

# Introduction

Prompted by the centenaries of the Great War and Russian Revolution, scholars are reassessing the place of 1919 in French and global history. Tyler Stovall recently deemed this year to be the high point of French labour militancy and a revolutionary moment with regard to Parisian workers, tenants and consumers.<sup>1</sup> As such, he challenged the convention that 1920 signalled the apogee of post-war unrest with the rail workers' strikes and the foundation of the French Communist Party (PCF) at the Congress of Tours.<sup>2</sup> Given his focus upon France's capital, it is unsurprising that Stovall should only have given scant consideration to the mutinies of the French Army and Navy of that year. The mutinies belonged to the traditional narrative of the PCF, for which these mutinies constituted a foundational myth.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, these military revolts underline the new emphasis upon 1919 as pivotal in the re-stabilisation of the French political order.<sup>4</sup> At a global scale, 1919 makes the case for renewed scrutiny, being a year of revolution, counter-revolution, race riots, labour militancy, women's enfranchisement and expulsion from the workplace, anti-imperial insurgency and the redrawing of borders. Understandings of its wider chronological context are also being revised. Thus, historians of the First World War argue that global conflict began in 1911 and only achieved final closure in 1923 and, therefore, that the 1914–18 periodisation is highly misleading.<sup>5</sup>

This research into the French military protest dovetails with scholars investigating the events of 1919 from below, or what might be called the global underside of the 'Wilsonian moment'.<sup>6</sup> Until 28 June 1919, the Allies remained at war with Germany, despite the Armistice of

11 November 1918. During that period, the Great Powers redrew the map of the world at the Treaty of Paris and established the League of Nations, intending to prevent future war. However, what is often missed is that 1919 was a complex threshold between war and peace that a variety of social and political forces contested and that that contestation, like the war itself, was on a global scale. Powerful surges of contentious politics, including revolutions in Germany and Hungary, constituted a transnational wave of rebellion. This process began prior to the war ending, with mutinies and labour and consumer unrest, in addition to colonial revolt, reaching a high point in 1919. Most obviously, the Russian Revolutions of 1917 (which should not be seen as an exclusively European affair) continued into 1919, which signalled a decisive year for the Bolshevik regime. Unrest was more widespread than a Eurocentric or Russo-centric approach suggests. Labour unrest was widespread with general strikes in Barcelona, Belfast, Buenos Aires, Glasgow, Peru, Seattle and Winnipeg, as well as miners' and steel strikes in the US and metalworkers' strikes in France. The colonial dimension complicates traditional narratives of the events of 1919: the Irish Republic was declared; Afghanistan gained independence. Indeed, this year witnessed the emergence of anti-colonial insurgency and movements across Europe's colonies and beyond (notably Egypt, India, Afghanistan, Algeria, Morocco, Korea, China and Ireland). In the metropolitan centres of the British Empire, race riots took place. Racial violence was also witnessed in Chicago and in twenty-five other locations during the 'red summer' in the US. Counter-revolution in Central and Eastern Europe had a murderously anti-Semitic dimension, as did the unrest in Argentina, the bloody repression of the tragic week that followed militant strikes. Further scrutiny is also needed to examine the gender dynamics of the year. For women, 1919 had a contradictory international balance sheet, being an important moment of political enfranchisement but also featuring their expulsion from the wartime labour force.<sup>7</sup>

The year of 1919 has many legacies. It signalled the first Arab spring, with the awakening of anti-colonial Arab nationalism in the Wilsonian and Bolshevik context. As a consequence of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, Britain definitively lost its moral claim to India. Race riots brought to public attention the presence of Black communities in the UK. Demobilisation brought the great reversal of wartime women's participation in skilled occupations in the belligerent states, largely restoring

the pre-war pattern of exclusion and discrimination. The first Fascist movement was founded, as was the Communist International.

If this book is a social history of one particular strand of 1919, namely, that of French military protest, it seeks to transcend older conventions of history from below in two ways. First, this book aims to assemble mutineer consciousness through its constituent parts: the senses, emotions, spatial understandings and memory. It therefore draws upon and combines insights from the history of emotions, of the senses, of the mnemonic and spatial turns. Second, it seeks to transcend the methodological nationalism of the classic works of history from below, conceived as the people's history of Britain, France and elsewhere.

### **‘The Black Sea Mutiny’: a single and plural contentious sequence**

As regards the revolts themselves, the Black Sea Mutiny became shorthand for a wider cycle of contestation with its roots in French intervention in Russia at war's end. Initially, as a consequence of Russian withdrawal from the war, French armed forces were stationed in the former Romanov Empire to the north at Archangel and Murmansk, and to the south in the Black Sea.<sup>8</sup> The intervention clearly took on a counter-revolutionary character, seeking to extend French spheres of influence, imperial power and economic interests. A brief outline of the sequence of mutinies illustrates the scale and pattern of the revolt. Generally overlooked in the historiography, the first mutiny began shortly after the arrival of French armed forces on 21 November 1918, when soldiers of the 21st Colonial Infantry stationed in Archangel refused to fight.<sup>9</sup> This isolated rebellion, without any apparent connection to other mutinies, anticipated three waves of protest.

