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Engagement and the French Nationalist Right: The Case of the Jeune Droite

The notion of 'commitment', the idea of the *écrivain engagé*, usually conjures up the image of the existentialist milieu of the postwar French Left. Sartre's writings of the late 1940s on the responsibility of the intellectual come readily to mind. In fact, the 'committed' writer not only predated the Second World War but could be found outside the confines of the intellectual Left. Historians, to be sure, have not ignored what might be called the 'prehistory' of the *écrivain engagé* as it emerged in the Popular Front era: the fellow-travelling itineraries of Gide, Malraux and lesser lights in their circle have received considerable attention.[1] Yet the focus has been almost exclusively on the antifascist Left — so much so that the origins of intellectual *engagement* have come to be virtually equated with individuals, organizations and publications surrounding the Popular Front. This emphasis has continued despite the admonition of two leading historians of French intellectuals, issued in the mid-1980s, that the interwar intellectual Right was every bit the equal of its leftist counterpart.[2] As I hope to demonstrate, certain young intellectuals of the Right, in fact, began to fashion a nationalist version of the *écrivain engagé* at about the same time as their adversaries on the Left. Admittedly, this version employed a different vocabulary and looked to very different political goals. Yet certain parallels are striking. Writers on the Right, like those on the Left, despite their initial tentativeness, concluded they could not remain on the sidelines in the face of the chain of events that began with Hitler's arrival in power in 1933, intensified with the events surrounding 6 February 1934, and reached a fevered culmination with the arrival of the Popular Front in power. Moreover, the study of

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commitment on the Right not only contributes to a more balanced picture of the intellectual forces operating in the 1930s but throws light on the construction of the interwar nationalist intellectual and an important subset of that prototype, the fascist and *fascisant* intellectual.

Some years ago, David Schalk, tracing back the roots of modern notions of commitment, pointed to the importance of the so-called *non-conformistes* circles of the early 1930s.[3] Perhaps the most striking characteristic of the *non-conformistes*, who gathered around a number of small, elite reviews, was the depth of their pessimism. Their writings were pervaded by an all-consuming vision of decadence, a vision that extended beyond their nation to encompass Western civilization itself. Yet, in the end, this seemingly dark vision of the *non-conformistes* was not a recipe for despair; it offered, as a kind of counterpoint, the alluring prospect of total regeneration. Further, displaying an inflated sense of intellectual entitlement, exceptional even among interwar French *littérateurs*, the *non-conformistes* proclaimed that it would be the 'mission' of their generation — for whom they served, of course, as an advance-guard — to undertake the task of national and civilizational regeneration. This, they claimed, would first require a proper analysis of the causes of the crisis; but, given its severity, 'pure intelligence' would not suffice. Passive reflection would have to be translated, at some point, into action. Here, in this shift to a more active perception of the role of the intellectual among the young *non-conformistes*, Schalk perceptively noted, one could find arguments that would later be expanded during the Popular Front mobilization.

Schalk had singled out Emmanuel Mounier, founder of *Esprit* and soon to become associated with the rise of a new Catholic Left, as the author of a rudimentary but recognizable version of *engagement*.[4] Mounier, however, was not the only *non-conformiste* to develop an early formulation of intellectual commitment. At about the same time, the Jeune Droite, a coterie of young nationalist intellectuals also part of the *non-conformiste* configuration, began to sketch out a rightist prototype of the *écrivain engagé*. Though the various individuals that composed the Jeune Droite were not of a single mind, their social, political and cultural attitudes had been shaped by a common influence — that of Charles Maurras. By dint of their educational credentials and their obvious talents, they seemed destined to renew the

intellectual capital of Maurras's Action Française, a movement that, by the early 1930s, seemed sorely in need of renewal.

The most precocious of the core group that formed the Jeune Droite was Robert Brasillach, later to become one of the most infamous of France's 'literary fascists'.[5] His entry into the political arena, like that of many on the literary Left who embraced communism in the 1930s, cannot be separated from his growing conviction that aesthetic detachment, in the deepening crisis of the mid-1930s, was untenable. Brasillach, however, was not alone among his circle of literary friends to arrive at the threshold of fascist-style political involvement by passing through a period in which a reconsideration of the responsibilities of the writer became a central concern. From the perspective of the early 1930s, the only figure among the Jeune Droite to have achieved some visibility in Parisian literary circles was Jean-Pierre Maxence; several others, though yet to make their mark, would become important figures in literary and journalistic circles in the postwar years.[6] They included Jean de Fabrègues, who later became editor-in-chief of *La France catholique*; Maurice Blanchot, among France's most influential postwar literary critics; and Thierry Maulnier, who became a front-page editorialist for *Le Figaro*, an influential voice on the postwar intellectual Right and, in 1964, a member of the Académie Française.[7] It was Maulnier, more than the others in his coterie, who took it upon himself to formulate a coherent stance on the role of the nationalist writer in politics.

Though the Jeune Droite emerged in the early 1930s as part of a self-styled generational movement, its principal intellectual inspiration, ironically, came from two men who came of age before 1914. That the first, as indicated, was Charles Maurras is perhaps unsurprising given his influence on twentieth-century French nationalism. But it was not only Maurras's nationalist 'doctrine' that influenced his younger protégés. Dating back to his *L'Avenir de l'intelligence*, first published in 1905, Maurras sounded the call for a new-style intellectual who would oversee the restoration of 'French intelligence'. According to Maurras, the latter had been debased, successively, by the intellectual revolutionaries of the eighteenth century who engineered the destruction of the *ancien régime*, the romantics of the early nineteenth who promoted passion over reason, and, finally, by those

writers later in the century, who, yielding to the siren call of the market, prostituted themselves for monetary success.

Writing from the perspective of the 1930s, Jérome and Jean Tharaud, two leading conservative literary figures, could still recall the inspiration that Maurras's *L'Avenir* had provided them as struggling young writers before 1914. His invitation, they remembered, had been to disdain the 'merchants of gold', who would turn them into their 'lackeys', and, foregoing monetary reward, to join with him in the company of those working to 'restore to intelligence its lost authority [and] to writers their prestige'. At the same time, the Tharauds further recalled, Maurras had served to disabuse 'youth' of the notion that the 'party of intelligence was that of the Revolution'.[8] In short, they found in Maurras what the Jeune Droite was to rediscover a generation later: not simply the author of a 'doctrine', not just the apologist for a certain vision of France and France's civilizational mission, but the defender of an idealized version of the French *littérateur* and the spokesman for an early, reactionary version of the *écrivain engagé*.

