor Moscow?', 387.

90. Sartre et al., *Entretiens*, 119.
91. Ibid., 143–148.
92. The text of the play appeared in *Les Temps Modernes*, No. 30 (March 1948): 1537–1582; No. 31 (April 1948): 1754–1813.
93. Pol Gaillard, 'C'est Sartre qui a les mains sales', *Les Lettres françaises*, No. 203 (8 April 1948).
94. Ilya Ehrenbourg, 'Contre le mensonge politique. Faulkner et Sartre vus par un écrivain soviétique', *Les Lettres françaises* (10 February 1949): 6.