

Le Dives-Palace

Opened in 1929, the Dives-Palace gradually took over the functions of the cooperative's cinema, and could be transformed into a ballroom.

It also hosted workers' rallies.

In May 1913, following the suicide of a Polish worker who had been fired while he was sick, 500 metal workers demonstrated during his funeral and gathered at the Dives-Palace.

In February 1934, it hosted a major meeting for a "common workers' front against fascism".

In 1943, the venue was temporarily closed down following demonstrations expressing hostility towards Laval, the head of government of maréchal Pétain.

After the Second World War, the cinema, a social hub, contributed to the unrest that was to shake up the town's political colours, eventually leading to the election, in 1953, of its first Communist mayor, André Lenormand. A former worker at the factory, and a resistant and deportee during the War, he was also a member of parliament from 1946 to 1958.

The workers' leisure time was split between activities such as family walks, gardening, fishing, music, sports, pigeon fancying, and theatre... This effervescent multitude of activities and associations created a genuine working class culture.

Legend

The Dives-Palace. The recently-opened venue played its part in the birth of the talkies with this screening of *Accusée, levez-vous!* by Maurice Tourneur. 1930, Jacques Gauthier collection.

Legend

1934 poster for a meeting at the Dives-Palace, J. Quellien collection.

Legend

The Harmonie La Dives wind orchestra was founded in 1882. It was involved in all "ceremonies", celebrated the saint's day of Sainte Cécile, patron saint of musicians, and took part in musical competitions. Photograph, J. Fligarek collection – *Un fleuve pour la liberté, la Dives*.