CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.0 Context

1956 is seen as not only a watershed for the Communist world, but a turning point in the Cold War. Stalin's death three years earlier had unleashed a process that would result in calls for economic and political changes in the Soviet Union and across Eastern Europe. However, it was Khrushchev's explicit references to the possibility of 'different roads to socialism' at the XX Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in February that year and, most importantly, his condemnation in a Secret Speech of his predecessor's more extreme policies and of the 'cult of personality' surrounding him that set in train a series of events and uprisings culminating in Hungarian Revolution in the autumn of that year. The Red Army's involvement in these situations and in particular its ruthless suppression of events in Hungary, caused consternation across the world and confusion throughout an international communist community no longer sure of Soviet intentions, or indeed of its moral authority. The lack of immediate and decisive opposition to these actions on the part of the Western powers reflected on the one hand, their reluctance to force the issue by challenging Moscow directly, and on the other, the way in which the events themselves had been overshadowed - to all intents and purposes - by the Suez Crisis. And it was this last episode that marked the crucial shift in the balance of power from Europe to the Superpowers, which dictated the course of history over the subsequent three decades. [1]

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[1]   The World War Two strategic alliance between the USA and the USSR began fracturing along foreseeable ideological lines before the war had ended, and after 1945, relations between the two powers soon returned to mutual suspicion and opposition. At Yalta and at Potsdam plans for the new Europe were of course paramount for all involved, but it was obvious from that point that understandings of what that would be were also divided into two camps; one informed by the Atlantic Charter that wanted an integrated space of liberal economic policies and improved social provision; and the other that saw as overriding objectives national protection and safeguards involving territorial demands, material reparations from and military and political restrictions on Germany. By the time of Churchill's Iron Curtain speech at Fulton in March 1946, the writing was on the wall. The history of Europe and of the world in the post-war decades quickly became the history of the Cold War. This continuing state of affairs unfolded against a backdrop of themes, trends, programmes and imperatives engendered by the need to replace state nationalisms with

This series of events was to bring unprecedented turmoil and dissension to the communist movement as a whole. The destruction of the Stalinist myth and with it the myth of the 'infallibility' of the Soviet system, together with acts of Soviet aggression towards, apparently, rank and file communists in the autumn of that year, sent shock waves around the world. Events in Hungary resulted in 2,500 dead, 13,000 wounded and 200,000 Hungarian nationals fleeing to the West via Austria as refugees. Attitudes towards Soviet authority across sections of the international communist movement and on the part of hundreds of thousands of communist

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more modern forms of government. These themes and trends centred on; the reconstruction and construction of Europe in physical, practical, financial terms and with regard to questions of collective security; and on the relinquishing of overseas territories and protectorates on the part of the historical colonial powers. Decolonisation reflected on one hand the increased profile and assertion of nationalist movements and leagues and on the other a widespread, although not universal, recognition that the time had come for change. In order to enshrine, protect and further all of the above objectives a number of international and supra-national organisations were established or reconfigured. In the West, the main examples of these were the UN (I945), NATO (1949 April), ECSC (1951), EURATOM / EEC (1957). In the Eastern Bloc, the main parallel bodies created at different moments as responses to Western initiatives were the Cominform (1947), the Comencon (1949 – 1991) and the Warsaw Pact (1955). On political, strategic and diplomatic levels the post-war decades were characterised by polemics, tensions, threats and stand-offs. Added to which, the sometimes intricate, sometimes crude displays of ideological and political rivalry on the part of the two power blocs, played out in a permanent state of international alert, as each possessed its own nuclear weapons and global strategic interests as counterweight. During our period there were broken accords, coups and proxy wars such as the Greek Civil War 1946-9, the Korea War 1950-3. The period 1945-56 was defined by a series measures and counter-measures including