A second and no less critical intellectual influence on the Jeune Droite can be credited to another, somewhat younger, polemicist of the nationalist Right, Henri Massis. In July 1919, Massis issued his famous 'Party of Intelligence' manifesto in *Le Figaro* where he took the lead in framing an intellectual agenda for the interwar Right. Significantly, the manifesto opened with a presentation of Massis's view of the role of the intellectual in the postwar world: 'public opinion' had a need to be 'guided and protected' and it was 'the role of writers, truly conscious of the peril' facing civilization to provide that guidance and protection.[9] From one perspective, the *Figaro* manifesto represented a continuation of the highly successful prewar campaign, in which Massis and Alfred de Tarde, under the pseudonym 'Agathon', had attempted to rally the 'generation of 1912' to the banner of a national renaissance. In Massis's view, the mission of the generation of 1912 — the mobilization of French national energies for a war against Germany — had been successfully accomplished; the victory not only preserved France physically but, no less importantly for Massis, preserved France's role as civilization's advance-guard and protector.[10]

But it was a precarious victory. As Massis looked across the postwar landscape, he saw an 'unspeakable confusion' stalking

the continent. Moreover, new menaces to civilization loomed on the horizons — to the east, the threat of Bolshevik-style revolution, to the west, the spectre of American-style materialism. Yet, in spite of these perils and to Massis's dismay, influential intellectuals, led by André Gide and his fellow *littérateurs* at the *Nouvelle revue française*, called for a 'demobilization of intelligence'. The movement to demobilize intelligence represented an admission — an anguished one for many — that an important segment of the intellectual community had been successfully enlisted in the propaganda campaign on behalf of the war.[11] This was an interpretation, of course, that Massis vigorously rejected. But to his growing frustration, as the first postwar decade progressed, Gide's influence, along with the vogue of the demobilized intellectual, grew apace. Whereas Agathon spoke, with some plausibility, for the youth of 1912, the postwar generation, Massis ruefully admitted, had been won over by Gide and the *NRF*.[12]

But all was not lost. Twentieth-century generations have had remarkably short half-lives.[13] By 1930 Massis decided that the time was ripe for the launching of another Agathon-style campaign mobilizing the energies of 'the new generation' in the service of national renewal. To that end, he began recruiting suitable personnel. From the École Normale Supérieure, he enlisted two budding literary talents, Brasillach and Maulnier. From his connections in the Catholic intellectual world, he befriended a circle of young neo-Thomists, including Jean de Fabrègues and Jean-Pierre Maxence. These two groups were to form the core of the Jeune Droite. Its first major initiative was an *enquête* published in *Candide* at the end of 1931 under the provocative title, 'la fin d'après guerre'.[14] The parallels with Agathon's prewar survey were striking. Its author, Brasillach, proclaimed the death of one generation — André Gide's 'generation of 1920' — and the birth of a new one — his own 'generation of 1930'. At one level, recalling the experience of the young Massis, the survey proved an effective way to launch a literary career.

Yet, clearly, Brasillach aimed at something more. His real target was the larger vision of the writer, a vision promoted by Gide and given expression in the pages of the *Nouvelle revue française*. Massis, one of Brasillach's obviously planted respondents, delivered the indictment. The writers associated with the *NRF*, obsessed by their own psyche and determined to 'recount

every last depravity of man', seemed determined to Massis to make literature into a branch of abnormal psychology. From this unhealthy fixation on their own psyche, he continued, other failings followed: their predilection for novelty and their arrogant rejection of tradition; their fondness for artifice and empty gesture; and, most especially, their proclivity to escape the 'real' and evade their responsibilities as writers.[15] To this, Brasillach, with help from his respondents, counterposed the outlook of the writers of the emerging generation — 'his' generation of 1930. Unlike their predecessors, these writers did not see the world born anew with them but looked back to a cultural legacy; instead of looking inward toward themselves, they turned outward, eager to observe and act in the world; and, finally, as distinct from Gide's disciples, they were ready to reassume their responsibilities as part of the elite that would 'protect and guide' public opinion. Further, the Jeune Droite eagerly emphasized that the notion of a 'crisis of civilization', which Massis had first integrated into a larger nationalist idiom in the immediate postwar, had both expanded and sharpened.

In fact, by 1932, certain Jeune Droite intellectuals had begun to carry the notion of crisis, together with the intellectual's responsibility for its resolution, a step beyond their mentor's earlier formulation. In that year Jean-Pierre Maxence could claim that one benefit of the crisis — which, by 1932, had expanded to include the effects of the Depression — was that it shifted the writer's attention to the external world. With 'escape' no longer an option, young writers were forced to 'observe what was happening at their doorstep and in their own country'. This, Maxence continued, would inevitably lead them, as it had led the young Maurice Barrès several generations earlier, to a realization of the importance of politics. Which is not to say, Maxence added, that young writers, following Barrès, must run for the Chamber of Deputies; but it will be necessary for them to find, like Barrès before them, 'a post from which to observe man, a means of getting outside themselves'. The great danger of self-involvement, according to Maxence, is that the writer arrives at a 'sort of emptiness' where he can no longer find within himself objects that are concrete, 'objects of love or of hate'. The passion necessary to inspire the writer, if he is to remain alive and vital, requires 'objects' upon which to focus — 'objects', interestingly, that excite not only 'love' but 'hate'.[16] Yet, for Maxence, it was

not just a matter of stimulating the passion necessary for creation; the current crisis was a human crisis of momentous proportions. Could the young writer, in the face of the human catastrophe engulfing the world, remain self-absorbed? 'A man who searches, who lives, who dreams, who thinks . . . can he remain indifferent to the immense adventure of men, which is first of all *his* adventure? Even rivers themselves', Maxence concluded ominously, 'flow under our eyes *as if they were carrying blood*'.[17] Maxence, for his part, was soon to join Jean Renaud's Solidarité Française, an early attempt to create a fascist-style league in France.[18]

As Brasillach admitted in his later memoir *Notre avant-guerre*, Maxence was a dynamic presence among the young intellectuals of the nationalist Right in the early 1930s.[19] By then, he had already published two volumes of essays and, at the end of 1931, had become editor of the *Revue française*, the first of a number of Jeune Droite initiatives. Another recruit to the Jeune Droite, Maurice Blanchot, saw Maxence as a formative influence. Writing in late 1933, Blanchot observed that many of the arguments worked out over a number of years by Maxence in isolation had now gained wide currency. And what, Blanchot asked, was Maxence's essential message? It was that writing cannot be separated from events; that the writer who does not find in himself 'objects of love and hate', who experiences only 'exhausted passions', has failed his calling; and, finally, that the writer needs to push himself to decision and to define himself through action.[20]

It is not without a certain irony that by the time Blanchot published his appreciation of Maxence at the end of 1933, the *Nouvelle revue française* was moving steadily in the direction of *engagement*. Just a few years earlier, the *NRF* had serialized Julien Benda's *La Trahison des clercs*, widely perceived as the classic defence of intellectual detachment.[21] But now, by 1933, André Gide — the Jeune Droite's exemplar of the detached, 'demobilized' intellectual — had not only entered the political fray but was working to bring the *Nouvelle revue française* along with him. The story of the gradual abandonment of the *NRF*'s earlier apoliticism, recently chronicled by Martyn Cornick, serves as a necessary backdrop to the further evolution of the Jeune Droite's conception of political commitment for two interrelated reasons.[22] First, the prestige of Gide's *NRF* through the

whole interwar period was such that its influence extended, if only as a negative foil, into the camp of its avowed enemies. Second, Thierry Maulnier, who would soon replace Maxence as the Jeune Droite's most articulate voice on behalf of a version of nationalist *engagement*, paid considerable attention to intellectual developments among his ideological adversaries. In fact, it is not too much to say that Maulnier formulated his views, perhaps more than any other figure in the interwar nationalist intellectual camp, as a kind of running argument against those on the centre and Left whom he considered worthy intellectual opponents. This certainly included Gide and many of the regulars at the *NRF*.