The epicentre of the wave of mutinies was the Black Sea. On 23 November 1918, the Allies decided to send the French fleet and Royal Navy to Sevastopol. With the transport of troops proving slow, the news of the armed movements of the Ukrainian nationalists (led by Petlioura), the anarchists (led by Makhno) and the Bolsheviks (led by Grigoriev) alarmed Allied commanders. The occupations of Odessa and Sevastopol were seemingly in keeping with the terms of the Armistice, allowing, as they did, the withdrawal of German troops. In January and February 1919, the French-Allied occupation extended to Kherson and Mykolaiv (Nikolaev).

The first phase of mutiny began with the 58th Infantry at Tiraspol, in the Ukraine, between 30 January and 8 February 1919. The 58th Infantry had been fighting against Bulgarian troops in Bessarabia.<sup>10</sup> On 2 February 1919, they received orders to take Tiraspol on the River Dniester, which was in Bolshevik hands. When the French troops advanced on the town, artillery and machine gun fire pinned them down. They had been told that there were only a few Bolsheviks and that the local population would welcome them with open arms. That evening the Bolsheviks sent out a sortie, resulting in several French troops being killed and injured. In light of the Armistice and the absence of a declaration of war on Russia, the troops held a meeting and decided to disobey orders (*nous ne marcherons plus*). On 7 February, officers reminded the men of their duty and furthermore the consequences of disobedience. The men remained calm and did not appear to be shaken. On 8 February, 467 men refused to cross the Dniester.<sup>11</sup> After their officers' persuasive powers had failed, the mutineers were taken to Bender, where they were kept imprisoned for three days and court-martialled for disobeying an order in the face of the enemy. From there, they went by boat to Istanbul (Constantinople), then Oran, Casablanca and the penal colony of Meknes, where they served sentences of hard labour: road-building in the Moroccan sun.

On the night of 1–2 March, Jeanne Labourbe's arrest and murder occurred. Labourbe was a French emigré who had joined the Bolsheviks and was disseminating revolutionary propaganda amongst French troops. This event became synonymous with the wave of mutinies for two reasons. First, the murder acted as a 'moral shock' or 'injustice frame' for mutineers, which official denial compounded.<sup>12</sup> Second, she achieved martyr status within the French left as the 'first French communist'. Despite official denial, the rumour persisted that the French authorities, particularly Colonel Trousson, alongside White Russian allies participated in her torture, mutilation and execution.<sup>13</sup>

This first phase of mutiny occurred against the backdrop of humiliating Allied retreat. The threat to Kherson rendered the occupation of Mykolaiv impossible. A battle for Kherson took place between 2 and 9 March. Mutinies affected the 176th Infantry and a detachment of sailors of the battleship *Justice* at Kherson between 4 and 9 March. General Philippe d'Anselme decided to evacuate on 9 March. The following day, d'Anselme telegraphed General Henri Berthelot with news that two French units that had arrived from Kherson the previous day had refused orders. Moreover, the local population was hostile to their presence.<sup>14</sup>

The withdrawal continued with the evacuation of Greek troops from Mykolaiv that occurred on 12 March under the supervision of the battlecruisers *Du Chayla* and the *Bruix*. The last Greek troops left the following day. A month later, on 5 April, mutinies broke out at Odessa with the 7th Engineers as well as the 19th Artillery at Coilendorf. Two days later, in the north, the 21st Colonial Infantry regiment mutinied once more at Archangel.<sup>15</sup>

With the second phase of contestation, the mutinies passed from the Army to the Navy.<sup>16</sup> On 16 April, the authorities discovered André Marty's conspiratorial preparations and clandestine contacts with Rumanian Social Democrats. Marty was an engineer officer aboard the destroyer *Protet* then stationed in Galați (Galatz), a port city on the Danube in eastern Romania.<sup>17</sup> Three days later on 19 April the revolt aboard the battleship *France* at anchor in Sevastopol harbour began, quickly spreading to other battleships, including the *Jean Bart*, the *Justice*, the *Vergniaud* and the *Mirabeau*, as well as smaller ships, gunboats *Algol* and *Escaut*. On the second day of protests, 20 April (Easter Sunday), a notorious incident took place: the Morskāia Road 'ambush' or 'massacre'. Greek troops under French command opened fire with machine guns on a demonstration of the local population and French mutineers in Sevastopol. Although historians have sometimes downplayed this event and at other times (in the case of Marty's history of the mutiny) struggled to ascertain the truth, this much is clear: there were several French injuries and one fatality.<sup>18</sup> In his report on the affair, Lieutenant Vaublanc identified the victim of the shooting as Raymond Firmin Morvan, a third-class sailor and apprentice quarter-master of the *Vergniaud*.<sup>19</sup> Motivated by a desire for demobilisation, a crucial compounding grievance for the crew of the *France* was the order to perform coal loading duties on the Easter holiday. Under pressure from the revolt, the Commander agreed the *France* could return home and postponed coal duties. These were performed without supervision of the officers on Tuesday, 22 April, and the *France* set sail the following day. The mutineers aboard the *France* believed that they had secured victory with their Commander's word of honour as its guarantee. It was not until their arrest in Bizerte on 1 May that they realised the ephemeral nature of their victory.