- the Truman Doctrine declared on 12th March 1947 marked a shift in US foreign policy in regard to the Soviet Union from *détente* to containment, pledging economic and military aid to Western European countries at risk of communist take-overs of the kind there had been in Eastern Europe since and running counter to agreements reached at the Yalta Conference,
- the expulsion from government of the Western Communist parties on May 4th 1947 at the request of the United States US Secretary of State Dean Acheson had warned Truman in February of that year of the strong possibility of a communist take-over in Europe
- the Marshall Plan (named after Secretary of State George Marshall) June 1947 – 1951 was an aid programme in the form of monetary loans and the provision of other goods and materials for the reconstruction of Europe (it was also offered to but refused by Eastern European countries)
- the Berlin Blocade 24 June 1948 – 12 May 1949 was the first real Cold War confrontation and it was the first to give rise to military casualties. It involved a struggle between the Soviets and the Allied Powers for control of the city Germany itself was the Cold War symbol *par excellence* as centre stage of East - West administrative, ideological, political controversy and confrontations. It was seen by the USSR through the lens of historical experience as its biggest potential military and strategic threat, and by the West as key to European reconstruction and thereby as the first line of post-war defence in preventing a communist takeover in the region. Not surprisingly therefore, it was the site of the first Cold War crisis resulting in the division of the country into two separate states until the end of the beginning of the 1990s. It was also the point at which the USSR began its gradual but measurable decline.

sympathisers in the West would never be the same again. [2] And it is to this period that the crystallisation of key ideological and practical trends in international Communism can be traced:

- Polycentrism (from 1956 onwards); which was a move away from Soviet centralism towards an international movement of Communist Parties with national specific orientations and agendas; long associated with the then leader of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) Palmiro Togliatti and directly linked to his credo of an 'Italian road to socialism' that had provided the ideological underpinnings of his 'New Party' of mass integration in 1945 (see 'Salerno Turn' pp. 76)

- The humanist vs. anti-humanist critiques of Marxism (from the late 1960s) as expounded notably by Louis Althusser and Roger Garaudy respectively; the former based-on an interpretation of the XX Congress of the CPSU as having engendered an ideological backlash to any type of 'tyranny'; and the former, as its having constituted a landmark on the road to social democracy

- Eurocommunism (in the 1970s); a movement more appropriate to Communist Parties operating in Western European democracies in the post-Stalinist era than outdated - and by then compromised if not discredited - programmes underscored by unthinking compliance with Moscow; spearheaded by the then PCI leader Enrico Berlinguer and subscribed to eventually, in much smaller measure and in piecemeal fashion, by the French Communist Party (PCF) under George Marchais.

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[2]   From this point onwards the Cold War increased in intensity with a number of worrying technological and diplomatic developments and turns complicating and compounding the situation - notably the production of American and Soviet long-range missiles, the colonisation of space and the Sino-Soviet split.   For communist parties in the West 1956 marked the commencement of a prolonged period of discussions regarding and experimentation with more 'autonomous' forms of communism, and for some communists, particularly intellectuals, it was the point at which they started to question Moscow's influence and / or to distance themselves from the Party (although the Soviet invasion of Prague in 1968 would proved to be the deciding factor in this regard for many communists) dissatisfied with what they saw as both its failure to fulfil its role as vanguard party of the revolutionary left and at the same time its inherently conservative, authoritarian, sectarian nature and practices. This predicament made room for and occasioned the advent of a number of more humanistic, more inclusive, less bureaucratic, less 'party political' movements in the late 60s that included the 'New Left' (alternative, revisionist politics), Third Worldism (the belief that the West was irretrievably contaminated with capitalist values, however there was also in this tendency an implicit critique of existing communism) and single issue politics (seen by proponents as a form of direct democracy giving long overdue attention as they saw it to issues surrounding human and civil rights).

1.1 The project

Reactions .... focuses on the impact of the Soviet actions in Budapest in the final months of 1956 on the PCF / PCI and their respective memberships at *regional* and *local* levels. Its objective is to determine extents to which the ensuing turmoil, dissention - and / or audible silences - at national levels, were replicated, for example and in this case, in regional Party strongholds and local communist communities. It concerns itself with the lives and political engagement of Communist Party members in local and regional settings rather than with those of social, political and geographical elites - of which much is already known. Looking at a particular history from below, from peripheries, via a series of in-depth personal interviews supported by documentary evidence, it examines and evaluates for the first time, contemporary reactions of Party militants / former Party militants [3] to these momentous events, in two culturally distinct locations. Consequently it can be seen as a social as well as political project, which seeks to make a pivotal contribution to the debates surrounding communist reactions to the events in question by providing a deeper, more faceted and more complete understanding of the issues involved (see Chapter 2.3).

