The French Intelligentsia and the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939

Thomas P. Anderson

Loyola University Chicago

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss

Part of the History Commons

Recommended Citation
https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss/750

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact ecommons@luc.edu. Copyright © 1965 Thomas P. Anderson
THE FRENCH INTELLIGENTSIA AND THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR
1936-1939

by
Thomas P. Anderson

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

January
1965
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**INTRODUCTION** ............................................... 1

Chapter

I. MAURRAS AND HIS CIRCLE .................................. 26

II. THE DILEMMA OF THE CATHOLICS: MAURIAC, MARITAIN, CLAUDEL .... 55

III. GEORGES BERNANOS ........................................... 83

IV. SIMONE WEIL .................................................. 114

V. MALRAUX ........................................................ 134

VI. THE ROLE OF THE PRESS .................................... 165

VII. THE ISOLATED INTELLECTUALS: SAINT-EXUPÉRY, GIDE, SARTRE .... 188

CONCLUSION: THE TWO NATIONS .................................. 215

BIBLIOGRAPHY ........................................................ 232
INTRODUCTION

In a generation first disillusioned by the meaningless death of millions in the First World War and then dispirited by a depression equally terrifying and meaningless, the conflict which burst forth from Spain in 1936 awakened a latent idealism which sent men and women from near and far rushing to join one side or other of a battle in which, at last, the issues between good and evil seemed clearly drawn. No one then could have been fully aware that the Spanish tragedy was but the prelude to a new period of unprecedented horror, and that those very people so shocked by the bombing of Guernica would have to take that of Coventry, Hamburg, and Hiroshima in stride.

Nowhere was this idealism more wildly awakened than in France where the Third Republic was being torn to pieces by the prolonged struggle between Left and Right.

"We were ten years old in 1936. For us the war in Spain was primarily a jolt, a spectacle of thousands of scrawny men, women, and children, their few clothes wrapped around them, starving: the Spanish refugees. From that which the adults said, we carried away alarming words, filled with anguish: Hitler, bombers, the fifth column, the war..." Thus do Pierre Broue and Émile Témime begin their celebrated history of the Spanish Civil
War. They were not alone in feeling the shock of this conflict, which flooded France with refugees and the papers of the world with news of its progress, and controversy over its meaning. Our concern here will be with what the war meant to certain men in France, and what they made it mean in the light of their own nation's experience, but before going on, a brief look will be taken at the background of the war itself.

"Work on the Spanish Civil War has not yet reached any sort of climax, for serious investigation has just begun," Stanley Payne reminds us, but enough has been done for us to grasp the outline of the conflict.

To begin with, for most of its history till 1931, Spain had been a monarchy. Since 1702, that monarchy had been of the house of Bourbon, save for an interval during Napoleonic times when the armies of the great French conquerer made an unsuccessful attempt to capture Spain for his brother. The restoration of the Bourbon Ferdinand VII to peaceful possession of the Spanish throne in 1815 produced many problems. For one thing the liberalism of the French revolution had taken root in Spain, and in 1823 Ferdinand ironically had to call in French soldiers to try to stamp it out. After Ferdinand's death in 1834, the liberals supported his daughter Isabella II against his brother Don Carlos who enjoyed the support of the Catholic Church. The result was the Carlist wars, which only succeeded in keeping the country in

---

1 Pierre Broue and Émile Témime, La Revolución y la Guerra de España, translated from the French by Francis Gonzales Aramburo (Mexico and Buenos Aires, 1962), I, 7.

turmoil. Government by pronunciamientos or risings of the military became the general order till the whole monarchy broke down in chaos with the expulsion of Isabella in 1868 by one of her generals. After a halfhearted search for a new dynasty the first Spanish Republic was duly proclaimed. But the republic could not survive, and the Spaniards were forced, reluctantly, to restore the Bourbon monarchy in the person of Alfonso XII in 1875. The supporters of Don Carlos' heir promptly began a new war and had to be suppressed.

This restored monarchy was a highly artificial creation. It was managed by premier Antonio Cánovas del Castillo who, despite the liberal constitution which had been given Spain in 1875, ruled by fraud and force. Those who protested the faked elections stood a good chance of not living to vote again. As Gerald Brenan comments in *The Spanish Labyrinth*: "It is not surprising therefore that the majority of Spaniards—in the country districts the immense majority—preferred to keep clear of politics." This system was perpetuated by the death of the king in 1885 and a long period of regency for his posthumous son, Alfonso XIII. But this regime of duplicity was increasingly hard to maintain. "From 1900 to 1923, the date on which Primo de Rivera overthrew it, the political regime set up by Cánovas was functioning every year with greater difficulty," says Brenan, and he cites as reasons "public opinion" and the disasters of the Spanish-American and the Riff Wars. Also, once he came of age, there was "the undermining action of

---

the King, which prevented the movement for restoring the prestige of the Cortes by free elections from coming to a head and so prepared the way for a victory of the army.\textsuperscript{4} The accumulated disasters of the Riff War ended with the defeat of Anual in 1921 and the way was prepared for a new military takeover. The man who led it was General Miguel Primo de Rivera, a rude, tough army officer from Andalucia.

"Primo de Rivera's experiment in dictatorship," comments Professor E. Allison Peers, "represented a new and attractive-looking attempt to do away with Spain's unchanging phenomenon of continually changing governments, . . . It ended badly . . . but the reasons were inherent in the character of the Dictator and the Spanish people.\textsuperscript{5} The most elemental trouble was the fact that the dictatorship failed to attract those among the Spanish people interested in reform. Its base of support was the army and the Catholic Church. Thus "... his rule rested upon an absolute contradiction. Spain needed radical reforms and he could only govern by permission of the two most reactionary forces in the country. . . .\textsuperscript{6} Another problem the dictator faced was that of the linguistic minorities, the Catalonians in the North East and the Basques in the North Central region, both of which had strong desires to go their own way. Under the first republic Spain had been more loosely federated than ever before, and this freedom was not for-

\textsuperscript{4}Ibid., p. 18.


\textsuperscript{6}Brenan, p. 82.
gotten, especially in Catalonia. The army, however, could not tolerate any kind of separatism and forced Prime de Rivera to be uncompromising. "His repression of Catalan aspirations was particularly severe."7

The business slump of 1929 brought down the regime. In January 1931 the dictator fled the country. "He left behind him no basis for any future regime. For awhile the King attempted to govern as Primo had governed, through a directory of Ministers led by a General. However, there was no powerful section of Spanish society which now supported the throne."8 By January 1931, the monarchy was swept away and in April the Second Spanish Republic came into existence.

This upheaval brought into the open all the insoluble conflicts which were so deep-rooted in the Spanish consciousness and which had remained quiescent during the long period of the Cánovas and then the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera. One concerned the Catholic Church. Supporting the absolutism of Ferdinand VII and then backing the unsuccessful attempts of the Carlists, the Church in the nineteenth century had been an active political force. "From 1874 then, to 1931, the Church, though losing every year its influence with the poor, was gaining steadily in riches and in political power. The death of Alfonso XII led to a great strengthening of its position. In return for Leo XIII's special protection the Queen Regent dealt out money and patronage with a lavish hand."9

7Ibid., p. 83.


9Brenan, p. 47.
"The Spanish Church," as Broue and Témime comment, "was an anachronism derived straight from the Middle Ages with its 80,000 priests, monks, and religious. [Actually this is an oversimplification, for the Church and its relationship with the state had been modified first by Ferdinand and Isabella and later by the Spanish Bourbons.] Its temporal power was considerable. . . . The inquest of the Ministry of Justice, effected on the day following the proclamation of the Republic attributed to it 1100 properties estimated to be worth 130 million pesetas. Its urban properties were no less considerable; it was a power in the world of finance."\(^{10}\)

Liberalism, the "timid, respectable, and conservative" liberalism of the day, as Brenan calls it, was the archenemy of the Church. "What sin is committed by him who votes for a liberal candidate?" asks an official catechism of 1927. "Generally a mortal sin," is the correct answer.\(^{11}\) "The Church," concluded Brenan, "presented . . . an insoluble problem, and when in the end the majority of the population abandoned it in despair at its political intransigence and burned churches and killed priests in revolutionary—I might almost say in true Catholic and filial—anger there is surely nothing to be surprised at."\(^{12}\)

The Catholic Church was not the only intransigent ideology in Spain. In competition with her was the extremely strong Anarcho-Syndicalist movement based on the theories of Bakunin and Sorel. Since the later ninetee-

\(^{10}\)Broue and Témime, I, 31.

\(^{11}\)Brenan, p. 52.

\(^{12}\)Ibid.
teenth century the ideas of the illustrious Russian revolutionary Michael Bakunin had circulated through Spain. They were based on a system of independent socialistic communes, similar to those of ancient Russia. This system gained wide support in the separatist northern regions, especially where it was wedded to the syndicalist idea of vertical unions propounded by the Frenchman Georges Sorel. Then "... in October 1910 a congress of libertarian groups and federations created the Confederación National del Trabajo [CNT] ... . Syndicalism was to be regarded, not as an end, but as a means of fighting the bourgeoisie. The end was of course Anarchism."\[13\] Thus was born the great Anarcho-Syndicalist movement which did not hesitate to use Bakunin's tactics of violence and terrorism whenever necessary. Most estimates give 2,000,000 for the CNT in 1936. Thus more men attended anarchist meetings than attended Sunday mass. In 1927 an elite organization, the Federación Anarquista Ibérica (FAI) was founded as a militant inner-party to "control and penetrate the syndicalist organization."\[14\]

A second proletarian organization was the socialist Unión General de Trabajadores or UGT founded in 1888. It was Marxist in tone, but after the Russian revolution did not follow the Soviet line. Beginning with a membership of 3,300, eleven years later it had no more than twice that number and this in "comparison with the teeming forces of the Anarchists was discouraging."\[15\] Nevertheless, after 1931 the UGT played a large and violent part

\[13\]Ibid., p. 172.
\[14\]Ibid., p. 184.
\[15\]Ibid., p. 217.
in Spanish history.

The army, the Church, the regionalists, the anarchists, the socialists, all were to have their role in the Second Republic and along with them was a budding fascist group, the most important faction of which came to be the Falange of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, son of the former dictator. 16

There were also, of course, the monarchists, disorganized but still a force, and even the Carlists, especially in Navarre, maintaining their organization through the Requetés or para-military volunteers. Out of these contending factions the Second Republic would have to build its support if it were to survive.

It began well, and was almost without opposition. "Upon the establishment of the Republic in Spain on April 14, 1931, the Rightist forces were left completely disorganized. The old monarchist parties disappeared, and only in a few provinces were the Traditionalists able to maintain any vestige of organization." 17 Much depended on the attitude of the Church and if she endorsed the Republic it had a good chance of survival.

The primate of Spain was Dr. Pedro Segura, Cardinal-Archbishop of Toledo, a man of imposing personality and great intellectual attainments. When a monarchist newspaper reported an interview with the exiled king in which he gave a very equivocal account of his willingness to let the regime

16 José Antonio Primo de Rivera (1903-1936), eldest son of the dictator, was a lawyer who became editor of the party paper of the Falange Española and subsequently head of the movement which he merged with JONS (Junta Ofensivas Nacional Sindicalistas) in 1934, organizing his party on the model of National Socialist Germany which he had visited. He was executed in Madrid by the Republicans.

continue unchallenged, the Cardinal issued a pastoral letter which seemed to support the monarchy. "By no means the whole of it could be interpreted as provocative, but the language and the sentiments of several paragraphs, on which the press naturally laid emphasis, were, to say the least of it, unfortunate."18 The letter was interpreted in some quarters as a declaration of war against the Republic.

When on May 10 there were riots in Madrid and the monarchist newspaper A.B.C. and a monarchist club were burned, the Cardinal, showing that he realized full well the implications of his pastoral, slipped across the border, bound for Rome. He subsequently tried to return in disguise, but was summarily ejected. Finally, the Pope was forced to declare the See vacant.19 But the breach between Church and Republic proved beyond repair, and the Republic prepared to launch its own offensive. It should be noted that the provisional government which expelled the Cardinal was headed by a Catholic republican, Alcalá Zamora, not by a professional anti-clerical.20 The composition of the first elected government of June, 1931 was much further to the left.21

18Peers, pp. 52-53.

19Ibid., p. 53.

20Niceto Alcalá Zamora y Torres (1877-1949), professor of law at Madrid, became a member of the Cortes in 1906. He joined the Republican cause when Primo de Rivera came to power. He was president of the Republic to 1936.

21The Left elected 116 Socialists, 60 Radical Socialists, 30 Republican Actionists led by Manuel Azaña, 90 Radicals, and 22 Progressives led by Alcalá Zamora. These with 43 Catalan nationalists and 16 Gallegans formed the pro-government bench. The Right had only 60 members total, including 19 monarchists led by Calvo Sotelo. Thomas, p. 45.
This newly elected government formed a committee to draft a Constitution. The mainspring of this committee was Manuel Azána, a professional literary man whose curious fortune it was to be made minister of war. Liberal and agnostic, he felt it was now necessary to move against the power of the Church. Azána put into the new Constitution the restriction of the activities of religious orders, an end to the payment of parish priests and other religious functionaries, and the dissolution of Church schools. Further, the noxious Jesuits were to be entirely expelled. "I greatly regret it, but this is necessary for the genuine defense of the Republic . . . ." he declared.\(^{22}\)

The Left spent almost two years in control. Azána became prime minister when Alcalá Zamora resigned over the anti-clerical provisions of the Constitution, and in due time Azána put through a much needed agrarian reform law and allowed a Catalan republic to be set up. Although the CNT, equally opposed to government by the Left or the Right, behaved badly, things went fairly smoothly, except for the military rising of General Sanjurjo who attempted to make a pronunciamiento in August, 1932. The rising succeeded briefly in Seville, failed elsewhere, and Sanjurjo, "the Lion of the Riff" as he was called, was quietly caged. The revolt appears to have been a protest against the CNT. This, and an abortive anarchist rising in January, 1933, disillusioned many with the Azána government and he went to the polls in November, 1933. The defeat which followed was overwhelming. The strongest party in the new Cortes was the Republican Catholic

\(^{22}\)Peers, p. 73.
party called the Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas, and led by José María Gil Robles a young barrister. The election also marks the emergence of José Antonio's Falange and the Communists parties into the political arena. This latter philosophy had previously made little headway in Spain, but appears to have grown somewhat during the republic.

The premier of this new government, except for a brief interval, was Alejandro Lerroux of the Radical party, but the real moving force behind the government was José María Gil Robles, whom the then president of the Republic, Alcalá Zamora, refused to name to the top office. The government of the Right did not prove a success, partly because of the world-wide depression and partly because of its own ineptitude. The two years of Left rule were years of high hopes and crushing disappointments, but the two years of Centre [as Professor Peers calls it] rule were years of monotonous depression.

To make things worse the government was faced with two almost simultaneous uprisings; first, that of the Catalans, led by the president of the Catalan government or "Generalitat," Luis Companys, but quickly squelched,

---

23 Parties supporting the late government received only 99 seats. The Center took 167, the Right 207, Thomas, pp. 66-67. Thus we see an example of the wild oscillation so typical of Spanish political life.

24 Ibid., p. 71. Thomas estimates the strength of the Communists in 1933 at 3,000 members.


26 Lluís (in Castilian Luís) Companys (1873-1940) was minister of the Marine in Azáñá's government, and prime minister of the Generalitat of Catalonia. Arrested in 1934, he was soon released and served as President of Catalonia, 1936-1938. He was tried and shot by Franco.
and secondly, a serious rising in Asturias headed by the miners under the leadership of the heretofore ineffective UGT. This was a virtual war and troops had to be called from the Riff to put it down. The general given this task by Lerroux was Francisco Franco Bahamonda, forty years old, son of a naval paymaster and graduate of the Toledo military academy. He had commanded the crack troops of the Spanish foreign legion from 1923 to 1927 and played a major part in the defeat of Abd-el-Krim, the Riff leader. "He was known as a strict, even a cruel, disciplinarian."27 The rising of the Asturian miners conducted with atrocities was put down with greater atrocities.

The nation was stunned. Lerroux's government limped along for a while and finally collapsed. A new governmental coalition was formed but it quarreled with CEDA and likewise fell. New elections were ordered for February, 1936. The Communists, still a small minority, proposed the union of the Left parties in a popular front. For once the Left agreed to act in unison, and there is a good deal of truth in the comment that: "The Frente Popular of Spain was born not in the ballot of a free democratic people, but on the bloodstained fields of Asturias; not under the Spanish flag, but under the red flag."28 Asturias united the Left as nothing else could have done. The Frente Popular won a close victory.29

According to Professor Peers, "the majority of the Right-wing groups were content to abide the consequences of the electorate's decision and to

27Thomas, p. 82.
29The Popular Front gained 278 seats, the Right 134, and the Center 55.
go into opposition until their turn came at last for power. But the fascists were not." 30 Or, in the words of Gil Robles himself: "The Spanish Rightists, who had succeeded at the cost of great sacrifices in directing the life of the country through the winding river beds of the law, now found themselves confronted by the most solemn duty of saving their country from Communist barbarism. The supreme moment of the Spanish civil war was approaching." 31

No one denies the seriousness of the situation in Spain. The anarchists, contemptuous of the government, terrorized Spain, burning Churches and killing clergy. The Falange, Requetés, and other Right-wing groups responded in kind. The government could do little. Azaná, once again prime minister, proved ineffective. The truth is, too few wanted a compromise solution. Too many, Right and Left, would settle only for total victory. The ultimate tragedy was touched off by the murder on July 13, 1936, of a right wing member of the Cortes, José Calvo Sotelo, who had been finance minister under Primo de Rivera, and was a Monarchist. He had been warned in the Cortes of his doom by Dolores Ibarrui, a leader of the small communist faction (holding only 17 seats). Thus his murder by a policeman of Left-wing sympathies was laid at the door of the party. Revolt broke out almost at once. But this murder was a mere incident, the revolt of the generals had long been preparing. Still, the murder, like the Asturian uprising had its psychological effect. "... Left and Right alike were shaken at the audacity of the crime, while the man in the street, dumbfounded with

30 Peers, p. 207.
31 Gil Robles, p. 8.
horror, saw it as the climax beyond which crime could not farther go."

Be that as it may, a number of generals "pronounced" against the Republic. Through a series of accidents, the head of the rebellion came to be Francisco Franco. He was supported by most of the army, and the constabulary known as Civil Guards, the Carlists, the Falange, and other Fascist groups. The Republic enjoyed the backing of the militias formed by the UGT, CNT, and the Communists, the special police known as Assault guards, and the Basques and Catalan separatist groups.

If the revolt had followed the normal Spanish pattern, the rebels would have won easily, having most of the trained men and the equipment. But ideology became involved. The revolt, begun in Morocco, moved swiftly to consolidate its power in Andalusia and in Carlist Navarre and Aragon, cutting off the Basques from the rest of the Republican forces. But it failed to seize the Catalanian Capital of Barcelona and was stopped cold before the gates of Madrid in late November by the surge of union militia that sprang to arms in what amounted to a people's revolution on the Russian pattern. From then on, through two and a half complicated years of fighting, the Spanish Civil War resembled nothing so much as the stalemate of the Western Front a few years before. Only slowly, and with great bloodshed, did the armies of Franco gain the ascendancy. By the end of October, 1937 the Basque area capitulated to Franco and all of the Nationalists (as they were called) faced the Eastern Front where the Republicans (or Loyalists) held a line from the middle of the French frontier, southward to the Nationalist

---

salient of Teruel and then West to Madrid, whence the line of battle curved slowly Southeast through Andalusia. By April, 1938 the Nationalists had driven from Teruel to the Mediterranean, once again dividing the Republicans and separating Barcelona from Madrid. Franco had swallowed all Catalonia by February, 1939, and after that he proceeded rapidly to whittle away the Madrid sector. Resistance collapsed in late March, 1939. Hugh Thomas estimates that total deaths in the war numbered about 600,000.33

Two important factors in the defeat of the Republic were foreign intervention, and internal dissension. As to the first, both sides tried desperately to gain arms and manpower from abroad. The Franco revolt forced the Republic to look abroad for aid. At first it was thought that Spain's sister Republic to the north might aid her cause. But as we shall see, the Popular Front government of France was already in serious trouble, and premier Leon Blum was unwilling to further compromise his government without the firm support of Great Britain. This Britain was unwilling to give. Anthony Eden, the foreign secretary in Stanley Baldwin's conservative government, advised Blum to "be prudent."34 This forced the Republic to turn to Soviet Russia, which indeed did lend its material support, cautiously at first. But the Soviet aid was never very great, compared to the foreign aid the Nationalists received. In addition, International Brigades were formed under Communist auspices to aid the Republic.

On the other hand, from the start Franco could count on the enthu-

34Ibid., p. 219.
siastic support of Mussolini, and Hitler soon joined in aiding the Nationalist cause. Some fifty thousand Italians served in division strength units in Franco's army, while Germany sent the Condor Legion, as it was called, of some 6,000 specialists, including pilots. Their material aid was in proportion. The result of these foreign interventions was to identify the respective sides with their international support. Thus the Republicans became "The Reds," the the Nationalists "The Fascists," whereas in reality the war was waged over issues that were essentially Spanish and rooted more in the history of Spain than the history of International Communism or Fascism.

The internal dissension in the Republican ranks became apparent as soon as the first enthusiasm wore off. The CNT still despised the government of Socialists and Communists. The Communists were rightly distrusted by the UGT as agents of Russian expansionism. Many of the Catalans had little in common with any Leftist movement, and the deeply Catholic and conservative Basques still less. Bloody civil war broke out between the CNT and the government in Catalonia during April, 1937, resulting in a great deal of tension with the Republican army. The Anarchists were too strong to be suppressed, but a prominent "trotskyite," Andrés Nin, whose followers had joined the CNT in the fighting, was later murdered by the Communists. The fighting and the murder of Nin in June, 1938 did much to discredit the Republic abroad. Thus the Spanish Civil War ran its accustomed course, confused, bloody, and terrible, with the whole world looking on and taking sides.

35 Thomas, Appendix III, pp. 634-643. Italy alone supplied 763 aircraft while the Republic received 242 from the Soviet Union.
The history of France since the 1870’s is in many ways parallel to that of Spain. The Third French Republic of 1870, like the Spanish First Republic, was born of chaos and disaster so profound as to shake the very belief of men in the principle of authority itself. True, there was no restoration of the monarchy, but support of this venerable institution, as we shall see, remained strong in France. In truth, the Third Republic was born of an assembly consisting in the main of monarchists. It was not till 1876 that, as D. W. Brogan put it, "The Republicans took over the Republic." And then, and here again is a parallel, it was not only the monarchists but "... the Church that had been beaten in the election."\(^{36}\) The conservatism of the Catholic Church in France was very like that of the Church in Spain; the anti-clericalism was equally similar. In 1877 when Jules Ferry was Minister of Public Instruction a series of laws were passed which deprived the Church of much of its force in education throughout France. Like Azáñ, Ferry began his attack with the Jesuits, declaring "it is from them that we wish to tear away the soul of the youth of France."\(^{37}\) These laws served to drive the Church more completely into the camp of the monarchists.

If Spain had pronunciamientos, France at least had her Boulanger. In 1886, Georges Boulanger a young general who, like Franco and many before him, had served in North Africa, became minister of war. Dashing and handsome, he seemed to Frenchmen a reincarnation of their past glories. Suddenly at the pinnacle of French politics, the general had begun wooing the

---


\(^{37}\)Ibid., p. 149.
Right and even the Royalists (which in France came in three different flavors, Bourbon, Orleanist, and Bonapartist), with the aim of staging a coup d'état. "Dizzy with the flattery and adulation with which he was surrounded," Boulanger fell from a lack of nerve at the critical moment. By April Fools' day, 1889 he was finished, and France awakened as from a bad dream. We may imagine, however, that the memory of Boulanger may have played some part in the French attitude to another general from Africa in 1936.

The worst spiritual crisis that the French Republic went through in the years before World War I had no exact counterpart in Spain. This was the Dreyfus affair. The story of the Jewish army captain accused of selling secrets to the Germans became world famous, largely because of the attention that certain celebrated Frenchmen such as Émile Zola paid to Captain Dreyfus and his claims of innocence. This incident again divided France into sharply opposed groups and placed the Church, along with the Regular Army and the Monarchists, in the camp of reaction. "In the Dreyfus case, the Church lined up solidly behind the opponents of Dreyfus, and placed its immense influence in the scales against a cause that eventually proved to have justice on its side."

38 Ibid., pp. 203-204.

monarchists. The Papal encyclical Vehementer of February, 1906 condemned the French Republic for breaking its concordat with the Vatican and denounced the separation of Church and State. "This amounted to an invitation to civil war." But the civil war never took place. Instead there remained a smoldering hostility between the temporal and spiritual power.

This deadlock was partly broken by the Great War of 1914 to 1918 in which all Frenchmen regardless of party were able to unite against the traditional German foe. After the war Church and State seemed to draw together, or, at least, they were less bitterly opposed than before. "In any case it was increasingly hard to whip up enthusiasm for campaigns against the Church. Catholics attributed this change too much to the realization that the clergy had produced good soldiers, . . . it was due even more to the practical acceptance by French Catholics of their position as a religious minority. The Church was no longer a menace to the state."

Despite the havoc of the war, France jogged through the twenties without any extraordinary crises. The economy of France boomed, even after the rest of Western Europe began to feel the pinch of the depression. But the facts of economic life gradually brought France into the common plight and by late 1933 she joined the depressed nations. The Great Depression accentuated all the conflicts in France, as it did in Spain and elsewhere. "The Agony of the Third Republic commenced in 1934. . . . An economic and financial crisis, which no one knew how to handle, aggravated by the end of German reparations

40 Ibid., p. 418.
41 Brogan, p. 640.
sensitized the restless public opinion." The Left-wing coalition of Camille Chautemps found itself in early 1934 faced with a major crisis over the financial affairs of a petty-grafter named Serge Stavisky, whose misadventures involving certain members of the government were exposed by the monarchist newspaper Action Française, organ of the "Integral-nationalist" or fascist movement of the same name. "Never before had the movement of Integral Nationalism enjoyed such popular support. . . . The fall of the bungling Chautemps ministry, January 25, was greeted as a major victory. . . . The advent of Édouard Daladier was followed by a brief respite. On February 3, however, the new premier's dismissal of M. Chiape, the Paris Prefect of Police who had shown so much consideration in his handling of the nationalist rioters, was the match that fired the powder." Édouard Daladier, head of the new Left-Coalition, dared to meet the Chambre on February 6. This touched off widespread rioting led by the veterans organization known dramatically as the Croix de Feu. The rioting brought down his government in its turn. It was replaced by a "National Government in which the strongest voice was that of the minister of war, the aged Marshal of France, Phillippe Pétain (born 1856) who was later to become chief of state in occupied France during the Second World War. Growing fear of Hitler abroad

44 Édouard Daladier (b. 1884), who emerges as foreign minister of the Popular Front government in 1935 and is again premier after the fall of Léon Blum in 1938, was a member of the Radical Socialist party.
and the nationalists at home forced the Left to unite. As in Spain, a "Popular Front" proved the answer. In this case it was composed of the Radical Socialists, Socialist Republicans, the Socialists led by Léon Blum and the Communists. It was backed by the great socialist trade unions the Confédération Générale du Travail and the Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire. The CGT and the CGTU corresponded roughly to the UGT in Spain in their outlook and aims. After victories at the polls in April and May, 1936, Léon Blum became the head of the new Front Populaire government. Thus, almost simultaneously governments of almost identical groupings took over in Spain and France. The new French government was challenged immediately by a series of spontaneous sit-down strikes. As a socialist Blum was forced to seek a solution to the economic crisis which would be acceptable to the workers.

"Consequently, on the night of June 7, he called the major leaders of management and labor to his official residence at the Hotel Matignon. Under considerable pressure they signed a series of agreements there," giving the workers wage increases, the right to organize and to have shop stewards. "Most French employers felt that they had been forced to capitulate to the 'class enemy' and, henceforth, they sought revenge for Matignon."46 Thus, by the summer of 1936, tensions in France were almost as acute as they were in Spain.

Then came the Spanish Civil War. "It was a sign of the times that it was impossible to get any measure of agreement as to what was happening in a

---


country within a not very long journey from Paris. . . . Soon there came out of Spain news, only too authentic, of horrible crimes committed by the partisans of both sides. . . . But the French . . . refused to see, in the Spanish Civil War, mainly or merely a Spanish Civil War. (It was over a generation since Spain had had a civil war.) Spain was a symbol; a symbol of the unending and hitherto totally successful aggression of 'Fascism.'”