As news of the Sevastopol rebellion spread, the mutinies recommenced elsewhere in the Black Sea. The battlecruiser *Waldeck-Rousseau* was in Odessa. Marty's presence awaiting court martial precipitated the movement aboard. On 23 April, the crew learned that an officer accused

of conspiracy from the *Protet* was on the ship. Two days later, sailors from the supply boat *Suippe* told of the events of Sevastopol. On 26 April, Admiral Caubet hastily removed Marty from the ship, shortly before the first assemblies of men, who sang the *Internationale*, and elected delegates. Their demands resembled those of the previous mutinies. Playing for time, the Admiral made concessions and said that he would do all he could to return swiftly to France and that there would be no punishments. The outbreak of unrest took hold on the nearby torpedo boats *Mameluk* and *Fauconneau*.<sup>20</sup> The battlecruiser sailed to Tendra, apparently en route to Istanbul. At Tendra, the mutiny spread to the battlecruiser *Bruix*. However, having bided his time, the Admiral was able to arm his officers and restore order on the *Waldeck-Rousseau* and then threaten the mutineers of the *Bruix*. In the final episode in this sequence of revolts in the Black Sea, the torpedo boat *Dehorter* at Kertch mutinied between 1 and 10 May.

What followed was a third more expansive stage of revolt spread across the Mediterranean to France, involving sailors, soldiers and workers in port cities, in which the desire for demobilisation and military grievances mixed on the streets with the demands of labour. At Istanbul (Constantinople), on 2 May, the battlecruiser *Ernest Renan* joined the movement upon which three days of effervescence took place. On 20 May, 117th Heavy Artillery disobeyed orders in Toulouse, followed by the 4th and 37th Colonial regiments on 27 May, in Bender, Bessarabia.

The movement reached the home of the Mediterranean Fleet during the second week of June. The Toulon agitation took its most serious turn on 10 June aboard the battleship *Provence*, when a group of 200 sailors attempted to seize weapons and roughly handled officers.<sup>21</sup> The *Jean Bart*, the *Démocratie*, the *Courbet*, the *Diderot*, the *Lorraine*, the *Jules Ferry* and the *Pothuau* were caught up in the mood of insubordination, as were the naval depots, 112th Infantry and 143rd Colonial Infantry. Huge street demonstrations occurred in Toulon on 12 and 16 June.

By now, in France, the Black Sea Mutiny had become common knowledge and was debated in the Chamber of Deputies from 12 to 17 June. Whereas left-wing deputies read letters from war-weary troops, the Minister of the Navy, Georges Leygues, denounced the mutiny as a German plot, a criminal intrigue, a product of revolutionary propaganda designed to undermine victory and an act of madness.<sup>22</sup> With the knowledge of the mutinies spreading to the public and within the armed forces, the agitation moved from port to port, from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. During 14–15 June, sailors stationed in

Rochefort protested. Two days later, the movement spread to sailors and soldiers in Brest, leading to violent clashes with police on horseback sent from Nantes.<sup>23</sup> On 19 June, Lorient witnessed demonstrations, as did Cherbourg on 24 June.

During this final phase of military protest, the mutinies returned to the warships on the north African coast, the Black Sea, the eastern Mediterranean and the Baltic. On 13 June, noisy protests began during the inspection of plates aboard the Danton-class battleship *Condorcet*, which had arrived at Tendra, near Odessa, in the Black Sea. Further refusals of orders ensued, as well as the election of delegates who would present the demands of the crew. In the Tunisian port of Bizerte, the agitation on the Danton-class battleship *Voltaire* began on 16 June, when the Commander Captain Stabenrath received two anonymous letters from the crew demanding demobilisation and leave, both referring to the Black Sea Mutiny. Indicative of how protest circulated, men joining the crew from Toulon communicated news of events in the Black Sea. The mutiny proper broke out on 19 June after Rear-Admiral de Margerie inspected the crew and announced that the ship was to leave for the eastern Mediterranean. As the Rear-Admiral went ashore, fifty men leant over the railings and shouted 'Demobilisation! Leave! To Toulon!' After the evening meal, a large assembly of men began a protest on the deck of the ship. The following morning, graffiti announced another meeting at 7.30 a.m., which elected delegates (Georges Wallet, Henri Alquier, Pierre Vottero and Le Bras). They met with the Commander, who promised to look into their demands, thereby calming the situation. Another mutinous assembly gathered on the evening of 20 June. The Commander waited three days to restore order through a wave of arrests.