Like many writers of the decade who had vaguely leftist but as yet politically unchannelled proclivities, Gide was brought into politics by a conjuncture of deeply felt fears and extravagant hopes. The fears were of fascism and war, almost always paired in the early 1930s; both fears were exacerbated by the reanimation of a militant German nationalism in the early 1930s. The hopes centred on Soviet communism, not only as a political counterforce to fascism, but, increasingly, as an alternative to liberal civilization, widely assumed in the early 1930s to be in a state of disintegration. These fears and hopes — mixed in various and differently weighted combinations — help produce that characteristic phenomenon of the second interwar decade: the fellow-travelling, committed intellectual. Gide, despite his aestheticism and his reputation as an unreconstructed individualist, which seemed to make him an unlikely candidate for such *engagement*, was to become an early French exemplar of the phenomenon.[23]

If Gide's conversion to a position that was at once antifascist and pro-Soviet came early and seemingly easily, the struggle to bring his fellow writers at the *NRF* aboard was more difficult and, in fact, never fully achieved. The most serious resistance came from the review's editor, Jean Paulhan, who worked to keep the review politically independent and above ideological divisions. Gide scored an early victory when, as early as mid-1932, over Paulhan's strenuous objections, he engineered the publication of Romain Rolland's call for a world peace conference.[24] From Paulhan's perspective, to publish the text, especially without any editorial distancing, was to promote a communist-sponsored activity, thus throwing the review unambiguously into the political fray.[25]

Undoubtedly, the appearance of Rolland's text would have been less worrisome to Paulhan had it not occurred against the backdrop of an even more egregious violation of the *NRF*'s vaunted political neutrality. That violation was the serialized publication of entries from Gide's *Journal* in which that most influential of the *NRF*'s stable of luminaries openly declared his sympathies for the Soviet Union. Moreover, the effect was heightened by the words in which Gide chose to express himself, words that evoked the childlike faith and soaring hopes of a religious neophyte in the throes of conversion.[26] It should be noted, however, that Gide's pro-Soviet stance did not go unopposed. He was attacked from many quarters, including some of his closest associates at the *NRF*. Ramon Fernandez, the *NRF*'s highly regarded literary critic, even suggested that Gide had been manipulated by those with greater political sophistication.[27] Yet, if Gide's faith in the Soviet Union seemed misplaced to a number of his *NRF* colleagues in mid-1932, that number had dwindled considerably by mid-1934.

The almost exact calendar year that elapsed between Hitler's assumption of power in Germany at the end of January 1933 and the events of early February 1934 in France proved a critical threshold. Not only had an aggressively nationalist regime effectively destroyed the neighbouring German Republic but, in the view of many contemporaries, domestic nationalist forces had conspired to destroy and, indeed, had almost succeeded in destroying the French republic during the street rioting of 6 February 1934. In the wake of February 1934, Paulhan, having given up all hope of keeping the *NRF* out of politics, set himself to the more modest goal of achieving a semblance of political balance. The imminent danger, from his perspective, was that the *NRF* would become identified not only as a political organ, but one espousing a particular ideological message.

Preventing this, he soon realized, would be no easy task. The events of February seemed to many to vindicate Gide's early politicization. Further, by early 1934 the issue was not one framed in simple political terms — that is, the endangered republic looking for defenders — but in cultural terms as well: the humanist legacy, common coin of the *NRF*'s regulars, needed its defenders against the avowedly *anti*-humanist upsurge of fascism. In fact, the logic of Gide's 'conversion' rested on two sets of assumptions: first, that liberal Western societies, anchored

in unjust and failing capitalist institutions, were sliding into fascism and, hence, endangering the humanist culture that had historically justified them; and, second, that the Soviet Union, whatever its growing pains, offered the prospect not only of a new society based on socialist justice but of a new culture, one which would revitalize the humanist legacy.[28] Seen from this perspective, the movement of many literary intellectuals toward politics was not so much an abandonment of aesthetic and cultural concerns as a growing conviction that the two — the cultural and the political — were increasingly and inextricably intertwined.

Symptomatic of Gide's growing influence over intellectuals moving toward *engagement*, as Cornick has observed, were two separate pieces appearing in the *NRF* in April 1934.[29] The first took the form of an open letter to Gide. It was written by Ramon Fernandez, who, not long before, had criticized Gide in the pages of the *NRF*. Though not ready to accept the discipline that membership in the Communist party entailed, Fernandez openly embraced Marxism, which, to his lights, had become not only 'the sole rampart of the oppressed' but the natural refuge of beleaguered humanists. French intellectuals, Fernandez warned, must avoid the 'terrible error' committed by Italian and German intellectuals — namely, the error of keeping faith with liberalism. They must, as a necessary first step, admit a discomforting reality: 'Liberalism is dead.' Following that admission, they must recognize the 'necessary rapprochement' between 'the interests of the proletariat and those of intellectuals'. The reasoning that led Fernandez to this conclusion was one that, though often voiced in fellow-travelling circles, was rarely spelled out so economically or so unencumbered by qualification:

> Here is for me the essential point: *the intellectual needs the working class in order to know himself completely. And, inasmuch as the worker needs the intellectual in order to imagine himself, there exists between the two a rigorous relation of reciprocity*.[30]

The effect of such a claim, at least on literary intellectuals, cannot be minimized considering Fernandez's very considerable influence.[31]

The second piece, an essay by an aspiring young literary talent, René Etiemble, offered evidence that Gide, long a literary influence on the younger generation, had now become a political one as well.[32] Defending Gide against his detractors, Etiemble

argued that his sudden and much-discussed adoption of a political stance was, in reality, not so much political as moral in its genesis and, as such, was completely consistent with the humanism that he had long espoused.[33] After all, Etiemble asked, '[w]hat is the goal of humanism if not to people the earth with individuals proud of their nature as men [and] conscious of their human responsibilities[?]'. And, he concluded provocatively, 'How does a humanism, thusly conceived and lived, differ *in essence* from communism?'[34]