“In France the events on the other side of the Pyrenees were followed with an extraordinary passion. The Right acclaimed the successes accorded to the insurrection against the Frente popular, brother of the abhorred Front populaire. ‘It is not,’ wrote General Castelnau in l’Écho de Paris, ‘two factions disputing the advantages of power: it is a war between Moscovite barbarity and Western Civilization.’”

This passion rested on the conception that there were indeed parallels between the Spanish and French situations. But as Jose Maria Gironella warns us in the introduction to his great novel of the origins of the Spanish Civil War, The Cypresses Believe in God: "Certain constants of the Spanish temperament operate under any circumstances. A Spanish Freemason is not an international Freemason. A Spanish Communist is not even an orthodox Communist. In every instance what is characteristic is a tendency toward the instinctive. . . . Spaniards follow men better than they follow ideas, which are


judged not by their content, but by the men who embody them." Many of the parallels Frenchmen saw were more seeming than real. It was, after all, a Spanish Civil War—or, if you want, another Spanish Civil War as D. W. Brogan reminds us. But all this was comprehended by very few north of the Pyrenees. Spain, as Gironella knows, remains "an unknown country."

That select group of people whom we can designate as the intelligentsia of France, the fiction writers, journalists, philosophers, and men of letters who molded France's consciousness of herself, were no less profoundly moved by the events in Spain. The intellectual has always had a great prominence in France, and, especially since the rise of modern ideological conflicts, it is true that: "Intellectuals with doctrines that could be popularized have had a special role in modern French life. Most Frenchmen knew nothing of their manifestoes, feuds, and schisms, though, indirectly, these 'squabbles among monks' provided rationalizations for popular prejudices of various kinds . . . in a few cases—like communism and reactionary nationalism—they furnished ammunition to discontented sections of the population."50

After the First World War the intelligentsia of writers and artists seemed increasingly aware of itself and its role. "Some French intellectuals behaved like celebrities and were viewed as such by the public. In the interwar period many Frenchmen were more interested in what certain well-known journalists, novelists, professors, and even artists thought about current

49 José María Gironella, The Cypresses Believe in God (New York, 1956), vii-viii.

50 Tannenbaum, pp. 107-108.
issues than in any cross section of opinion."\textsuperscript{51}

It is not surprising then that the literary prophet became confused with the political prophet, and that men whose stock and trade was belles-lettres were often pleased to find themselves at the center of heated political or ideological disputes. This was a period in which many members of the intelligentsia gravitated into extreme positions. Thus we shall find them joining the Action Française on the extreme right and the Communist party on the left. Some, such as André Gide, tried both.

If the literary intelligentsia were looking for problems to solve and challenges to meet, they certainly had no trouble finding them in the thirties. "In the 1920's different people were trying to escape from or rebel against different things, and they did this in a variety of ways."\textsuperscript{52} But "By the 1930's some of France's outstanding writers began to face the problems of man and society less pessimistically and to seek positive rather than negative answers. Aside from the Catholics and the Marxists, who had their own solutions, some authors tried to rehabilitate as an individual with a raison d'être. The literary generation of the depression years was primarily an ethical one. Its members asked: How can one live in order to justify living?"\textsuperscript{53}

We are going now to examine the reactions of this intelligentsia to the Spanish Civil War. Why these particular members were chosen should become

\textsuperscript{51}Ibid., p. 107.

\textsuperscript{52}Ibid., p. 95.

\textsuperscript{53}Ibid., p. 98.
clear from the biographical information included on each. But in general I have tried to choose those men who most completely personified the intellectual climate of their times and who had greatest influence on their contemporaries. That these men and women should be not only interested in such an event but be able to interest the rest of France in their opinions, is, as pointed out above, part of the peculiarity of the French situation. "When a great crisis, like the Dreyfus case, arouses the passions and shakes the soul of the nation, literary men, intellectuals, and savants take part in the battle."54 The Spanish Civil War proved such a crisis.

CHAPTER I
MAURRAS AND HIS CIRCLE

Among those external forces which played their part in the destruction of the Second Spanish Republic perhaps the most bizarre was the semipolitical organization Action Francaise, which, through its daily newspaper, l'Action française, influenced a large section of the French reading public. The guiding genius of the organization was a man named Charles Maurras, who was born in the fishing village of Martigues near Marseilles in 1868, the son of a tax collector.

The early life of Charles Marie Photius Maurras was filled with frustrations, not a few of which were caused by his scrawny, undernourished appearance and his intensely introverted personality. Unattractive to girls and shy, he was one of those dreamy boys who drift into passionate friendships and verse as naturally as other lads into sports and clubs. He lived largely in a bygone world of historical romance, completely adverse to and contemptuous of his surroundings. At one time he went so far as to express disbelief in the axioms of geometry. His family was royalist by persuasion and had a strong tradition of following the sea. Young Charles was destined for a naval career, but at fourteen he was stricken with a deafness which became progressively worse with the years. This deafness ruined his chances to be-
come a midshipman and plunged him more and more into the gloomy world of his own morbid imagination.¹

The correspondence between artistic failure and fascism has, perhaps, not been sufficiently explored in our age. If Charles Maurras had been a successful poet or critic he might not have turned to political propaganda. But he was only a second-rate aesthete, and this was a commodity with which France in the fin-de-siècle was certainly glutted. The intensity of his aesthetic passions is illustrated by the story that on a trip to Greece, he fell in love with the noble buildings atop the Acropolis of Athens. "Here he was so affected by the exquisite lines and splendor of the first column of Propylaea that he embraced as much of it as his outstretched arms could encompass, and, taking care that a nearby group of noisy Americans would think he was measuring its circumference, he kissed it as a loving friend."²

For Maurras, Beauty was not Truth, but Order. The symmetry and order of classical art, exemplified by Greek art was a quality above all to be prized and imitated, not only in modern art, but in modern life as well, particularly the life of the state. It is interesting that Maurras developed his aesthetic doctrines with the chaos of Dada almost on the horizon, and his rigid ideas of the state at the moment when France seemed to have found political flexibility in the Third Republic. In both he was to be


preposterously out of date, and yet no less determined to put his ideas into practice, in verse or violence.

Arriving in Paris in 1885, he was hardly able to feel that he was in his own native France, so great was the proliferation of foreign names and accents. It was in this inhospitable milieu that he discovered for the first time his interest in the history and literature of his native Provence. This was the period of the revival of the moribund romance languages, Provençal and Catalan, and the mainspring of the Provencal revival was the poet Frédéric Mistral. Maurras developed an intense devotion to his writings. In 1888 he had the honor of meeting his hero and, significantly enough, in the same year he first met Maurice Barrès, the philosopher of Nationalism. 

Mistral and Barrès were to be the forces which shaped his life. Maurras "soon showed his lifelong habit of mixing literature and politics" by planning to use the Provencal revival as the basis for a federal regime based on local autonomy, an idea ironically similar to that of the Basques and Catalans who sided with the Spanish Republic.

The political doctrines which Maurras evolved during his early years in Paris were, like those of Barrès, based on an exclusive and militant patriotism and phobia toward all foreign elements in French life, especially those famous "four elements" the Jews, Masons, Protestants, and naturalized citizens (whom Maurras called Metiques). This nationalism thrived on the wounds of 1871 and looked to Lorraine as to some promised land. For all his highly

---

3Butnman, pp. 185-186.

4Tannenbaum, p. 48.
developed political sense, Maurras might have remained no more than a "cafe intellectual" had it not been for the Dreyfus affair which reached its climax in 1898-1899 when Maurras had been developing in the capital for fourteen years.

In these events Maurras was preconditioned to the cause of anti-Dreyfusism, but he could hardly have realized that the cause would dominate his life from that time until his death more than half a century later. It was the Dreyfus affair which gave an organ of self-expression to the obscure Provençal poet and made him a force to be reckoned with in French politics from then on. In the spring of 1898, two little-known French journalists, Maurice Pujo and Henri Vaugeois, "sickened by their country's plight," founded a political committee known as the Comité d'Action Française. "The Comité's appeal to the electorate presented the Dreyfusard campaign as a revival of panamisme, a diversion to serve the interests of corrupt politicians and financeers." Henri Vaugeois was thirty-four, a teacher of philosophy. His associate, Maurice Pujo, aged twenty-six, had been a classmate of Charles Pégy at the Orleans lycée. At twenty Pujo had founded a review whose title speaks for itself (and for a generation of Frenchmen), L'Art et la vie, "one of the many publications then drifting down the narcissistic waterways of the fin-de-siècle Left Bank."

---


6Ibid.
Pujo has been dismissed by one author as no more than a "hack writer," but he was in fact an editor of genius. He was, like Maurras, unprepossessing in appearance, and when he spoke "not only stammered but always held his manuscript up before his face." On the other hand, he had a superb grasp of the techniques of propaganda. "The only means at all efficacious for making oneself heard," he later wrote, "will be to disturb the false public order, which masks scandal, and to create the opportune news item that will bring this scandal into the broad light of the street." Many years after the foundation of Action Française, Pujo told Edward Tannenbaum that he had wanted to give up politics and go back to literature after the Dreyfus affair, but his friend Vaugeois had persuaded him to stick to "politics." It was a fateful decision.

To Vaugeois and Pujo came the idea of founding a journal of anti-Dreyfusarism, the Revue d'Action Française, which many years later was to become the daily newspaper l'Action française. To this project they soon attracted the literary talents of Charles Maurras who collaborated with them in the first issue, July 1899. Maurras had, by this date, moved intellectually from resurrecting dead languages to resurrecting dead governments and had declared himself a royalist. Though Vaugeois and Pujo did not share his royalism, Maurras soon became the dominant member of the association. He had "devised or revived an almost compelling system of thought, especially for the

---

7 Ibid., p. 46.
8 Maurice Pujo, Les Camelots du Roi (Paris, 1933), xvi, quoted in Tannenbaum, p. 93.
9 Tannenbaum, p. 57.
youth of France, hampered by conventions, impatient with a system of government largely dominated by middle-aged and old men and champing at the bit for action." This system of thought could be summed up as "Integral Nationalism," a concept of state order based on traditional values, the king, the Church, and harmonized like a work of art by the firm hand of authority.

Under the leadership of Maurras, "the Action Française was not a party but a doctrine. It was, to be precise, an organ of Maurras' doctrine of integral nationalism. In view of his passion to dominate the thoughts of others and the moral superiority which his doctrine gave him over his colleagues, one may even go so far as to say that the Action Française was virtually Charles Maurras." Charles Maurras was not necessarily summed up in the writings of the Revue d'Action Française. It was the personal magnetism of Maurras that drew men and women, many with intellects vastly superior to his own, into the Action Française. Georges Bernanos, associated with the movement from its earliest days, wrote in tribute that "nothing can be known of Maurras if one judges the man by his writings, for the writings are not the man." Of his system, he declared that Maurras "was both the master and the prisoner." 

Maurras and his integral nationalism had a great appeal for the Catholic youth of France, for students and seminarians. It appealed to that half of the French nation which had been tragically estranged from the revolutionary

10Buthman, p. 322.
11Ibid., p. 294.
tradition and sought revenge in a return to the old order unmodified by the
passage of time. "If Maurras succeeds in persuading the literate young that
the democratic idea is losing its force," declared the philosopher Georges
Sorel, "he will deserve to be classed among the 'maîtres de l'heure,' since
his doctrine will have provoked a change in the orientation of present
thought."\footnote{Michael Curtis, \textit{Three Against the Third Republic, Sorel, Barrès, and
théorie du proletariat} (3rd Ed., Paris, 1929), p. 18.}

The doctrines of Maurras fell upon the fertile soil provided by the
Catholic revival in which the educated youth "ill at ease before the critical
ideas of a rationalist Sorbonne," turned toward the Catholic Church, ad­
miring it for the very qualities of order and authoritarianism which Maurras,
himself an agnostic, admired in the Church. The Neo-Thomists, at that time
still considered radicals, in general favored the Maurrasian discipline. It
was Dom Besse, a learned Neo-Thomist and master of novices at Notre-Dame-de­
Ligugé, who guided Georges Bernanos into the movement. Another scholar, Fa­
ther Humbert Clérissac recruited Jacques Maritain, the celebrated Thomistic
philosopher and his poetess wife Raisa, as well as the noted critic Henri
His most famous work \textit{Les Jeunes Gens d'Aujour d'hui}. He submitted to the Pope
in 1927, but did not break with Maurras personally during the Spanish Civil
War. He was director of the \textit{Revue Universelle}. During the period 1940-1945
he was a member of the Vichy government. For G. Bernanos, J. Maritain, and
F. Mauriac, see chapters devoted to them.} These talented people, rightly or wrongly, "looked to Maurras as
the first thinker of his time."\footnote{Ibid., p. 224.} As late as 1926, the very year of the
Papal condemnation of movement, Jacques Maritain, Henri Massis, and Maurras were working together to concoct a book attacking the critics of the movement.16

Despite his commanding personality, Charles Maurras was almost overshadowed by another commanding personality who joined the Action Française movement as an active contributor in 1904. This was Léon Daudet (1867-1942), the son of Alphonse Daudet, "one of the glories of Republican letters." Léon had grown up in a circle frequented by such good republicans as Zola and the Victor Hugo family. On the other hand, he became an anti-Semitic though his "anti-Semitism was a complex sentiment, partly inherited, partly rationalized, partly opportunistic, as were many of his momentary fancies. Unlike most fancies, however, it was a constant—fluctuating in intensity, occasionally discriminating, as anti-Semites generally do, in favor of 'good' Jews, but never disappearing for long."17

As an orator, as well as a writer, Daudet spread Maurras' doctrines and his own. "Rabelaisian in person as well as in print," he provided a marked contrast to the introverted Maurras and "by his fire and verve," provided, "a body for what had so far been only a doctrine."18 In accounting for the popularity of Maurras and Daudet in the decade before the First World War, it is necessary to remember that for the impressionable young of France they provided the same service as André Malraux for a later generation:

16Ibid., pp. 232-233. Maritain's sketches were published as Une opinion sur Charles Maurras et le devoir des Catholiques (Paris, 1926).

17Weber, pp. 44-45.

18Ibid., p. 46.
they represented the union of thought and action, of art and violence, dear to the heart of Frenchmen.

It was through violence, principally, that the Action Française made its mark on French life. "We did not have to await," declared Maurras, "... the curious meditations that Sorel entitled Reflections on Violence, to say and write, perhaps the first of our generation, that it might be necessary to use violence."¹⁹ Maurras did more than say and write it. Violence had been the trade mark of the anti-Seyfusards in 1899, violence continued to dominate the policies of the Action Française. In 1908, the same year that the daily l'Action française appeared, a group of young men was organized to sell the paper. Because they acquired peddlers' licenses from the state, they became known as the "peddlers of the King"—Camelots du Roi. Drawn from both the highest and lowest classes of society, they soon became a kind of para-military gang. "Probably most of them, like Georges Bernanos, were not much concerned with the theoretical or 'Maurrassian' ideas they were supposed to defend. But in spite of moral difficulties which resulted in frequent purges, the Camelots were to serve the Action Française well."²⁰

Their first test came within a month of their organization, when François Thalamas was called upon to lecture at the Sorbonne. This unfortunate man had suggested some four years earlier that Jeanne d'Arc, the guiding beacon and patron saint of the extreme Right, had been the victim of illusions.

¹⁹l'Action française, Sept. 21, 1912, quoted in Curtis, p. 144.
²⁰Weber, p. 53.
To prevent his lectures, Camelots stormed the classroom on more than one occasion and beat Thalamas senseless.

The Thalamas affair disgusted even the violence-prone Parisians; the pretender to the throne appeared ready to drop the movement. But the coming of the First World War gave the Action Française a chance to use its vituperation in a cause all Frenchmen could support. The movement came through the war with very high credit.

The Great War, in France, as elsewhere, changed the political climate. Extremist movements barely able to command a following in the Golden Twilight of the old order, now blossomed everywhere. Léo: Daudet, elected to the chamber of deputies after the War, became more and more the leading spokesman for the movement. He declared in 1922 that Italian Fascism was "no more than a reaction of national sentiments to the beastiality, stupidity, and noxiousness of Communism. . . ." In November of that year, the newspaper Le Populaire expressed concern that Daudet himself might lead a march on Paris similar to that of Mussolini on Rome and put himself at the head of a revolutionary government.

During the period from 1918 to 1926, the Action Française seemed more and more to be turning into a political movement. Daudet and other pro-Action Française members in the chamber of deputies made it seem as though it might succeed in boring at the French Constitution from within. But to succeed on

\[21\] Ibid., p. 133. Daudet came in with the "horizon blue" chambre of 1919, went out with the tide in 1924.

\[22\] Ibid.
the political level, it was necessary for the movement to have the warm support of the Catholic hierarchy and faithful. New currents were in the air.

The Roman Index had interested itself in Maurras for some time and in January, 1914 had declared that seven books by Maurras and the Revue de l'Action Française were "truly very bad and deserving of censure, the more so since it is hard to keep young people away from these books whose author is presented to them as a master in political and literary questions and as the leader of those from whom the salvation of his country should come."23 Pius X refused to make public the decree. But from that time on the head of the movement was on the chopping block and the blow fell in September of 1926, when the Pope confirmed a denunciation of the movement by the Archbishop of Bordeaux. Despite this, Bernanos was still able to report to Henri Massis that, "the morale of our troops is admirable,"24 and the Action Française would go on. But the situation worsened and on December 29, 1926 came the papal decree placing the works of Maurras on the Index, along with l'Action française itself. Subsequent decrees excommunicated readers, expelled from seminaries students caught advocating Maurrassian ideas and suspended any cleric showing sympathy for the movement. Maurras had come up against a totalitarianism more powerful than his own.

"If this doctrine is considered the source of all heresies, then we shall have to start life all over again," complained Georges Bernanos.25

---

23Ibid., p. 222.
24Ibid., p. 232.
25Ibid., p. 239.
Men like Dr. Pierre Mauriac, the brother of the novelist, remained away from the sacraments for four years. Nevertheless the condemnation stuck.

It dampened, but did not destroy, the Action Française. With its Catholic character gone, it became more frankly authoritarian. It began to be suspected of not working so much for a restoration as for a dictatorship. As Charles Micaud tells us, "Many disciples of Maurras began to look for a Caesar as a substitute for a Bourbon."27

The rise of National Socialism in France's hereditary enemy, Germany, began to present an embarrassment to the movement in the early thirties. On one hand, the Germans' anti-Semitism, authoritarianism, and anti-Bolshevism, all appealed to Maurras and his friends. On the other hand, Germany was the supreme enemy, the symbol and focus of French hatred. Should Hitler and his domestic policies be approved, or should Hitler be denounced as the enemy of France? This was the dilemma facing the leaders of the Action Française.

Maurras was ambivalent in his appreciation of the relative dangers of Germany and Britain, says Charles Curtis, and "Maurras never decided which was the greatest danger and most serious threat to French national interests,"28 in

26Ibid., p. 239.
27Charles Micaud, The French Right and Nazi Germany, 1933-1939 (Durham, N. C., 1943), ft. nt., p. 16. Many of Maurras' former disciples began to turn to Col. de la Rocque's Croix de Feu which led the riots of Feb. 6, 1934 against the Daladier government. This was a Right-wing, non-monarchist organization appealing to veterans of the 1914-1918 war. They excelled even the Camelots Ju Roi in mindless violence and by 1935 numbered 2,000,000 members not all of whom, fortunately, were active.
the early thirties. England was suspect as the ancient national enemy and the stronghold of liberalism.

But as German rearmament and military expansionism increased in the mid-thirties, it became plain that Germany represented a first rate threat to France. Writing in February, 1935, Maurras declared, "One of our most imperious duties is to insist on what a German victory would mean. .. Each Frenchman, with his possessions, his liberties, and his skin, would be its certain victim..."29

And yet, how could the Action Francaise resist a kind of admiration for the self-proclaimed defender of the West and Christendom against the forces of Russian Communism? Even after the remilitarization of the Rhine, Maurras could not resist a certain ambivalence. "What shall we do? We do not have to march against Hitler with the Soviets. We do not have to march with Hitler against the Soviets. Between these two Kamchatkas of stupid folly lied the sphere, the immense sphere of the interests of Western Europe."30 Geography aside, the sphere of action was indeed shrinking.

It was not very long before the hysterical anti-German propaganda began to give way to equally hysterical anti-Russian propaganda, in spite of the fact that the Russians were, if anything, anxious to befriend France and the Germans daily more militant. "As for provoking a holy war, [against Germany] let us leave that task to the parties of the Left!" wrote Maurras a few days later. "It was time in 1922, '23, '24, it was still time in 1930

30Ibid., March 8, 1936, in Micaud, p. 91.
and even in 1935 to take certain aggressive measures of defense. But these
times have changed completely. Defense! Defense! Defense! and for this
defensive armaments! But to ensure this rearmament let us closely watch
Moscow." The enemies of the Action Française must have read these writh­
ings with considerable amusement.

Meanwhile, the romance with Italian fascism lasted. When Mussolini
invaded Ethiopia the question arose of voting sanctions against his regime.
Maurras ran an article threatening with death those deputies favoring sanc-
tions against Italy. The chambre, acting in self-defense, passed a law,
subsequently known as the Loi Maurras, on January 10, 1936, transferring
certain press offences from the juries of the Assizes to the Correctional
Courts where the judges would take a dimmer view of journalistic antics.
Irrepressible, Maurras replied on January 13, again threatening a hundred
and forty-two deputies. On February 13, Léon Blum, the socialist premier
was attacked on the street by men identified as belonging to the Camelots
du Roi. Though the Action Française denied any part in the attack, it was
immediately suppressed. The daily l'Action française continued to appear,
and Maurras, sentenced to 250 days, was not immediately imprisoned. (Daudet
had already undergone a prison term in 1927, escaped, and been in exile till
1930 when he was pardoned). Despite the fact that the Action Française had
been losing its prestige since 1926, the government was still a little in
awe of it, and half afraid to take serious action.

31 Ibid., March 15, 1936, in Micaud, p. 92.
Maurras himself remained, quite rightly, contemptuous of the Republic. Looking back on this period, he wrote, "The rage and uneasiness of the poor radical cadres, refugees of the Republic and the republican spirit, who were not able to be enemies or friends! ... We will not devalue, they said, and devalued. We organize prosperity, and it was ruin. We create military power, and they created feebleness."\textsuperscript{33}

1936 proved to be a critical year in the history of the Third Republic. It witnessed the triumph and the failure of the Popular Front government under Léon Blum, the imprisonment of Maurras, and the beginning of the Spanish Civil War. Maurras himself saw in the formation of the Popular Front the beginning of a Left-wing revolution in France. Against this, he later claimed, he had been ready to mobilize the full resources of the Action Française. "If" between 1936 and 1940 all had passed without war or invasion, and if our revolutionaries had been able to make a revolution in the customary manner, that of Russia and Spain, the response would have been automatic, immediate, for all which was done by l'Action Française from 1899 to 1940 was done to assemble around it the most daring and strong."\textsuperscript{34}

But events abroad were shaping France's destiny. First the affair of the sanctions against Italy, then the war in Spain, and finally the German invasion of Poland, changed the course of French history. In these crises, the Action Française reserved its bitterest hatred not for Blum and the socialists, but for the "liberal Catholics" whom they accused of inconsist-

\textsuperscript{33}Charles Maurras, \textit{La Contre-Révolution Spontanée, la recherche, la discussion, l'émeute} (Lyon, 1943), p. 215.

\textsuperscript{34}Ibid., p. 33.
But Henri Massis insisted that "the novelty in that year 1936 was the 'patriotism' of the revolutionary intellectuals, which by means of patriotic ideology sought not to restore national cultural values, but rather to protect them from the vertiges mortels of fascism and by means which were nothing but an incitement to civil war. Th 'revirement' of the communists had no other object ... than that which was seen as well in the Catholics of l'Esprit, these pacifists, these disarmers of old suddenly turned to warmongers."  

As Maurras himself put it, "All ended in 1935, all began in 1936, the world of the Left seethed with burning articles and discourses in favor of military action which they called 'sanctions' against the conquest of Abyssinia by Italy. ... I denounced to the nation the maneuvers of these radical cranks, socialists and Christian democrats. Their response was to condemn me to two hundred and fifty days in prison."  

With accusations of treason and inconsistency flying from both sides, and both Right and Left convinced that the policy of the other would lead to total destruction either by invasion or civil war, the government finally gained the courage to imprison Maurras who began to serve his sentence in March, the month Hitler marched into the Rhineland. Then in July came the opening shots of the civil war in Spain. This conflict, according to Charles Micaud, completed the "polarization of French life."

36Ibid., 115.
37Maurras, La Contre-Révolution, p. 225.
"The struggle of Germany and Soviet Russia in Spain," says Micaud, "inevitably led the Right to aloofness from Eastern European affairs. The ideological war between fascism and bolshevism had become paramount, too often relegating the question of national security into the dim background. It became more and more necessary to accept one of the alternatives: German expansion with its mortal risk for France, or alliance with Russia, which the Communist participation in the government made inpalatable. . . ."\(^{38}\)

This polarization made it possible for the Right to look upon the Spanish war as their own personal struggle. "Good Frenchmen who hadn't the ghost of a national government since the elections of 1936, our friends and collaborators, used their full right to seal, by themselves, on that great day, a moral alliance of Nationalism on both sides of the Pyrenees."\(^{39}\)

Fortunately, Maurras declared, the Action Française, though suppressed, was still able to exert itself for the defense of France. "The rapid intervention of Maurice Pujo, Henri Massis and . . . other friends of the Action Française was fortunately able to save the country. They managed to nip in the bud the new plot of the breakers of the peace."\(^{40}\) According to Massis, "It was at this very hour that the Spanish revolution with its incendiaries of churches and its chief mark, a furious iconoclasm, exposed and clinched the case of socialism, showing it in its true colors as opposed to civilization. The fundamental objection put forth by Maurras, that there

---

\(^{38}\) Micaud, p. 125.


could be no better order from the disorders of the crowd, was it not proved tragically true by the destructions in Spain? "Who knows?" we ask now, "who knows what will happen in the days ahead. The fire covers all. Today it is in Madrid, Barcelona, tomorrow will it not be in Paris?"  

Again, as in the question of the sanctions, the Catholic Right, represented by the men of Action Française, found itself divided from the "liberal Catholics" (most of whom, it might be noted, were liberal only by comparison). Henri Massis dramatically writes:

In the Crusade against Soviet Atheism, Spain received the honor of being the first menaced and the first victorious. . . . The Red Spaniards, those with whom our socialists made common cause, sought to find partisans and defenders in the French Catholic press, where the ideology of the Left seemed visibly triumphant. (The Catholic writers, the Bernanoses, Mauriacs, Maritains, making a passing slap at the "men of the Right," vied with one another in denouncing the "fascist atrocities.") The Reds, they say, have massacred the servants of God, they have burned the sanctuaries, but the crimes of the Whites, they are more serious, because they committed by men who pretend to make a holy war, a war of sacred rights which Jesus Christ has given his Church, because they are defenders of the temple and sanctuary of God. And Jacques Maritain cries out against the abominable heresy of the Spanish Nationalists and paints in the most frightening colors the violence of the Whites.  

"It was not surprising," as Micaud points out, "that the French Right should have sided with General Franco as the champion of the forces of Order against the forces of Revolution represented by the Spanish government."  

What was surprising was the amount of aid which the French Right, and the

41Massis, II, 94.
42Ibid., 109.
43Micaud, pp. 111-112.
Action Française in particular, was able to give Franco's cause.

The Action Française had already certain established links with the Spanish Right. In fact, the influence of Maurras had been instrumental in the establishment of "one of the most intellectually active groups of the Spanish Right, the men centered around the Cultura Española and its review entitled Acción Española after l'Action française. This was the movement headed by the ill-fated José Calvo Sotelo. These ideological links gave the Action Française considerable advantage in covering the story of the war.