A pattern of insubordination was now spreading to all compass points with a similar pattern of grievances, arguments and tactics. The demands for demobilisation or leave, knowledge of the Black Sea Mutiny, unofficial gatherings, protests during inspections or refusals to cooperate with orders and arguments about the constitutional nature of the intervention connected the movement. Unrest reached the French patrol boats in the Baltic Sea between 21 and 23 June. With demobilisation, leave and the return to France featuring as principal demands, the *Dunois* and *Intrépide* witnessed protests, perhaps spreading to other ships in the area. On 26 June, sailors aboard the cruiser *Guichen* seized the ship in the Greek port of Itea, only to have it recaptured via the rapid deployment of Senegalese riflemen. On 1 August, in Tendra, all

but one of the crew of the torpedo boat *Touareg* signed a protest letter after receiving news that their service was to continue. Two days later, the crew refused to be inspected but the arrest of their leader and intimidation persuaded them to return to normal duties. The cruiser *D'Estrées* was also the scene of protests by the crew on 13 and 14 August in Vladivostok.<sup>24</sup> On this occasion, their demands for demobilisation led to the repatriation of reservists.

The final act of mutiny took place on board the Danton-class battleship *Diderot* on 5 October, ending the generalised phase of military protest that stretched from June to October. From late September to early October, a series of incidents occurred on the *Diderot*. The visit of Admiral de Bon and his inspection of the crew precipitated protests on 24 September at Beirut. By 2 October, 200 of the crew listened to Page give a militant speech, who was then arrested for his efforts. Three days later, a similar number of men assembled and decided to storm the ship's cells to liberate Page. The bugle call to action and the intervention of the Commander-in-Second thwarted their plans and Page was escorted away on a launch, thereby defusing the situation. By this time, peace with Germany had been signed, demobilisation continued to relieve the crisis, and the coming elections of November offered the prospect of change in the political situation.

If the mutinies of the infantry are included, the wave of military protest lasted nearly a year, beginning in November 1918 and lasting until early October of the following year. Its extensive geography ranged from Archangel and Vladivostok, via the Baltic to the Atlantic ports of metropolitan France, across the Mediterranean to the Black Sea. Hundreds of mutineers faced courts martial. This was very much more than the 'two days of madness' or 'two bad days' as Leygues described it in the Chamber of Deputies.<sup>25</sup>

### The historiography of a mutiny

This book proposes a fundamental reassessment of these events and their significance in cycles of transnational contention, French collective memory and political culture. The existing historiography of the mutinies is deficient in this regard. André Marty dominated early versions of the mutinies (which was to be expected given that he was a prominent member of the PCF by the time these assessments were made). He produced a series of pamphlets, articles and the multi-volume *La Révolte de la Mer Noire* (1927–29). The latter entered the literary canon of the

French labour movement and new editions followed in 1932, 1939, 1949, 1970 and 1999. He produced a shortened text *Les Heures Glorieuses de la Mer Noire* in 1932 (which was, like *La Révolte*, republished on the thirtieth anniversary).

Marty was earnest about his history and perhaps his scholarship ought to be taken more seriously.<sup>26</sup> He went to great lengths to find material for his book, describing it at one stage as a *collective* work under his editorship. At the same time, Marty was under contradictory pressures, between scholarship and filling gaps in the narrative, between searching for the truth about what had happened and the political conclusions to be drawn from the events. His book was a party history, a foundational text of French Communism. Despite amnesties for mutineers in 1921 and 1923, legal guilt and innocence shaped mutineer narratives, including Marty's own. For Marty then, the need to write a carefully researched rebuttal of court-martial charges complicated the assertion of the heroic status of the mutineers. He had to deal with official denial and a lack of access to official documents. Despite considerable efforts to find French or Russian sources, he never discovered the identity of the sailor shot on 20 April 1919 on Morskaïa Road, as that information could only be found in the Ministry of the Navy files.<sup>27</sup> Finally, Marty had to write in the midst a virulent campaign conducted by members of the extreme-right, for whom the mutineers were a handful of traitors in league with (even in the pay of) foreign powers.<sup>28</sup>

As a consequence of the two Marty 'affairs' (1919 and 1952), the campaign for his release (likened at the time to the Dreyfus Affair) and his publications, André Marty has, more than anyone else, shaped the memorialisation of the mutiny. A corrective to this imbalance is needed. Albert Cané initiated the *Comité des Marins* (Sailors' Committee) that led the campaign for the amnesty of mutineers, and toured the country in public meetings in 1920 and 1921.<sup>29</sup> Cané claimed that he had not heard of Marty's case until September 1920.<sup>30</sup> Though this may be an exaggeration, Marty only became synonymous with the mutiny in retrospect. Cané insisted that the Committee of Social Defence was responsible for Marty's celebrity rather than the other way around.