The project looks at:
- extents to which, ways in which and stages at which local and regional issues, conditions and dynamics factored in how the events in question were received in each of these communities
- it considers the ways in which global issues affected ordinary lives in concrete ways
- whether local / regional issue had a bearing on national Party stances and strategies in relation to our events (see Chapter 7.6).

In so doing, it looks at:

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[3]   It should be noted that at the time of writing the PCF is still in existence whereas the PCI transformed itself in 1991 into the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS), whilst dissidents formed the Communist Refoundation Party (PRC). Since then it has existed in various versions of 'Democratic' Parties.

- the polyvalence of events, of actions, of language, of symbols, as it examines diverse interpretations of these phenomena
- people's horizons as it considers responses to events according to particular roles, situations, perspectives and references
- emotions, as it explores instinctive reactions, measured responses, outrage, ambivalence, denial
- ideological and political convictions of individuals and of groups, and at the very understanding of 'militancy' itself, in context
- Party cultures and the place and role of the individual vis-à-vis those cultures.

The scheduling of this investigation is expedient as protagonists are at the moment of writing in their 70s, 80s and 90s, and therefore time was of the essence if seminal eye witness accounts were to be documented. [4] Via this research it has been possible to recover detailed, explicit and *inedita* information regarding specific aspects of an overlooked history. The evidence provided here is context rich, revealing, often surprising, at times contradictory – *and it manifests distinct patterns*. Findings in part corroborate, in part add to, and in part challenge the received wisdom regarding the reactions of French and Italian communists to our events, and therefore the project itself makes an all-important and timely contribution to the debate.

Whilst studies of a broader, national character are fundamental of course, and must be the starting point for any historical enquiry concerning international events; examining a theme as it relates to a specific community (or in this case a sub-community) allows - invites - new questions to be asked of the past. A given

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[4] Added to which, in a global sense this timing is even more relevant and the information all the more valuable given the reduced number of potential informants in these and other similar locations due to the effects of Asbestos used in the shipbuilding industry up until the 1970s. The long-term effects of this substance on those exposed were of course chronic health problems and / or death. As a result, there are disproportionately fewer surviving shipyard workers in these community locations than there are those who worked in other sectors of the local economy. Certainly, in the context of this study, there were fewer surviving members of this category of worker than there would normally have been, however due to the qualitative as opposed to quantitative nature of the research it was possible nevertheless to compile a representative and replicable sampling frame in each location (see Chapter 3).

community is at once part of a wider context and a distinct articulation in space and time. Fresh perspectives gained via such an enquiry are particularly instructive in shedding light on what was typical, atypical and / or exceptional at any one conjuncture in relation to a particular phenomenon corresponding to particular conditions. And whilst studies that focus on key figures, on national political, centralised decisions and strategies in response to key moments in history are, naturally, a first focus for the historian; the reactions of a range of actors from, for example in this case, Communist Party functionaries at local and regional levels, those fulfilling semi-official roles within the Party structure and the rank and file - are qualitatively as pertinent, often constitute useful correctives to widely held assumptions, and are ignored at a loss to history. The bottom-up, local / regional perspective of this project in relation to contextually significant events is unique, and therefore it presents an essential model of how to understand particular political cultures and party political activism at sites far removed from centres of political power - both national governmental power and in this case - national Communist Party leaderships in Paris and in Rome.

The community focus of this study has a specific relevance and significance within this interpretive framework as the cases themselves i.e. the cohorts of Communist Party members in cells and sections in La Seyne / Toulon, and Monfalcone / Gorizia, were in fact sub-communities of larger communities that constituted the wider membership bodies of the Regional Party Federations (across the *département* / *provincia*), which were in turn component parts of both the national parties PCF / PCI and the international communist movement. Each of the case study communities, to greater and lesser extents, should be understood as a conscious formal grouping of highly politicised, highly committed members acting within a larger pyramidal organisation of like orientation that distinguished itself in its national setting not only in terms of specific ideological beliefs and political objectives, but also in terms of a singularly rigorous internal dynamic.