Even before the war broke out, the daily l'Action française had manifested great interest on conditions in Spain. Throughout the spring and early summer of 1936 the paper declared almost daily that revolution across the Pyrenees was imminent. On June 10, 1936 it noted: "The police today discovered in Madrid, a plot made for an insurrection in this country. Seven cases and a number of sacks which a transport agency had taken to Saragossa for delivery to an affiliate of the Confédération National du Travail have been seized. The cases and sacks contained four hundred uniforms of the Civil Guard and a number of documents giving the address of arms depots and uniforms possessed by the CNT of Madrid. Numerous arrests have been made."45

When the war came, in a rather unexpected manner, for it was a Right-wing pronunciamiento and not a Left-wing revolution that began the fighting,


45 l'Action française, June 10, 1936. I am indebted to the Hoover Institute for making their files of l'Action française available to me.
Léon Daudet had strong opinions of the causes and solutions of Spain's problems.

It has been foreseen that the political and seemingly "official" assassination of Calvo Sotelo would have consequences. These consequences are an insurrection in Spanish Morocco, which threatens to spread to the peninsula. The Spanish patriots have strong temperaments, civilians as well as the military, and a large part of the Civil Guard is with them in the struggle which has begun between the besieged state and the general cause, so it is difficult to say how it will turn out. I believe for my part in the coming glory of Spain, Catalonia included when she awakens from those absurd ideas with which we have been afflicted, burdened by and enfeebled by since 1789, but which have not stopped us. The moment will come . . . for her as for us in the two battles of the Marne and Verdun.46

On July 22, 1936 Maurras wrote that the Spanish war was a "guerre de religion," a struggle between individualists and "others who believe that man counts only as a part of a natural group—his family or his profession. The struggle will be without mercy."47 Whatever one might think of his analysis of the principles of Franco, or his belief that man counts only as part of a group, one has to admit that the last statement was one hundred percent correct.

The basic line of Maurras and his circle, as of the French Right in general, was that Franco was the defender of Western values, by which they meant largely their own values, against the Communistic East. Daudet expressed this view in an article of the 24th. "Spain," he wrote, "is actually the pivot, as General Franco said, of European civilization. That is its

46 Ibid., July 20, 1936.
destiny. Its geographic position gives it an air of isolation from Europe, but then it is bound to Europe by historic bonds." 48

When the war broke out, the immediate problem of the Spanish Republic was the purchase of arms. Most Spanish weapons were in the hands of the military forces who led the rebellion and though the Republic had thousands of willing volunteers for its defense it had little to arm them with. Still less did the Republic possess the heavy machinery of war, airplanes, and tanks. If the Republic was to survive, these must be imported from abroad. To Spanish Republicans, it must have seemed providential indeed that Léon Blum and the Popular Front were in power in France. Surely they could have been expected to render full aid to a distressed sister republic. But Blum's power was largely a chimera. His regime rested on a complex grouping of parties and required above all the support of French public opinion, and if there was one thing certain it was that the French public wanted no part of any foreign war.

It was over the question of arms shipments that the Action Française "made its greatest contribution to the victory of the Nationalists." 49 In this campaign Pujo played a prominent part. Overshadowed most of the time by Maurras and Daudet he came into his own as a mudslinging journalist. When, on July 22, Pujo learned that a Spanish mission had arrived in the French capital to negotiate the purchase of arms from the Blum government, he wrote in l'Action française: "What do the Madrid envoys want? Money,

48 Ibid., July 24, 1936.
49 Weber, pp. 380-381.
guns, planes? Whatever it is, the French forbid the government of the Jew Blum to give it. Not because the Spanish insurgents are 'fascists.' But because these insurgents, if they win, will be Spain's next government and would not forgive France for what she did. This was, of course, not the real reason of the Action Française. Actually it was precisely because Franco represented a force with which the French Integral Nationalists could identify that he received their vigorous aid.

Pujo received his intelligence from friends at the Spanish embassy who kept the Action Française informed of the progress of negotiations. Meanwhile, Maurras expressed his opinion that any aid to the republic would mean the intervention of Germany and Italy and develop into a general war. These articles played skillfully upon the general fear of war that seemed at this time to deprive the French public of any intelligence. "After the first salvo by l'Action française, the other Right-wing papers followed suit. Within twenty-four hours of Pujo's first article, l'Écho de Paris expressed vague but decided opposition to the idea of arming the Spanish Republicans, and on July 24 Henri de Kerllis denounced in greater detail the plan for delivering material to government forces."51

All this added considerably to the difficulties of Fernando de los Rios, the Republican ambassador in Paris. He held several hasty conferences with Blum and Daladier, the minister of war. At first it appeared that Blum, who now was dismayed not only by French public opinion but also by the attitude

50, 'Action française, July 22, 1936.
51, Weber, p. 381.
of the British might not be able to offer any material aid. Then it was re-
called that a 1935 treaty had secretly stipulated the sale of 20 million
francs worth of arms to Spain. News of the impending sale reached the press
through the Spanish embassy and there was again a Rightist furor, giving
Pujo additional opportunities to make trouble.

On July 24 he declared: "Yesterday afternoon, because of the emotion
aroused by our announcement of the day before, minister Blum sought to make
a change. The Spanish government, he hastily explained, has never demanded
of the French government that we sell them war and aviation materials. If
they have sent representatives to Paris, it is simply to wrap up deals al-
ready made over six months ago with private industry. We are surprised that
certain journals, even nationalist ones, accept that explanation. IT IS A
LIE." The sale was cancelled. Eventually some aircraft were sold pri-
vately, Andrée Malraux acting as the agent of the Republican government.
The word of this sale was also leaked to the press.

This made it possible for Pujo to continue to blame the Blum govern-
ment for the reported deliveries of German Junker and Italian Caproni airc-
craft to Franco, for Blum by his "imbecile obstinacy" in covertly aiding the
Spanish Republic had given the Germans and Italians an excuse for interven-
tion. After the intervention of the fascist powers, L'Action française
argued that, in spite of this fact, the danger of war should make France

52 L'Action française, July 24, 1936.
53 Thomas, Spanish Civil War, pp. 223-225.
54 L'Action française, July 30, 1936.
pursue a neutral course. Suddenly the extreme nationalists turned pacifist. Pujo in his columns began the insistent chant: "To the door, Blum-la-Guerre. Peace! Peace! Peace!"

Daudet also began to express his concern for Peace. "The Ethiopian Affair, a colonial one of little significance, was transformed by the League of Nations into a European affair, and was certainly a grave threat to peace. But the Spanish affair without doubt exceeds it in magnitude and importance. This cannot be contained, alas!"

As we have seen: "The Action Française was soon identified with the cause of Franco Spain; its enemies were also the enemies of Franco." As a consequence of this, there was considerable sniping between it and the Catholic press of the Left. "The campaign to suppress the voices of the anti-fascist Left in Catholic circles, temporarily halted in 1936, advanced with Franco's armies. A striking mark of their success came in August, 1937 when the Dominican weekly, Sept, born in 1934 under the auspices of the Pope himself, was suppressed on orders from the Vatican, reputedly for economic reasons." It was apparent that the Action Française and the hierarchy had at last found something on which they could agree.

The bombing of Guernica in April, 1937, produced a crisis in world opinion and profoundly embarrassed Franco's supporters. But l'Action française promptly began to set the French reading public straight on the matter.

55 Ibid., August 2, 1936.
56 Ibid., July 29, 1935.
57 Weber, p. 249.
"An article in the May 6 edition told how Red lies had been exposed by the inquiries of honest French reporters who found that not Nationalist planes and bombs, but fires set by the Russians had destroyed the town. And when this version proved slow to gain acceptance . . . Maurras attacked the dirty tactics of those who spread their lies abroad on this and other matters in hope that some of the mud they threw so irresponsibly would stick."58 Thus it was not only in the critical opening moments, but throughout the war that Maurras and his friends gave substantial aid to the nationalists. This aid was valued by the nationalists, for despite its religious difficulties the l'Action française had a circulation of some 30,000 and reached many people of importance.59

That Franco recognized his debt was evident when Maurras himself paid the visit which Bernanos had predicted in Les Grands Cimetières sous la Lune.60 The visit took place in May, 1938, and Maurras and his friends were welcomed with "semi-official honors," feted at Burgos and elsewhere, Maurras received the personal thanks of the Spanish dictator and was made a "corresponding member of the Royal Academy of Spain."61 When Maurras, brought to trial by a vengeful Fourth Republic, was challenged by Paul Claudel to account for his fascist ties, he defended this visit to Franco's Spain, saying: "In 1938,

58Ibid., p. 384.
59Ibid.
60Bernanos, Diary of My Times (New York, 1938), p. 68. This is the English language edition of Les Grands Cimetières sous la Lune.
after all the accumulated stupidities of the Popular Front, it was not easy to cry "arriba Francia," in Franco's Spain. That is what I succeeded in doing in my visit in April [Sic] of that year." Maurras was therefore convinced that France, not Franco, was in error and that the honor of the Third Republic required vindication after all the efforts of Blum to aid the Republicans. Maurras was a kind of good-will ambassador for the _Pais Real_ to which he claimed to give his allegiance.

Certainly the Spanish War marked a triumph for Maurras. He had achieved something at last, but not, unfortunately, in France. It set the stage for another triumph as well, for on this issue Maurras and the Papacy were one. The statement of Cardinal Verdier of Paris had been published in _l'Action française_, calling all men to a crusade against the Spanish Republic. "The war in Spain is really the struggle between Christian civilization and the false civilization of Soviet Atheism." Fighting side by side in a common Crusade, the Church and the _Action Française_ began to move closer together. Though the movement never completely recovered the favor it had in Catholic circles, the Church's opposition to communism and socialism, as well as its support of "... General Franco, made it increasingly susceptible to a reconciliation with the _Action Française_ in the late thirties." Maurras too was anxious to get back in the good graces of the Church and began to make representations to various members of the hierarchy, in-

---


63_1'Action française_, September 8, 1937, in Tannenbaum, p. 219.

64Weber, pp. 250-251.
cluding Verdier. In February, 1939 came the death of Pius XI who had long opposed a reconciliation. It was suspected that his successor, Cardinal Pacelli, who became Pius XII, might be more congenial as he was known to have strong monarchist views. Monsignore Ottaviani was sent to France to arrange the details of Maurras' submission. Cardinal Verdier was bypassed, as was Monsignore Giovanni Montini, the Secretary of State, known to be unfavorable to a reconciliation. The submission was made in June, and in July Pius XII lifted the interdict on l'Action française, despite protests from Daladier, who was now premier. 65

This second triumph seems almost certainly to have been at least partly the result of the active policy of the Action Française in regard to the Spanish Civil War. Certainly the time for the reconciliation between Rome and French fascism was ill-timed from any other point of view, for it caused new dissent and division in France on the very eve of her war with the totalitarian powers. Charles Maurras had seen a government of the type he admired set up in Spain, had seen his policies vindicated by the Vatican, now he was about to see France receive an authoritarian government, ironically, at the hands of the German foe.

Maurras' reaction to the disasters of 1940 was to declare that France had no real part in the defeat which she sustained. France had been tricked into joining England against Germany. As usual the real villains were the Jews. "The barbarous occupation of 1940 would not have taken place without the Jews of 1939, without their filthy war, the war they undertook and they

declared; our occupiers were introduced by them, it was the Jews who launched us into catastrophe."66 Considering the fate of the Jews under Hitler this would have been rather shortsighted of them.

Actually, Maurras and his movement flourished under the occupation as never before, though poor Léon Daudet died heartbroken when France was overrun. Pétain admired and trusted Maurras and the Action Française remained "his steadiest supporter" in return. In February, 1941 Maurras published an article with the unfortunate title *La Divine Surprise*, heaping praises upon Pétain.67 The general never forgot, nor did the Resistance. Of De Gaulle and his movement Maurras wrote, "however much longer our old anti-Gaullist campaigns must go on, we will renew them daily,"68 but all this was simply accumulating material for his war crimes trial, which duly took place in 1945.

Afraid to touch Maurras when he was the leader of tens of thousands, the Republicans, once backed by the guns of the allies, managed to screw their courage to the sticking place after the liberation. Maurras and Pujo were brought to trial for treason. All their old enemies took the opportunity to vilify them. Paul Claudel, too feeble to attend in person sent a statement, which, among other things, accused Maurras of trying to keep him out of the Académie Française. André Gide attacked Maurras in print. There

---


67 Ibid., pp. 446-447.

was something truly pathetic about these old, old men, carrying their hatred to the very edge of the grave.

Pujo, who denied doing anything besides what he was told to do as editor, received a sentence of five years. Maurras got life imprisonment. "Vive la France," called Pujo; from Maurras came the anguished cry, "C'est la revanche de Dreyfus." 69

Edward R. Tannenbaum comments. "He was wrong, as he had always been wrong, in evaluating the motives of his enemies." 70 But in a way he was quite correct. Almost half a century earlier, during the Dreyfus affair, Maurras had declared that the innocence or guilt of a man was of no importance beside the safety of the nation. The men of the Fourth Republic were simply putting Maurras' own principle into action. They let him out of prison in 1953, to die. And did he in those bitter years often perhaps console himself with the thought that no matter what Jacobin principles might triumph in France there was still, across the Pyrenees, a country with a true Nationalist government, a government which he himself had helped to establish? Probably not. His chief occupation, as far as we know, was to write a romantic novel, Le Mont de Saturne. The artist had too late triumphed over the fanatic.

69 Ibid., p. 212.
70 Tannenbaum, p. 251.
CHAPTER II

THE DILEMMA OF THE CATHOLICS: MAURIAC, MARITAIN, CLAUDEL.

The problem of the Catholic intelligentsia confronted with the fact of the Spanish Civil War was a particularly trying one. If they chose, they might follow the lead of Maurras and his interdicted Action Française. Certainly they would find themselves in the company of many bishops if they supported the cause of Franco. The papacy itself seemed to lean in that direction. On the other hand, many prominent French Catholics had been working since the condemnation of L'Action française toward a sort of "social Christianity," in an effort to gain the support of the liberals. These liberal elements now befriended the Spanish Republic which was certainly in part responsible for the massacre of thousands of Catholic clergy. But if the Catholics identified themselves with the Republic they threw themselves into the camp of those hostile to the Church. This was the dilemma which confronted French Catholicism. Here we shall examine the reaction, first of all, of François Mauriac and Jacques Maritain, and then, of Paul Claudel, all three of them leaders of Catholic opinion.

It is convenient, and appropriate, to discuss François Mauriac and Jacques Maritain together because of their similar attitudes toward the Spanish war.
But, despite the fact that these two found themselves allies in the Spanish crisis, there is nothing similar in their early history. Jacques Maritain was born of Protestant parents in Paris, November 18, 1882, which makes him the elder of the two by almost three years. He studied at the Sorbonne and fell under the influence of Bergson, the greatest philosopher of his day. In 1904 he married Raissa Oumancoff, who was to become a leading French poetess. In 1906, partly through the influence of the novelist Léon Bloy, the Maritains were converted to Catholicism. Drifting more and more from the Bergsonian position, Maritain became interested in Thomism, and eventually became a leading figure, along with Étienne Gilson in the Neo-Thomist revival. He was associated with Henri Massis and with Charles Maurras in the Action Française movement, which he abandoned after 1927 for a more liberal position.¹

François Mauriac was born in October, 1885 at Bordeaux of a strongly Catholic family. His father dying when he was less than two, François, his sister and three brothers were raised by their mother. His earliest work was highly praised by Maurice Barrès, and this friendship certainly must have opened many doors for him. He began a series of novels which brought him fame and eventually membership in the Académie Française (1933). In the meantime he had associated, along with his brother Pierre, in the Action Française, had broken with the movement and become "reconverted" to Cath-

For both of these men, the condemnation of Maurras in 1927 was an important moment. Maritain, reflecting many years later on the event, wrote: "Pope Pius XI's action caused the scales to fall away from my eyes. It was as if the dynamic energies of the Gospel, the true spirit of Christianity, obfuscated from without by unconscious, oppressive errors, had suddenly been set free. . . . This spirit, though opposed by many, inspired the youth movements, the French 'Catholic Action,' and the young clergy who dedicated themselves in poverty and enthusiasm and love to preaching the Gospel to the working people, to putting an end to the 'great scandal of the nineteenth century,' the divorce between these people and the Church." This is the voice of a man looking backward, with some complacency, on his youthful folly. Undoubtedly, the crisis produced a great deal of anguish before "the scales fell away." In 1929 Maritain wrote: "I can only think of Charles Maurras with sorrow. . . . The affection I bear that indomitable soul makes me realize the full tragedy of his destiny. But the love I bear the Vicar of one crucified God makes me also realize the depth of his personal, his paternal suffering."

In Mauriac's case there is no doubt of it. He records in one of his

---


most intimate writings his own feelings on that momentous occasion. "The Action Française had been condemned. In Bordeaux, where reigned a Cardinal who would hear nothing of compromise, we were in the lion's jaw. Country gentlemen, who had led saintly lives, were dying without the sacraments."

Arguing with the moon, he protests, "They have done nothing, mother, but obey their conscience. . . ." She responds, "There can be no Christian conscience that is at odds with the Church." . . . "But the Almighty is not concerned about what paper we read!" The look she gave me was both sad and stern. "God is not mocked," she said. I protested that I was not mocking God, and reminded her of the saying that "God is Love." . . . "Not in the sense you give that word, my boy: otherwise it would make everything too easy."

Mauriac never lost his respect for the men of the Right, or the ideals which they represented. A writer of great compassion and sensitivity he understood the misdirected idealism which led them to a false position. Many years later he was to write, in tribute to Henri Massis, "So long as the struggle lasted, I, God knows, remained in the camp opposed to that of Massis. But now that those dark years are behind us, and the battleground has shifted, I still see Massis motionless in precisely the same spot on the field, now almost deserted, in the gathering shadows, upright beside the grave of his defeated master."

5François Mauriac, Mémoires Intérieurs, translated by Gerard Hopkins (New York, 1960), p. 26. One is reminded of T. H. White's couplet: "God is love the bishops tell;/ Ah Yes, I know, but love is hell."

6Ibid., p. 19.
As the thirties commenced the antagonisms which divided the French nation were sharpened by the deepening international crisis. Jacques Maritain began to speak on more urgent issues than metaphysics, denouncing on one hand the godless atheism of the Soviets and on the other armed Catholicism of fascist Italy. Both communism and fascism he saw as rooted in a common error. "The corporative organization which forms the state is very much on the line of requirements of the present day, although under various names and at the service of various ideals, it is already realized in Soviet Russia and Italy."  

The latter state, in particular, he viewed with alarm, because he felt that nothing could be as dangerous for the true spirit of the Catholic Christianity he believed in than "attempts undertaken by certain Catholic state leaders to make out of the precepts of the encyclicals an immediate program for a political or national reconstruction, to be brought about by means of the state's authority. . . also, the danger is all the greater in so far as; contrary to the nature of things, one has used Catholicism as a means of replacing a political ideal naturally temporal and a principle of unification naturally temporal, which fail as a result of circumstances."  

Mauriac, commenting on the growing power of Adolph Hitler wrote, "When the house painter Adolf Hitler signed a pact with destiny, undoubtedly he

---

7Maritain, Du Régime Temporal et de la Liberté (Paris, 1933), p. 66.
8Maritain, Ransoming the Time, translated by Henry Lorin Binese (New York, 1946), pp. 210-211.
was not able to measure the power of that engagement." It was becoming more significant every day, the destiny of Hitler. Mauriac declared that Hitler deserved a Shakespeare to tell his story, and indeed, the grim tragedy that began in those years with the rise first of Mussolini and then Hitler can be easily compared to the growing feeling of foreboding in Macbeth.

In their campaign to awaken France to the spiritual dangers within and without, the Catholic writers made use of a growing press. Maritain (writing in 1942) explained the situation as follows: "The chief obstacle to the people's return to Christianity was the old idea that the Church was the ally of the possessing classes. . . . This situation had to be reversed and some fifteen years ago [1927] the struggle was taken up by a few Catholics, both priests and laymen . . . a group of Dominicans launched a series of publications, notably the bimonthly magazine La Vie Intellectuelle, and, later the weekly Sept. . . ." This latter journal was suppressed during the Spanish Civil War because of pressure from the Catholic Right in both France and Spain. "At once a new weekly, Temps Present, was founded by Catholic laymen with the same end in view. . . . Meanwhile another group represented by the magazine Politique and the daily paper l'Aube was carrying on a similar struggle in the political field. . . . During the same years a third group was at work—the editors and friends of the magazine Esprit. This monthly had been started about 1933 by some young Catholics eager to find their own way against both Fascism and Communism and to lay the foundation

---

of a Christian revolution."\textsuperscript{10}

The Spanish crisis created the problem of divided loyalty for these groups. On the vital question of official interference in Spanish affairs even those opposed to Franco were unsure of the wisdom of such intervention. Should not the conflict be localized and allowed to burn itself out? So thought Mauriac when he wrote in \textit{Le Figaro} on July 25, 1936 denouncing intervention.\textsuperscript{11} In his famous statement he declared for himself and his associates:

\begin{quote}
It is necessary for the President of the Council [Blum] to know it: we are here, all of us, to try to surmount the current of hate with which the French are flooded since the advent of the Popular Front. We have made ourselves the forces of moderation. In an atmosphere of Civil War we have wished to keep our reason.

But if it is proved that our leaders collaborated actively in the massacres in the Peninsula, then we will know that France is governed not by statesmen, but by bandit chiefs, controlled by orders against which there is no appeal, controlled by the International and by Hate. We will know that the President of the Council today has forgotten nothing of the secular rancor which filled the partisan Léon Blum. Such a spirit would mean that wiser heads have been expelled from that party of violent men. Each is free to judge only as his conscience tells him. For myself, . . . I vow that I cannot enter into the reason of these great murderers who have no right on their side in my own eyes.

I must be free to keep in my affections, without distinction of parties, Navarrese, and Castillians, Catalans and Andalusians.

We do not want a single drop of Spanish blood to be
\end{quote}


spilled by the fault of France. Spain is indivisible in our hearts: Spain of El Cid and Saint Teresa, of Saint John of the Cross, of Columbus and Cervantes, of El Greco and Goya.

And I believe myself to speak for a large crowd in all regions, of Guyenne and Gascogne, Bearn and the Basque country, in calling to M. Blum who agitates for intervention: that to do so is to intervene in a massacre. "Pay attention, we will not pardon you for this crime, ever."  

He was later to find this statement very embarrassing. In the same newspaper, almost two years later, he explained it by saying: "At the first news of the military rising and the massacres of Barcelona, I had at first reacted as a man of the Right; and at Vichy, where I found myself, I dictated in haste, by telephone, that article on the International and Hate."  

In truth, his attitude had changed very rapidly during July and August, 1936. News of the conduct of Franco's troops in the taking of Badajoz horrified him. "The massacres of Barcelona and the sacrileges, dictated to the conquerors of Badajoz their conduct. They were restoring the traditional religion of Spain. . . . What an age, alas! when the 'concentration camp' appears as a measure recommended by charity and pity. . . .

Nonintervention, it is necessary to avow, in the degree of furor and drama which attends it, resembles a complicity. To aid the hostages in both camps, it is on this plan that all Frenchmen could become interventionists, all of them have at least enough imagination to understand the significance

13 Mauriac, Le Figaro, June 30, 1938, Rémond, p. 177.
of the simple headline of an evening newspaper: *The Price of Badajoz.*\(^\text{14}\)

To Mauriac, Spain seemed to suffer as a single living being subjected to torture. "Spain, is she still living?" he asked as the war continued into 1937. "After so many weeks we can no longer tell if she breathes. Nothing comes from the other side of the Pyrenees but the rumor in all the dialects of the world of the injuries being exchanged down there: of enemy races killing each other on her corpse. And then suddenly, the sombre mantle of death floats from the feminine form, still alive, who is detached from the demon which has transfigured her.\(^\text{15}\)

He recalled his conversation with a Spanish gentleman before the war, who told him how other nations held Spain in contempt. "My Spanish friend was right, for his country has never counted for much in foreign eyes, but she has never been more of a stranger than when the battle of nations is fought on her corpse. She is trampled underfoot by Gentiles incapable of entering into her mystery. Those Russians, those Italians, those Germans, had come to her ransacked house in order to decide a quarrel that did not concern her, and her own martyrdom remained an enigma to them. . . . They were having a party far from their own homes. What a marvelous field for maneuvers! they think. What a firing range!\(^\text{16}\)

The real victims of this international conflict are the Spanish people, "The Spanish people, at once the most carnal and most spiritual, in whom

\(^{15}\)Mauriac, *Journal II*, p. 198.
\(^{16}\)Ibid., p. 199.
every idea is incarnated, in whose hearts the divine love and human passion swirl together, have become the prey of what seems to be most hostile to their genius: they are being assassinated in the name of systems of which they cannot even conceive. . . . The masters of Moscow and of Berlin can trample upon this people like a grape harvest under the wine press, but they can never possess it from within. 17 Spain is in the grip of a demon, he told the French people, a demon which was mercilessly destroying her. Mauriac's Demon was the impersonal forces of modern war, and the demon was the same, no matter whether the weapons are in its "right" hand or in the "left." "It cannot be said that the right hand of the demon, to whom Spain has been surrendered, does not know what the left hand was doing: do the protagonists of this civil war doubt that in each camp it is the same spirit that moved them, that hurls them one against the other?" 18

Seeing a production of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* Mauriac mused:

"Mussolini, Franco, the people of Rome and those of Barcelona would be able to play these parts naturally. O myth of progress! . . . The poets hand us the mirror of the depth of centuries and we recognize our own face. It shows us sprinkled with blood, and it is always the same blood, shed always in the name of the same words: Country, People, Order, Liberty, Democracy. . . . The 'requet' of Franco, the soldiers of the international brigade, that 'Black shirt,' this 'red falcon,' were shown before by Shakespeare and

17Ibid.
18Ibid.
those mortal enemies resemble each other like brothers."¹⁹ The demon that possessed Spain, like that which was soon to possess Europe, was, after all, made up of ordinary human beings.

This ability to see both sides of an issue, while it may be a virtue, is often an uncomfortable one, both for the possessor and for those who know him. Further, it is a great incentive to do nothing to resolve the issue. Thus Mauriac's original denouncement of Blum's planned intervention was based on the truth that the Spanish conflict should be limited and the Spaniard left alone, but at the same time, intervention was the only hope for the Spanish Republic. Inaction meant, inevitably, a Fascist triumph. But then, Mauriac could hardly have been expected to come out too strongly at first for an anticlerical republic.

Jacques Maritain was a victim of the same division, as Henry Bars explains in his biography of the philosopher:

The Spanish insurrection of 1936 did not only tear Spain to pieces. It also divided France and especially the French Catholics. The position of Maritain gave rise both among us and elsewhere to inexplicable hatreds. What support had he? First, and above all, "that of itself and essentially the civil war is a bad situation that should be avoided and once it has burst out should be put to an end as soon as possible in conditions just and humane." More concretely, he refused to see in "the national Spanish war" a "holy war." . . . Finally, as a philosopher and man of action he made a severe judgement of the course of the war and the justice of the nationalist camp, not without speaking also of analogous proceedings in the camp of the Republicans (but less because they were not covered by the name Catholic and the Catholics of the whole world had abundant information against them). In conclusion he affirmed "that one could not

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 200–201.
take the side of Salamanca or of Valencia." In his judgement strangers had no right to take sides in a civil war, but he knew before hand, as he had in another drama of 1926, that this moderation was not understood except by a small number of free spirits. It was from the Right that he received attacks, and Claudel distinguished himself by his attacks against philosophy. In the meantime the position of Maritain exercised a power for the good of the French Catholics, especially that group around the journal Sept (which was suppressed for that reason a few months later) and made it possible that Bernanos in his turn might give forth his opinions. It is painful to observe that the author of *Les Grands Cimetières* [Georges Bernanos] whom for a dozen years had fought the same adversaries as Maritain and who called him "Jacques" held a personal animosity against him thereafter. 20

Bernanos was certainly a difficult ally for the "liberals," and his association with them points up the complexity of the issues involved, for that irascible gentleman was anything but a liberal in his views. François Mauriac tells us, "I cannot remember, but at some time in the thirties, he wrote something pretty scathing about my work, comparing it to a cellar, the walls of which are sweating with moral anguish. Nevertheless, all through that period I was regularly receiving from him handsome copies of his books, all of them inscribed, often in words which went far beyond the requirements of professional comradeship, as for instance, this on the fly-leaf of *Les Grands Cimetière sous la lune*: "This book can make its way only by advancing through the breach which you so bravely and so nobly opened. May you not find it unworthy of you. With all my admiration and all my love." 21

Thus did Bernanos recognize Mauriac's part in beginning the anti-Franco

20 Bars, pp. 136-137.

campaign which he was to carry on so brilliantly in his great indictment of the "White Terror." The publication of _Journal II_ in 1937 must have indeed made quite an impression on Mauriac's contemporaries, for he was a member of the Academy and generally recognized as having no peer but Gide among living French writers. In his journal, Mauriac speaks of another writer who played a significant role in the Spanish Civil War, André Malraux, that modern Byron who flew for the Republican air force. Of his unsophisticated propaganda for the Republican cause he speaks scathingly. Recording one of the many speeches Malraux gave before Parisian crowds he writes: "He swaggers impressively in his bravado, but he makes a myopic impression which has no real feeling and is full of stupidity. For example, just the other evening at La Mutualité, he stated, that General Queipo de Llano [the ferocious and debauched "radio general" whose broadcasts for Franco stirred up much controversy] had ordered by radio the bombing of hospitals and ambulances 'to keep up the morale of the rabble.' But he did not tear himself away from that street no matter how passionately he roared out against these terrors: so one can't believe in him. And just the same, after a very poignant description of the Spanish peasants making a procession for a wounded government aviator, he added 'among the enemy, when their aviators fall, if the carbiners don't come to their rescue, no one runs to aid them.' At that moment the doubt could be found growing on the street, and someone said, _mezzo voce_, 'except in Navarre.'"22

 Caught in the middle, the Catholic liberals had to be equally active

---

22Mauriac, _Journal II_, p. 203.
against the Right. On November 21, 1936, Maritain, Francique Gay [editor of l'Aube] and other leading members of the intelligentsia printed a manifesto in l'Aube which attacked Maurras and others, especially the editors of the satirical Right-wing publication Gringoire, over the death of Blum's Minister of the Interior Roger Salengro, a Socialist, who was driven to suicide by the insistent cries of "traitor" leveled against him. The manifesto spoke of "the crushing responsibility of those who dare to speak without proof against a man's honor, of those who accuse opponents in such a manner that no refutation can ever dispel the doubt introduced in passionately prejudiced minds."