Reactions to Marty's book are unhelpfully polarised; all sides have missed its significance as a consequence of partisanship. With typical hyperbole, when Marty was in favour with the *Parti Communiste Français* (PCF, French Communist Party), it did its best to assert the factual credentials and historical value of Marty's historical work, which provided 'a passionate account, careful to re-establish the truth

deformed by reaction'. Marty was a 'remarkable' Marxist historian, substantiating every fact with 'authentic testimonies, official reports, letters or accounts of soldiers and sailors'.<sup>31</sup> In the main, traditionalist historians and those of the right disparaged Marty's literary efforts, stressing its omissions, errors and political bias.<sup>32</sup> Raphael-Leygues and Barré criticised Marty's 'memoirs' for being revised and corrected many times (being a sign of weakness rather than sustained research). For them, Marty lacked the credibility of another mutineer Charles Tillon's memoirs.<sup>33</sup> There was also criticism from the left. Writing in 1953, the mutineer Le Roux complained about Marty's interpretation of the events in Sevastopol, downplaying its libertarian character. However, the toll of the years upon Le Roux's memory left giveaway clues that betrayed the certainty of his assertions. Le Roux had to backtrack to render his own account consistent, having forgotten to explain how the mutiny spread from the landing party to the ship: 'I forgot to say that two of us were sent aboard to be disciplined and they spread the rumour that we were in revolt. This contact had an influence over the action of those on board.'<sup>34</sup> This exchange reveals a danger: the goal of moving away from Marty in favour of the restoration of mutineer dialogue can be lost in point-scoring contentions.

While Marty clearly lacked a professional historian's training, his *Révolution* is a valuable and in some ways methodologically innovative text. He took the project seriously. So, for instance, he battled with the party press to ensure that the publication was presentable, angrily sending seventeen pages of corrections to his second edition.<sup>35</sup> Writing in June 1936 to Chorokhov, who had been a Bolshevik negotiator with the French Admiral Exelmans, Marty asserted his history of the mutiny as its 'most complete and verified' account in the French language. Fascinatingly from a methodological viewpoint, he described it as a collective enterprise of 112 participants that he simply 'edited and coordinated'.<sup>36</sup> This perspective ought to be situated within the Comintern policy of workers-as-correspondents ('*rabcors*') in revolutionary newspapers. A 1932 issue of *L'Humanité* illustrates this *rabcors* approach with its round-up of witnesses from the mutinies of 1917, 1919 and the Christmas truce of 1914.<sup>37</sup>

If Marty established the landmark text, others followed. Charles Tillon, another mutineer and communist who had held a ministerial post in the post-Liberation government, wrote *La Révolte Vient de Loin* (1969) the fullest personal memoir of the wave of naval mutiny based on his personal experiences on board the *Guichen* which mutinied at

Itea, Greece, on 26 June. Three years after Tillon's memoir, the PCF published a collection of two eyewitness accounts, documents and a historical introduction, Jean Le Ramey and Pierre Vottero's *Mutins de la Mer Noire* (1973).

From a more conservative perspective, the Minister of the Navy Georges Leygues's grandson, Jacques Raphael-Leygues, and Jean-Luc Barré produced a history of the mutiny that drew on the minister's personal papers. It sought to provide a popular narrative of events to bring the mutiny to the public eye and to offer an alternative perspective to Marty's communist narrative. Despite drawing on some interesting sources, including interviews with Charles Tillon and Admiral Peltier, the authors' sympathies lay too obviously with the authorities and took the official interpretation of the events more or less at face value and therefore routinely attempted to discredit Marty. Problematically, the work sympathises with Georges Leygues's pathologising dismissal of the revolt as 'two days of madness'.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, Raphael-Leygues cites the far-right *Action Française* leader Charles Maurras on the need for reform in the Navy, noting the hostility of the officer class to the Third Republic for 'the noblest of reasons'.<sup>39</sup> This text sits therefore in the wider nostalgic literature glossing over the naval hierarchy's affinity with *Action Française*, Vichy and the Empire.<sup>40</sup>

The most substantial text on this topic remains Philippe Masson's monograph *La Marine Française et la Mer Noire, 1918–1919* (1982).<sup>41</sup> As might be expected from the Head of the Historical Service of the Navy and a professor of maritime history at the School of Naval Warfare, he frames the mutiny very much within the institutional language and mindset of the French Navy. He also draws on the conventional interpretation of the mutinies of Chemin des Dames of 1917 as akin to a breakdown in industrial relations rather than an act of political or anti-war radicalism.<sup>42</sup> There is no denying that it is a scholarly and rigorous work, drawing on the full documentation of the naval and national archives and it does not indulge in political apologia. That said, the empiricist assumptions and official status of the work means that it cannot be the last word, especially on the agency of the mutineers. My research aims to go back to the sources that Masson used, somewhat amplified where possible, and read them through a different lens. This research is concerned less with the reconstruction of events from the official documentation than understanding the mindset of the officer class, the military elites and the government in their struggle against the mutiny.

### Evidence and subjectivity: privileging mutineer sources

From the evidentiary perspective, this new research privileges mutineers' subjectivity through their own accounts of the events. Ironically, the materials revising Marty's account come largely from the former PCF central committee member's archive. In the preparation of *La Revolte*, Marty used his contacts from the prisons, the navy and the PCF to elicit testimony from mutineers, usually via correspondence. He compiled fragments of biographical information on around 200 mutineers of 1919 (from both the Army and Navy as well as from the Black Sea and beyond).<sup>43</sup> Claiming to base his history on the testimony of 112 mutineers, the testimonies of around fifty mutineers survived in his personal papers both from the French Army intervening in the Russian Civil War and the Navy (as well as additional ones from the mutinies of 1917). This provides a rich and underutilised resource allowing the kind of scrutiny of senses, emotions and memory more typically reserved for those of a more elevated social status.<sup>44</sup>