Further, by the spring of 1934 Gide's path to antifascist commitment, which involved a rather blatant form of fellow-travelling, was no longer the only path available. The newly launched Comité de Vigilance des Intellectuels Antifascistes (CVIA) differed from existing organizations like the Association des Ecrivains et Artistes Révolutionnaires (AEAR) in that, although it included communists in its ranks, it was not communist-controlled. This opened the door to a form of *engagement* that was antifascist without being either openly or covertly pro-communist.[35] As Cornick has pointed out, the number of *NRF* regulars who, by the spring of 1934, were willing to sign antifascist manifestos like the one that launched CVIA was impressive. The list included *NRF* insiders like Roger Martin du Gard who had previously been critical of Gide's openly pro-communist antifascism.[36]

The *NRF*, in this respect, serves as a window on an important segment of the community of literary intellectuals. It reveals the degree to which, from a relatively early date, a number of these intellectuals, heretofore vaguely sympathetic to the Left but politically uninvolved, began to gravitate toward commitment. As early as 1932, certain contributors, most notably Gide, began to associate openly with communist-front organizations and publications.[37] The events of February 1934 in France, which represented the culmination of a series of setbacks for antifascist forces elsewhere in Europe through 1933 and into early 1934, represented an important watershed. What had been a small stream of artists, writers and savants meandering toward some form of commitment, now deepened and widened, becoming, by the spring of 1934, a swift current. It was, however, a current that would have minimal political consequence as long as the traditional parties of the Left remained deeply divided. Here the main obstacle remained the French Communist Party, which, in the

aftermath of the events of February, seemed eager to reassert its long-standing 'class against class' intransigence.

That obstacle, however, was suddenly lifted in late June 1934 when Maurice Thorez, in a dramatic volte-face, announced that the Communists were ready for 'unity of action' with the Socialists. The subsequent announcement, scarcely a month later, that a 'united front' agreement had been reached seemed to signal the end of the long blood feud between Communists and Socialists that had crippled the postwar French Left. With the announcement of the 'united front', the briskly moving currents of intellectual commitment on the Left suddenly found release into the larger flow — soon to became a torrent — of frenetic political activity.

Like his friend Jean-Pierre Maxence, Thierry Maulnier had become convinced by 1933 that, given the tenor of the times, the nationalist writer could not remain isolated in an aesthetic cocoon. And like Maxence, he was attentive to larger developments in the literary milieu. Writing in late 1933, Maulnier observed approvingly that many of the leading writers of the day — from Valéry and Gide to Céline and Malraux — had turned their attention to larger political and cultural themes. Rehearsing an argument that he and his friends had first developed during the *fin d'après guerre* campaign, he asserted: 'The facts impose themselves on us. The destiny of nations, the destiny of the species are too gravely implicated in the problems of the moment for *l'esprit* to ignore them.' Further, Maulnier argued, the intervention of 'intelligence' cannot remain at the level of 'abstract theories or detached observations'. Intelligence must find a way 'to participate, in a sort of militant manner, in the collective destiny, in defending or overturning or edifying values'. Among these values, Maulnier included 'ideologies' that, he insisted, should not be seen as 'pure games nor rigid doctrines but as attempts to justify a given action [and] the means of building the strength of a movement'.[38] In short, Maulnier seemed ready to conceive a role for 'intelligence' that was, at once, public and instrumental.

Yet Maulnier's path to commitment, unlike Maxence's, was not a straight one. More given to consider all sides of an argument, Maulnier came to a committed stance only after carefully weighing competing options. For example, in the same article in which he seemed ready for unambiguous *engagement*, Maulnier

also raised serious reservations. Intellectual interventions, Maulnier warned, presented grave dangers. One could not ignore that leading writers in Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, abdicating their proper role as creators of doctrine and 'guides of popular sentiment', had become mere conduits for political propaganda. Further, he argued, such abuses, if more egregious under Hitler and Stalin, were not restricted to them; they had, in fact, become endemic in 'le monde moderne'. 'We live under the empire of vulgar values, [which are] servile [and] thus utilitarian. Modern man has great suspicion of that which is not useful'; hence, the propensity of 'modern men', including intellectuals, to feel the need to justify themselves in terms of their utility. This, in turn, was leading to an 'incontestable danger' — namely, that the intellectual, pressed on all sides by a sense of crisis, will seek out 'in political, national, and social struggles, a sort of justification, an excuse for his existence, as if his existence had any need of excuses'. Thus, curiously, an argument that began as a plea for intellectual participation on instrumental grounds, seemingly turned, mid-course, into one against the instrumental uses of intelligence. To feel the need to justify one's existence, Maulnier asserted, would be to 'risk losing the idea, absolutely essential to all humanist civilization, that there are *des êtres humains de luxe*, like *des objets de luxe*, whose sole function is to exist'.

Yet, just as Maulnier seemed ready to reverse himself and condemn instrumentalism, his argument took one final, dialectical turn, coming to rest on what might be termed a higher instrumentalism. Though one should never 'subordinate intelligence' to any 'inferior end' — certainly not democracy, or progress, or humanity, or even *la patrie* — one can demand that intelligence 'spread and enlarge . . . the culture from which it emerged'. Thus, Maulnier's *humains de luxe*, whose sole duty, seemingly, was to exist, in fact, operated under a larger Nietzschean imperative: 'the duty to take sides between life and death'. And for *humains de luxe*, exemplars for Maulnier of aesthetic 'intelligence', the choice for 'life' was coextensive with protecting and enlarging humanist culture.[39]

Maulnier's musings concerning the intervention of intelligence in public life, having been occasional before the spring of 1934, now became not only much more frequent but filled with a new sense of urgency. As the campaign mobilizing Left intellectuals around a platform of antifascism picked up momentum,

Maulnier began to perceive the outlines of a massive *trahison des clercs* whose ranks, he noted sardonically, were swelling with erstwhile defenders of intellectual detachment. His anxiety in this regard focused on two related developments. The first and most obvious concerned the role that communists appeared to have had in organizing large numbers of prominent intellectuals, most heretofore politically uninvolved, into an antifascist, pro-Soviet front. The second development — even more worrisome, for Maulnier than the first — was the success of the communists in convincing many of these intellectuals that communism, though seemingly an alien and inhospitable doctrine given their own traditions, could be interpreted as an extension and a completion of the legacy of Western humanism.