Some months later, both Maritain and Mauriac, along with Gabriel Marcel, the philosopher, participated in the issuing of another manifesto. This one also spoke of responsibility, in this case, the responsibility for the destruction of Guernica by German bombers. M. Claude Farrere, a member of the Academy had stated that the destruction, which he had gone to Guernica to inspect, had been caused by the Republicans themselves. But the signers of this manifesto were not fooled.

FOR THE BASQUE PEOPLE

The Spanish Civil War has taken a particularly atrocious character in the Basque country. Yesterday it was the aerial bombardment of Durango. Today, by the same method, it is the almost complete destruction of Guernica, a defenseless town and the sanctuary of the Basque traditions. Hundreds of noncombatants, women, and children have perished at Durango, at Guernica or

---


elsewhere. Bilbao, where one finds a great many refugees, is menaced in the same fashion.

Whatever opinion one has on the qualities of the parties which confront each other in Spain it is indisputable that the Basque people are a Catholic people, that the practice of the Catholic faith has never been interrupted in the Basque country. In these circumstances, it is up to Catholics, without distinction of party to raise their voices first that the world may be spared the pitiless massacre of a Christian people. Without justification or excuse is the bombing of such open cities as Guernica. We address our agonized appeal to all men of heart, in every land, that the massacres of noncombatants may cease at once.25

One weakness of this manifesto is that it chooses a particular group of sufferers for its pity, rather than the entire mass of struggling humanity in Spain. Why should pity for the Basques be greater than that for the Catalans or Andalusians? Mauriac tried to answer in an explanation he wrote as to why he had signed the petition. "... I give this reason: this very Basque people, profoundly Catholic ... look for, and call upon their brothers in Christ and do not find them. It is too late to ask if they merit their sufferings, or if one can find an excuse for it! It is here that I declare myself unable to comprehend the positions of our leaders. Even if the reasons which have caused the Basque people to choose to cast their lot with the party of strangers, we do not have a right to be confused about our duty: we cover their

wounds, and for the rest, God will be the judge. . . . The branch is menaced with death and the whole tree suffers."  

Again, in *Le Figaro* Mauriac explained that: "The legal government of Spain has said to the Basques, 'you are free.' That independence, restored after centuries, which the rebels refuse them, and which has been legitimately conceded to them, how could it be that they would not defend it, foot by foot, with all the tenacity of their race? If they have made a mistake it should not be examined here. But if they have committed a fault in refusing to deliver the mines of Bilbao to the Germans, then the French should at least overlook it. One day, perhaps, we will understand that this poor people suffers and dies for us."  

Jacques Maritain also seemed to have certain difficulties in clarifying his position in regard to the petition for the Basques. In his typically tortuous fashion he tried to explain himself to *Nouvelle Revue Française*:

... It has been written that "the national war in Spain is a holy war and the holiest which history has known."  
... In its essence war is among those things which are Caesar's, it is par excellence of the temporal order, from its beginning to its end, the sacrifice of men, the temporal city; all war conforms to political and economic interests, the lusts of the flesh and the blood. However, in a civilization of the sacral type, that terrestrial duty that empowers it to take a role in regard to the spiritual ends has in reality, I do not mean just in the intentions of hearts, but I mean in an objective and historical moment, the primacy. ... Just or unjust, a war against a foreign or against fellow citizens, rests of necessity that is essential to it, in that order which is profane and secular, not pertaining to the sacred.

---


27 Mauriac, *Le Figaro*, June 17, 1937, Rémond, p. 188.
... War is not sacred and it risks blasphemy to call it so.28

This means that Franco's "Crusade" is only another secular war; especially when he fights against a "Christian people" Maritain might have added. Maritain tells us himself that the declaration on the Basques: "Provoked a great storm of imprecations on the part of the reactionary elements which were endeavoring to deceive opinion by a corrupted press, various reactionary salons, and the influence of the French Academy."29 Undoubtedly the declaration was a forthright and brave act on the parts of all the signers, and yet, read closely, one sees that the essence of their concern with the Basques was that they were a "Christian People." This is the real answer to the question of why these members of the intelligentsia were so moved by the plight of the Basques. Mauriac himself admitted that he was going to the aid of his "Catholic brothers." Undoubtedly it was easier for these men to sympathize with fellow Catholics than with, say, Catalan anarchists, who were suffering just as cruelly, but it takes away something from the humanitarian spirit of their protest to find it made on such parochial grounds.

The protest on the treatment of the Basques does, however, stand as a sort of milestone in the growing cleavage of public opinion on the war. As Maritain points out, from that time on the two parts of Catholic opinion: those who believed in Franco's crusade and those who favored an open-minded neutrality, were at war. "Those French Catholics who took an equally firm

29Maritain, "Religion," Pour la Justice, p. 70.
stand against the 'holy war' and against the slaughter by Communists and Anarchists, and who tried to persuade the European democracies to intervene effectively to end a fratricidal fight which obviously might kindle a universal conflagration, were dragged through the mud by an irresponsible, so-called Catholic press."30

Maritain had been genuinely shocked by the callous bombardment of civilian areas, and from his high seat of Neo-Thomist philosophy he declared again and again that the bombardment of cities could never be tolerated, under any circumstances. Such tactics could not ultimately succeed, he declared, for: "Let the barbarians do their worst with their machinery for racking our bodies; as long as free consciences exist, they cannot destroy our souls."31

Despite the efforts of such writers as Mauriac and Maritain to remain neutral, their outspoken hostility to Franco, and less obvious feelings toward his enemies made them in fact champions of the Spanish Republic whether they willed it or no. It was all very well to say with Maritain that the Catholics of the world had ample proof of Republican crimes, the very fact that Maritain was silent about them and loud in his indignation of Franco tended to turn Catholic opinion toward sympathy with the Loyalists.

In the case of Mauriac at least, the Republican government recognized its debt. A letter to Mauriac, dated August 5, 1938 (written, therefore, only a few months before the fall of Barcelona) expresses this fact clearly:32

30Ibid.


32A Photo-copy of this letter can be seen in P. H. Simon, p. 88.
Monsieur,

The president of Catalonia, M. LLuis Companys, has learned that you are to be promoted to commander of the Legion of Honor, and has ordered us by telephone to convey to you his personal congratulations, and also to congratulate you in the name of the Catalanian government and the Catalan people to whom you have so often and nobly shown your friendship and good will.

We are happy at the same time to express our congratulations and we beg you to believe in our sentiments of admiration and high esteem.

N. M. Rubio
Generalitat de Catalonia
services de information

Was Mauriac perhaps embarrassed by this tribute from "the Reds"?

As the Spanish Civil War came to its bloody conclusion it became evident that it was only the beginning of the struggle. "The European war in reality had its prelude in the Spanish Civil War," wrote Maritain during World War II. ". . . The inextricable confusion of ideas which grew up around this war began thence forth to obscure among us the sense of the most obvious national interests. The result of all this was that the basic force of a country at war, its inborn national instinct, which for France is the instinct for liberty combined with confidence in the strength and vocation of her people, had been profoundly undermined before the war started."33 The Spanish struggle, he saw, had played its part in preparing France for defeat.

"Marshal Pétain," he points out, "was a friend of General Franco, an admirer of his crusade; he came to think that the only way of France was

---

through a Catholic-dictatorial regime on the Spanish line." So France, under the leadership of the old hero, slipped naturally enough into a totalitarian order. Pétain, like Franco, hoped that through neutrality he might save his country from the ravages of modern war, but, of course, Pétain was to save neither France, nor himself.

Even so, Maritain refused to glorify the allied cause, the more so in that he saw the allies using many of the questionable tactics of the enemy. "This is not a holy war," he cautioned his audience in America during the dark days of 1940. "The people of my country have enough good sense, they understand that all war brings with it and leaves behind misery and poison, so that they can guard themselves from enrolling the sanctity of the Ineffable Name in the temporal war which they make, even when the enemy has himself raised the standard of pagan empire and the hatred of God."35

Mauriac too was to protest against the crusading zeal of the allies. In France especially, after Hitler's armies were driven from the field, he saw nothing but hypocrisy in the declaration of a holy war. "Man succeeds in disguising himself so well that under the robes of a public prosecutor, for example, he puts on the comedy of justice for honest folk and for himself. Thus a boy of eighteen is sentenced to the putrification of the penitentiary because he once gave the Nazi salute. How all those who battened on the Germans during those four years must have laughed: the munitions makers, the brothel keepers. They certainly must have quite a laugh when

---

34Ibid., p. 48.

35Maritain, "Le Christianisme et la Guerre," (address delivered to the New School of Social Research, April 18, 1940), Pour la Justice, p. 13.
they think of that lad."\textsuperscript{36}

Of Mauriac's overall attitude to the sufferings of man, Pierre-Henri Simon has aptly written that, "Mauriac refuses to regard man as an innocent tossed into a world of evil and misery, and justified in raising a cry of revolt; he sees him certainly as miserable, but guilty as well, and responsible because he is free..."\textsuperscript{37} Certainly the same could be said of Jacques Maritain. Going on to a consideration of other writers, Simon remarked that "Not in him \textsuperscript{Mauriac}... as in Claudel, does the faith produce such an empty optimism which ends in stifling the sorrows of earth in the song of the angels."\textsuperscript{38}

Far different from the response of Maritain and Mauriac to the Spanish war was that of Paul Claudel, the Catholic poet. Claudel was older than either of them having been born in 1868 during the Second Empire. He wrote his first poetic drama, \textit{Tête d'Or} while they were still in their early teens. From 1890 on he had a distinguished career as a playwright, culminating in the surrealist drama \textit{Le soulier de satin}, which deals, rather strangely, with Spain in the period of the Reformation. Also from 1890 dates his career as a diplomat. He saw duty in the Far East, was in Germany at the start of World War I, and then served in Asia and Latin America before his appointment as ambassador to the United States from 1926 to 1933. His last ambassador-


\textsuperscript{37}Simon, p. 90.

\textsuperscript{38}Ibid.
ship was to Belgium in the critical 1933-1935 period. Thus he was not only a leading Catholic intellectual and France's foremost dramatist, but also (as so often happens in France) a leading governmental figure. But he was a man cut off by his frequent absences from much of what was going on in France.

Louis Chaigne, commenting on the position of Claudel in regard to the Spanish question, states that "French Catholic opinion was bitterly divided on the Spanish Civil War. Maritain and Mauriac, later joined by Bernanos (who originally favored Franco), were strongly opposed to the Nationalists. Claudel saluted the victims of the revolution [that is the victims of the Red revolution supposedly made by the Loyalists], in which he saw a demonic undertaking. Moreover he originated a pro-Nationalist manifesto, which circulated among intellectuals. He plunged headlong into the controversy, through faithfulness to his Catholic conception of Spain; a conception which emerges clearly from Le Soulier de Satin." For him the most important fact was not the ideological conflict, but simply the anti-clericalism of the Republicans. The massacres, undoubtedly real and widely publicized, of priests, nuns, and lay brothers, stirred his imagination, and being a poet he expressed himself in verse. His Aux Martyrs Espagnols may or may not be great poetry, but it certainly left its readers in no doubt as to the stand of the author.

39 Further biographical details can be found in Stanley T. Kunitz and Howard Haycroft, Twentieth Century Authors (New York, 1942).

Eleven bishops, seven thousand priests massacred and never an apostasy!

Ah! to be able myself even as you someday to give such high testimony to the splendor of day!

It has been said that you sleep, sister Spain, as one who only seems to sleep,

And are able when asked to give seven thousand martyrs!

"Who gives me all these children?" cries the one whom they called sterile.

The ports of heaven are not wide enough for all that host which tumbles in as best it can!

The time of labor is finished, it is the time of growth.

The time of pruning is over for the tree, it is the time of re-growth.

The idea has germinated under the earth, and in all parts of your heart, Holy Spain, there is an immense regeneration of love! 41

It is interesting to note that here, as in the poetic image of Maruiac's Journal, and, as we will later see, in the writings of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, Spain is both feminine and passive. Nor is this a purely literary criticism, for both Mauriac and Claudel looked upon the conflict as one of alien forces fighting over the prostrate body of Spain. Men in those days did not conceive, as Dennis Brogan has pointed out, that what was taking place was simply "another Spanish Civil War," 42 such as Spain had every now and then for the purgative effect, but rather they conceived of a struggle of absolutes in which Spain provided simply the battlefield.


In prose too, Claudel defended the sacred cause of the Spanish clergy. His book *La Persécutio n Religieuse en Espagne* is a profoundly moving account of the martyrdom of the Spanish priests and nuns. Here he tries first of all to examine the causes for the persecution of the Church. Had it indeed failed in its spiritual mission, so that the persecution as Brenan wrote, takes on a religious character? No, Claudel answers. "The Catholic Church did not collapse of itself. It is simply at the mercy of the forces of destruction. Spain, during the first two years of the Republic, and then from February, 1936, underwent two governments which deceived the nation. They had promised with the achievement of the Republic, a complete tolerance in matters of religion: 'A free Church in a free state' and that tolerance was turned in each case to legal and criminal persecution."43

Thus it is not the failures of the Church, but the malice of evil men that has led to the massacres in Barcelona and elsewhere. And who are these evil men? Claudel saw them as the disciples of Karl Marx. "That which is taking place in Spain should not be a subject of astonishment to anyone. No one who takes part in the political and social struggles of our time is unaware that it is the Marxist program in matters of religion. It is founded on the doctrines of Marx and Lenin and achieved its first practical realization in Leninist Russia."44 Claudel perhaps gave the Communists credit for more diabolical ingenuity than they could possibly have possessed in a nation where they numbered so few members when he states that: "The destruction of

43 Claudel, *La Persécutio n Religieuse*, p. 5.

the Catholic Church is obeying a preconceived plan which intends the destruction of all religion. This plan is shown by the explosive forms in which, since the advent of the Republic, the Marxist or Anarchist movements have acted against government whether of the Left or the Right. In all Spain, the government of the Popular Front has favored the use of all forms of outrages against religion since the night of its election." It seems extraordinary that a man entrusted with the ambassadorship to such strategic spots as the United States and then Belgium could be naive enough to lump Communists with Anarchists and then both with a government which covered, as we have seen, almost the entire spectrum of Left-of-center politics. Despite these flaws in his reasoning, his work emerges as that of a man genuinely concerned with the problem of justice and determined to speak honestly for the truth as he saw it.

Claudel, like most men on the Right, made much of the July, 1937 statement of the Spanish bishops condemning the war and stating the appalling disasters that had fallen on the clergy. "The Spanish Church," Claudel declared in Le Figaro, "under the signatures of two cardinals and the greater part of the prelates, has made an address to the bishops of the world in a collective letter, which establishes the true character of the events on the peninsula which are voluntarily or involuntarily changed and disfigured by the greater part of the press, even the Catholic press.... One cannot understand the Spanish revolution which blossomed forth in 1936 if one understands it as an attempt at social construction as in Russia, having for its goal the substi-
tion of one social order for another, but rather it is an enterprise of
total destruction long prepared and directed against the entire Church..."46

He contrasted the life in Nationalist and "Communist" Spain. "In the
White zone, there is nothing left of the civil war. . . . Behind the front
there is no revolution: life is normal, all in order. In the Red zone there
is civil war at the front, but behind that civil war, more singularly and
gravely, there exists The Revolution: a devastating revolution, which de­
files the economy, destroys justice, disorganizes social life, and ruins all
contact with religion and faith."47 His criteria of good, clearly stated,
are order and religion.

As for the Basques: "The Catholic Biscayans have obtained their auton­
omy in exchange for their collaboration with the Reds, even in the midst of
Civil War. This autonomy was accorded and approved by a small faction of the
Cortes, assembled at the beginning of October in Madrid. Thus, the struggle
is complicated in the Basque country. Politically the clergy is divided in
their sympathy with Carlism and autonomy. . . ."48 He sympathized with their
aspirations but he felt they had sold out to the Red Republic. These were
the views of France's greatest living poet and a leading diplomat, and
undoubtedly they must have influenced a good many French Catholics against
the Republic.

46 Claudel, Le Figaro, August 27, 1937, in Remond, pp. 197-198.
47 Claudel, La Persécution Religieuse, p. 2.
48 Ibid., p. 128.
When the German armies overran France in 1940, Claudel not only remained in France, but at first he "favored the politics of Marshal Pétain." Soon, however, he discovered that the policies of the aged Marshal meant the ruin of France. He went to French Africa, where he conferred with prominent French leaders, including the aviator-philosopher, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, who had escaped into exile, and from these conversations he experienced a change of heart. In fact, he made an abrupt change and opted for General Charles de Gaulle whom Saint-Exupéry and many others deeply distrusted. "In 1942 he joined the Gaullist movement, and henceforth put his faith in General de Gaulle, with whom he was on excellent terms." He nevertheless returned to France where he remained till the end of the war.

Before the war, the violent opposition of Maurras and the Catholic Right had kept him from membership in the Academy, but after World War II Claudel was approached by Henri Bordeaux, dean of the Academy, and his old political enemy François Mauriac who asked if he would again put himself forward as a candidate. He was elected to the Académie Française in 1945.

For Claudel, as for Mauriac and Maritain, the chief question on the Spanish Civil War was whether or not the massacres and other obvious crimes of the Republicans against religion and order in society outweighed the fact that they stood for the liberal and democratic tradition of which the French Republic itself was the symbol, and practically the only other representative on the

49 Chaigne, p. 249.
50 Ibid., pp. 250-251.
51 Ibid., pp. 258-259.
Continent. Each of these men followed his own conscience and thus led the millions of Frenchmen whose respect for them bordered on worship into divergent camps.
CHAPTER III

GEORGES BERNANOS

As a young man, the novelist Georges Bernanos participated in the activities of the Camelots du Roi, a youth group of the Action Française, the extreme right-wing, Bourbon monarchist party led by Charles Maurras. On one occasion Bernanos and two other young men set out to terrorize a priest loyal to the Third Republic who was saying mass at Sains. "They first attended another mass, held in a barn by a saintly old priest sent by the bishop to counteract the other. "The Mass of M. Jouy . . . could not count in our eyes," Bernanos explained, "so we armed ourselves for this little expedition with sticks and with a revolver. The priest and the worshippers realized that we were enemies." After sufficiently impressing poor M. Jouy with the enormity of his offence, the three toughs left. "The scandal remained of modest proportions."¹ It is difficult to imagine a man who was to become one of the sharpest critics of the violence of Franco's "crusade" acting as a terrorist and it is difficult to imagine the author of The Diary of a Country Priest, the brilliant and deeply religious story of a

saintly and unworldly cleric, as a member of the proto-fascist Camelots du Roi. But there is much in Georges Bernanos' background which makes it understandable that he flirted at one time with what he was later to call, "the fascist temptation." The son of a draper, Georges was born on February 20, 1888. His family was intensely Catholic and very much a part of the French middle class (in addition to the family business they owned a small property in the department of Pas-de-Calais). As a boy he was educated first by the Jesuits and then at a series of seminaries. In 1906 he left the seminary and went to Paris where he studied at the University, and it was there that he came under the spell of Charles Maurras and the Action Française. He wrote for monarchist journals and was briefly imprisoned in 1909 on account of his anti-republican views. In the period just prior to the First World War, Maurras gained for him the editorship of a small monarchist newspaper at Rouen, l'Avant-garde de Normandie.

In these pre-war years, Bernanos was attracted to the monarchist movement and the Action Française because he thought that he found in these causes an echo of his own intense idealism. "In Maurras and his circle he recognized the elite which, he could legitimately think, would not surrender either to bribery or defeat." "Voyez-vous, tout est une question d'élites," as he

---

2 These biographical details and others, except where noted are from Guy Gaucher, Georges Bernanos ou l'invincible espérance (Paris, 1962), pp. 169-173.

3 Molnar, p. 23.

once remarked to André Langier. But at the same time one cannot deny that Bernanos' "elite" with its anti-Semitism, its hatred of democratic forms and constant resort to violence, was, even at that time, a spiritually bankrupt one, and a precursor of the fascist movements that followed the First World War. Bernanos, however, appears actually to have relished this violence and found it not incompatible with his own high ideals of honor and patriotism.

Central to Bernanos' political thought, both then and later, was the idea that a nation, a people, have a vocation, a destiny which must be accomplished, and in this accomplishment lies their honor which must not be compromised, even if it means defeat and death. "Honor," he declared, "makes for sacrifice of one's life." It is opposed to "the modern politics, the child of Machiavelli," which is founded on "realism" and seeks only "to save one's skin." It is violently opposed to democracy. "The democrat, and particularly the intellectual democrat, is in my opinion the most loathsome type of bourgeois," he was to declare, many years after his break with Maurras.

There are two great turning points in the life of Georges Bernanos, and both of them are associated with war and violence. While he was still young enough to be called back for active service, the First World War broke out. Bernanos fought for four long years in the trenches. The war, the sort of patriotism it engendered behind the lines, the false unity it produced among

---


the factions within the Third Republic, all this disgusted and dismayed him. "It is true," he wrote a friend, "that war constrains us to a complete revision of our moral values. It is true, absolutely true, that our senses are revolted and our disgust aroused by the great honor offered by the poor people to: 'the religion of France and of Saint Poilu.'"  

The sham victory with its mock celebrations, its vengeance on the German nation could not appeal to a man with so deeply rooted a sense of honor. Then too, it would have been painful for Bernanos to admit that the godless republic he so detested, with its decadent bourgeois democracy, had defeated the might of Germany, even if such a defeat were real. Far from admitting any victory for France he looked upon the outcome of World War I as a defeat for honor, a defeat, not at the front, but behind the lines, through subversion on the part of those who engineered the war.  

"From 1914 to 1918," he later reflected, "the men at the front were sustained by some kind of honor. Those behind were sustained by hate. . . . I defy any average well educated schoolboy to write an essay, for instance, on the kind of literature from which these miserable beings sucked the substance of their sedentary patriotism—without giving it up in despair."  

Like so many young men disillusioned by the war, Bernanos felt that France, captured by Clemenceau and the politicians of the Third Republic, had "deceived" the men at the front. "There is no doubt," he wrote, "that a large  

---

7Bernanos, letter to F. Lefevre, in Pastiaux, p. 77.  
8Bernanos, Diary, pp. 239-240.
number of the heroes were 'deceived' by their wives between 1914 and 1918.
Yet that can be regarded as individual bad luck. Whilst the abject post-
war celebrations, . . . I say, put horns on us all. France herself was
making cuckolds of us—no dishonor in that! But we couldn't help feeling
ashamed. . . ."9

Bernanos himself married, while on leave in 1917, to Jeanne Talbert
d'Arc, who claimed descent from a brother of Saint Joan. From an ideological
point of view no marriage could have suited Bernanos better than one with a
second Jeanne d'arc. When the war was over, Georges Bernanos was thirty
years old. He resumed his old career of newspaper editor for La National.
But other things were not the same. The war for him acted as a great puri-
ifying force. It opened his eyes to much of the sham connected with Maurras
and the Action Française. He left the party in 1920, but continued on
friendly terms with Maurras and his associates and wrote articles for their
publications.

He considered that the Maurrasian movement, founded as a counterforce
to bourgeois Catholicism had gradually gone over to the enemy and become the
tool of the middle class.10 His own hope, the restoration of the monarchy,
the rekindling of the spirit of unity among the three estates manifest in 1789,
and the re-establishment of French grandeur, had been sacrificed to mere
clericalism and anti-communism. Still, when the Vatican condemned the move-
ment in 1926, Bernanos was the first to rush to Maurras' defense. "A new

9Ibid., pp. 237-238.
10Molnar, p. 51.
modernist invasion begins," he wrote to Henri Massis. "One hundred years of concessions and equivocations have allowed the spirit of anarchy to penetrate the clergy. . . . One of these days I shall be executed by Bolshevik priests with the Social Contract in their pockets and the cross on their breast."\textsuperscript{11} Such was Bernanos' view of the attempts of the papacy to make contact with the modern world. For Bernanos the modern world was as diabolical as a Bosch landscape and to compromise with it was to give in to the devil.

The First World War did something else for him besides opening his eyes to the shabby grandeur of the Action Française. It unloosed the great desire to express himself as a novelist. Several years of intense creative work culminated in 1925 with the publication of his first novel, \textit{Sous le soleil de Satan}. Bernanos was then thirty-eight years old. Unlike so many of the writers who appeared after the First World War, Bernanos wrote with a mature conviction and an already established prose style. He was immediately acclaimed by many as one of the leading novelists of his time. His first novel was followed by \textit{L'Imposture} (1927) and by \textit{La Joie} (1929) which took the Prix Femina.

His novels brought him a reputation, but very little else. He was still dependent upon his trade as editor and controversial journalist. In 1933 he became the editor of \textit{Figaro}, then under the management of Coty who was attempting to form a right-wing movement in opposition to Charles Maurras. The year before Bernanos had written his first full length polemical work, \textit{La Grande peur des bien pensants}. In it he discussed the ideas he had absorbed

from Édouard Drumont, a right-wing, monarchist writer known for his anti-Semitic views, and the betrayal by Maurras of the nationalist ideals of Drumont in favor of an allegiance with the bien pensants, the "right-thinking people," the small minded bourgeoisie whom Bernanos saw as the supreme enemies of France and the tools of Fascism. This book had made Bernanos the very man to lead the right-wing opposition to the growing fascism of the Action Française, but in 1933 Bernanos was severely injured in a motorcycle accident. "What followed was undoubtedly one of the most difficult periods of his life."12

Georges Bernanos, with a wife and six children to support, found himself in a very bad position, without any steady income save for the small royalties on his books. He was forced to flee from Paris to less expensive locales. "From that time, which marks a sort of parting of the ways, if not in his thought at least in his active life, dates his truly itinerant career, in which it was impossible to settle down, his passionate pilgrimage."13

Bernanos fled first to the south of France, and then, in quest of some place where the franc would stretch further, to Majorca in the Balérics, which he discovered as a refuge long before it became a famous artist colony. On "this tiny island" which "can easily be crossed in two hours from one end to the other,"14 he settled down. He was not the sort of man who could hold himself aloof from his surroundings; with great energy he entered into the life of Majorca, made friends, acting as if he were going

---

12Gaucher, p. 171.
14Bernanos, Diary, pp. 105-106.
to stay there forever. Perhaps it was his Spanish blood, for his family (as his name would indicate) traced its remote ancestry back to Spain. Perhaps it was that he saw in the Spanish people the sort of innate nobility and sense of honor that he most admired. In any case, there is no denying that he came to love his sunny island.