Several documentary sources allow access to mutineer understandings of 1919. Surveying Marty's archive requires consideration in turn of the following forms: correspondence, court-martial reports, letters with memoirs attached, artefactual discussion, events-based discussion and personal reflection. Each form has its specificity and, within that, each instance possesses its own peculiarities. Perhaps most significantly, temporal and spatial distance from the events shaped testimony. For example, in Marty's papers, there are two examples of a *carnet de route* (campaign journal) written as a perfectly contemporaneous diary.<sup>45</sup> The account of Lucien Godin, a sailor aboard the battlecruiser *Bruix*, covers 30 March–22 May 1919, and details the day-to-day events across the entire cycle of protest in the Black Sea. The notebook of Marius Jules Cyrille of the *Ernest Renan*, however, runs from 25 February to 23 June 1919. This form avoids the filters of memory and the distance of time present in other evidence.

Many testimonies take the epistolary form, which offers interesting additional insights into the relationships between these former mutineers: their modes of address, the use of language, shifting degrees of formality, their emotional bonds, their sense of shared experience and dialogues with past selves. The Marty papers have an abundance of mutineers' letters. Complex contexts of authorship, addressee, timing and the nature of the author's participation in events require careful consideration. Ernest Dupont's letter to his parents provides a case in

point. It is lengthy, rich in description and emotional detail, as well as being written almost contemporaneously to the mutiny, within only a couple of weeks of the events. A tension between his assertion of manhood through participation in epic events and an anxiety about parental response highlights the ambivalence of his account. Marty was also ambivalent about Duport, wrestling with the paradox that he was politically suspect but provided the richest source of information. In Marty's papers, a handwritten note glued to a typed comment described Duport as '*une ordure*' (a piece of refuse) for his cowardly double role – 'white for the officers, black for the sailors', as the note put it. The note alleged that Duport even stated that if the Commander could not make the men accept orders, then he would himself, with a revolver in his hand. The note also claimed that Duport failed to refute the Commander-in-Second's deposition at the court martial on this count.<sup>46</sup>

While Marty collected letters that appeared in the press or those to other addressees (as with the one that Duport forwarded to him), in the main he was the intended recipient. The letters therefore reflect the mutineers' verdict on Marty and his endeavours to write their history. To these letters several more could be added from the papers of Charles Tillon, who after the Second World War played a prominent role in the association of former mutineers. These testimonies allow for new insights into the subaltern experience of the mutiny. Although mediated through the filter of retrospection, they contain the emotions, memories, understandings, knowledge and thought processes of the mutineers. This subjectivity is almost entirely missing in previous accounts of the mutinies.

The contrast with court-martial testimony is revealing. Where the latter produced a divisive constraint upon mutineer subjectivity, letters in both Marty's and Tillon's papers were essentially solidaristic: assisting Marty in the writing of *La Révolte* or connected to Tillon's work in the mutineers' veteran association. They were private and bilateral. They allowed an emotional refuge in hostile environments, allowing the author to express himself with an emotional freedom more difficult for veterans to do in public. In effect, Marty and Tillon acted as nodal points for network construction. They fostered emotional bonds, mutual services and a shared reading of the mutiny, rebuilding what repression had fragmented.

Marty was at some disadvantage regarding the accrual of testimonies. He had been on a smaller ship and had been relatively isolated, being imprisoned before the main events of Easter 1919. The mutineers

were scattered to the prisons and penal colonies of the French empire and were thus difficult to contact. Marty himself was imprisoned until July 1923. He amassed his archive because several veterans were able to provide him a name or two from whom he could get more information – usually these were people from the towns or areas the veterans belonged to and people with whom the veterans had kept in touch.

In addition to letters, memoirs provide another major source of the mutineers' views of events. Both published and unpublished accounts of the mutinies exist.<sup>47</sup> Marty's papers contain several unpublished memoirs that mutineers appended to letters sent to Marty.<sup>48</sup> Song (and to a lesser extent poetry) offers insight into mutineer subjectivity. Singing played a major part in the events, and analysis of the content, timing and function of the songs has rich analytical potential, though equally song might be politically instrumentalised retrospectively, thereby affecting our reconstruction of events. Beyond these sources of evidence, other materials – photographs, leaflets, novels, posters, newspapers, parliamentary debates, Ministry of the Interior and of the Navy records – could enhance the research in two distinct ways. First, the official documentation allows access to how the authorities comprehended the mind of the mutineers and the moment of 1919. Second, these and other sources permitted the event to persist in French political culture, constituting the mutiny's sedimentary layers of artefact upon which even the mutineers themselves drew.