Symptomatic, for Maulnier, was the April 1934 issue of the *NRF*, which contained the Fernandez and Etiemble pieces. For Maulnier, among the intellectual confusions put forward by the two contributors, none was more 'bizarre' than the confusion surrounding the use of the word 'humanism'; it was mistakenly conflated with humanitarianism, with which, to Maulnier's lights, it had no connection. This conflation led Fernandez, for his part, to look toward 'the collectivist revolution [as] the supreme recourse of a *humanisme menacé*'. Maulnier, noting that this confusion was increasingly frequent, took the opportunity to posit his own conception of humanism and to trace its misguided conflation with humanitarianism to its source:

> Humanism, that glorious desire of select *esprits* to reach the refinement of intuitions and instincts . . . has been contaminated by the foolish ambition to share with the entire species those spiritual goods which have meaning and virtue only if they are the preserve of a small number [of individuals] and by the hope, quite ignoble in the end, of an impossible and detestable leveling of conditions and *esprits*. Humanism and the haughty distrust that it displays toward the self and toward others is thus mistaken for the vilest complacencies toward man, for the crudest myths among . . . modern cults, the cult of humanity [and] the cult of progress.[40]

By mid-summer 1934, with French Communists and Socialists moving toward a united front, Maulnier's sense of alarm grew apace. He argued that the antifascist coalition among intellectuals, which began as a marginal operation, was rapidly becoming generalized. What was most disturbing, from Maulnier's perspective, was the growing intellectual heterogeneity of the coalition: political moderates like Alain and Julien Benda were

now ready to fight 'under the same flag' as fellow-travellers like Henri Barbusse and Romain Rolland. Representatives of a 'conservative Radicalism', which had long been the main prop for the 'established, democratic and parliamentary order', now stood, shoulder to shoulder, with partisans of 'revolutionary Marxism', which styled itself 'collectivist, proletarian, and dictatorial'.

What could be said, Maulnier asked, about such an incongruous alliance? One might be tempted to argue that it was only the fear induced by the shock of 6 February 1934 that allowed for the accommodation of such seemingly disparate ideological positions. This, however, would be a 'superficial judgment', Maulnier concluded. Liberal democracy and Marxist collectivism, after all, represented the same 'struggle against natural superiorities, the same egalitarian faith, the same uniformity . . . imposed upon individuals'. Democratic society, by 'uprooting individuals from living organisms and from *cadres naturels*', by reducing them to impotent and isolated atoms, had, in fact, 'prepared the *poussière d'hommes* demanded by the collectivist factories'. Following the general lines of the Maurrassian script, Maulnier concluded that democracy and socialism, both offspring of the ideas of 1789, were rooted in the same 'egalitarian furore', the same 'irremediable vulgarity'. Thus the emerging Popular Front intellectual coalition could not be easily dismissed out of hand as a purely tactical move, one dictated solely by political imperatives. Maulnier cautioned, however, that this was only one side of the issue. Many of the intellectuals who rallied to the 'common front' were not, as one might expect from their polemics, 'primaires obscures'. Some, Maulnier admitted ruefully, were 'esprits' of undeniable 'importance and quality', representatives of the illustrious tradition of 'literary individualism'.[41]

Yet these larger problems notwithstanding, Maulnier reasoned, the most immediate concern was the ominous political threat represented by the united front. From a purely political standpoint, Marxist revolutionaries and representatives of the partisans of parliamentary democracy had recognized their common interests and were organizing to do battle. 'Will the nationalist parties reveal themselves more hesitant, more irresolute? Will not the activity and the arrogance of the enemy unite them once more?'[42]

Jean de Fabrègues, writing in late 1934 on behalf of the

Catholic element of the Jeune Droite, seemed no less ready than Maulnier to view with alarm the emergence of the united front on the Left. Nor any less ready to draw the political consequences. Since only 'saints' and 'animals' can live outside human society, we Catholics, Fabrègues asserted, must choose our side in the great struggle. And, given the current polarization, there are only two sides: the first favours materialism, determinism, and an anti-Christian conception of man; the second stands in 'defence of the family, national unity, [and] *des cadres sociaux naturels*'. To be sure, certain critics have argued that behind the lofty principles defended by the latter lurk material interests. These charges, Fabrègues admitted, are not without foundation; those who employ worthy principles to defend base interests must be exposed. However, Catholics cannot lose sight of the larger issue: in the current crisis two very different 'conceptions of human destiny' are at stake. 'Can we, therefore, remain outside the struggle that is being prepared — that, already in fact, is engaged?'[43]

By the end of 1934, with a new mobilization of intelligence proceeding apace in both camps, only a few isolated protests could be heard. Among the dissenting voices was that of Jean Schlumberger, a friend of Gide and, with him, one of the *NRF*'s founders. Schlumberger took issue with the uncritical tone of the recent political commentary in the pages of the *NRF*. His piece, besides taking aim at Gide and the growing contingent of fellow-travellers around him, raised larger questions about the responsibilities of the intellectual and the proper limits of *engagement*.[44]

Typically, Maulnier accepted Schlumberger's opening to elaborate his own position on the subject — a position that, given his already-noted hesitations, was still not fully formulated. At the outset, Maulnier seemed in full sympathy with Schlumberger's call for 'impartiality' on the part of intellectuals. Such impartiality did not require, as Maulnier interpreted it, that the intellectual be completely detached from earthly concerns; it did require, however, a modicum of 'prudence'. Clearly, Gide's uncritical embrace of the Soviet Union, tantamount to a profession of faith in a communist future, was unacceptable. As a matter of general principle, Maulnier seemed ready to accept Schlumberger's critique of the new-style intellectual: 'If there is a primordial duty reserved for intelligence, it is not to become blind, and not to accept the blind submission to a cause'; though 'intelligence'

might engage from time to time in the political debate, it must resist mobilization on behalf of a programme or enrolment in a party.[45]

Yet, if one might agree that such mobilizations and enrolments were, in principle, an evil, were there not, Maulnier asked, exceptional times when they might be considered a 'necessary evil'? And if one admitted such exceptions, Maulnier further demanded, would not the present qualify as such a time? His reasoning in this regard was revealing: 'One cannot fail to recognize the addition of energy and efficacy that the enrolment of intellectuals can give to *nations or parties* that are enemies of our culture. *Is it not necessary to respond with a comparable enrolment?*' Not to respond in kind, Maulnier concluded, would be equivalent to refusing the full mobilization of the able-bodied when facing an invasion by a fully mobilized adversary.[46] As his metaphor suggests, for Maulnier the cultural struggle could be equated — without the slightest suggestion of irony — to a war waged against a national enemy.

The degree to which Maulnier had been 'mobilized', and the way in which this mobilization manifested itself, was only fully revealed at the end of the following year during the heated debate over whether sanctions should be imposed upon Italy in the wake of Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia. The Action Française, speaking for much of the French Right — albeit in a less accommodating tone — took up the defence of Mussolini. For the neoroyalists, the Italian alliance was the cornerstone of the French security system. The political subtext here was very large. To alienate Mussolini, the Maurrassians reasoned, would force Italy into the arms of Nazi Germany, creating an ideological 'fascist' bloc, while, at the same time, pushing France into the camp of an opposing 'antifascist' bloc, led by the Soviet Union. This sombre picture turned even darker as the neoroyalists contemplated the likely possibility of a Popular Front electoral victory in 1936: the French Communist Party, taking its marching orders from Moscow, would, neoroyalists assumed, easily dominate a Popular Front government and, hence, become masters of the French state.