He would sit, day after day, in a cafe off the rambla, writing the last chapters of what was to be his greatest novel, *The Diary of a Country Priest*. He wrote in a cafe, "at the risk of being taken for a drunkard," so as not to "be deprived of the human face and voice, which I have tried to render with dignity." Or he would take a ride out from the sleepy little town of Palma on his "tall, red motor bicycle." These were the things which gave meaning to his quiet life. He looked at the peasants, but saw, not a class, but individual faces, particular people who managed dignity along with poverty, as he himself did.

But it was not long before he found his peaceful refuge invaded by the growing hostility between Right and Left that swept over Spain in the period following the attempted rising of Lluis Companys in Catalonia, and the Asturian miners' revolt in 1934. Bernanos was appalled at the poisonous hatred unloosed in the land. Although Catalonia is the part of the Spanish mainland nearest Majorca, the island itself was not in favor of the anticlerical and nationalist uprising. Evidently a severe persecution took place at this time on the mainland, for we find Bernanos writing in a letter which is dated from Palma, November 27, 1935 about the attacks carried on by the

15Ibid., p. 18.
right-wing extremists against the Catalanians, in reprisal for their desecrations.

"We wonder," he wrote, "if one of these days our lives will not be ridiculously brought to an end by being shot by the Catalans. They have sacked all the churches in their power. These sacrileges terrify the island. I vow that I find it laughable to pretend to hurt saints by striking their images. A silly whim of the people! The repression is terrible everywhere, and absolutely without mercy. The sweet peace of God, by means of all those deaths! As it is, you can see people execute others for a yes or a no. That is what one sees, and tries not to see. I know a poor, brave capuchin, charged with confessing those condemned to death . . . eventually all the communists confessed before they died. The whims of the people!"

The family with whom Bernanos, his wife and children were staying was that of the wealthy and aristocratic Marques De Zayas, chief of the falange in Majorca. The falange was an extreme nationalist, Catholic movement which drew some of its inspiration from Maurras, the Action Française, and something too from Mussolini's fascism. It appealed mainly to the type of high-strung aristocratic youth whom the Spaniards disparagingly call, señoritos, "little gentlemen." Its leader was the brilliant and suave young idealist, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, son of the strong man who had run the monarchy. Their program was based on Social Justice and National Gran-

---

16 Bernanos, "Lettres," Les Cahiers du Rhône, LXXIX, 46. It is possible this letter is misdated, but there was widespread violence throughout 1935.

deur, in about equal measure. Bernanos' eldest son, Yves, was drawn into the movement, evidently with his father's approval. Bernanos seemed to see in the falangists an echo of his own youthful enthusiasm for the Camelots du Roi. If occasionally they indulged in such youthful antics as administering a heavy dose of castor oil to outspoken republicans, it was no more than a youthful prank. He saw that these young men were "full of honor and courage," and their program, though he could not "swallow it whole," seemed to him inspired by a "furious sense of social justice." He admired too, their "wise mistrust of the clergy," and of the army, whom Bernanos considered traitors to their king.

And then came the revolt of General Franco. This second war which he witnessed, this dress rehearsal for the Second World War, proved as important an experience for Bernanos as World War I. He later was to declare that "The Spanish experience was perhaps, the capital event of my life. . . . It gave me a chance to observe to what depth the totalitarian poison had corrupted the conscience of Catholics and even that of priests." 20

The falangists gave their support to the revolt, which triumphed in Majorca with hardly a shot fired. Bernanos tried to be pleased with Franco and his crusade. "My illusions on the enterprise of General Franco did not last long," he tells us, "but while they lasted I conscientiously endeavored

---


19Bernanos, *Diary*, p. 75.

to get over the disgust which some of the men and means inspired in me."21

During July and August, while the revolt was in its earliest stages, Bernanos sent "seven or eight" articles to a Dominican weekly magazine called Sept. In these articles he praised the rebels for their determination to "assure the moral and religious unity of the country with iron and fire if necessary."22 Even after he had changed his opinion of the war, he continued to affirm that "It is not the use of force which seems to me iniquitous."23

Indeed, it is hard to escape the conclusion that if Franco had restricted his killings to the front line, he would have found in Georges Bernanos a firm supporter. Bernanos barely avoided what Thomas Molnar has called "the fascist detour." Many of his friends and associates failed to avoid it.24

Majorca fell easily to the rebels, quiet set in. There was fear of a Catalanian attack which did, in fact, take place under the command of Captain Bayo who was later military adviser to Fidel Castro.25 The Catalan attack was a complete failure. And so, although this was war, Majorca saw almost no fighting. What it did see was the massacres. For three years, Georges Bernanos had moved in the sleepy rhythms of Palma, Majorca's quiet and easy-going capital. For three years he had talked with its people, gotten to know them, to like them. He was not prepared for what took place after the

21Bernanos, Diary, p. 85.
23Bernanos, Diary, p. 85.
24Molnar, p. 90.
25Payne, p. 100.
abortive landing of the Loyalists. What he saw in those months caused him to
to begin his second great work, before he had even finished the *Diary of a*
Country Priest. In *Les Grands Cimetières sous la lune* he set down the things
he saw "with a kind of luminous and accurate fury." Like *La Grande Peur*
des Bien-Pensants this book is an attack on the complacency of the bourgeois
class in the face of overwhelming evil. But, as Molnar says, the second book
is far more profound in tone than the first because here Bernanos speaks from
his own experience. 27

He was in an ideal position to speak. His son, an officer in the falange,
and the leader of the falange lived under the same roof. Bernanos was a first-
hand witness to all that took place. He never ceased to respect and share his
son's convictions, but he saw the falange taken over by the military and the
Italians who flooded into the island for their own purposes. Of the falange
he writes, "I tell you there were barely five hundred in Majorca, on the eve
of the Pronunciamiento. Two months later there were 15,000 thanks to a most
shameless recruiting drive of army officers, with the object of destroying
the Party and its discipline, organized by an Italian adventurer called
Rossi." 28

Bernanos soon became convinced that he had erred in his judgement of
Franco and his methods. By January, 1937 he was writing to a friend:

---

26 Ibid., p. 95.
27 Molnar, p. 89.
28 Bernanos, *Diary*, p. 76.
I am at the end of my nerve. . . . I think that X is aiding in a clerical and military revolution. It is a degrading spectacle, and it is difficult to imagine something so paradoxical, explosive with cynicism and hypocrisy. You will tell me about the other side. . . . Okay, Okay, but the other side is not us, they don't speak our language. I prefer untidy hangmen, more or less drunk, to the "puritans" of Oliver Cromwell, who were the terror and abomination of my life when I was five, from the works of W. Scott. Now I have seen them for real. In fact, a thousand, at this very moment when those Catalan guignols landed. They have "pruned" the villages thereabouts as a precaution. By means of denunciations—from the cure's housekeepers or mistresses, etc., etc.—they have taken whatever poor chaps were suspected simply of being only a little less than enthusiastic about the movement and have had them shot behind the cemetery of a burg called Manacor. 29

In this atmosphere he began Les Grands Cimetières. This book, one of the great testaments to come out of the war, is a curious thing to read. At times it seems to be only the ravings of an old and broken man. The enemies, for Bernanos, are theoretically Franco and Mussolini, but he cannot forget his earlier hatred against French bourgeois and Jewish culture. Voila l'enemy! This is the unescapable conclusion.

He begins, somewhat cryptically, with an attack on "the stupid," an attack in general terms which manages to include among the various categories of Stupids, everyone from liberal democrats like Jacques Maritain to rightists like Maurras. But his sympathy is more with the latter than the former. The book is filled with a terrible, passionate hatred.

"For the wrath of the Stupid has always saddened me; but today I might almost say it terrifies. The whole world is full of the din of it. What

else is to be expected? The Stupid asked nothing better than not to have to understand anything, and they even used to get together and try not to understand, because the last thing of which man is capable is to be malicious and stupid all by himself—a mysterious state reserved presumably for the damned. "

These terrible attacks on the stupidity of the bourgeois world are saved from being utterly ridiculous only by the occasional flashes of brilliant humor. They are not directly related to the main theme of the book, which is the experience one man, Georges Bernanos, a man whose natural sympathies are with the oppressors, in the face of an oppression which he cannot support. "Do not suspect me of believing in angelic intervention," he cautions those who would protest that he should not be so idealistic in his condemnation of Franco. "It is for theologians to decide whether there is such a thing as a Holy War, a war for Holiness. But if circumstances ever impose it upon us, it will not have to be fought by theologians. It will be fought by us, or by our children. We have therefore the right at least to hope that it will be fought according to the rules of human decency and honour."

His first taste of what the terror could be came with the attempted Catalan landing. The army, with the falange and Civil Guard, easily defeated the Loyal troops on the beachhead and forced them to surrender. "I am not aware," protested Bernanos, "what the Crusaders of the Peninsula did or did

30 Bernanos, Diary, p. 21.
not do. I only know that the Crusaders of Majorca put to death in a single night all the prisoners who were huddled in the Catalonian trenches.\footnote{Ibid., p. 153.}

This then was the terror which he witnessed. But it did not end with the defeat of the invasion. That was, in fact, only the beginning. The round-up of suspects began, the reign of terror. "For my part," he declared, "I call Terrorism any regime wherein citizens are outside the protection of the law, with life or death depending on the whim of those in power. I call Terrorism any system of suspects. It was such a regime that I witnessed for eight months.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 98-99.} This sort of regime twists and perverts the natural instinct of self-preservation into a system in which everyone spies on everyone else, everyone is afraid of being denounced for the slightest offence. "What is a regime of suspects?" he asked. "It is a regime by which those in power deem it legal and fair not merely to exaggerate immensely the significances of certain delinquencies, in order to get rid of the delinquents under the thrust of martial law . . . but even to exterminate "dangerous people" on suspicion. . . . In order to track down such persons the assistance of informers is essential. So a regime of suspects is a regime of secret accusations.\footnote{Ibid., p. 99.}

Bernanos was a man of keen personal sympathies. His greatest fault was a failure to imagine himself abstractly "in the other fellow's shoes." He could not imagine Georges Bernanos the communist, or Georges Bernanos the Jew, or even Georges Bernanos the republican. But when it came to individuals
whom he knew and loved he expressed the fullest human sympathy. Here the terror was not something abstract to be read of in the daily newspaper. If it had been, he might have celebrated Franco's cause with as much good will as Paul Claudel. But, living in Majorca, he could not fail to see what terrible disease was taking over the body politic.

"Over there, in Majorca, I saw lorry-loads of men pass over the Rambla. They rumbled like thunder on a level with the many-coloured terraces, freshly washed and running with water, gay with the murmur of country fairs. The lorries were grey with road-dust, the men too were grey, sitting four by four, grey caps slung on crosswise, hands spread over their tent-cloth trousers, patiently. They were kidnapping them every day from lost villages, at the time when they came in from the fields. They set off on their last journey, shirts still clinging to their shoulders with perspiration, arms still full of the day's toil, leaving the soup untouched on the table, and a woman, breathless, a minute too late, at the garden wall, with a little bundle of belongings hastily twisted into a bright new napkin: A Dios! Recuerdos!"

This was the taste of death in Majorca, dust and sweat, the smell of the fields, the atmosphere of life in a sleepy town suddenly gone mad with the passions of war. Bernanos and his family saw it all, and with infinite compassion and sympathy he set it down in his brilliant *Les Grands Cimetières sous la lune*.

Lacking real enemies, the army and its agents turned on the poor and

---

helpless. "There was an old ragpicker," he remembers, "who used to keep the streets clean. He rode in a queer wagon drawn by the ghost of a donkey covered over with a skin that looked as though it had been borrowed from another animal of the same kind, because it seemed far too large for his bones. Although the only son of this 'government official' had been slaughtered by the rebels, a charitable pub-keeper allowed him to sleep in the stable beside his curious beast. My little girl, Dominique, was most attached to them both. But on Easter day she found her old friend hanging—hanging between his dust-bin and his donkey."36 Grief had brought the old man to suicide on that "triumphant Easter day, with the morning full of white seagulls."37

Always the excuse was that the poor and hopeless formed the disaffected class, the communists and anarchists which the army and falange sought to stamp out. The poor were Godless. But Bernanos answers, like Malraux in Man's Hope,38 that the poor have been deprived of God by his ministers. "However bad they are, the poor cannot be held responsible for the economic crisis and the armament-race. What if they have lost God? Did you [the clergy] give them God to take care of?"39

Death, even violent death, was nothing especially new to Georges Bernanos. After all, he had been through the war, and four years in the trenches

36Ibid., p. 218.
37Ibid.
38André Malraux, Man's Hope, l'Espoir, translated by Alastair MacDonald (New York, 1938), pp. 31-33.
39Bernanos, Diary, p. 167.
must have been enough to harden a man to almost anything. It was not so much the killings, as the manner in which they were carried out. It was as much what this sort of brutality did to the executioners as what it did to the victims that filled him with rage. Writing of his own son, Ives, he said: "I happen to know... a young French boy who, early in the Spanish Episcopal Crusade, had to take part in a punitive expedition. He returned greatly distressed, tore off his phalangistas shirt and kept on saying in a voice broken by suppressed sobs—his old voice, his little boy's voice, which had returned to him, 'The dirty rotters. They've just killed two poor old chaps, two peasants ever so old, chaps of at least fifty..."\textsuperscript{40}

But it was not this type of person that shocked Bernanos. He had faith that Ives would ultimately survive the period of brutality, that his mind would not be stunted by it. His recourse to the tears of a child were an indication of his basic decency. It was the ones who couldn't cry that really worried Bernanos, the people who could "get used to" an atmosphere of hatred and suspicion, who could learn to enjoy playing the totalitarian game. In this category he placed most of the Roman Catholic clergy on the island. Led by the Cardinal Archbishop of Palma they assisted in every phase of the terror. Describing the period of the Catalan invasion he recorded: "two hundred inhabitants of the... small town Manacor, had been dragged from their beds in the middle of the night, driven to the cemetery and shot down and burnt in a heap a little further on. The personage whom good manners require that I should refer to as Archbishop, had sent a priest around, who stood with his

\textsuperscript{40}Ibid., pp. 221-222.
boots paddling in blood, distributing absolutions between the shootings."\(^{41}\)

Bernanos tells, as a prime example of the callousness of the religious to the horrors of war, the story of the Catalan soldiers who invaded a convent during the August landing. "In the midst of the confusion appeared a South American, a kind of giant, pointing a gun and introducing himself thus: 'My sisters, I am a Catholic and a Communist. I'll blow out the brains of the first man who doesn't treat you with respect.' The convent became a hospital for the invaders and during the next two days the South American aided the sisters in every way and engaged in 'teasing controversy' with the Mother Superior, who tells the story of her rescue thus: 'Suddenly we heard guns outside. . . . Then we heard cries of Viva España, . . . and the doors burst open. . . . Our brave soldiers entered from all sides and settled accounts with the wounded! The South American was killed last.'\(^{42}\)

Worse still, the brutality with which the fascists treated their opponents was openly approved of by the very highest clerical officials. Bernanos, as a leading Catholic writer, knew them all, and saw the hardness of their hearts. He realized that this cold-blooded hatred had deep historical roots, especially in Spain, that it had long been a part of Church policy. "It is easy enough nowadays to say that the Inquisition was a political weapon in the hands of Spanish kings, but the most brazen of churchgoers could not deny that its contemporaries had no idea of it. Had I in the sixteenth century advanced such a theory at the famous University of Salamanca, I should

\(^{41}\)Ibid., p. 90.

\(^{42}\)Ibid., pp. 111-112.
have been regarded as a seditious influence, and perhaps burnt at the stake."43

This new inquisition, like the old, enmeshed all sorts of people in its net. It corrupted, he saw, not only the clergy, but the pious as well, making them instruments of brutality. He records one such instance in Les Grands Cimetières.

I saw a woman of thirty-five, appertaining to the inoffensive category which over there we call beata, living peacefully in the bosom of her family after an interrupted novitiate, spending among the poor whatever time she did not spend in church, show sudden signs of incomprehensible nervous terror, speak of possible "reprisals," and refuse to go out alone. A very dear friend, whom I cannot name here, took pity on her, and in order to reassure her, offered her shelter. A little later the devotee decided to return home. The day she was leaving her charitable hostess questioned her affectionately:

"Come, child, what have you to fear? You're one of God's little lambs—who could possibly wish out of the way such a harmless creature as you?"

"Harmless? That's all you know! You don't think me capable of serving religion. Everybody thinks as you do, and nobody's frightened of me. Well—you can find out for yourself. I had eight men shot, madame. . . ."44

The argument used by the Churchmen and others for their behavior was that communists and their sort are outside the bounds of normal human decency and that anything one did to them was quite all right. Bernanos saw that this hypocritical argument could be used to justify the worst excesses of totalitarianism. "Is it fitting," he asked sarcastically, ". . . to give

43 Ibid., p. 93.
44 Ibid., pp. 87-88.
this suppression the character of being a praiseworthy act, justified by motives that are above the ordinary? I know nothing about it. . . . Wouldn't they . . . the enemy . . . come under ecclesiastical jurisdiction? Their sin is the very one that was punished with the utmost severity by the tribunals of the Holy Office, and history teaches us that these tribunals spared neither women or children. . . ."45 This attitude, he realized, fit perfectly into the new totalitarianism. "I believe the Germans would soon get used to burning their Jews in public, and the followers of Stalin their Trotskyites."46

The new inquisition was as inexcusable as the old, and like the old manifested a complete disregard for Christ's teaching while apparently striving to make adherence to Christ's Church mandatory. The paradox, Bernanos realized, could be resolved only if one understood that the Church in addition to being an instrument of grace was also a human, and at times an all too human, institution. "If I happen to hold the Church responsible," he wrote, "it is not in the absurd ambition of reforming it. I don't consider the Church capable of human reformation, at all events in the manner of Luther or Lamennais. I don't wish the Church to be perfect, for the Church is a living thing."47

Bernanos conjures up in Les Grands Cimetières a clerical spokesman to answer the charges brought against the clergy by the author. This priest,

46Ibid.
47Ibid., p. 95.
somewhat in the manner of Dostoevski's grand inquisitor, gives a cynical,
but lucid, account of the Church's position in Spain. "Do the Catholic writers
know the Gospel better than we do? They are making a mockery of our Crusade.
They demand that we should put at the head of it a leader who is beyond crit­
icism. Let them find him, and when they have found him, let them put him
there themselves! So far we will be content with the leader who is usually
at our service, without our having to give him a name. Would you like to
know the name? It is General Lesser-Evil. We shall continue to prefer him
to General Make-Things-Better for the wisdom of nations has denounced the
latter as the enemy of prosperity."48 Franco, for all his faults, is to be
preferred to the "Reds."

And yet, Bernanos somewhat inaccurately states, the Church had been
a firm supporter of the Republic, or at least pretended to be, until the
very moment when Franco revolted. He contended that as long as they con­
trolled a predominately right-wing government, as they did from 1934 to
1936,49 they were satisfied. During this pro-Republican period, he asks,
"Would any one of those theologians who today seek to justify Civil War, by
arguments borrowed from Aquinas, then have approved the public use of them,
even as the merest hypotheses?"50 The clergy were willing to use the
Republic as long as it served their purposes. Like the military they were

48 Ibid., pp. 157-158.
49n ... The CEDA [Catholic Action Party] led by Gil Robles became the
most powerful party in Spain after the elections of 1933." Thomas, p. 67.
50 Bernanos, Diary, p. 80.
willing to desert the poor, simple-minded king and offer their allegiance, with the mental reservation, that their allegiance was only to be counted on as long as their self interests were served. Now they held up their crossed-fingers and smiled wisely.

But if Franco should lose? Bernanos' fictional clergyman has an answer to that too. He would pounce on the loyalty shown to the republic by the Catholic Basques. The Churchmen would exclaim: "You great little people! Amid the crisis you have remained loyal to the pledge you gave to the legitimate rule (legitimate in spite of its mistakes for Christians do not admit rebellion). You have kept the flag of the Faith flying steadily, imposing on its powerful allies, together with reverence for its traditions and its language, complete freedom of worship and the protection of priests. Fall in behind us, Catholic Huesca! Before the civil war, you were, of all the provinces of Spain, the most endowed with the social sense, the most Christian. The Jesuit Fathers had lavished tokens of ardour upon you, and invested vast funds... You have proved that men can be loyal at the same time both to the Church and Democracy." This piece of gross hypocrisy, like those later statements of Hitler, would have relied on the fact that the truth is soon forgotten.

Bernanos did not see the Spanish Civil War in black and white. For him truth and falseness existed side by side in both camps and to Bernanos

---

51 Actually, this loyalty was due not to staunch republicanism, but to the Basque separatist tendencies which the republican politicians encouraged.

52 Bernanos, Diary, p. 129.
this itself was the disturbing thing. No where was there a "right" side. All positions "in the general contagion took corruption." "The Spanish tragedy," as Bernanos saw it, "is a charnel house. All the mistakes by which Europe is bringing about her death, mistakes which she tries to spew forth in frightful convulsion, mingle there in putrification. . . . It is a charnel house of real principles and false, of good intentions and bad. When they have stewed together in mud and blood, you'll see what they turn into. . . ."53 What they turned into was, of course, the Second World War, which he plainly saw was on its way.

All along, it is wise to keep in mind, that what the former member of the Action Française objected to was "not the use of force," but "the religion of force."54 The diligent use of force in the correct pursuit of "real principles"—this appealed to him rather than not. He objected to the massacres, without ceasing for a moment to be a man of violence, and he praised Ives for taking his principles seriously enough to fight in the front lines before Madrid. He remained a monarchist, a reactionary, a bit of a fanatic.

And yet, he was one of the few to see clearly through the tangle of war to the heart of the problem, that ideologies must be paid for in human flesh and blood. And he was one of the few able to communicate this vision to the French audience for whom he wrote. His following as a novelist was large, larger still after the publication of The Diary of a Country Priest. He used all his influence to make France aware of the true nature of the Spanish

53 Ibid., pp. 118-119.

54 Ibid., p. 85.
"charnel house."

Another who saw the war much as Bernanos saw it was the sensitive and dedicated French Jewess, Simone Weil, who is considered by some as a sort of "Catholic mystic" although her allegiance to the Church was tenuous at best. She worked as a nurse on the other side during the war. Becoming acquainted with Bernanos' Les Grands Cimetières she wrote him the following letter:

The war in Spain was not, as it had appeared to me at the start, a war waged by famished peasants against landlords, and their ecclesiastic accomplices, but it was a war between Russia, Germany, and Italy. . . . I do not see anybody outside of yourself alone, who, to my knowledge, has been immersed in the atmosphere of this war and could resist it. What does it matter to me that you are a royalist and a Disciple of Drumont? You are incomparably closer to me than my comrades from the Aragon militia—the comrades whom I used to love.55

The central question in the whole war was, for Bernanos, what effect does all this have on France? His answer was to try to cast into the role of Franco the unmilitary Charles Maurras. "Suppose," he asks, "for instance, on his return from Salamanca, where M. Charles Maurras is bound to go one of these days to pay his respects to the great General Franco, the author of Antinea were to undertake a purging of his native town on the same lines. I doubt the curé of Martigues would achieve such comforting results. . . ."56 in terms of last minute conversions.

Thomas Molnar states that the reason Bernanos was so struck by what


56Bernanos, Diary, p. 68.
what he saw was that he understood the similarity between the French and Spanish situations, and feared that the same forces were going to bring about the same clash and civil war in France that he witnessed in Spain. 57

But if he saw similarities, he saw differences as well between the French and Spanish situation. He felt that Frenchmen were not capable of quite so much. Partly this was racial pride, of which there is a strong streak in Bernanos. "We are not Germans nor Spaniards," he later wrote, "we do not feel at home in the forests of Germany or in the sun-drenched Castillian cemetery, the haunt of men dark and sad, smelling of jasmine and corpses." 58 He was trying in Les Grands Cimetières to tell France that there was still time to repress the savage instincts of ideologies. "In plain words: I think that whoever comes to us with the open suggestion that young French or English workmen, even communists, whose fathers fought with us in the trenches on the Somme or at Verdun, should be purged out—ought to be discouraged here and now." 59

He believed, moreover, that the right-wing had thoroughly enough discredited itself already in the eyes of Frenchmen; that France, like Bernanos, was not ready to completely succumb to "the Fascist temptation." "If M. Maurras had any sense of our history, other than that gained from historical novels, he would have realized that the attitude of the right over the affairs in Ethiopia as well as Spain, produced a profound wound in a large part, an

57 Molnar, pp. 89-90.
59 Bernanos, Diary (preface), p. 10.
assuredly not negligible part, of French public opinion."\(^{60}\)

It was to further arouse French public opinion that he wrote *Les Grands Cimetières*, a book which, through its unmistakable authenticity and passion, was calculated to rouse the French before "time ran out." It did not succeed, but it caused a profound stir. Others besides Simone Weil grasped its message. "Bernanos always cherished the letter of a highly placed Roman prelate who sent him his blessing for having written the book and let him know that it was read by the Pope himself."\(^{61}\) And, at the same time, the book met with considerable clerical opposition. Bernanos apparently heard that the book would have been placed upon the Index if it had not been for the personal intervention of the Pope himself.\(^{62}\) This view is not unlikely considering the extreme anti-clerical tone of the work.

If Bernanos had reason to be pleased with the Papal reception of his book he had less reason to be pleased with the Vatican's conduct toward the victors in the Spanish Civil War. In a later work, written from Brazil, he cites a news item in the Brazilian press.

"Vatican City, 22-12-39. The Spanish ambassador to the Holy See, Senor José de Yanguas, not given an audience till the end of the year, offered to Pius XII a precious crucifix of maderian sculpture taken from the church of Guernica, destroyed during the Spanish Civil War."\(^{63}\)

\(^{60}\)Bernanos, *Nous Autres*, p. 100.


"Yes," comments the embittered Bernanos, "when one considers the shame which is the temptation of humility, when one goes to shame as to a brothel, one has no choice but to consign one's illusions . . . at the price fixed by the firm of Gallimard." 64

He saw, in the closing days before Hitler's armies overran France, that the situation had become more desperate. "Right or wrong, it seems to me that our time is running out. I had this impression in 1936, when I wrote Les Grands Cimetières sous la lune. I don't think I was much mistaken then." 65 The reason was not that France had completely succumbed to fascism, rather it was that France had failed to expel the fascists who were sapping her strength and destroying her unity. "Rather Hitler than Blum! This was the slogan that Goebbels' agents were whispering into the ears of thousands of bourgeois for whom it meant: rather Hitler than such costly social reforms." 66 In Les Grands Cimetières he had warned that "each European country carried a perfectly formed embryo totalitarian state in her belly," 67 and now he saw that this was true of France as well, in the emergence of support for Hitler. If Bernanos' reputation as a prophet rests on anything it is on the clarity with which he saw what hardly any other dispassionate observer saw.

64 Ibid.
67 Bernanos, Diary, p. 65.
at the time, and few have realized since: that the extreme right was doing more to destroy the unity of the France it supposedly cherished than was the international-minded left. The central mistake of both right and left was to let ideology rule over respect for common humanity. This was the central message which Bernanos drew from the Spanish conflict and tried to pass on to a France on the verge of destruction from the same forces which had engulfed the Second Spanish Republic.

For Bernanos, as one commentator put it: "The ideologies are complete systems, logical and perfect in the eyes of men. The logic of these systems is rigorous, and this, man abuses. Seduced by the coherent deduction which he finds in the structure of the system, man does not dream that in carrying such a system to its ultimate conclusion, he is going contrary to the very life of man." 68

Bernanos points out such an instance. "The hangmen of the so-called Spanish crusade, for example, whom I saw in operation at Majorca, were suffering from the same malady as their enemies. Their fanaticism was simply the powerlessness that comes of not believing in anything with a single and sincere heart." 69 They let ideology take the place of human compassion and understanding. They are willing to sacrifice men to things. They have made things, ideas, their god. Here Bernanos appears not as a reactionary, which he too often was, but as a conservative in the best sense; one who tries to

---

68 Pastiaux, p. 83.

69 Bernanos, "Why Freedom?" (La Liberté pour quoi faire?) Last Essays, p. 98.
conserve human values which appear to be slipping away in a world man no longer dominates.

"In the sacrifice of men, there is a diabolical principle that it is above all the young who should be sacrificed in modern war and in the sacrifice of the young for the old, he [Bernanos] finds a cult of Evil where the child is sacrificed for the masses."  