### **Theory and concepts: reaching out for mutineer subjectivity**

From a theoretical viewpoint, this book is conceived as a reconstruction of mutineer subjectivity, integrating various components that make up consciousness: the senses, emotions, reasoning and cognition, language and memory. The approach is informed theoretically by three fields of scholarship. First, the intention is to recover fruitful elements of Marxist theory and historiography. The result connects into an earlier generation of Marxists who were preoccupied with consciousness, thought and language, namely Vygotsky, Volosinov, Bakhtin, Gramsci, Lukacs, Benjamin and Lefebvre, whose thought was in no small way prompted by the experience of 1919. The virtue of these thinkers is that they challenge the conventions of structural and post-structuralist linguistics regarding human consciousness. Thus, Valentin Volosinov embeds language within social contestation through the concept of

multi-acculturality.<sup>49</sup> For current purposes, Henri Lefebvre's major contribution to Marxism lies in his elaboration of the 'social production of space' being a major influence on social constructivist understandings of the organisation of space and the sense of place.<sup>50</sup> Developmental psychologist Lev Vygotsky proposes an understanding of consciousness as a dialectic of thought and language rather than reducing the former to the latter. In addition, he critiques the dominant Jamesian notion of emotions within psychology.<sup>51</sup> Bakhtin supplies a dialogical version of language apt to understanding the heterogeneity of subaltern thought as well as the effort of the authorities to homogenise thought into an official monologue.<sup>52</sup> Through the concepts of contradictory consciousness and good versus common sense, Antonio Gramsci allows a dynamic model of how thought responds in social conflict. His notion of hegemony also provides a sensitive and culturally aware framework of the influence of dominant ideas.<sup>53</sup> Gramsci's contemporary Walter Benjamin gained recognition for his theorisation of temporality in revolutionary ferment with regard to how agents experience time, reconfiguring past, present and future. As well as this, his diverse writings encompass memory, photography and the ruins of capitalist progress.

Overall, then, given that Vygotsky, Volosinov, Bakhtin, Gramsci, Lukacs, Benjamin and Lefebvre adopted a Marxist framework, consciousness was for them a shared category, if viewed from different perspectives, and thus allows a coherent integration of their insights. Taken together, these thinkers offer coordinates of subjectivity, thereby refreshing the Marxist historiography of consciousness that has centred on a defence or revision of E. P. Thompson's conceptualisation of class consciousness.<sup>54</sup> It also provides an alternative to the language-centred conceptualisation of phenomenology drawing on Heidegger that has been so influential via the post-structuralisms of Foucault and Derrida, sometimes known as the 'linguistic turn'.<sup>55</sup>

The second intellectual field that furnishes theoretical shape to the project is social movement theory. Through such scholars as Charles Tilly, Sidney Tarrow, Doug MacAdam and Donatella Della Porta, social movement theory has done more than Marxism to codify the processes and mechanisms of social protest and social movements. Their categorical precision proves invaluable to comprehending the course of the mutiny through cycles of protest, protest repertoires, political opportunity structures, injustice frames and dynamics of contestation.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, the collection of essays *Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics* (2001) mapped out a renewal of social movement

theory's conceptual toolkit (voice and silence, emotions, space and time), coinciding with new directions in social and cultural history. Social movement theory also acts as a bridge to transnational reinterpretations of history, allowing us to situate the mutiny in a global pattern of contestation.

The third optic offering theoretical insight into this research is the cross-disciplinary dialogues of memory, senses, emotions and consciousness. After Lucien Febvre's injunction to historians to take seriously the historical reconstruction of emotions, the historiography of emotions emerged in earnest with the work of Peter and Carol Zisowitz Stearns.<sup>57</sup> They were concerned with the time-specific norms directing emotional life, or as they put it, the 'emotionology'. They considered the history of the modern US from the successive viewpoints of anger, sadness, jealousy and the emergence of 'cool' as the predominant American emotional style.<sup>58</sup> Their assumptions and those of other modern historians of emotions flowed from Norbert Elias's *Civilizing Process* (2000), in which modernity led to progressively greater emotional self-control in the public sphere.<sup>59</sup> In response to this modernisation thesis, Barbara Rosenwein has challenged the grand narrative of affective patterns, arguing that it misunderstands pre-modern emotional styles.<sup>60</sup> As an expert in Medieval Europe, she proposes instead a multiplicity of emotional communities.

Within the historiography of emotions, William Reddy's work is rightly influential. Drawing insight into consciousness from outside history, Reddy argues that what we learn from the disciplines of neuroscience and experimental psychology is that a Saussurean understanding of language as an autonomous higher system is untenable. For Saussure, a sequential, linear process from lower order functions of the mind (such as sight and hearing) crosses a threshold into the independent higher-order realm of language. This flawed model of language is shared by post-structuralism.<sup>61</sup> Instead, Reddy observes that the relationship between language and lower order functions is not linear and strictly hierarchical but multiple, and that the neuroscientists prefer centre-surround or cascade models of brain dynamics. In practical terms, this suggests an integrated approach to consciousness, paying attention to its many facets, moving away from self-sufficient textual or discursive approaches that privilege language. Reddy thus problematises the relationship between words and feeling, proposing the concept of the 'emotive' as speech expressing emotions. For Reddy, at a societal level, governments and elites regulate 'emotional regimes' of

rules of articulation and repression of emotions. These regimes are not all-encompassing, as nonconformist emotional refuges (namely sites of ‘emotional liberty’) challenge such emotional regimes. Reddy has, more than anyone else, engaged in a multidisciplinary dialogue and attempted to theorise the nature of emotions. Nevertheless, in identifying emotion as a ‘new underlying structure’, it is hard to see how Reddy escapes the charge of exchanging one reductionism for another.<sup>62</sup>

Echoing this cross-disciplinary stance from the scientific side of the fence, Steven Rose’s work on memory bears similarities to Reddy’s intervention. Rose’s appeal to move beyond the Cartesian dualism of brain and mind prompts us (as Reddy has done) to think of the implications of the revolutionary insights of recent years into consciousness, the composition and functioning of the *brain* and what this can mean for those concerned with the *mind* in the study of memory.

