• Christian confederation: need to work for all, regardless of their view on class struggle

Early twentieth century

• 1920/21: PCF set up
• Lenin called for 21 conditions to be adhered to
• Condition 9: each part should work within trade unions and support positions of Communism
• History of very vigorous trade union activity on the part of PCF members
• PCF members working within CGT
• It split as a result
• 1920: Confédération générale du travail unitaire (CGTU)
• This became Communist
• Front Populaire was next important moment when you see reunification of Communists, Socialists and Anarchists in a trade union
• Front Populaire important in history of left and labour movement
• Léon Blum became Prime Minister
• Communists not in government, but supported almost all of what it did
• This was a government born of the fight against Fascism
• Strikes began to push the government further left
• Strikers argued that reforms did not go far enough
• Maurice Thorez was leader of the PCF at the time
• He uttered a declaration which was condemned by people both in and out of the PCF
• “Il faut savoir terminer une grève dès que satisfaction a été obtenue”
• “You should know you need to end a strike as soon as the demands have been satisfied”

Emergence from WWII

• Trade unions were dissolved by the Occupier
• Communists in informal labour movement
• Very much criticised until 1941
• When Germany invaded the USSR, Communists joined the Resistance
• 1947: a year when there were a lot of strikes
• A year that was intense in terms of strikes
• Communist ministers were obliged to leave government
• Communists emerged strengthened from the war
• Trade unionism did as well
• CGT appealed to workers to support reconstruction
• Some saw this as a time to seize power
• Leadership appealed for those who were armed to hand back their weapons
• 1960s: fairly calm for trade union activity
• 1964: Confédération française démocratique du travail (CFDT)
• Formerly known as CFTC
• This was becoming closer to Socialist Party