The work of teasing out the civilizational implications of the Abyssinian affair was undertaken in a manifesto published in the pages of *Le Temps* on 4 October 1935, two days after Italian

troops began operations in Abyssinia. Its author, not incidentally, was Henri Massis. From one angle, the 1935 manifesto was an update of Massis's 'defence of the West' campaign of the 1920s. Interestingly, however, the active agent carrying forward the West's values and institutions was no longer France, as it had been in the immediate postwar, but Mussolini's Italy. Representing 'young Italy', Mussolini was doing civilization's work in Abyssinia, where he had assumed the burden of the West's colonizing mission. After all, Massis claimed, the 'great peoples' of the West like the English and the French owed their greatness, in no small measure, to their '*oeuvre colonisatrice*, which remains one of the highest and most fecund expressions of their vitality'. For the French people, 'whose colonial empire occupies a fifth of the globe', to condemn 'young Italy's' colonial aspirations would be not only transparently hypocritical but, assuming sanctions were applied, would mean ruin to 'the most precious country in our world'.

In fact, it was not just Italy that was threatened but the humanist legacy itself, Massis asserted. To challenge the colonial impulse, he argued, was to challenge 'the notion of *man* himself, the legitimacy of his possessions and his titles — all things that the West has, until now, held as superior and to which it owes its historic grandeur with its creative virtues'. Yet one should not be surprised to hear such challenges, Massis admitted. They followed logically from liberal articles of faith, especially that most dangerous of Genevan fictions, 'the fiction of the absolute equality of all nations'. Those who fight for sanctions operate from the premise of 'a false juridic universalism' that proclaims the equality of all — 'the superior and the inferior, the civilized and the barbarian'. How else could they uphold the independence of 'an amalgam of *tribus incultes*' against the civilizing mission launched from the Latin West?[47]

Judged by the reaction the manifesto stimulated, Massis had not lost his touch for framing issues, stirring controversy, and mobilizing opinion. Described by one student as one of the 'plus mobilisatrices' of the interwar petitions, it finally brought together over eight hundred names; among them were leading academicians, most of the influential voices of both the moderate and Maurrassian Right, and, significantly, all of the leading young neo-Maurrassians associated with the Jeune Droite.[48] From one perspective, the manifesto represented a response to

the Popular Front's attempt to appropriate culture by equating its antifascist struggle with the defence of civilization. Massis, in effect, defended Mussolini's Italy as a Western colonizer and, hence, not unlike France, a civilizer of the uncivilized. To deny such a role to Italy was, implicitly, to question French colonial prerogatives as well as France's larger civilizational claims.

From another perspective, Massis's manifesto represented an appropriation of its own. Before the Abyssinian crisis the parties of the Left had successfully identified themselves with the cause of peace and, conversely, had cast their nationalist adversaries as dangerously belligerent. Massis reversed the terms of this convention. If the sanction campaign succeeded, he charged, it would 'unleash a war without precedent', pitting European against European. Casting the Left as the party of war and calling upon the nationalist Right to mobilize on behalf of peace proved an important juncture. According to Jean-François Sirinelli, Massis's manifesto should be seen as a 'significant milestone' in the growth of a 'neo-pacifism of the Right'.[49]

From the beginning, Thierry Maulnier took an active part in the Ethiopian press campaign. Even before Massis's manifesto was published, Maulnier had written a piece for the *Revue universelle* arguing that the Italian designs on Abyssinia must be seen in the context of 'defending the West'. Mussolini's initiative in Africa, he asserted, was an affirmation by the 'white race to sustain its vitality and to maintain its role as director [of civilization] in the years to come'.[50] Any attack against Mussolini's Italy could only be viewed as an attack against 'all of us'; those who refuse to stand with Italy 'betray the entire cause of civilization'. Like Massis, but even more explicitly, Maulnier was ready to trace the 'betrayal' to its roots: the egalitarianism preached by democratic philosophers 'who take a singular joy' in equating 'what is noble and what is vulgar, what is civilized and what is savage, what is Italian and what is Ethiopian'. This egalitarian outlook 'is the refuge of all those who are ignorant of or who hate the beautiful and necessary hierarchy of the superior and the inferior'.[51] In all of this, Maulnier faithfully followed the authorized Maurrassian antidemocratic text, including quasi-mandatory reference to the first great historical enemies of 'civilized man' — Luther and Rousseau.

However, if the antidemocratic tenor is distinctly Maurrassian, Maulnier's larger argument revealed a critical departure. It was

one made possible, in this case, by the remarkably malleable image projected by Mussolini in the mid-1930s: a paragon of order, stability and authority for some; a prototype of youthful revolt, dynamism and charismatic leadership for others. For Massis, Mussolini had his dynamic side, making him attractive to the young; but he was essentially a man of order and a defender of Western values — even, however implausibly, an exemplar of 'Christian man'. By contrast, it was not Christian virtue but pagan *virtu* that defined Maulnier's Mussolini. For Maulnier, what was most characteristic of the *transformation mussolinienne* was its deployment of 'creative vitality, *élan*, energy, youth'. To be sure, Maulnier expressed his habitual reservations concerning 'the inner principles of fascist civilization'; like his mentor Maurras, Maulnier took exception to the fascist emphasis on the totalitarian claims of the Fascist state. Yet Mussolini's Italy, as a force of renewal in a decadent Europe, had a privileged place in Maulnier's schema. On this point, Maulnier spoke, uncharacteristically, without qualification:

> In a Europe where many writers have freely admitted the first signs of aging, of organic disorder, of indolence and degeneration, Italy is one of the first places in Europe where, against this decadence, a reaction has commenced.[52]

It was not, in this case, simply a matter of a young, Fascist Italy offering selective 'lessons' to an old, liberal Europe. By its resurrection of an élan lost in modern times, Mussolini's Italy was, in effect, *reliving* the early history of the West:

> This spirit of creation, of youth, of conquest that Fascism displayed in its domestic programme, this spirit that drains marches, builds cities, puts youth in stadia . . . is the same spirit that the Duce intends to carry now to the fevered African lands . . . Creation, conquest, expansion, risk, adventure, heroism, *youth*, virtues that London and Geneva condemn now in the name of a comfortable immobility, as a danger to tired nations [and] that today are Italian and fascist, are the very same virtues, it must be recognized, that created the dominance of Western man at his apogee.[53]