While Bernanos and those like him sought to save France from a totalitarian future, one can not but admit that they aided all the while the enemy they were fighting by their distrust of democracy. Bernanos thought, "I'm perfectly capable of having my own opinion of M. Franco without... honoring M. J. Maritain for his deplorable reveries on the Jews or democracy."  

To such intransigence there is no reply. Again he echoed Tocqueville when he said, "Democracy means liberty much less than it means equality; democracy is infinitely more egalitarian than libertarian."  

Bernanos, and many of the Frenchmen for whom he was writing, found themselves caught between two fires. On one hand, they abhorred totalitarianism; but on the other, they deplored the shabby third Republic, not realizing that any meaningful state must rest ultimately on compromises.

---


71 Bernanos, Nous Autres, p. 68.

72 Bernanos, "Why Freedom?" p. 75. "The taste which men have for liberty and that which they feel for equality are, in fact, two different things; and I am not afraid to add that among democratic nations they are two unequal things." Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, Vol. II (New York, 1959), p. 100.
which while less than noble do not violate basic integrity. Bernanos, and he was not alone, looked to a mythical monarchy of the past which he hoped to recreate in the future. He was right in denouncing the bourgeoisie for crying "Better Hitler than Blum," but at the same time he himself was crying "Better to dream of the impossible than to make terms with the real," or, in other words, "Better Pipin IV\(^{73}\) than Blum." His influence upon the mind of France was considerable, especially upon that section of French Catholic opinion who would otherwise have heard only praise of Franco and despotism, but he mirrors quite well the inability of France herself to make do with the merely real, to come to terms with the possible. But among those unable to come to terms with the "atheist" Republic, he was almost alone in not giving in to the temptation to declare "No enemies on the Right," and support the worst excesses of fascism. This is why his witness of the Spanish Civil War made such an impression upon the France of his day and why *les Grands Cimetières* remains one of the most important testaments of the age.

\(^{73}\)Pipin IV is the mythical ruler of France in John Steinbeck's satire, *The Short Reign of Pipin IV.*
CHAPTER IV

SIMONE WEIL

Of all the French intellectuals who went to view the Spanish Civil War certainly none cut a stranger figure than Simone Weil, a girl of about twenty-seven, already known as one of the ablest minds in France, and certainly one of the oddest. And yet, no one appears to have understood better or more quickly what was going on in Spain nor put the knowledge to better use than she.

The story of her intellectual life is for the most part one of wild oscillations, hurried judgments almost immediately denounced, of quixotic and irrational loves turning to equally impassioned hatred. She summed up very well for us her attitude in one of her most profound writings, Gravity and Grace. "If we know in what direction the scales of society are tilted," she wrote, "we must do what we can to add weight to the lighter side. Although the weight may be something evil, if we handle it with this motive we shall perhaps not be tainted by it. But we must have a concept of equal balance, and be always ready to change sides, like Justice, that fugitive from the camp of conquerors."\(^1\)

\(^1\)Simone Weil, Gravity and Grace (a selection of her thoughts culled from her Cahiers).
Her sympathies were catholic and covered both the quick and the dead, the ancient Cathari of Provence and the victims of modern, state-led inquisitions. During the Second World War she remained briefly in France after the fall and was arrested by the Vichy government as a Gaullist sympathizer. At her hearing the magistrate informed her that if convicted she would be thrown into prison with prostitutes. She immediately leaped at the idea as being her only chance to make contact with a class for whom she had always been sympathetic. Thereupon the judge decided that she must be hopelessly insane and let her go.\textsuperscript{2} Not all of her scrapes ended so comically.

She was born in Paris, on the third of February, 1909, to a middle-class Jewish family of some intellectual pretentions. From the very first she was in delicate health and her life in constant danger.\textsuperscript{3} She was in addition afflicted with increasingly bad eyesight and soon saddled with those curious, old-fashioned glasses one sees in all her pictures. The thick glasses and the pouting mouth of the perpetual invalid, disguise a face that is not without a certain quiet beauty and they combine to give her the look of a sick owl.

The Weil family was completely agnostic in outlook and pretended that the subtle distinctions in the treatment of Jews and gentiles did not exist.\textsuperscript{4} During her early life she was overshadowed by her brother, a mathematician


\textsuperscript{4}Ibid., p. 19.
of genius, and, concerning the two children, the saying in the Weil family was "'One has genius, the other Simone beauty.'" In both cases this appears to have been a slight over-estimation, and the real genius of the family, as it turned out, was Simone. She progressed quickly in school, despite recurring illness, following the prescribed route for a girl of talent in the school system of the Third Republic. "Her année philosophique was passed at the Lycée Victor Duruy, where she received instruction from the distinguished philosopher Le Senne. At the Lycée Henri IV she prepared for the entrance examination to the École Normale Supérieure. Here she came under the influence of Émile Auguste Chartier, better known under his pseudonym of Alain." Her contact with this man who has been described as the greatest teacher of modern France proved decisive in pushing her into the teaching profession and the life of the intellect.

At this time her views, like those of so many of her contemporaries, were with the Left. Much later she was to write to Georges Bernanos: "from my childhood onwards I sympathized with those organizations which spring from the lowest and least regarded social strata. . . ." She never joined the Communist party, however, and was deeply suspicious of Stalinism. It has been suggested that her communism was part of a reaction against the Treaty of Versailles, which she condemned for its harshness and unfairness to the

---

5 Tomlin, p. 16.

6 Ibid., p. 17.


8 Tomlin, p. 17.
Germans (certainly a most unusual position for a French schoolgirl in the twenties, but typical of Simone Weil). She had strong pacifist views at one time and even before she was out of the École Normale she signed a protest against the "militarization of the intellectuals," along with several other students, and former students Jean-Paul Sartre and Romain Rolland.\footnote{9}{Cabaud, p. 37.}

She passed her final exam in July of 1931 and was posted to the girls' school at Puy.\footnote{10}{Ibid., pp. 38-39. She had asked for a position "at a port (Le Havre if possible) or in a town in the industrial north or central region."} At the same time she began to write her first articles for the revolutionary syndicalist journal *Révolution Proletarienne*.\footnote{11}{Tomlin, p. 19.} This was the organ of a small splinter group which had broken away from the Stalinist party and tended toward the syndicalist (anarchist) view. It was here that some of Simone Weil's most profound political and social writing was published. Her first article was entitled "Prospects—Are We Approaching a Proletarian Revolution?" In it are some of the dominant themes of her later work. The tone is pessimistic. "Fifteen years have elapsed. The Russian Revolution has not been crushed. . . . And yet, nowhere on the surface of the globe—including Russia—are there any soviets. . . . The regime of October, . . . has for fifteen years accommodated itself very well to the boundaries set by its national frontiers; its role abroad now consists, as events in Germany clearly demonstrate, in stifling the revolutionary activ-
This condemnation was passed at a time when such leading intellectual figures as Malraux were still under the spell of Moscow.

As a writer she seems to have arrived on the scene suddenly, at an age when most young people are concerned with less serious pursuits. Without the experience of years she had a marvellous insight into history and economics as well as philosophy. For all that, her chief fame was gained in none of these fields, but rather in the field of mystical religious experience. Her book *Waiting For God* (not published till 1950) which was edited from the notes that she left at her death, records one of the most interesting religious experiences of the century. She hesitated for a long time on the verge of joining the Catholic Church, despite her sharp and sensitive criticisms of Catholicism, but never accepted baptism.

In the mid-thirties, however, she was still picking her way among a confused maze of ideologies and her thought is a mixture of religious and communist principles. Her strict proletarian sentiments led to many ascetic practices, including the giving of her entire salary, except for an amount equivalent to the dole received by the unemployed, to the poor, who would queue up outside her door on payday. Even this was not rigorous enough and in 1934 she applied for a year's leave from teaching in order to take a job.

---


13 Nonetheless, she is listed on her burial registration as a Catholic. Cabaud, p. 382.

14 Tomlin, p. 18.
as a factory girl and experience firsthand the life of the oppressed. Her health remained poor and the year was a period of severe strain and great disappointment. As she herself put it, "I received forever the mark of a slave."\(^{15}\)

Shortly after she returned to teaching, the Spanish Civil War began. Simone Weil was one of the first French volunteers to offer to serve the republic. This has always been a puzzling point in her history and one on which she herself has given us very little enlightenment. She always showed great reluctance to speak of the war, except when it was necessary to render testimony for one or other of her old comrades in arms.\(^{16}\) One biographer points out that "If she had any predilection, it was towards anarchism and syndicalism. This was due to the circumstances of the Spanish Civil War. Unlike many of her revolutionary comrades she combined an intense hatred of social injustice with personal solicitude for its victims."\(^{17}\) Even so her conduct in going to war, is out of keeping with the rest of her character. Madeline Marie Davy, who wrote knowingly and sensitively of Simone Weil's life admits that "Some are astonished to see Simone Weil taking part in the Spanish War and then aggrieved by its pointless murders. These sentiments are the proof of her naïveté, for all religious or political parties when persecuted become persecutors. Without doubt she was moved only by such

\(^{15}\)Ibid., p. 20.


\(^{17}\)Tomlin, p. 13.
realities as she herself experienced. Thus the men and women loyally engaged in the resistance were seen after the liberation to have made errors of judgement, condemnations of innocents and veritable massacres.\textsuperscript{18}

In her brief journal of her experiences in Spain, Simone Weil recorded for us her own emotions and views upon first seeing Spain. "One realizes with difficulty," she wrote, "that Barcelona is the capital of a region in the middle of a Civil War. When one remembers Barcelona in time of peace, and when one debarks from the train, one has the impression that nothing has changed... Nothing has changed, effectively, save one little thing: the power is now given to the people. The men in blue command. It is at present one of those extraordinary periods, which till now have not lasted, when those who have obeyed take over the responsibilities."\textsuperscript{19}

At the outset, she was moved not with horror, but with hope for the future. The question she had voiced in Révolution Proletarienne so pessimistically now seemed to be answered in the affirmative: we were now approaching the revolution. The men in blue, that is, the militia in the blue uniform overalls which she herself would wear, had the reins of power in their hands and anything seemed possible. "Arriving in Barcelona," we are told, "she was presented to Julian Gorkin\textsuperscript{20} of the executive committee


\textsuperscript{20}Julian Gorkin (real name Gomez) was the companion of El Campesino and "indefatigable editor of the works" of that general. Thomas, p. 144, ft. nt.
[of the political action wing of the CNT]. She surprised him, not only by her good faith and warlike enthusiasm, but also by the proposition she presented." This frail, sickly girl with thick glasses asked the anarchist for nothing less than a mission behind the enemy lines! There she naively planned to study enemy morale. "But, my poor Simone, with your face, your reactions, your enthusiasm, you would benounce yourself within twenty-four hours." In a later war she would again volunteer to be dropped behind the lines, this time in Vichy France, and the idea seems to have been somewhat of an obsession with her.

Having been saved by Gorkin from this absurd adventure, she donned the uniform of a militiawoman, the typical blue dungarees in which one sees her in her well-known photograph, standing at attention and smiling in the streets of Barcelona. In the middle of August she set out for the front and joined the column of the anarchist leader Durutti on the plain of Aragon near the Ebro River some fifteen kilometers from the impossible goal of Saragossa, which, as George Orwell describes, the militia could see at night from their mountain positions "a thin string of lights, like the portholes of a ship." When this strange new recruit was taken to Durutti, she asked him first of all how she could fight. "Take a gun, that is enough," answered the leader.

And so Simone Weil, with her myopia and the germs of the tuberculosis that was later to kill her already in her lungs, became a soldier in the

21 Cabaud, p. 142.
22 George Orwell, Homage to Catalonia (Boston, 1952), p. 38.
23 Cabaud, p. 142.
anarchist militia. She has left us an all-too-brief account of her experiences at the front. One is struck first of all by the sense of utter exhaustion that fills her account, and secondly by the growing sense of horror, the dead bodies eaten by rats, the inhumanity. "A war without prisoners," she wrote from personal experience, "if one is taken one is shot." \(^{24}\) Lastly one is surprised that she seems so well to have kept her own innocence intact in the face of all this brutality. The struggle for her personal humanity was not an easy one as she herself tells us. "Criterion: fear and the taste for killing. Avoidance of each of these—How? In Spain, this seemed to me a heartbreaking effort, impossible to maintain for long. Make one's self such then that one is able to maintain it." \(^{25}\) She experienced in the militia that brutalizing contact with force which had been and was to be the experience of so many soldiers in the twentieth century.

"Contact with force," she wrote, "is hypnotizing; plunges one into a dream. One should suffer force wide-awake, handle it wide-awake, but beware, for there is, among other aspects of the the state of slumber, an illusion of extreme lucidity which is not wakefulness—As for other people, plunging them into a dream, one should take care that it is the distressing sort of dream which provokes the longing to awaken from it (but not horrible enough to take away even that longing) and that a possibility of so awakening is left them."\(^{26}\)

\(^{24}\) Weil, Écrits, p. 214.


\(^{26}\) Ibid.
How well Simone Weil was able to keep her wakefulness, her sense of horror in the face of so much dreadfulness, is illustrated by her journal. She felt sympathy for fascist prisoners, for the distressed peasants, she remained alive to the fact that an entire civilization, the work of centuries, was being destroyed. "Column of Garcia Oliver," she noted, "despite the CNT of Lerida, burned the Cathedral (full of valuables, of gold, artistic treasures) and massacred twenty persons in the prison which they penetrated by force." 27

Despite her pathetic attempts to learn to shoot and her stubborn determination not to give in either to her physical condition or her increasing desolation, Simone Weil proved no great success as a soldier. She was soon removed from front line service and relegated to the cooking detail of the battalion. There, perhaps in response to some concealed urge, she had a frightful accident, scalding herself badly with boiling oil, and as a result was forced to return to France for care in October, 1936. 28 She considered returning to Spain, but decided for some reason against it. Cabaud suggests that "Simone Weil had two singularly hard experiences. Her year as a worker had disappointed her. . . . She began to discover the true personalities behind the ideological fictions which generated her desire for a new world. Her two months in Spain put the final stamp on her purification. She had seen in the worker the human beast." 29

---

27 Weil, Écrits, p. 214.
28 Tomlin, p. 20.
But this is, I think, unfair in that it makes her out to be a mere dilettante flirting with the working class movement. A better explanation comes from her own writing, "we must do what we can to add weight to the lighter side." In Spain she had seen the same enthusiasm as André Malraux had seen, but unlike Malraux she had seen that as soon as the proleteriate had triumphed in the Republican half of Spain, justice had fled from the camp of the conquerors, as, she would insist, it always would. The persecuted had become the persecutors. This fact she explains fully in her subsequent writings.

This feeling of desolation is expressed clearly in the fragment of an essay she never published, but which dates most likely from the fall of 1936. "What is happening in Spain?" she asked. "Each upon that question has his own word to say, his histories to tell, a judgement to pronounce. It is the custom to go and make a tour down there, and return with a penful of articles. One isn't able to open a journal or revue without there finding writings on the events in Spain. How much of this is really superficial? . . . It is not true that the revolution corresponds automatically to a highly developed, intense and clear consciousness of the social problem. It is the contrary which is true when the revolution takes the form of a civil war. In the torment of a civil war, the participants lose all common measure of realities. . . and the social transformation is made by chance. How is it possible to report anything coherent, after a brief visit and fragmentary observations? All the same, it is possible if one sifts one's impressions to draw some clear lessons." 30

30 Weil, "Fragment (1936?)," Écrits, p. 217.
Further thoughts on the subject are found in a complete but again unpublished essay significantly titled "Réflexions pour déplaire" written about the same time. Speaking to an audience she in the end could not venture to face she wrote:

I am, and I know it, going to shock my good companions, but when one seeks to restore liberty one must have the courage to say what one thinks, even if it is displeasing. We have all followed, day by day, anxiously, with agony, the struggle which goes on over on the other side of the Pyrenees... There has been seen previously in Europe only one experience so bloody, that of Russia. Lenin... after coming to power, along with his followers after a long and unhappy civil war, constructed a bureaucratic machine, a huge military and political machine to weigh down the unhappy people... Lenin was head of a political party, of a machine seizing and seeking to exercise power. It is possible to doubt the good faith of him and his companions... But it is not possible to doubt the good faith of our free companions in Catalonis. But what do we see there? There too all the forms of constraint are produced, all sorts of inhumanities contrary to the ideal liberty and humanity of the anarchists. Of necessity, the atmosphere of the civil war suppresses the aspirations which one seeks to defend by means of civil war.31

This is the bitter truth which Simone Weil had learned in Spain. By the very act of breaking free from repression by the use of violence, the proletariat had turned themselves into oppressors. Not only did they declare that the end justified the means, in truth, the means had become the end. Terror itself had become the object of war. This indictment is strikingly similar to that in Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*, and the grotesque picture which he was later to paint in *Animal Farm*. It reminds one too of the quotation from the epistle of Saint James with which Gironella opens *Los

31Weil, "Réflexions pour déplaire (1936?)," *Ecrits*, p. 218.
Cypresses creen en bios. "From whence are wars and contentions among you? Are they not from the concupiscenses which war among your members?" Simone Weil, for the moment at least, falls into the fallacy of the great disillusionment which will lead a post war world to the ultimate despair of the human condition one finds in Orwell and in William Golding's Lord of the Flies.

Continuing her reflections she wrote: "... there is down there military constraint. Despite the flood of volunteers—they decree a mobilization... decree the application of the old code of military law to the militia. There is constraint in labor, the council of the Generalitat [government of Catalonia]... has decreed the obligations of the workers to add extra hours without pay whenever it considers it necessary."32

The war in Spain, which at first seemed too furious to last very long, went into its second year, with no letup in ferocity either at the front or behind the lines. Simone Weil became more and more apprehensive over the eventual outcome of the struggle. She saw in it a parallel to the pointless war she had witnessed as a child, in which, finally, the war existed as something to be waged for its own sake without any regard to final, reasonable objectives. Writing for Nouveaux Cahiers in April, 1937, she expressed her fears. "Common to all our most threatening troubles is one characteristic which might appear reassuring to a superficial eye, but which is in reality the great danger: they are conflicts with no definable objective. The whole of history bears witness that it is precisely such conflicts that are the

32 Ibid.
most bitter. It may be that clear recognition of this paradox is one of the keys to history; that it is the key to our own period there is no doubt.33 She concluded, "... it is easy to find examples of lethal absurdity wherever one looks. The prime specimen is the antagonism between nations."34

Of this lethal absurdity, Spain was the prime example. Here hatreds had been generated which could end only in the complete destruction of one side or the other.

Suppose one dared to suggest to any party man the idea of an armistice in Spain? If he is a man of the right he will indignantly reply that the fighting must continue until the forces of order are triumphant and anarchy is crushed; if he is a man of the left he will reply with equal indignation that the fight must continue until the people's freedom and well-being are assured and the oppressors and exploiters crushed. The man of the right forgets that no political regime, of whatever kind, involves disorder remotely comparable to that of a civil war. ... The man of the left ... forgets that even on his own side liberty is suppressed far more drastically by the necessities of civil war than it would be by the coming to power of a party of the extreme right. ... And both of them forget that during the long months of civil war an almost identical regime has grown up on both sides. Each of them has unconsciously lost sight of his ideal, replaced by an entity without substance. For each, the victory of what he still calls his idea can no longer mean anything except extermination of the enemy; and each of them will scorn any suggestion of peace, reply with the same knock-out argument as Minerva in Homer and Poincare in 1917: "The dead do not wish it."35

34Ibid., p. 157.
The result is a deadlock, the loss of all human meaning. The "power of words" has taken events out of the hands of men and the war in Spain becomes a new siege of Troy with the gods holding the balance of power and deciding the fate of men. No one is capable of stopping the war, no one is capable of mitigating its frightful effects. "In Spain, if one of the two sides gave the impression of wanting peace this would first have the effect of encouraging its enemies and stimulating their aggressiveness, and then it would involve the risk of uprisings among its own supporters."36

Perhaps the best statement of what the war meant to Simone Weil and others who like her shared in its heartbreaking experiences, is in her celebrated letter to Georges Bernanos upon the publication of his Les Grands Cimetières sous la lune in 1938. The two had never met; she was writing simply as a fan to express her sympathetic understanding of what Bernanos told of the horrors of fascist rule in Majorca, because she felt that they had shared similar experiences. She begins by telling him of her own brief career in Spain and then of her decision not to return. "I left Spain against my will and with every intention of returning; but later I decided voluntarily not to do so. I no longer felt any inner compulsion to participate in a war which, instead of being what it had appeared when it began—a war of famished peasants against landed proprietors and their clerical supporters—had become a war between Russia on the one hand and Germany and Italy on the other."37

---

36Ibid., p. 169.

She next recounts, briefly, the acts of senseless violence which she had witnessed and which seem so similar to those Bernanos had seen from the other camp. Just as one of the most moving passages in Bernanos' book concerns the massacre of the Catalan militia after their abortive raid on Majorca, so Simone Weil tells the story from the other end. "I was at Sitges when the militiamen returned, defeated, from the expedition to Majorca... Out of forty young boys from Sitges, nine were dead... The very next night there were nine revenge operations. In that little town, in which nothing at all had happened in July, they killed nine so-called fascists. Among the nine was a baker, aged about thirty, whose crime, so I was told, was that he had not joined the 'Somaten' militia."\(^{38}\)

But it was not the facts of the murders that were important for her, and in this too she resembles Bernanos. "The point," as she said, "is the attitude towards murder. Never once, either among Spaniards or even among the French who were in Spain as combatants or as visitors... never once did I hear anyone express, even in private intimacy, any repulsion or disgust or even disapproval of useless Bloodshed."\(^{39}\) And here one cannot help but think of Malraux's \(l'\)Espoir where hardly any such scenes are mentioned.

And what of the much praised fraternal spirit, which one hears so much of in works such as Hemingway's film \(The\ Spanish\ Earth\)? Simone Weil saw quite a different relationship between warriors and workers. "Although

\(^{38}\)Ibid., p. 173. It is not known to what militia organization she is referring.

\(^{39}\)Ibid., p. 174.
there was no insolence, no injury, no brutality, . . . nevertheless, between the armed forces and the civilian population there was an abyss, exactly like the abyss between rich and poor. One felt it in the attitude of the two groups, the one always rather humble, submissive, and timid, the other confident, offhanded and condescending. "

Finally, in a burst of despair she states: "One sets out as a volunteer, with the idea of sacrifice, and one finds oneself in a war which resembles a war of mercenaries, only with much more cruelty and with less human respect for the enemy." 

This letter to Georges Bernanos is probably the last piece that she wrote on the subject of the Spanish Civil War. Even before the final disaster to the Loyalist cause she had abandoned any hope that a just peace could result from a war so filled with injustices on both sides. She directed her efforts towards other objects; spiritually toward new insights into the mystical experience which was uniquely hers, as a political writer and propagandist toward the menace of Germany and the colonial question. But this does not mean that she entirely put the Spanish experience out of her mind. Though there is hardly a specific reference to that conflict in any of her last works the change in her attitudes and outlook which the war produced is unmistakable.

When France fell to the Germans in the spring of 1940, she at first

---

40bid., p. 175. The fact that many of the militia were city folk from Barcelona undoubtedly had something to do with this feeling.

41bid.
remained. The laws promulgated by the Vichy government against Jews did not permit her to teach and undoubtedly she would have eventually been placed in a concentration camp and died there had she not slipped out of the country. She arrived in the United States in June of 1942 and there, and later in London, she worked for the Free French movement. Among the articles she wrote at the request of the movement was *A War of Religions*, a brief essay on ideology and totalitarianism. In it she returns once again to the themes of her writings on Spain. "Scientists and artists," she declared, "often make science and art a closed area within which there is no place for virtue or vice, whence they conclude that in their capacity of scientist or artist they are absolved from all moral responsibility. Soldiers and priests sometimes do the same, and in this way they justify the devastation of cities or the Inquisition. In general, throughout history this art of delimiting special areas has enabled men who did not appear to be monsters to perpetuate innumerable monstrous crimes."42 Men, therefore, must be made to feel that they have a total responsibility for all their acts, that they must work and suffer together joined in brotherhood.

This theme is expanded in her great book *The Need For Roots*, also written for the Free French Movement. Those who commissioned this book (which was only to be published after her death) must have been somewhat surprised to find in it: "an analysis of French society more penetrating and merciless than anything achieved in recent times. . . ."43


43 Tomlin, p. 13.
Anderson

For Roots she gives us what is to be her last word on the subject of cruelty and humanity. "In identifying an act of cruelty it is necessary to bear in mind the circumstances, the different meanings attached to acts and words, the symbolic language peculiar to each environment; but once an act has been indubitably recognized as being cruel, it is a horrible one, whenever and wherever it happens to have been committed.

"We should feel it irresistibly if we loved as ourselves all the unfortunate beings who two or three thousand years ago suffered cruelties at the hands of their fellow men."44 Surely much of this compassion came from her experiences in Spain. This compassion finally contributed to her death, for despite her illness she refused to eat more than the diet of the average Frenchman in Vichy France, and so died, from illness and malnutrition on August 24, 1943. She was one of the most important Christian witnesses to the cruelty of a barbaric era. She remained uncorrupted by it and managed to influence the generation of Europeans who were to build a new society upon the ruins of that old one whose illness she had diagnosed so clearly in Spain.

Simone Weil was very much a Frenchwoman, though this statement would have given Charles Maurras apoplexy, for she was also a Jew. Because she exemplified so completely the education and background of the enlightened middle class during the Third Republic, the issues with which she was concerned were very much in the French tradition. Personal freedom, and au-

Authority, justice and the common good, the rights of the individual in the midst of a revolution: all these concerns show her a thorough student of Alain. But because she combined with the passionate common sense of the French the outlook of the true mystic she was able to transcend all the values of her class and time and present us with a view of war and human suffering which is truly timeless. The secret of the sympathy she showed to the views of Bernanos lay in the fact that he too was applying the extraordinary standard of the mystic to the events of his time. Thus, though her concerns, as we shall see, are much the same as those of André Malraux, her conclusions are more the conclusions of Georges Bernanos, because she, like Bernanos, judged man's fate in terms of a supernatural destiny.
CHAPTER V

MALRAUX

During the fading days of the Spanish Civil War, the celebrated French novelist, André Malraux visited the United States seeking support for the Loyalist cause. Handicapped by a lack of knowledge of the language he made his way across the nation till finally, and inevitably, he arrived in Hollywood. There, at a party, he was asked by one of the guests why he, one of France's famous novelists, would risk his neck, as he had done, in Spain, fighting on the side of the Republic. Malraux replied, in English, "Because I do not like myself."\(^1\)

André Malraux is a man who seems to have spent the greater part of his long and active life trying to escape from the self he did not like. Action and commitment have been the means which he has chosen to sublimate André Malraux the man. Deliberately hiding and confusing the facts of his biography he has built up a legend about himself which flourishes and pursues him, just as legend of "Lawrence of Arabia" pursued T. E. Lawrence, a man for whom Malraux feels great spiritual sympathy.\(^2\) "Probably nothing about Malraux," said

---


\(^2\) Ibid., pp. 3-4.
one of his literary critics, "is so important as the legend that has grown up, more or less spontaneously, about him. . . . He has taken the position that while his books belong to the public, his private life is entirely his own business; the public; free to do exactly what it pleases with what it knows--or thinks it knows--of his personal affairs, has made the most of its opportunity."³

Georges André Malraux was born at Paris on November 3, 1901, a date which played a significant part in his life because it made him just young enough to avoid the traumatic experience of participation in the First World War.⁴ Perhaps because of a perverse resentment at not being able to take part in that struggle, he drifted, in his early twenties, into a life of action. Interest in oriental art drew his attention to the lost temples of Indo-China and he set out in company with his wife to rediscover them. He succeeded, and was promptly arrested by the French colonial administration for removing government property, in the form of priceless works of art, from the temples. His case became a sort of minor Dreyfus affair when the word got back to Paris. Prominent men, many of whom he had never met, including André Maurois, André Breton, Louis Aragon, and the Gallimards, signed a petition demanding his re-

³W. M. Frohock, André Malraux and the Tragic Imagination (Stanford, Calif, 1952), p. 3. Frohock is a professor of modern languages at Columbia.