Was the experience of this crisis different for the French communists due to, arguably, inherent centrist, vertical tendencies in French culture *per se* that found

even stronger expression within the PCF? Was the Italian experience distinct in any way due to the especially strong regional identities that exist in that country at the expense of a cohesive national identity – a phenomenon that is particularly relevant to the fortunes of the PCI in the region in question? Or, despite any culture specific differences that might have had a bearing on the ways in which news of our events was received in the two localities, were responses essentially or ultimately replicate due to the internal organisation of the parties ensuring that the situation was addressed, misgivings aired and communities rallied in the same way, via the democratic centralist principle of 'freedom of discussion, unity of action'? The results of this research stand partially as a test case for the notions that a) the responses of national Communist Parties leaderships reflected nation-wide responses, including those at lower levels and at decentralised points in the party structures and that b) the responses of party militants at those lower levels in France and Italy would have been, as members of a distinct international community, the same or at least very similar within and across the samples. In addition to the reactions to the Soviet interventions on the part of ordinary Party militants in each of these socio-cultural settings, this project looks at:

- national party positions of the PCF and the PCI
- what part national-specific orientations and agendas of PCF and the PCI played in these positions
- the ways in which the respective Communist Party Federations in Toulon and Gorizia handled the crisis at the regional levels e.g. in initiating, facilitating, directing discussion of the issues involved, or in demonstrating unquestioning support of the official party line
- whether reactions of informants in each case location differed in any way i.e. either across single case-studies or across the multiple study and if so why?
- the immediate and long-term effects of the episode in both communities.

Reactions .... recreates the communist way of life, lived in an ideological and organisational framework of 'the Party', which was to all intents and purposes self-defining, self-referential, self-sustaining and all-encompassing. The decision to

become a member of a non-ruling Communist Party as opposed to remaining a 'fellow travellor' or someone who simply voted communist in local and / or national elections [5] was not taken lightly and it was not seen as a short-term option. As always, being a party member required a total commitment on ideological and political levels; anything less would have been antithetical - and essentially precluded in small communities. It was also an unequivocal political statement that on personal and professional levels was not without consequences, and this was as true as ever as things stood in our communities during the mid 1950s. Being a communist has often been described in ontological terms. An individual *became* a comrade - and evidence from this study supports this view, although evidence also suggests that there were cultural and ideological differences in this regard (see Chapters 7, 8). [6]

1.2 Case study approach

This project takes the form of a multiple case study that centres on the shipbuilding towns and ports of La Seyne in the Var region of France and Monfalcone in what is today the Friuli-Venezia-Giulia region of Italy, [7] in their regional contexts. Case studies can prove singularly productive as research models in that they present an invaluable opportunity for the detailed and intensive analysis of a particular reality via interview-based research. They typically have as their subject of analysis a socio-cultural-political phenomenon as it manifests within a specific group or community (although in the wider sense subjects can include events, policies, practices,

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[5]   A proportion of the electorate in La Seyne for example, would vote for the Party strategically in local elections purely as a result of its success in office as regards delivering social and material improvements.

[6]   Nevertheless, the term party 'militant' in this study is essentially synonymous with party 'member' due to the fact that becoming a member of the French or Italian Communist Party was at that conjuncture and in those particular contexts a true commitment in itself that by definition required active engagement in the political life of the party on a daily basis. Whilst this appears to be borne out in large measure, things were not quite that simple.

[7]   In 1956, the region of Venezia Giulia comprised the Gorizian Province (with the town of Gorizia the provincial capital and Monfalcone as its second largest town and industrial centre) and the former Free Territory of Trieste (incorporated into Italy in 1954). In 1963, the region of Friuli-Venezia-Giulia (FVG) was instated comprising the Provinces of Gorizia, Pordenone, Udine and Trieste as the regional capital. (Regions in Italy were set-out in the Constitution of 1946 but not put into effect until the 1960s). FVG is an autonomous region with a special statute due to its border location and particular history.

processes, entities etc.). Their unique quality is that they can provide a link between phenomenon and context.