Within a few months of the end of the Abyssinian crisis, the leading figures of the Jeune Droite had come together to launch a new review. The name these young neo-Maurrassians chose for their venture — *Combat* — is revealing. It advertised the fact that, whatever lingering doubts they might have harboured about political commitment, they were now fully prepared to engage in

the political struggles about to reach their apogee with the Popular Front elections of the spring of 1936. Their adoption of a committed stance — as indicated above — had not come easily. The case of Maulnier, by 1936 the most articulate voice of the Jeune Droite in political matters, reveals a lingering ambivalence. Here a parallel with a segment of intellectuals on the moderate Left is suggestive. For many of these Left intellectuals, especially those connected with the *NRF*, the path from the 'demobilization' of the 1920s to the remobilization of the 1930s was travelled with hesitant steps. Gide's early commitment was the exception rather than the rule. What became decisive for many *NRF* regulars was the increasingly menacing image of 'fascism'. In this regard, late 1933 and the early months of 1934 were crucial. While across the Rhine Hitler's astonishingly swift consolidation of power dashed early hopes that Nazism was a momentary aberration, in France the events of early February 1934 raised the spectre of domestic fascism.

Just as the image of fascism had haunted Gide and his circle, that of communism raised apprehensions, albeit somewhat later, in the ranks of the Jeune Droite. The early mood of optimism, fuelled by the events of 6 February 1934, that the long-heralded 'national revolution' was in the offing had largely dissipated by the summer of that year. French communists, once isolated and maligned, were now at the centre of a mobilization of a heretofore divided Left. What had been an abstract fear of communism now became frighteningly concrete for the neo-Maurrassians. And, as with fascism for the Left, the menace represented by communism was complex. At one level, it was simply a competing political ideology, more dangerous perhaps, but like any other political challenge; at another, in its cultural guise, communism was a deadly peril precisely because it aimed beyond workaday politics and toward the humanistic values that, for the neo-Maurrassians, sustained civilization itself. Moreover, these dangers were played out simultaneously within France, where communists were the partisan enemies threatening the internal cohesion of the nation, and on the international stage, where France's very survival as a great power was at stake. In this regard, the neo-Maurrassians shared a perception common to much of the French Right at the time: namely, that it was hardly coincidental that a united front orchestrated by communists at home had emerged in tandem with a Soviet-led ideological

crusade against Nazi Germany in Europe. Hence, the emergence of a 'neo-pacifism' among many on the Right, including the young neo-Maurrassians.

Yet for the Jeune Droite fear of communism was just one side of a coin; on the other stood the allure of fascism. Once again, a parallel suggests itself. Gide's commitment, as has been seen, was not merely a negative rejection of fascism. The presumption, increasingly shared in Gide's circle, was that one could not fight effectively against fascism from the ground of a hopelessly corrupted liberal republicanism. One needed, as it were, a positive alternative; and that alternative, for many, became Soviet-style communism. In a like manner, the staff of *Combat* became utterly convinced that the liberal republic, whose decadence they long decried, could offer no barrier to a communist-style revolution that they believed was being prepared under the auspices of the Popular Front. Holding actions would be of no avail; only a pre-emptive 'national revolution' would suffice. Though Maulnier and his friends consistently denied they were importing foreign doctrines — neighbouring regimes provided 'lessons' and not 'models', they insisted — the true sources of their inspiration were all too transparent.

An important caveat remains. There was certainly nothing predetermined about these alternative routes that led to communist fellow-travelling in one case or fascist fellow-travelling in the other. Certain individuals, both at the *NRF* and among the neo-Maurrassians, chose to turn off at one or another of the places where the route branched along the way to communist or fascist commitment. Indeed, both Gide and Maulnier — the former earlier and more definitively, the latter later and less definitively — came to question the political end point to which *engagement* seemed to lead them.[54]

But for a time during the Popular Front mobilization, the allure of *engagement* was a powerful one, attracting many not only on the formerly 'demobilized' Left, but on the neo-Maurrassian Right. Here Maulnier at *Combat* stands as a prime example. Clearly, during the heyday of the Popular Front, he had been drawn deep into the 'magnetic field' radiating from the fascist regimes. This attraction operated in the face of strong counter pressures: on the one hand, his Maurrassian origins with its strong anti-German bias; on the other, his deeply ingrained disdain for anything that might qualify his independence of

judgement. In a mirror image of Gide's somewhat earlier evolution, Maulnier's descent into the political arena was motivated both by deep-seated fears and soaring hopes. The fears were animated not only by the apocalyptic vision of a communist-style revolution but by the prospect of a continuation of liberal decadence. The hopes, no less real, were animated by an image of a France, regenerated as a result of her own 'national revolution', and ready to take her place as a worthy partner of the new Italy and the new Germany in a revitalized Europe.

Notes

1. See, for example, the recent issue of *Vingtième siècle* (October–December 1998) examining intellectual *engagement* in the twentieth century.

2. Pascal Ory and Jean-François Sirinelli, *Les Intellectuels en France, de l'affaire Dreyfus à nos jours* (Paris 1986). The recent history of French intellectuals by Michel Winock, *Le Siècle des intellectuels* (Paris 1997), is a notable departure.

3. David Schalk, *The Spectrum of Political Engagement: Mounier, Benda, Nizan, Brasillach, Sartre* (Princeton 1979). This was a milieu first described by Jean-Louis Loubet del Bayle in his *Les Non-conformistes des années 30. Une tentative de renouvellement de la pensée politique française* (Paris 1969).

4. Schalk, op. cit., 17–25.

5. Schalk includes a chapter on Brasillach, but it focuses on the Popular Front years. The best biographical treatment of Brasillach remains Robert Tucker's *The Fascist Ego: A Political Biography of Robert Brasillach* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London 1975). Though several biographies of Brasillach appeared in France in the 1980s, sparking something of a 'Brasillach revival', they suffer, to varying degrees, from an attempt to separate Brasillach the writer and critic from Brasillach the fascist. Most egregious in this regard is Annie Brassié, *Robert Brasillach ou encore un instant de bonheur* (Monaco 1987). For an overview of Brasillach from an historiographical perspective, see Paul Mazgaj, 'Ce mal du siècle: The "Romantic" Fascism of Robert Brasillach', *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques*, Vol. 23 (Winter 1997), 49–72.

6. Maxence is a pseudonym for Pierre Godmé. He had directed a small Christian literary review, *Les Cahiers*, before becoming editor of the *Revue française*, the first intellectual home of the Jeune Droite. In 1933 he became a regular literary critic for *Gringoire*, the most successful of the nationalist *hebdos*.

7. The early careers of all of these figures, as they relate to the Jeune Droite, is sketched in Loubet del Bayle, op. cit. For quite different appreciations of their activities in the mid- and late 1930s, see Eugen Weber, *Action Française: Royalism and Reaction in Twentieth-Century France* (Stanford 1962); Zeev Sternhell, *Neither Left nor Right: Fascist Ideology in France* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London 1986); and Jeannine Verdès-Leroux, *Refus et Violences. Politique et littérature à l'extrême droite des années trente aux retombées de la libération* (Paris 1996).