⁴Ibid., p. 10. The following bibliographical material is taken from Frohock except where indicated. Professor Frohock discovered from checking articles written by Malraux that he could not possibly have been in China at the time of the events portrayed in The Conquerors.
Freed, Malraux drifted into newspaper work in Indo-China. The Chinese revolution was in full swing, and it appears that Malraux visited China and may have taken some part in the struggle as an agent of the communist party. The often repeated story that Malraux sat on the committee of twelve of the Kuomintang may belong only to legend, but it is certain that the events of this epic struggle and especially the betrayal of the revolution by Chiang Kai-shek made a permanent impression on Malraux and provided material for two of his best known novels, *The Conquerors* (1928) and *Mans Fate* (*La Condition Humaine*) (1933), which won the Goncourt prize.

Whether Malraux was a member of the Communist party while in the orient or later remains a matter of conjecture, but it is certain that he was among the most outspoken of the young French intellectuals of the early thirties. In this period of Hitler's ascendancy, the French intelligentsia swung, in the main, to the Left, and Malraux was one of their idols, especially after the publication of *Mans Fate*. Janet Flanner states that "Malraux' basic position by this time was what party men today disdainfully call that of a negativist—one who is for something, within limits, because he is totally against something else." Being violently opposed to Hitler and the Nazi movement he "entered into a mutually pragmatic relationship with the French Communist party," and became one of that party's leading public figures.

---

5 Flanner, p. 10. Actually it appears that Malraux was "jailed" rather comfortably at a good hotel in Saigon. Malraux's novel *The Royal Way* (1930) contains a semi-biographical account of this expedition.

6 Ibid., p. 34.

7 Ibid., p. 36.
In this period he visited Russia several times, attending writers’ conferences and talking with high officials.

It seems certain, however, that "negativism" was not Malraux' sole reason for giving his allegiance to the communist cause. Another writer, who perhaps understands Malraux better, suggests that what Malraux sought was the "virile fraternity" of the communists which manifested itself in "revolutionary combat" that stripped bare the degraded bourgeois concepts of life, and made it possible for the individual to regain "his fertility" for creative and meaningful action as well as "the absolute fundamental sense of belonging to a definite time, a definite place and a specific milieu, without which authentic norms of conduct, and even a true understanding, the self cannot be born." Possibly too, the party represented a means of escaping from the self which he despised into an external commitment.

In 1935 he published Days of Wrath a novel which "perhaps conformed with his notions about the proper way to make propaganda" for the communist cause. It tells the story of a communist agent in one of the Nazi prison camps which later became so notorious. Malraux, even at this early date, sensed the impending disaster for Europe. Chiaromonte tells of his haranguing "one of those pathetic popular front crowds" at the Salle de la Mutualité in Paris and announcing, "not Bread, Peace and Liberty, but the Coming War."

---


9It is doubtful, however, whether Malraux would have been attracted strongly to an organization which did not offer a basically humanistic ideology.

10Frohock, p. 104.
For Malraux the war came sooner than for most. On July 18, 1936 the Spanish Civil War began and Malraux was in Spain two days later. He seems to have been present for the first days of the heroic defense of Madrid by the ill-organized, popular front militia and this tremendous outburst of human courage and violent capacity for action left a great impression upon the writer. He returned to France and launched the campaign to aid the Republic with the slogan "Planes and guns for the Spanish people." He began with the aid of "influential friends" to smuggle planes, weapons and pilots into Spain. The French Communist party appears to have remained aloof from the adventure, and suggested limiting aid to "ambulances and bandages."

When Malraux began the formation of the volunteer group known as the Escadre España, the Spanish Communists circulated the rumor that the planes had been sent by Thorez, the chief of the Communist party in France.

This squadron played an important part in the defense of Madrid in late 1936 and early 1937. Malraux was the titular chief, but not being a licensed pilot himself, although he occasionally flew "while everybody held his breath," he turned the active command over to a pair of French reserve officers. Malraux went on sixty-five missions, participated in the August attack on Medellin, where they flew "low enough to use their pistols," bombed the Alcazar at Toledo.

---

12Flanner, p. 39. Chiaromonte, on the other hand, states that Malraux was in Madrid when the war broke out. P. 915.
13Chiaromonte, p. 915.
and flew raids in the Guadalajara campaign. Malraux crashed, was wounded, flew again, and then, when the squadron was "on its last wings," left Spain in March, 1937 and conducted speaking tours in Europe and America in behalf of the Loyalist cause. Sometime during this hectic period he found time to write the novel Man's Hope (L'Espoir) which was published in November, 1937, by Gallimard. "It made an immediate and powerful impression in France. Of his current-history novels, this naturally, was the one that ordinary French readers were most intimately interested in (and nearly twenty years later it still remains a best-seller among students in the Sorbonne neighborhood), for what he told about was next door and was still happening at the time the book came out."

The book is hardly a novel at all. The characters are wooden-puppets portraying various shades of opinion. The book contains so little "local color" that one might wonder if Malraux was in Spain at all.

Man's Hope appears to contain many biographical elements. The character Magnin is evidently Malraux himself, for some of the adventures of Magnin the aviator appear elsewhere as authentic experiences of the author. But there are many personnages more important in Man's Hope: Manuel, the earnest young communist who rises to the command of a division, and Ximenese, the Catholic officer of the Civil Guard who chooses loyalty to the republic, and critics

14 Flanner, p. 39.

15 Ibid., pp. 39-41.

16 André Malraux, "This is War," Colliers (March 29, 1937), reprinted in full in Robert Payne, The Civil War in Spain (New York, 1962), pp. 261-272. These same incidents are given to the hero Magnin in the last chapters of L'Espoir.
have differed as to the intention of the work. Frohock charges that its aim is "to make propaganda, in every possible way," and that "the intention of the literary artist would conflict directly with the intention of the propagandist." And another critic has commented that "the reader who may be convinced that the message of L'Espoir applies to him would have to join some militant organization or go off to some war." Actually, while these views are to some extent true, they do not do justice to the breadth of Malraux' understanding. It is no more mere propaganda than it is mere biography.

In 1939 with the help of his friend the film producer Corniliglion-Molinier who had also been in Spain earlier, Malraux returned to the battle-torn country and made a movie of segments of Man's Hope while the fighting was still going on. "The film won the Louis Delluc Prize, which is the French film critic's award."

Malraux' long flirtation with communism was ended by the Hitler-Stalin pact of August, 1939, which convinced him of Stalin's bad faith as a defender of the world against the Nazi menace. The Second World War broke out soon after and Malraux enlisted as a private in the tank corps, was wounded and captured by the Germans, escaped and fought in the resistance, later became a colonel in the Free French army and commanded a regiment of infantry in

17Frohock, p. 104.


19Flanner, pp. 42-43.
the liberation of France. Transferring his allegiance to General de Gaulle, he became the minister of Information in the De Gaulle government of 1945. After the political eclipse of the General, Malraux retired to private life and began the publication of a series of works on the history of art. The fall of the Fourth Republic to the Gaullist coup d'état in 1958 returned Malraux to office as minister of Information and later minister of Culture, a position which he continues (1963) to hold. His last novel, The Struggle with the Angel was partly destroyed by the Nazis, but a fragment was published as The Walnut Trees of Altanberg (1948). In this work the central character is modeled on T. E. Lawrence whose career, up to a point, so resembled Malraux's own.

One of the leading novelists of his time, France's foremost art critic, and an active political figure, Malraux shaped the consciousness of the generation which grew up between the two world wars. Upon his sense of destiny the Spanish Civil War had a profound effect, but to understand this effect and what was at stake for Malraux we must go back several years before the war.

In 1931 occurred one of those historical encounters which seem to symbolize the spirit of an age. Leon Trotsky, ex-Menshevik leader who changed sides, and became leader of the Red Army during the Russian Civil War (1919-1920) and was exiled by Stalin from Soviet Russia in 1930, wrote his estimate of Malraux: The Conquerors for the Nouvelle Revue Française. The story centered around the desperate and doomed efforts of the communist revolu-

---

tionaries in Canton to hold back the forces of Chiang Kai-shek. Seemingly, these men are betrayed by the International in the interest of its larger schemes and Trotsky saw the book as an unintentional condemnation of the Stalinist system which Malraux was at this time celebrating. After picking on what he considered doctrinal errors, and at the same time praising the high artistic quality of the book, Trotsky arrived at last at his central point.

"The book is entitled Les Conquerants," he wrote. "In the spirit of the author, this title can be taken in two senses, either it refers to the fact that the Revolution is conquered by the imperialism, or it refers to the Russian Bolsheviks, or more exactly, to a certain faction thereof. The Conquerors? The Chinese masses are not raised up by the revolutionary insurrection, which is under the indisputable influence of the coup d'état of October and is lead by the banner of Bolshevism. These 'conquerors' do not conquer. On the contrary, they are all delivered up to the enemy. If the Russian revolution provoked the Chinese, the Russian agents strangled it. Malraux does not make these deductions. He does not seem to think of this. These facts do not stand out in the depths of his remarkable book."21

To the same issue of the periodical, Malraux submitted his reply. To Trotsky's charge that the revolution had been betrayed by compromise with the bourgeoisie he wrote as follows: "It would be absurd to contest the value of Marxism in much of the revolutionary doctrine. But a Marxist action is not possible other than as a function of class consciousness. As long as the

21Ibid., p. 500.
masses profess that it is more important to save the soul than to be happy and free; as long as they believe, as in China, that life is provisionary and a sort of preparation for a better life, for them violence is not a possibility. The class consciousness must be awakened, developed.\(^{22}\) In China there was no revolutionary proletariat, which would be capable of reacting with the sort of violence to make another October Revolution.

How then could the revolution be accomplished and what means should be used? For Malraux, in the moment of crisis when all seemed lost, means should be subordinated to ends. "But as the victory of the mercenary armies which marched on Canton [the armies of Chiang Kai-shek] cut off all propaganda, all mobilization of the proletariat, all revolutionary formation, and we were certain to be vanquished. Then we used Tcheng-Dai.\(^{23}\)

"'Attention!' says the Marxist. 'We do not make revolution for the sake of revolution, but rather for the sake of the proletariat. Above all, it is necessary to preserve the proletariat in its formative stages so that it can grow. If not, our revolution is senseless.' How could it be possible, to give into the hands of the Chinese proletariat, who were few in numbers, badly organized, barely indoctrinated, a power which they could not use alone? How could the powerful bond which in Russia was the reconquest of the land have been developed among the workers and other classes? Who understood most profoundly the deepest needs of the masses? In six years the International has given that question successive answers; then, in 1925, a general passion

\(^{22}\)André Malraux, "Réponse à Trotsky," *NRF* (April 1, 1931), p. 503.

\(^{23}\)Ibid. Tcheng-Dai represents the bourgeois wing of the revolution.
simplified the problem, the disdain of England, the struggle for Hong Kong commenced.Only the Moscow agents, Malraux felt, could be relied upon to implement the revolutionary consciousness and forge it into an instrument of effective action. Personally, however, Malraux always felt great admiration for Trotsky. On this issue, however, the value of discipline and Moscow direction in the revolution, they parted. During the Spanish Civil War, in 1937 when Trotsky asked Malraux, in connection with an incident at the Moscow treason trials, to state, publically, that Malraux had seen Trotsky at Royan in 1934, Malraux found himself bound by the same discipline he valued so highly and did not make the statement which went contrary to the party line.

This was a problem for Malraux, the question of discipline versus the feelings of the heart in the revolutionary struggle. Technically, the Moscow agents might be right, but by their cold-blooded attitude they seemed to destroy the very things for which the revolution existed. Trotsky was speaking not only against Malraux, but in another sense, for Malraux, since this dialogue runs through not only Man's Hope but The Conquerors as well. In the latter book Garine, the hero, joins the communists rather than the anarchists, because the communists are "technicians of action," rather than talkers like the anarchists. "The communist knows that fervor stops few tanks."
Claude Mauriac catches the spirit of this conflict when he writes: "André Malraux recognized in the Revolution the choice most acceptable to the spirit and the heart of man. But the revolution, if it is to survive, is forced to take from the enemy his methods of combat and of administration. Necessary compromises which a just heart and spirit cannot bring itself to accept. Thus did T. E. Lawrence perceive that it would be necessary to press into ordinary service the orgiastic enthusiasm of the Arab fanatics."  

Another observer, who witnessed Malraux's speech-making on behalf of the Spanish Republic, reported on one such occasion: "He did not know how to lie; that is, to tell the truth, he lied badly. He did not know how to please, this Malraux, in spite of the foolish acclamations which he received. He could bring himself to use foolish and consoling words. 'The whole question [Malraux said] is to know how we can transform the revolutionary fervor into revolutionary discipline.' That hard truth, badly stated, caused consternation. The fascists licked their lips. I overheard one next to me say 'The problem can't be solved. Their goose is cooked.' After the hero quit the stand, the applause was brief. The temperature on the street went down. Malraux returned to his solitude."  

This was for Malraux the vital issue, but one which he never succeeded in solving to his own satisfaction. He had witnessed the magnificent surge of power from the people of Madrid, and that fervor had held Franco at the

---


But at the same time he must have been aware that the anarchists who came charging across Spain from Barcelona under the leadership of Durruti, broke and ran in their first engagement, because, "they were not used to that sort of war."31

Man's Hope is bursting with the sense of this conflict. Magnin is the spokesman for the human spirit (and after all, Magnin is Malraux himself, very thinly disguised). Against him is Garcia, a character patterned upon a real communist agent of the same name. Garcia is the spokesman of discipline. They hold at one point a grotesquely unreal conversation in which they cold-bloodedly discuss the revolution in progress around them. Listening to the sound of the people going into action, Garcia comments: "as to those sounds coming through the window, Monsieur Magnin,—I might define them as an Apocalypse of Fraternity. They work on your emotions. . . . They stand for one of the most moving things on earth, and one of the rarest. But all of that's got to be transformed—or perish!"

To this Magnin replies with great emotion. "Well, you may be right. Only, mind you, for my part I don't countenance, . . . any conflict between all that revolutionary discipline stands for and those who are still blind to its necessity. Even the wildest dreams of absolute liberty, of power given to the worthiest and all the rest of it—all these things, as I see them, are part of what I'm here to implement. I want each individual to have a life that isn't classified in terms of what he can extract from others.

See what I mean?" 32

But for Garcia, the people alone are not the revolution. They are the raw material out of which the revolution must be made. All, like the communists of Canton in The Conquerors, are expendable. Reasons, idealism, these things do not matter. "In times like the present... I'm less interested in the reasons men have for giving their lives than in the means they have for killing off their enemies." 33 On the battlefields of Spain this conflict of the human heart against the human reason is given personification in the struggle between the communists and anarchists for control of the revolution. By spring of 1937 this conflict broke out into open combat in the streets of Barcelona. 34 Garcia gives his reasons, and presumably Malraux 35 for placing himself on the side of the communists. "The communists, you see, want to get things done. Whereas... the anarchists... want to be something. That's the tragedy of a revolution like this one. Our respective ideals are so different; pacifism and the need to fight in self defense; organization and Christian sentiment; efficiency and justice—nothing but contradictions. We've got to straighten them out, transform our apocalyptic vision into an army—or be exterminated. That's all." 35

The forging of this discipline can be costly to the human spirit, as

---

32Andre Malraux, Man's Hope (L'Espoir), translated by Stuart Gilbert and Alastair MacDonald (New York, 1938).

33 Ibid., pp. 114-115.

34 Thomas, pp. 424-429.

35 Malraux, Man's Hope, p. 212.
Malraux knows. One of the most moving incidents in his novel is that of Manuel refusing to pardon the soldier who is to be executed because he fled from the firing line. "So that's it? You've no voice now as far as we're concerned," the soldier says to Manuel. And Manuel, a basically good and kindly man, realizes that he is caught up in the brutality of war, a brutality necessary if the Republic is to win out over the fascists.

But even Garcia has his doubts as to the methods which are to be employed to advance the revolutionary cause. At one point he confides: "One of the things that worries me most is seeing how in every war each side adopts the characteristics of the enemy, whether they wish it or not." Even the communist party itself does not escape his scrutiny. At one point he questions Magnin, the airman, as to the motives for which his volunteer pilots are laying down their lives. "At the beginning of the war loyal falangists died shouting, 'Long live Spain!' but later it was 'Long live the falangists!' Are you sure that among your airmen the type of communist who at first died shouting 'Long live the proletariat!' or 'Long live Communism!' doesn't shout today, in the same circumstances: 'Long live the Party!'?"

Here Magnin tries to clarify his own, and his flyers' relationship to the party, and presumably, that of Malraux as well. "The word 'party' is misleading in any case," he states. "It is most difficult to group together under one label a mass of people united by the same vote, and parties whose ultimate roots go down into the deep, irrational mainsprings of human nature." And then

---

36 Ibid., p. 390.
37 Ibid., p. 506.
38 Ibid., pp. 504-505.
Malraux has his hero add, significantly, "The age of parties is beginning, my friends."39

As this problem of the relationship of party discipline and human freedom is so central to the novel Man's Hope, and since this work embodies so much of Malraux's thought on the war and had such great significance upon its publication,40 it would be interesting to see how the conflict is resolved. Frohock comments that "... the reader may conclude that Man's Hope contains an unmistakable propaganda lesson: the Revolution must succeed; it can succeed only if organized; the only competent organizers are the Communists; thus the leadership must be handed over to the Communists at any cost."41 This critic goes on to say that Malraux's intention is to show the working out of this lesson, which is his "discursive argument" and that the emotional argument of the book against this stand, the argument voiced by Magnin, is defeated in the course of the novel.42 Malraux makes no allowances for the Spanish temperament, inherently anarchistic. Indeed, he seems to see the Civil War not as something belonging to Spain but to abstract mankind.

But if it is true that only the Communists could lead the Revolution, it is not the whole truth, and it seems certain that the French audience for whom the book was intended understood that for Malraux, as for themselves, this conflict remained unresolved. In Malraux's case the historical resolu-

39Ibid., p. 505.
40Flanner, pp. 39-41.
41Frohock, p. 110.
42Ibid., p. 121.
tion of this problem came with the Hitler-Stalin pact. Party discipline, or loyalty since it has never been proved that he was actually a party member, could not stand the test of this breach of faith.

But at the time of the war, Malraux sees communism as the Hope which is the title of his novel. For him at this time, communism appears as more than a party, for as Magnin pointed out, a party is a complex thing, appealing, like a religion, to deep human emotions.

To Malraux, says André Blanchet,43 "The social revolt is a communion taken by all those men struggling shoulder to shoulder against the same servitude. A new Church: that is what Malraux sought in communism."44 But Malraux sought above all things the community of man, and communism is "A strange church which separates him from them! ... Between the communists and him this was always a misunderstanding. He worked to make revolts; they to construct a society of equals, a lateral society, I could say, for the satisfaction of their appetites. And such a society seems to him [Malraux] nothing but a jail."45

If Malraux was willing to turn the nascent revolution over to the mercies of his "co-religionists" it was not without a good deal of doubt as to the eventual outcome, a doubt which the history of events in Spain bore out fully. At one point he has a radical anarchist leader, Negus say to a com-

44Ibid.
munist: "We’re not Christians, not at all! But your lot are turning into a priesthood. I don’t say communism’s becoming a religion, but I do say that the communists are turning into priests. For you, being a revolutionary means just—being cleverer than the next fellow. It wasn’t like that with Bakunin or Kropotkin—not by a long shot! You’re soaked in the Party, in discipline, in plotting and scheming. If a man doesn’t belong, you don’t give him a square deal; you’ve not a scrap of decency toward him. You’ve lost even your loyalty." 46

These words were written before the tragedy of Barcelona when the communists massacred the Trotskyites and Anarchists in a blood bath rivalling anything at the front, but they show a dreadful foreknowledge, and foreshadow as well Malraux’ betrayal of Trotsky. "In the communal fraternity of the Revolution, when the gods differ the hearts separate!" writes Gaëton Picon 47 and certainly the Civil War bore this out.

Malraux, the "true believer" in the communist doctrine, is at the time of the Spanish revolution not entirely without admiration for that other absolute alternative offered in the Spanish Civil War, religion, and most especially the Roman Catholic Church. 48 In L’Espoir there are several Catholic characters among the heroes, Ximenes the Civil Guard officer, and Guernico (whose name is perhaps a play on Guernica, the Basque shrine bombed by Franco)

---

46 Malraux, Man’s Hope, p. 201.


48 Cannon is at great pains to stress that Malraux was not hostile to the Catholic Church.
who leads an ambulance unit.

Quite early in the novel, *Man's Hope*, while the street fighting is going on for control of Barcelona, he has a long conversation between Puig, (an anarchist who seems to resemble Durruti) and Ximenes, in which the former asks: "What chance have the Barcelona workers had of learning about God? Through the lips of those men who in his name declared the terror inflicted upon the Asturians was just and proper—eh?" To which the colonel can only reply: "No, but they could have learned about Him through those few things that tell in a man's life—childhood and death and courage. Not from the lips of preachers. Let's assume the Church in Spain has fallen short of its duty to our countrymen. But why should the ruffians who pretend to share your views . . . prevent you from carrying out yours? It's a mistake appraising men only by what's lowest in them."49

Puig comes back with the classic defense of his position. "When you condemn folk to low living you can't expect high thinking of them. During the last four centuries who's had the 'cure of souls' as you would call it? If they had not been taught so well to hate perhaps they could learn better how to love." "And Christ?" the colonel asks. "He was an anarchist who succeeded."50

Later on, Manuel the communist exclaims to Ximenes "... just look at this country. What has the Church reduced it to? A sort of beastly second childhood! What has the Church taught our women? Two things only: to obey

49 Malraux, *Man's Hope*, pp. 31-33.

50 Ibid., p. 33.
and procreate obéir et à dormir!"51

But these blows against the Church reflect only one facet of Malraux's thought, for, like the conflict between discipline and fervor in the revolution, the conflict between the ministers of Christ (who might be likened to the efficient but wooden-souled communists) and Christ Himself (only an anarchist who succeeded) goes on without any real resolution. Guernico, a Catholic, gives as his reason for remaining loyal to the republic: "... I'm appealing to the soul of the Church against its body: ... Faith doesn't imply a lack of love. And hope doesn't imply a world that justifies itself by making people worship once again, like a fetish, that crucifix at Seville which they call 'The Rich Man's Christ.' (Simony, not heresy's the trouble with our Church)."52 Guernico, who is portrayed as the gentlest and kindest of men in the novel, does not himself shed blood, but is satisfied to save lives on the battlefield. He and Ximenes, the warrior, typify two Catholic responses which Malraux admired. Guernico, and perhaps Malraux himself, saw in the agony of the Catholic Church in Spain, persecuted by the Republic, the salvation of the Church itself as an institution.

"In those squalid houses, and in the hospitals," Malraux has Guernico say, "there are priests at this very moment, dressed up in waistcoats like Parisian waiters and collarless—and they're hearing confessions, giving extreme unction, perhaps baptizing children. I said to you that for twenty years I've not heard Christ's word in Spain. But those priests are being

51Ibid., p. 175.
52Ibid., pp. 312-313.
heard now."

But it is not the salvation of the Church alone which is at stake in Spain. Malraux sees as the ultimate meaning of the struggle that is taking place, an opportunity for the renewal of man, a sort of baptism of man into the human fraternity. The title for one of Malraux' articles on the war is "Forging Man's Fate in Spain" and whether or not this title was chosen by Malraux, it expresses something of what he felt was taking place in Spain. He was concerned basically with what he called, "The Quality of Man." In his epic novel L'Espoir the theme is man ... brought to his feet and abruptly asked before the Revolution what he thinks life is all about. There are communists, with their communistic answer; but communism is clearly not the heroine of the book. ... The eyes of the book are on the 'quality of man.'"

This "quality of man" is more than the "virile fraternity of the communists." In part it is the solidarity of men in the face of the fascist menace, the mysterious human force that made the people of Madrid rise in defense of the republic in the early days of the war. It is the sense of belonging to the human community, of having a part in what Malraux, like his friend

53Ibid., pp. 313-314.
54André Malraux, "Forging Man's Fate in Spain," The Nation (March 20, 1937), pp. 315-316.
56Flanner, p. 57, calls Saint-Exupéry "Malraux' only adventurer-writer friend."
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, called the "building of the Cathedral of man," the sense of a universal Church in which the mystery celebrated is that of human nature itself. Its opposite is "metaphysical loneliness, and the keen consciousness of the degrading effect of the disdain of one's fellows of another class...".

The most exhilarating feeling produced by the war is, to Malraux's mind, the sense of fraternity. At the very beginning of the book, Puig, the anarchist tells Ximenes, "When I was in prison... I never dreamed that such fraternity was possible." And again, another character in L'Espoir expresses similar feelings to Manuel. "When we, our people, I mean, try to do something for humanity we're working for our own families as well. It's one and the same thing. But the others, they pick and choose." The fascists sort men into classes, but the Republicans are united in a fraternal society—this is the social message of Malraux's L'Espoir. As pointed out more than once above, Malraux was not unaware that within this fraternity there were sometimes bickerings, the communists versus the anarchists for instance, but he saw, overall, the burst of spiritual energy liberated by the Spanish Civil War as that war's great gift to mankind. Malraux's biographer Gaëtan Picon put it this way: "Without doubt Malraux wants to say that a man is nothing other than what he makes, that man does not discover himself

57Saint-Exupéry discusses this in Flight to Arras (New York, 1941)
58Gannon, p. 86.
59Malraux, Man's Hope, p. 30.
60Ibid., p. 95.
by reflection on himself; but one discovers life as one discovers war, and it is the sum of these discoveries which make up the human personality. Without doubt he seems to adhere to a sort of 'empiricism' or 'existentialism:' if it is true that man begins in the other, then we all must begin as Manuel does on the last page of L'Espoir. Manuel has, by the end of the novel, completely subordinated himself to his role as a general in the people's army and to his duty as a party member. He can hardly believe himself the same man who, before the war, "bought a little car to go skiing in the Sierra." For him, personal life is over, he lives only in the cause, for it is there alone that hope for a better future exists.

Hope, based on the ideals of the revolutionary movement, is the conclusion of the book. One of the characters in Man's Hope confides to another, "I've hit on a certain truth, oh, quite a simple one: one expects everything at once from 'freedom' but for man to progress a bare half inch a great many men must die. . . . All seeds begin by rotting, but some of them germinate. A world without hope is . . . suffocating." This hope is the necessary propelling force for men to realize the goal of the human community; without it, the goal can never be attained. This is the "propaganda" of L'Espoir. This was what Malraux was trying to make clear to his generation.

In another of the philosophic dialogues of Malraux' novel, two characters discuss the problem as follows: "Hope 'springs eternal' as they say, and it's a terrifying thing! A man who . . . has run up against more than

---

61 Picon, p. 23.

62 Malraux, Man's Hope, pp. 228-229.
his share of ingratitude or baseness or stupidity—well, he's bound to stake his hope on some new order. Among other functions, the revolution plays a part that an 'eternal life' used formerly to play; that explains many of its characteristics." The other person answers. "You spoke of hope just now. Well, men whom love unites, have access to regions they could never reach left to themselves."

So despite all the disasters of the war, this hope is still possible, at least at the time when Malraux was writing. "The night is seen advancing steadily over Spain as do the conqueror's armies, yet within this night there is still the 'dark underground communication' of the people rejoicing, amidst terror and devastation, in a Promethian 'carnival of liberty.' Destruction is countered by a reckless hope of victory and liberation that will not be deterred by any cost or punishment." It has been stated, however, that in this novel, Man's Hope, Malraux is "trying to avoid the implications of tragedy." Man's Hope was published at the end of 1937 when there was still hope of a victory for the republicans. If he had waited his message would not have been one of hope but of "human impotence." But Malraux, even after he left Spain, did not lose faith in the possibilities for victory.

Mid-March, 1937 found André Malraux in the United States. Here, at a dinner arranged for him by the publication The Nation he spoke succinctly of

---

63 Ibid., pp. 323-324.


65 Chiaromonte, p. 789. It is not true that Stalin had "already judiciously stopped all aid" by the end of 1937, but he had certainly cut it down. See the table at the end of Thomas, pp. 640-643.
his own feelings toward the war, and the feelings of the vast majority of intellectuals in Spain and France. Malraux was deeply troubled by the problem of the intellectual in a world beset by totalitarianism and his speech (here quoted in the form in which it was subsequently printed) is an expression of his feelings.