The multiple case-study provides the conceptual framework for identifying the characteristics of two or more single case-studies in locating patterns of convergence, divergence and specificity where they exist across an extended sample, and in this way they can serve to test existing theories and generate new understandings. 'Put simply, this design entails the study using more or less identical methods of two contrasting cases. It embodies the logic of comparison in that it implies that we can understand social phenomena better when they are compared in relation to two or more meaningfully contrasting cases,' and the results of this type of research tends to be viewed as more convincing as a result, (Bryman, 2004, p. 53). They provide access to primary evidence 'on the ground' as well as the privileged perspective of 'over-view'. But contemporary comparative studies are more than merely descriptive. Far from being 'inert' they are heuristic, seeking explanations for the constants and variations they identify. It is *the very act of comparison* that throws-up new insights, and new dilemmas. [8]

1.3 Case-study description

Both case-localities were at the time (and are) the largest administrative divisions and industrial centres of like nature in their respective department or province; both shipyards are located at the furthest points from their respective capital cities; both were economically and politically distinct, in similar ways, in their regional settings at the time; both had a similar sized population of a similar socio-cultural-economic composition; and both enjoyed high levels of communist support. Therefore these two localities offer a valid and indeed optimal comparative base that lays bare similarities and differences where they present.

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[8]   Nevertheless, the comparative process must not become an end in itself. There can be a risk that the writer lose sight of the true subject of enquiry in favour of indulging a literary device. This would render the study tangential and inevitably undermine its integrity.

La Seyne / Toulon in the Var region of France	Monfalcone / Gorizia the Gorizian Province, in the Venezia-Giulia region of Italy in 1956 (currently Friuli-Venezia-Giulia)
La Seyne **Industrial suburb** and largest administrative division of Toulon (at 8 km from Toulon), in the Var region, on the *Côte d'Azur* **Toulon:** administrative departmental capital and predominantly *conservative* town due to the main naval base in the Mediterranean with attendant administrative presence and political influence; strong left-wing presence in shipyards (including workers from La Seyne); paradoxically, there was a distinctly better relationship between PCF and SFIO in local council / community than in La Seyne **La Seyne**: point of reference for communists in the region, therefore in this study Toulon considered *in relation to* communist bastion La Seyne **Location of La Seyne:** Province-Alps-Côte d'Azur; 840 km from Paris **Main industry:** shipbuilding; parent company *Société des Forges et Chantiers de la Méditerranée* in Marseille ; the shipyards in French context located at furthest point from the capital **Auxiliary industries:** chemicals **Population of La Seyne in 1956:** 26.000	**Monfalcone** **Industrial suburb** and largest administrative division of the Province of Gorizia (at 25 km from Gorizia) on Italy's North-East frontierwith Yugoslavia **Gorizia:** administrative provincial capital and predominantly *conservative* town; public sector economy; historically *Contea Principesca* of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; light industry on outskirts; context not naturally conducive to communist politics (for Federation of Gorizia, Monfalcone was the trump card and main political reference) **Monfalcone**: point of reference for communists in the Province, therefore in this study Gorizia considered *in relation to* communist bastion Monfalcone **Location of Monfalcone:** Gulf of Trieste; 629 km from Rome **Main industry:** shipbuilding; parent company *Cantieri Riuniti dell'Adriatico* in Trieste (since 1959 *Fincantieri*); the shipyards in Italian context located at furthest point from the capital **Auxiliary / other industries:** chemicals, textiles **Population of La Seyne in 1956:** 24. 589 (calculated from 1951 / 1961 censuses)