8. Jérome Tharaud and Jean Tharaud, 'Hommage à Charles Maurras pour son Jubilé littéraire', *La Revue universelle* (1 January 1937), 141–2.

9. Published in the 'supplément littéraire', 19 July 1919.

10. On Massis's prewar generational campaign, see Robert Wohl, *The Generation of 1914* (Cambridge, MA 1979), 3–41.

11. On this topic, see Martha Hanna's perceptive study *The Mobilization of Intellect: French Scholars and Writers during the Great War* (Cambridge, MA and London 1996).

12. On Massis's one-man cultural war with Gide and the *NRF*, see Paul Mazgaj, 'Defending the West: The Cultural and Generational Politics of Henri Massis', *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques*, Vol. 17 (1991), 107–12, 116–17.

13. The increasing compression of generational sensibilities in the wake of the First World War was, according to Robert Wohl, op. cit., a general European characteristic.

14. The series ran from August through October 1931.

15. *Candide* (17 September 1931).

16. 'L'écrivain et l'action', in *Le Rajeunissement de la politique* (Paris 1932), 115–33.

17. 'Positions. Les Ecrivains et l'événement', *Revue française* (25 June 1932), 89.

18. Pierre Milza has claimed that with the formation of Solidarité Française, one 'entre de plain-pied dans le fascisme français'. *Fascisme français. Passé et présent* (Paris 1987), 146. Likewise, the Solidarité Française is seen by Robert Soucy as an important expression of French fascism. *French Fascism: The Second Wave, 1933–1939* (New Haven and London 1995), 59–103. For a somewhat different view, see Gilles Labousse, 'De la Solidarité française au Parti du faisceau français. Un exemple de radicalisation politique', *Vingtième siècle. Revue d'histoire*, No. 58 (April–June 1998), 43–54; Labousse argues that the Solidarité Française was not fascist at its inception.

19. Robert Brasillach, *Notre Avant-guerre* (Paris 1981), 123–33.

20. 'Les Livres: Positions', *Revue du siècle* (October 1933),75–7.

21. As a number of scholars have pointed out, however, *Trahison* is not a condemnation of commitment per se; Benda, a veteran of the Dreyfusard campaign, defended *engagement* of intellectuals in the name of 'universal' values.

22. Martyn Cornick, *Intellectuals in History:* The Nouvelle Revue Française *under Jean Paulhan, 1925–1940* (Amsterdam and Atlanta 1995).

23. For a perceptive recent evaluation of Gide's politics in the 1930s, seen within the context of his literary career and his personal life, see Alan Sheridan, *André Gide: A Life in the Present* (Cambridge, MA 1999), 441–547.

24. Printed in the *NRF* (1 August 1932), 318–19.

25. Martyn Cornick, 'Catalyst for Intellectual *Engagement*: The Serialization of Julien Benda's *La Trahison des clercs* in the *Nouvelle Revue Française*', *French Cultural Studies*, Vol. 4 (1993), 47–9.

26. 'Never', Gide admitted, 'have I looked toward the future with a more passionate curiosity. I applaud this gigantic and yet completely human enterprise with all my heart.' This text, written in 1931, was published in the *NRF* of July 1932, one month before Rolland's text. Cited in Cornick, *Intellectuals in History*, 134; on the reaction to Gide's admission and his subsequent fellow-travelling activities, see Herbert R. Lottman, *The Left Bank: Writers, Artists, and Politics from the Popular Front to the Cold War* (Boston 1982), 25–6.

27. Cornick, *Intellectuals in History*, 135.

28. For a month-by-month account of Gide's evolving attitudes toward the Soviet Union between 1931 and 1935, see Sheridan, op. cit., 441–86; see also Gide's still-useful retrospective published in Richard Crossman, ed., *The God that Failed* (New York 1949).

29. Cornick, *Intellectuals in History*, 140–1.

30. 'Lettre ouverte à André Gide', *NRF* (1 April 1934), 703–8; Fernandez's italics.

31. Regarding Fernandez's reputation, Pascal Ory could write 'Considered by many as the most brilliant literary critic of his generation, this writer, because of his role at the *NRF*, occupied a strategic position in Parisian cultural life.' Ory and Sirinelli, op. cit., 95.

32. Etiemble wrote under the pen name Jean Louverné.

33. 'Conversion?', *NRF* (1 April 1934), 628–48; cited in Cornick, *Intellectuals in History*, 140–1.

34. 'Conversion?', op. cit., 638.

35. Pascal Ory, *La Belle Illusion. Culture et politique sous le signe du front populaire, 1935–1938* (Paris 1994), 93–5; Ory and Sirinelli, op. cit., 96–9.

36. Admittedly, Drieu la Rochelle was recording his growing fascination with fascism in the pages of the *NRF* through the spring of 1934, but his presence by this time, Cornick insists, was merely 'token'. Cornick, *Intellectuals in History*, 84–5.

37. Though Gide never formerly joined the AEAR, he participated in events it sponsored and agreed to be part of the directing committee of its monthly review, *Commune*.

38. 'Nouvelles tâches de l'intelligence', *Revue universelle* (15 November 1933), 500.

39. Ibid., 501–2. The extent to which Maulnier had been influenced by his reading of the German cultural critic was revealed in his *Nietzsche* (Paris 1933).

40. 'Le Collectivisme humanitaire', *Revue universelle* (15 April 1934), 245.

41. 'Une Mésaventure de l'humanisme', *Action française* (26 July 1934), 3.

42. 'Emeutes en province', *1934* (4 July 1934), 6.

43. 'A propos du "bien commun". Necessité de s'engager', *Revue du XXe siècle* No. 1 (November 1930), 38–40.

44. 'Note sur la politique', *NRF* (December 1934), 869; cited in Cornick, *Intellectuals in History*, 143.

45. 'La Mobilisation de la littérature', *Revue universelle* (15 December 1934), 752.

46. Ibid.; my italics.

47. Massis's manifesto is reproduced in Jean-François Sirinelli, *Intellectuels et passions françaises. Manifestes et pétitions au XXe siècle* (Paris 1990), 92–4.

48. Ibid., 92.

49. Ibid., 95.

50. 'Suicide de l'Europe?', *Revue universelle* (1 October 1935), 103.

51. 'La "Morale" contre la civilisation', *Revue universelle* (1 November 1935), 374.

52. 'Suicide de l'Europe?', op. cit., 105.

53. Ibid., 106.

54. See Gide's *Retour de l'URSS* (published in 1936) and Maulnier's *Au delà du nationalisme* (published in 1938).

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