Ultimately, this book seeks to reconceptualise how historians might think about consciousness. Scholars from different disciplines have declared successive paradigmatic shifts in aspects of, or related to, consciousness and this research aims to encompass these sensory, spatial, emotional, linguistic and cognitive ‘turns’ into a holistic approach to individual and collective consciousness. Consciousness therefore offers a terrain to reintegrate the fragmentary dynamics and advances of the scholarship in these fields. This is not to assert that this is the only way that such a connectivity can be established, but it is the one that is appropriate to the source material available in this study.

### Signposting mutiny

Each chapter scrutinises one aspect of mutineer consciousness in the following instalments: the senses, emotions, place and space, personal memory and collective mnemonic practice. Chapter 1 therefore probes the first dimension of mutineer subjectivity: the senses. The opening problem when interrogating mutineer testimony from this perspective is why some senses (vision and hearing) registered but others were strangely absent. The sights and sounds of mutiny divulge much about the experience of the participant. A visual language, notably the red flag, communicated and disseminated mutiny as well as contesting the visual order of the authorities. This disruption in the visual realm made a powerful impression on all sides. More fundamentally, the epistemological relationship of sight and truth features in mutineer accounts and requires consideration. Mutineers tested the claims of their superiors

with their own eyes: seeing was disbelieving. The mutiny also entailed a soundscape tantamount to an auditory contest comprising silences, the overwhelming volume of modern warfare, laughter, murmuring, slang and song. The senses nourished mutineer subjectivity as intermediaries with the 'outside world'.

Chapter 2 investigates the inner world of emotions. The armed forces (and particularly the Navy) expected recruits to conduct themselves according to emotional conventions. Mutiny broke those norms of emotional behaviour. To understand mutineer subjectivity then, it is necessary to outline military emotionology and the role of emotions in the mutiny. Fear and anger emerge at the breaking point of mutiny and feature as the most common emotions cited in mutineer accounts. These two emotions highlight the need to consider emotions as a relationship of mind and body, with mutineers recording the corporeal effects of these emotions. If fear and anger punctuate the course of the mutiny at specific points, a broader emotional sequence underpins the cycle of protest and its aftermath. The pattern of hope, joy and despair is discernible and this evolution has considerable importance for the turn of events themselves and their afterlives.

Chapter 3 inspects the mutiny in the wider world, in the dynamics of space and place. Transnational circulations (of information, ideas, contention, mutiny, disease and people) shaped the experience of 1919. In this year more than any other, territorial divisions of the globe were not fixed or stable. Military service meant travel and the need to make sense of unfamiliar lands and peoples. Moreover, military authorities relied upon the place-bound ideology of nationalism and perceived mutiny as a contravention of this very specific place attachment. In the age of imperialist war, national, ethnic and racial identities interacted with nationalism in complex ways. Furthermore, one feature of the transnational experience of 1919 was the act of fraternisation, which mutineers understood in political, internationalist or universalist terms. Yet, given colonial assumptions and the strategies of the French military, there were racial limits to mutineer internationalism and fraternisation. On their part, the French authorities sought to exploit colonial troops to repress the mutinies as part of their response to the emergency of 1919.

Chapter 4 discusses the personal memory and forgetting of mutineers. Mutineers reflected upon this process, allowing analysis of the dynamics of memory within mutineer consciousness. Some mutineers sought to compensate for the frailty of memory with material objects such as photographs, press cuttings, printed songs or letters. Ageing

and the passage of time meant that memory constituted a potentially troubling negotiation between a present and a past self, ultimately a self-awareness of one's own loss of vitality.

The final chapter broaches how these personal dynamics of memory converge in collective commemoration and the capacity of these practices to shape the historical reception of the mutiny. In particular, the chapter scrutinises the Fraternal Association of the Veterans of the Black Sea and their Friends set up in 1949, with its last act in 1973. The precarious history of the Association amounts to a contest to assert the significance of the 1919 mutinies against powerful forces of oblivion, revealing the way in which 1919 stayed with the mutineer generation.

Overall then, the senses, emotions, space and memory combine to constitute the world of the mutineer. Through their subjectivity of thought and deed, the mutineers could in turn attempt to transform that world. This book proposes that the actions, feelings, sights, sounds and places that jumble together in mutineer memory enrich our understanding of 1919, taking us beneath the diplomacy and peacemaking of high politics, helping us to comprehend the century's most unruly year, giving us a glimpse of the torrid complexity of its global underside.

## Notes

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