Ethnic composition (main features of): - *original population:* French nationals - 30% of population of Italian extraction, result of pre and post war immigration (political / economic)	*Ethnic composition* (main features of): - *original population*: majority Italian speaking / minority Slovenian speaking - incoming contingent of mainly southern Italians to work in public sector during the Fascist regime - sizeable contingent of Italian speaking Istrians as the result of post-war influx
Socio-economic conditions of La Seyne 1945-late 50s - shipyards completely destroyed, town 60% destroyed - *harsh economic conditions*, slow recovery into late 1950s - 1956: 1 in 6 people directly employed in shipyards	**Socio-economic conditions of Monfalcone 1945-late 50s** - shipyards completely destroyed, town relatively undamaged due to geographical position of shipyards on outskirts of town - *harsh economic conditions*, slow recovery into late 1950s - 1956: 1 in 7 people (in the area surrounding Monfalcone (in the 'Monfalconese') directly employed in shipyards
Socio-political nature of local community in La Seyne in 1956 - open, tolerant community of mainly: second / third generation Italian (and Corsican) economic and / or political immigrants, the vast majority of whom were naturalised as French citizens; small numbers of Spanish immigrants / migrants result of Civil War; and the original population - easy cultural / political / socio-economic assimilation of Mediterranean peoples (after a certain tension re. high levels of pre-war Italian immigration) - communists / communist sympathisers in the majority, and in local political power - *intellectuals*: the Var region did not have a large community and / or numbers of intellectuals (as defined in	**Socio-political nature of local community in Monfalcone ni 1956** on one hand: - Christian Democrat majority of centre / centre right / right: irredentist / pro-Italian local population, a percentage of whom had come from other parts of Italy during Fascist regime; plus elements of incoming Istrian exiles; distinct anti-communist element within this broad grouping on the other: - open, tolerant, mixed community of Italian / Bisiac dialect (Venetian derivation) speaking majority and small Slav minority - Italian-speaking majority had grown organically with the development of the shipyards since 1907 - numbers of communists reduced as a result of post-war ideological and economic emigration to the new Yugoslavia - *intellectuals*: Venezia-Giulia did not have a large community and / or number of intellectuals (as defined in the purist sense

the purist sense of academics, writers, artists etc) as did certain other regions or large cities in France, due to its socio-economic nature & composition / distance from the capital etc.	of academics, writers, artists etc.) as did certain other regions or large cities in Italy due to its socio-economic nature & composition / distance from capital etc.
Socio-economic nature of La Seyne - *working class town* identity due to shipyards - *population* 1907: 19.747 - *shipyards established*: 1825 – 1988 (from 1580 in pre-industrial form) - *prior to this*: agricultural economy, fishing	**Socio-economic nature of Monfalcone** - *working class town* identity due to (shipyards / surrounding areas) - however town itself Christian Democrat due to: the way in which local economy developed; the demographic / political shifts that occurred during the Fascist era and in the immediate post-war period that changed the political nature of the town / region - *population* 1900: 5.000 approx. - *shipyards established*: 1907 – date - *prior to this*: agricultural economy, fishing
Local politics - strong left-wing identity of town due to local economy - Socialist mandate 1919-40 - legacy of progressive politics in the region since mid C19 symbolised by the reference to *le Var Rouge* ('red' here signifies socialist) - left-wing influence of Italian political exiles during interwar period and smaller number of Spanish émigrés 1936-9 - *town itself :* Communist controlled 1946 – 85 (Socialists 2ⁿᵈ political power during that time) - this history between Socialists / Communists was the cause of much post-war hostility mostly at level of local politics exacerbated by Communists' successful administrations - the friction inevitably felt to an extent at community level	**Local politics** - strong left-wing (communist) reputation of town as identified with shipyards, port and surrounding areas - left-wing elements legacy of being part of relatively progressive federation style of Austro-Hungarian Empire 1797-1918, which accommodated socialist groupings - also legacy of communist-led resistance to Fascist regime 1922-1943 - *town itself :* Christian Democrat controlled until 1983 (Communist Party 2ⁿᵈ political power during that time) - post-war discrimination against communists on part of local political establishment and employers - exacerbated by communist 1945-7 campaign to make the region part of Yugoslavia - industrial workforce came from

	surrounding areas which were either communist controlled or with strong communist support
Distinctions in regional context - *regional specificity* in context: sea border region facing North Africa, in our period, one of the transit route for troops to Algeria - C19 Var region historically 'maverick', strong left wing (historically 'socialist') identity and opposition to Paris government - La Seyne characterised by particularly bitter relations between Communists and SFIO - *departmental capital* Toulon significant right-wing presence / influence due to its historic as a major naval base	**Distinctions in regional context** - *regional specificity* in context: border region between post-war Yugoslavia and Italy, historically contested territory, politically problematic and in terms of 'national' identity, C20 strong left-wing / communist 'opposition' to traditional authority in region - *provincial capital* Gorizia significant right-wing presence / influence due to its history as administrative centre dating from the Austro-Hungarian period - 'Italianisation' of its population during the Fascist era with the implantation of state workers from the south and other parts of Italy - May-June 1945: 40 days rule of Tito in 1945 (Trieste, Gorizia and the Littoral) - town physically split between Yugoslavian Italian sector in two for the period 1945-September 1947 - influx of Istrian exiles when that region passed to Yugoslavia after the war
- *virulent left-wing (communist) element* in Toulon was located in and emanated from in the naval dockyards - as opposed to the tensions between Socialist and Communists in La Seyne, Toulon had viable working relationship with the Socialists	- *left-wing influence* in Gorizia came from relatively small contingent of Italian communists / large sections of the many Slovenian communities in the town itself and its surrounding areas
- *La Seyne* generally *seen as* a working class town due to shipyard economy, communist bastion since post-war	- *Monfalcone generally seen as* communist bastion due to shipyard economy, its 'red belt', pre-war anti-fascist resistance, WW2

political success (from 1947) based on WW2 Resistance record - *communists in La Seyne seen as* insubordinate, hard core militant by PCF Federation in Toulon	Resistance - *communists in Monfalcone seen as* militant extremists by PCI Federation in Gorizia
Shipyards and ports in La Seyne - *one of the largest, most important* shipyards in the country with an international reputation - Port: a constructed feeder port for local industry (main international multi-function port in Toulon) - *communist bastion*: due to WW2 resistance record and the popularity and success of certain local political leaders - *industrial centre* of activity in the department - *situated* 200 metres from town - *Confédération Général du Travail* near union monopoly in shipyards: at this time the PCF / CGT were tightly linked - *CGT membership* mixed but its leadership made-up exclusively in 1956 of PCF members - CGT had to fight privately owned FCM employers for conditions - *1956*: 3.800 members of the of local population directly employed in shipyards (those working in naval shipyards in Toulon number unknown)	**Shipyards and ports in Monfalcone** - *one of the largest, most important* shipyards in the country with an international reputation - Port: a constructed feeder port for local industry (main international multi-function port in Trieste) - *communist bastion*: due to pre-war anti-fascist resistance, WW2 Resistance of notably shipyard workers and their post-war activities - *industrial centre* of activity in the province - *situated* circa .5 km. from town centre - *Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro* near union monopoly in shipyards: at this time the PCI / CGIL were tightly linked - *CGIL membership* mixed but its leadership made-up of almost exclusively in 1956 of PCF members - CGIL had to fight state sector (IRI) for conditions - *1956*: 6.975 members of the local population directly employed in shipyards
Why La Seyne important to Federation - *ideological / political / economic* - political reference, the Federation's regional centre of gravity	**Why Monfalcone important to Federation** - *ideological / political / economic* - political reference, the Federation's regional centre of gravity

- for this study, Federation considered *in relation to* party structure in La Seyne - this was also the case to a large extent vis-à-vis the national party leadership, although the naval shipyards in Toulon were also important - Communist Mayor and MP cachet and influence for Party on local, regional, national levels - post-war reconstruction meant premiums for contracts went straight to PCF (not, as in other Parties, retained by local politicians / officials) - *high numbers of PCF members* - shipyards privately owned and therefore dealing with industrial matters was effectively taking-on capitalist system - *CGT/ Party link strong*; most effective union body, political and capillary function - post-war opportunity to be the voice of the working class in La Seyne and by extension to smaller industrial points / other economic sectors in the region	- for this study, Federation considered *in relation to* party structure Monfalcone - this was also the case vis-à-vis national party leadership - important contestation in shipyards and surrounding areas to Christian Democrat political hegemony in town / region due to pre and post-war political and economic demographic shifts - as opposed to Gorizia, which was traditionally a bourgeois town / administrative provincial capital and therefore a less militant environment - *high numbers of PCI members* - shipyards state owned, 'IRI', and therefore dealing with industrial matters was effectively dealing with Italian government - *CGT/ Party link strong*; most effective union body, political and capillary function - anti-fascism born in the shipyards, therefore ideological link to communism strong and enduring within community
PCF Var Federation - (**Toulon**): 4.564 members - **La Seyne** (and St. Mandrier): most important of 20 sections politically and in terms of member numbers (410 in town section alone)	**PCI Federation of Gorizia** - (**Gorizia**): 4.966 members - **Monfalcone:** most important of 25 sections politically and in terms of member numbers (1.352 in town, shipyards and factory sections)

1.4 Structure of the thesis

As this is a dynamic comparative study and not merely a description of two case studies, the main body of the work (Chapters 5 – 8) is structured according to a

chronological / thematic model. The chronological aspect of the study foregrounds key moments and developments leading up to, including and following the Soviet interventions in Hungary at international, national, regional and local levels.

The nature, extent and consequences of these developments *on each of the two case communities* are then compared *to their respective national discourses* in relation to macro events. This comparison highlights the significance and influence of local issues, conditions, values, perspectives, time-scales in relation to the way in which larger issues are perceived and experienced in local contexts. Research findings in each case-study are then compared *to those of the other case-study*. Finally, the overall findings are considered *in relation to international forces* and the interconnectedness of human affairs as global issues, factors, trends and tendencies impacted on small communities and touched the lives of ordinary people. This research model provides a graphic and coherent template for what is a multi-layered and multi-faceted enquiry. It automatically locates any co-occurrence and discontinuity and allows this to be accounted for clearly and contextually as it:

- permits time sequence and themes to be brought together

   i.e. global / local issues, events, agendas, developments, standpoints

- facilitates the measurement and evaluation of the unfolding dynamics of international, national, regional and local phenomena

   e.g. international and national events .... to regional and local contexts

       regional and local events .... in their own contexts

       regional and local issues and conditions .... vis-à-vis national perspectives and responses

- locates issues, factors, themes and dynamics at all levels and from all directions, allowing those at local / regional levels in particular to be brought into relief

- highlights analogies and anomalies across the two examples that in turn highlights comparative historical processes in play

- offers the 'proximity' of the micro historical enquiry that explores the deeper effects of larger issues; and the 'distance' of a transnational perspective that distinguishes global forces, exchanges and networks.

There is of course a significant measure of horizontal, temporal overlap to the analytical framework, reflecting the impact or cumulative impact of issues or events and developments at any one time on either of the two communities for whatever reason. There are also vertical markers across the framework - that sometimes coincide - of national, national party, community specific phenomena that reflect national, national political and local issues.

The project is organised in 8 sections:

Chapter 1 (this chapter) provides an orientation to the study by: presenting the macro historical context in which our events unfold; outlining the study's objectives; discussing the case-study approach *per se,* introducing the case-locations themselves, looking at the historical and political identities of the towns and in general and with particular regard to the Communist Parties and their members; and detailing the structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2 presents the rationale of the project and sets out the contribution it makes to the field by identifying and discussing a) existing works that address key aspects of its subject matter i.e. the PCF / PCI, the Cold War and decolonisation and b) conceptual aspects of its design i.e. micro history, oral history, memory *per se*, dominant discourses, and myths.

Chapter 3 describes and discusses in detail methodological approaches adopted for the research - looking at: the transnational / local / regional perspectives; the internal logic of the study; research strategy; data collection / assessment / analysis; procedural issues; and questions of ethics.

Chapter 4 draws for the first time on personal testimonies of the participants in this study to provide the local and regional historical contexts leading up to our period and situate the communist cultures in La Seyne and Toulon, Monfalcone and Gorizia immediately prior to 1956. In this way it allows a sense of what was transformed by events that year, and explains the attitudes and perspectives that affected the

informants' reactions to the Soviet interventions i.e. it provides the interpretive pathways through the detailed micro history that follows.

Chapters 5-7 constitute the main body of the thesis that looks at global / regional / local factors and at new or new treatment of empirical evidence. An integrated approach is taken in the examination of a) *the interconnecting layers of international, national, and localised issues, trends and phenomena* that took their effects in our two communities in specific ways and b) *those effects and the divers and often dramatic tensions they introduced for ordinary communists* as evidenced in a varied range of documentation and as provided in detailed personal testimonies by a representative selection of individuals who experienced them.

Chapter 8: this section presents the findings of the research and draws a number of distinct and significant generic conclusions that have been brought to light by the in-depth, comparative, transnational approach. It demonstrates the way in which this unique synthesis of subject matter and chosen methodologies has open-up new understandings of the complexities of post-war, Western European communist culture/s. It identifies and discusses avenues of further enquiry that have emerged from these findings, and it looks at the informants' retrospective analyses of the Soviet interventions and their medium and long-term implications for the communist movement regionally, nationally and internationally.