"Speaking before people whose very calling is the defense and maintenance of culture," Malraux began, "I want my talk to be limited to the function of trying to make you understand why so many Spanish writers and artists are fighting on the side of the loyal Spanish government, why so many foreign artists are today behind the Madrid barricades, why the only one of the great writers of Spain who joined the Fascists, Unamuno, died at Salamanca, discarded by them, hopeless and alone." 66

The problem of Miguel de Unamuno y Jugo (1864–1936), the greatest of contemporary Spanish philosophers and writers, distressed Malraux here and in Man's Hope as well. Unamuno had originally sided with Franco, but after a short time realized that he could not stomach being made a "show piece" for the regime. Thereupon he took the occasion of an official address as rector of the University of Salamanca to tell off the fascists in no uncertain terms. For this he was sentenced to death, but he died of a heart attack at his home before any action could be taken against him. 67

Malraux, in his address, went on to talk about what had attracted all of these intellectuals to Spain, and once again he recounts, as his personal

---


67 Luis Portilo, "Unamuno's Last Lecture," in Payne, p. 117.
experience, one of the incidents he gives to Magnin in *Man's Hope,* the story
of the wounded flyers being carried triumphantly home by the peasants. "I
raised my eyes, the file of peasants extended now from the heights of the
mountain to its base—and it was the grandest image of fraternity I have ever
encountered: those abandoned villages, that entire people following men
wounded for their sake, men whom they had never seen before. . . . And I
could not help thinking that these men of ours, . . . had been willing to
risk their lives in the specific hope that no military escort but the strong
fraternity of the people themselves would henceforth accompany those who
fight for their ideas."\(^6^8\)

To this fraternal spirit Malraux contrasts the spirit of fascism, in
which he sees particularism carried to an extreme. "What," he asked, "is
the positive element in the various forms of fascism? I think it is the
exaltation of differences that are essential, irreducible, and constant,
such as race or Nation . . . . The fascist ideologies by their very nature
are static and particular. As for democracy and communism, they disagree in
respect to the dictatorship of the proletariat, but not in respect to their
values, since the dictatorship of the proletariat is in Marxist eyes, the
concrete means of obtaining real democracy—all political democracy being a
delusion so long as it does not rest on economic democracy. But what unites
us all is that . . . we aim to preserve or to recreate, not static or particu-
lar values, but humanist values—humanist because they are universal. . . ."\(^6^9\)

\(^6^8\)Malraux, "Forging Man's Fate," p. 315.

\(^6^9\)Ibid., pp. 315-316.
As to the state of the arts under a fascist regime, Malraux sees no hope for them at all. "I have always been struck," he declared, "by the absolute inability of the fascist arts to portray anything but the struggle of man against man." Whereas, he states, for the democrat or the communist fighting is not an end, but a means. "Determined to fight since fighting is the only safeguard of the meaning we want to give our lives, we nevertheless refuse to make fighting a fundamental value.... There is much suffering in the world, but there is one kind of suffering which is a privilege to endure, the suffering of those who suffer because they want to make a world worthy of Man." 70

Despite the fact that so many of the intelligentsia concerned themselves with the fate of the Spanish Republic, Malraux was keenly aware in his writings that in reality the intellectual could not fully participate in the revolutionary struggle. What was needed was a different breed of man, the sort of man that Manuel becomes in Man's Hope, the engineer and "gifted pianist" who gives up his personal pursuits, his intellect, and subordinates himself to the cause of the revolution. Garcia, in the same novel, is also an intellectual and it is he who exclaims at one point: "The business of the revolution is to solve its own problems not ours. Ours depend on ourselves alone.... For a thinker, the revolution's a tragedy. But for such a man, life too, is tragic. And if he is counting on the revolution to abolish his private tragedy, he's making a mistake, that's all." 71

70Ibid., p. 316.
71Malraux, Man's Hope, pp. 396-397.
And yet, Malraux, himself very much an intellectual, felt that he, and men of his stamp, had something to offer to the revolutionary cause. What this something was he was not quite sure, but he felt that it did not involve a criticism of the revolutionaries because they were not intellectuals themselves. "I grant you," Garcia says, "that those who, on humane or intellectual grounds, may feel inclined to pick holes in revolutionary politics know nothing of the stuff of which a revolution's made. And the men with practical experience of revolutions never have the talent of Unamuno; often they are incapable of expressing themselves at all."\(^7^2\)

Malraux himself refused to abandon the field entirely to the non-intellectuals, but he was aware of a special sort of "treason of the intellectuals" which was taking place in the world around him. "For a while," he has Garcia say, "... the intellectuals were the 'clergy' of the world in which the politicians represented the nobility, for better or for worse. \[^{[This is meant in the sense of the three-estates as in France under the monarchy.}]\] Their claim to act as spiritual advisers was uncontested. It was they, the intellectuals, Miguel de Unamuno and not Alfonso XIII indeed for that matter Miguel and not the bishops—who were responsible for teaching men how to live. But nowadays the new political leaders claim to rule our minds as well: Miguel against Franco ... Thomas Mann versus Hitler, Gide versus Stalin. ... it's a conflict of prerogatives."\(^7^3\)

Commenting on this particular passage in \textit{Man's Hope}, Claude Mauriac

\(^7^2\)Ibid., p. 395.

\(^7^3\)Ibid.
has written that: "Malraux tells us, the intellectuals have lately been able resign, without a very bad conscience, the political field to men who do not shackle the irrefutable imperatives of the spirit. Between thought and action the specialists have divided the work."74 This division, Malraux is trying to say, cannot be allowed to stand, and one reason he so rejoiced at seeing "artists" on the battlefield of Spain was that it seemed to him that this is where men of intellect belong in a moment of crisis. However heroic Unamuno's final resistance was, Malraux cannot forgive the fact that he, old and dying though he was, chose to receive, even for so short a time, the praises of the fascists, rather than to commit himself to the decision which was inevitable, the decision to fight against tyranny in all its forms. "The problem is simple," writes Mauriac, "The revolution is an act and whoever commits himself and becomes engaged, takes his own fatal choice. In a certain sense, the choice is tragic, especially for intellectuals who, in a large measure, are men of 'the nuance, the degree and quality of their truth, of the complexity,' . . . . Still, in politics, the dissidents, or the conquered, are traitors, and traitors to the measure in which they are ineffectual."75

One cannot help feeling, reading Malraux' writings on the war, that one reason that he chose the communist position as opposed to that of the liberal democrats was that the intellectuals among the latter seemed all too ready to abdicate in favor of the politicians their role as the "clergy of

75 Ibid., pp. 213-214.
the world." Shade (whose name for some unknown reason becomes Slade in the English translation), an American newsman in Madrid, is Malraux' example in Man's Hope of the liberal democratic man. At one point he has Shade write, for his readers back home: "Let's find out what we want. When a communist addresses an international conference, he puts his fist down on the table. When a fascist addresses an international congress he puts his feet on the table. A democrat, be he American, English or French,—when he addresses an international conference, scratches his head and asks questions. . . . Let us find out what we want. [Either] let us say to the fascists . . . or to the communists, if need be, 'Get out of here. If not you will have to deal with us.'" 76

Malraux at the time of the Spanish Civil War was undergoing a profound intellectual crisis in regard to his role as a political figure. This crisis was significant for himself and for the French intelligentsia of the Left, whom he, in large measure, represented. It concerned the relationship of intellectual subordination to the discipline which was necessary for the revolutionary struggle, to the independence of spirit and body which was necessary for the intellectual's existence as an intellectual. For Malraux, this submission meant a subordination to the will of the communist party in Moscow, and this, he was never able to completely achieve. 77 Malraux remained suspicious of the religious sense of dedication and passivity which seemed as


77 Flanner, p. 36.
necessary for a good communist as a good monk. For the intellectual this would mean an unbearable sacrifice, but one which he felt tempted to make because he realized the necessity of the revolution. That was the agony of André Malraux, and those who followed his speeches, articles, and books. "For the thinker, the revolution's a tragedy." And so it was. The historical outcome of the war in Spain in which Russia gradually withdrew her support for tactical reasons, was followed by the pact between Hitler and Stalin a few months later. This was an agonizing moment for Malraux and the whole of the French Left. Malraux resumed his life of adventure and intellectual travels to arrive at last at a common sympathy with Charles de Gaulle. As a case he seems typical of the Frenchmen who found their ground cut out from under them in the dark days of 1939, but Malraux was more than just another Frenchman, or even another intellectual. Malraux tried to explain the significance of the Spanish Civil War to the men of his generation while the war was still in progress and the true significance unknown. But, essentially, he remained an artist and poet of revolution, more concerned, as he pointed out to Trotsky in Nouvelle Revue Française, with revolutionaries as men than with doctrine. To Malraux can be ascribed the same task which is given to Manuel in Man's Hope: "To give a voice to the silent grief of men, to articulate and compose their inarticulate hopes and ecstasies even at the risk of losing his own voice. . . ." Such was the task of André Malraux.

78 Ibid., p. 44.
79 Blumenthal, p. 69.
CHAPTER VI

THE ROLE OF THE PRESS

One of the dominant factors in the molding of public opinion in any modern society is the press, daily and periodical, with its constant torrent of information, misinformation and ideas flowing in an inky black stream into the lives of all members of the nation. In France especially the most important writers have not failed to turn their hand to what we would call journalism. The periodical writing of Léon Daudet, François Mauriac, Paul Claudel and others has already been mentioned, but those mentioned were by no means the only men of letters who took part in the controversies which raged around the Spanish Civil War. The number of French books on the war is large, especially the number of those favoring the cause of Franco, and the volume of periodical literature is equally immense. Most of the newspapers favored the Spanish rebels, at least to the extent of opposing French intervention to aid the republic.¹

¹Here is a list of the principle dailies and where they stood on the Civil War in Spain.

  Generally pro-Franco: l'Ami du Peuple (Pierre Taittinger, editor), Circulation, 150,000; La Croix (R. P. Merklin), 100,000; Le Jour (Léon Bailby), 200,000; Le Matin (Maurice Bunau-Varilla, Stephane Lauzanne), 450,000; Le Petit Journal (Col. de la Rocque), 200,000; Le Temps (Jacques Chastenet and Émile Mireaux), 70,000; L'Écho de Paris (Henry Simond), 155,000; l'Action
This stand was crucial at the start when the Leon Blum government was toying with the idea of direct French intervention in Spain. Every attempt to aid the stricken republic was closely watched by the Right-wing press and zealously reported. "... the obstruction of aid to the Spanish Republic was increased by the everlasting denunciations of such clandestine shipments in the French Right-wing press. These denunciations (many of which, by the way, were false) played, needless to say, into the hands of Germany and Italy, which never ceased to reproduce under gigantic headlines these 'revelations' and denunciations from ... The Action française, Candide, Grignoire." So wrote Alexander Werth, himself a prominent journalist and popular historian of the period. As has been noted, the Action française opened the show, but the other papers quickly joined in. "Within twenty-four hours of Pujo's first article, L'Écho de Paris expressed vague but decided opposition to the idea of arming the Spanish Republicans, and on July 24, Henri de Kerillis denounced in greater detail the plan for delivering

française (Maurice Pujo), 450,000; La Liberté (Jacques Doriot), 40,000.
Reasonably neutral: Le Figaro (Lucien Romier); Paris-Soir (Raymond Manevy), 1,800,000; Le Petit Parisien (Pierre Dupuy), 1,320,000; Le Journal (P. Guimier), 410,000.
Favoring the Republicans: Le Populaire (Léon Blum), 60,000; L'Humanité (Marcel Cachin), 450,000; L'Oeuvre (Jean Piot), 200,000; Ce-Soir (Louis Aragon), 250,000.


material to government forces. . . . "3 The quick intervention of Italy
in the war spoiled the argument that this was prevented by French neutrality,
but the pro-Franco press was able to adjust its line suitably. "Pertinax
André Geraud] in L'Echo de Paris, Jacques Doriot in L'Emancipation nationale,
Saint-Brice in Le Journal, and Léon Bailby in Le Jour, abandoned the line
that aid to Madrid would justify widespread foreign intervention and argued
instead that, even if it were proved, Italian intervention could never justify the risk of war."4

After the nonintervention policy had been affirmed, these same writers
continued their campaign against the republicans. "It is significant," writes
Micaud, "that the Spanish Loyalists were not represented as a republican
government fighting a Fascist rebellion, but as a coalition of anti-Fascist
forces dominated by the Communists."5 This view was not entirely without
foundation and had the merit of making the struggle of the republic for
survival seem an attempt by Russia to gain a foothold in the West. Most of
the Rightist press would have subscribed to the statement made by Le Temps,

3Eugen Weber, Action Francaise, Royalism and Reaction in Twentieth Century France (Stanford, Calif., 1962), p. 381. Henri de Kerillis was one of the founders of L'Epoque in 1928. "A man of the Right he fought the Popular Front: he took the part of the Spanish rebels and began a subscription to offer a sword of honor to General Franco. But, a nationalist, he did not accept the Munich pact which consecrated the abandonment of Czechoslovakia to Hitler . . . he condemned the accord reached at the expense of our allies and raised his voice against the conclusion of a military agreement . . . with Soviet Russia." Manevy, pp. 180-181. He fled France in 1940 but opposed De Gaulle, writing a work entitled: I Accuse DeGaulle while in the United States during World War II.


5Micaud, p. 112.
The Spanish Civil War is a formidable struggle between the two Spains: that of the People's revolution, in power since the elections of February, and that of the counter-revolution which groups all the forces hostile to the regime, from the Moderate Republicans to the former Carlists. Obviously, in mentioning the "two Spains" the editorialist was thinking also of the "two Frances," and the Popular Front government then in power north of the Pyrenees.

Raymond Recouly of the Revue de France explained the alliance of the Popular Front parties in Spain as a "paradoxical alliance between the bourgeois parties on the one hand and the Socialists and the Communists on the other." In this alliance he felt that the Communists must become the dominant force, for "it is always the most radical elements that pull and direct the team. In order not to break this alliance, the moderates are constantly obliged to yield to the revolutionaries... to aid the government of Madrid is to furnish arms to Communism, to permit it to establish itself more firmly in Spain."

As the protracted character of the Spanish conflict became more evident, Recouly declared that it was indeed a "crusade" to save Europe from the evils of the Bolsheviks. "In all the countries where communism is not to be feared,

---

6 Le Temps, July 24, 1936. According to Micaud, Le Temps was the "semi-official mouthpiece of conservative governments, especially on foreign policy." p. 242. Its successor paper is Le Monde.

notably among the Anglo-Saxon peoples, no one wants to hear this crusade mentioned, for it seems useless and even dangerous. It is otherwise in the nations where Communist propaganda is redoubtable, above all in France. The fear of revolutionary troubles—not at all imaginary—the prospect of a general strike under cover of which the attack would be made against the Republic, all that seems to many of our compatriots as near possibilities. This very serious risk seems to them to dominate all others."

There was, of course, another risk, which grew as the war progressed, that a victory for Hitler in Spain would have very serious consequences for France. Thus "the Rightist press, as well as the parliamentary debates reflected this position of the conservative bourgeoisie, pressed between the menace of Pan-Germanism and the fears of a Russian alliance. Illustrative of the indecisive attitude of the Conditional Nationalists were the articles by René Pinon in the Revue des Deux Mondes from June to December, 1936. He alternately pointed to the German and the Bolshevist danger, apparently incapable of establishing an order of priority between them." "If it is the government that prevails," he wrote, "it will be in the hands of the Communists and the workers whom it has imprudently armed, and Spain will become a Soviet country, prey to the most bloody repression. That would make a very dangerous neighbor for France," he concluded.

---


9Micaud, p. 117. Important articles on Spain by René Pinon appear, August 1, 15; September 1, 8; December 15, 1936; March 1, 15, 1937.

This conclusion received added weight as the grim accounts of continued dissension and persecution behind the lines in Republican Spain filtered into France. Louis Bertrand, a member of the Académie Française, wrote in *La Revue Universelle* that in "Red Spain," they "abolish the liberty of conscience, the freedom of thought for which we have always fought, reestablishing inhuman tortures and a refinement of beastial cruelty. ... They delight in violating the most elementary rights of man. The assassination of hostages, ... all free and civilized men cannot but protest with indignation against such degradation, against the horror of living under such a regime." Thus, a victory for Germany was a victory for France, whatever it might mean for the future. A victory for the Spanish Republic would have been, as the novelist Thierry Maulnier put it, "the victory of the principles which are rightly considered to lead to the ruin of France and of civilization." The German fleet's bombardment of Almeria in retaliation for a Republican attack on one of their ships was greeted by Gustave Herve's *La Victoire* with an article headed: "Hurrah for the Germans!"

Books of the Right-wing persuasion were not lacking either. During the struggle were published such works as M. Chaminade's *Feux croisés sur*

---


12 Yves Simon, *The Road to Vichy* (New York, 1942), p. 168. According to Simon, Thierry Maulnier was "a brilliant and talented young writer who had won a leading position among French Intellectuals."

13 Ibid., pp. 165-167. Herve founded *La Victoire*, a radical right-wing newspaper in 1914. It was one of the first Parisian papers allowed to appear during the occupation.

Not only was there a liberal outpouring of bound volumes, poetry too had its part to play in expressing ideology. Not all poets were Paul Claudel, unfortunately. From the review Occident comes a piece entitled "The Crusader."

Its hero is better known as General Francisco Franco.

Every morning the silent man
rises early and goes to morning mass.

On his shoulders rests the whole
weight of western civilization....

It is he who will save the France
of St. Louis and of Joan of Arc.

Oh thou, who art chosen by God to
be a rampart of hope and faith

Against the powers of Hell....¹⁵

¹⁴ P. A. M. Van Der Esch, Prelude to War, the International Reprecussions of the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939 (The Hague, 1951), pp. 183-184.

Henri de Kerillis, the prominent parliamentarian and writer had been one of the most outspoken men of the Right against intervention in the Spanish war, but as the war progressed, Alexander Werth noted certain changes in his outlook. "Kerillis, for instance, though pro-Franco on general grounds, is now profoundly disturbed by the hold Italy and Germany have taken over him; Franco is, in consequence, becoming a menace to France. 'If only,' he says plaintively, 'we had backed him from the start, instead of supporting the Reds, think what a difference it would have made to France.'"¹⁶ Kerillis was a man of outspoken views who would be anti-Vichy and anti-Gaullist during the World War. Historian André Maurois remembered voting for him in the 1935 elections, as a protest "against the popular front."¹⁷ Kerillis' problems of conscience became those of the entire right as Hitler became more and more involved in Spain.

The Catholic press undoubtedly had a harder time than the secular journals in formulating an attitude towards Spain. If Claudel could not agree with Mauriac and Maritain, what were smaller fry to do? Paul Vignaux explained the religious problem of Catholics in Politique Étrangère. "Even in France the 'horrors of Barcelona' have determined the pro-Franco position of the mass of believers. Paul Claudel has expressed this attitude in a poem. Even in the summer of 1936 as ardent a democrat as M. Gay [Francisque Gay, see above in connection with Mauriac] explained the impossibility for Christians

¹⁶Ibid.

to give their support to a republic that did not disavow the worst anti-clerical outrages.\textsuperscript{18}

The exiled Italian priest Don Luigi Sturzo was one of the most frequent writers on the Spanish question.\textsuperscript{19} Through the medium of the liberal Catholic daily newspaper \textit{L'Aube}, he advocated neutrality in the early part of the struggle. In September, 1936 he declared:

Outside of Spain, there are no lack of Catholics to take up a position in favor of the insurgents; the sacrileges committed by the crowd are so great and so numerous that instinctively one thinks that well-being and order are to be found on the other side. But the excesses committed by the insurgent troops must be taken into account in that terrible, bloody experience. . . . The Civil War has two sides: justice requires that one does not give to the insurgents a religious character which they scarcely have. . . . The Church is only on the side of innocent victims, fallen on one side or the other of the two lines; she is solely with those who suffer, with those who die, with them because they are dying, on both sides; she is at the same time with those who are led by a fanatic hatred against religion because of ignorance, or the lack of proper religious formation, or a disordered life; she is with them because until their last breath they are also souls to be saved.\textsuperscript{20}


\textsuperscript{19}Don Luigi Sturzo (1871-1959), "ordained a priest in 1894, founded after the First World War the Italian Popular Party, with the encouragement of Benedict XV. . . . Lived in exile in France and England after 1924, exercised an influence on the French Christian Democrats." Remond, p. 280. \textit{L'Aube} was founded in 1932 by Francisque Gay and Gaston Tessier, circulation: 10,000 copies.

This sums up the general editorial policy of the "liberal" Catholic press. An editorial in Sept declared: "I admire the French, so proud of their political ideology that they are able to set up for our approval such a catastrophe, and find it possible to exalt the champions of their cause, martyrs of the Republican faith or heroes of the National Army. It is in effect the noblest deception of civil wars: that they rediscover, more naturally than other wars, something of the duel of ideas, the conflicts of doctrines or mysterious rites; and it is this which gives them their character of atrocity and passionate violence." Recalling the crimes of both sides, the editorialist concludes: "I blame the insurgents who have confused the cause of national order with rebellious generals and mobilized colonial troops against their fellow citizens. And I blame the Republican Loyalists who have nothing to defend but a government soiled by the blood of assassinations, one which can accomplish nothing and is unable to establish the order which it allowed to be subverted. The shadow of civil war hangs over our country. Is there nothing to which we can direct our efforts? ..." If one were to hold each side equally responsible as this editorial advocated, then there was indeed little toward which one could direct one's efforts. By apportioning blame the liberals in effect stepped to one side and took no further part in the argument. It was a pose they would not be able to maintain for long.

La Croix took a less judicious stand and flung itself into the thick of the argument. François Veuillot wrote in August of 1936, a few days after

---

the Sept editorial appeared:

... The law of love! Ah! God will that it be restored in Spain! ... Of the Spanish Catholics, the true, fervent and deeply reverent Catholics of Spain, of those among them most of all who, to save their country from anarchical revolution and bloody persecutions, have had to take up arms against the government of their country, the government discredited, among other things, by its complicity with the criminals whom it had in its power to arrest, we dare to demand that they do not lose their view of the law of love which always guards the righteous, which is generative of justice, even in the face of the greatest crimes and the bitterest battles. ...

In general the right-wing Catholics seemed to go in for exclamation points and very long sentences. But Veuillot realized that it was necessary to condemn some of the actions of Franco. Like so many others prepared to favor the Nationalist cause he was shocked by the massacre at Badajoz, where the defenders upon their surrender were slaughtered in the bull ring. "... We believe we fulfill an obligation to the Spanish Catholics, ... in proclaiming that, in cold blood, we cannot approve certain factions which defend the Church. When we behold on the same day, in the provinces reclaimed from the persecutors, the authorities of Seville celebrating the feast of the Assumption in a public feast and the victors at Badajoz executing en masse more than a thousand prisoners ... ah! truly then our hearts are troubled." 23

If the press in general, and especially the Catholic press, seemed confused

---

22 François Veuillot, La Croix (August 27, 1936). Rémond, p. 182.
This paper was a semi-official French Catholic daily founded by the Augustinian fathers of the Assumption. The editor imposed by the Holy See in 1927 was R. P. Merklin. Veuillot in addition to writing for La Croix was on the staff of the journal l'Union. Rémond, p. 270.

23 Veuillot, ibid., Rémond, p. 183.
by the charges of massacre and counter massacre, they can hardly be blamed for it. In general the press concerned itself more with atrocities than with ideas. The brutal murder of priests was far more important than the academic question of personal responsibility in a collective revolution or the proper application of the law of double-effect.

As time went on the problem of the Basques became more and more troublesome to the Catholic press in France. Not only were the Basques Catholics who, for political reason, opposed Franco's "crusade," but also they were an ethnic group which straddled the Pyrenees and had one foot in France. Thus every Frenchman was acutely aware of their problems. One of the most influential of the leaders of the Catholic press in France was Gaétan Bernoville. An ardent supporter of Franco against the Godless Republicans, he nevertheless was a good enough journalist to see that persecution of the Basques was making propaganda for the Reds. In the journal *La France Catholique* he wrote: "The question of the Basque provinces of Spain seems to us to make for insidious and tenacious propaganda, which one can use to mix-up and deform things at will. One regrets that such propaganda can use a name which is honored in our letters: that of M. François Mauriac. . . . The problem which troubles him would be better posed, if he admitted from the outset, explicitly, that it is necessary to distinguish between men and the cause they serve. When one has admitted those excesses on the part of Franco, it remains true that

---

24Gaétan Bernoville (1889-1960), "collaborated on numerous Catholic journals, *La Croix, Les Études, La France Catholique.* He founded the revue *Les Lettres* in 1913 and was director to 1919. Following the 1924 elections, he projected beginning a great new daily, *d'Énergie.* He took the initiative in the first "Week of Catholic Writers" . . . " Remond, p. 275.
Franco and his followers are defending Christian Civilization against Marxist barbarity."25

The sum of this message appears to be: it isn't much of a crusade, but it's the only one we have. To ease the conscience of those who wished to support Franco despite his occasional misdeeds, the Republicans obligingly came up with massacres of their own fully as bad as anything committed by Franco. These were all the worse, in the eyes of the Catholic press, in that they were committed by the godless upon the Godly. Historian Jean Guiraud26 writing in La Croix in August of 1937 commented on the statement of the Spanish bishops favoring the Nationalist cause. "The cruelly anti-religious character which is taken by the governments of the Left well shows that there is no choice but the government of Bolshevist communism or the solution of Franco on the other hand which is the ressurrection of the national soul that does not want to become the slave of foreigners—any foreigners! which affirms the resolution to raise up the element essential in the Spanish character and its worldly life; the undeniable belief in God. That is the reason, say the Spanish Bishops, why to the Catholics of Spain, this war, which is imposed on them by the foreigners and the 'God-less' is

25Gaétan Bernoville, La France Catholique (July 31, 1937). Rémont, p. 183. This was the journal of the National Catholic Action Federation begun in 1925. Jean de Fabreques was editor. P. 271.

26Jean Guiraud, historian, "author of many historical works, director of the revue Les Questions Historiques. Founded the Catholic Association of Heads of Families . . . devoted to the defense of the rights of fathers and public morality. . . . Entered the staff of La Croix at the end of the First World War." Rémont, p. 277.
a war in defense of their country and their honor."  

In many ways the most extraordinary, and perhaps the most honest, statement to appear in the Catholic press was that of Bernoville in La France Catholique in the spring of 1938. "From the Christian point of view one is opposed to Guernica, or the bombardment of Barcelona, or the execution of many Basque priests. Each of these events should be closely considered. These facts or others, the executions in Nationalist Spain, have no significance, none at all, against the cause of Franco. If any doubt this, I ask them to read, or re-read the history of the Crusades. They will discover they were not always handled nicely; individuals as well as nations fell to the crusaders. What is that against the admirable ideal, which shows the Christian how to proceed on this epic mission, the conquest of the tomb? I submit in all friendship this consideration to François Mauriac and Jacques Maritain. . . ."  

But while some cheered on the combatants, others worked for peace and reconciliation. Don Luigi Sturzo, as early as October of the first year of war declared to the readers of L'Aube: "That for which we should hope and which we should desire . . . is the gaining of the cessation of that useless carnage (as Benedict XV has characterized war) with a plan of political and social conciliation far-reaching in scope."  

An idle plea falling on deaf ears. The war went on another year, and Pierre-Henri Simon was to write in

---


28Bernoville, La France Catholique (May 9, 1938), Rémond, p. 201.

29Sturzo, L'Aube (October 3, 1936), Rémond, p. 204.
Temps Present: 30 "In Spain the day seems already overdue when one would think that in the lassitude, powerlessness and anarchy of the combatant forces the most reasonable and humane solution would impose itself: the mediation of the great powers of Europe, aided and encouraged by the Church—mediation which is the only way possible for a rapid and just peace, without reprisal and without oppressive violence against the vanquished, and without dissension among the victors. . . ." 31

Just after the start of the New Year, Claude Bourdet, the secretary of the French Committee for Civil and Religious Peace in Spain wrote in the same journal: "Here is the second time that a year has opened on Spain bathed in blood. . . . How to break the infernal circle? By a peace without a triumph of arms, peace without grandeur perhaps in the eyes of romantic, but an infinite peace, because it breaks the dialectic of hate. This peace, as a look at the actual situation will show, is the only chance to end this struggle in a reasonable way. . . . But to achieve that peace, more must be done than simply desiring it. It is necessary to work. It is particularly necessary that England and France work. And it is necessary to find a means of cooperation among the leaders of the two warring camps. . . ." 32

Such forthright declarations were not always appreciated by the Catholic

---

30 Pierre-Henri Simon (b. 1903), "taught at the Catholic University of Lille (1929-1938) . . . collaborated before the war on La Vie Intellectuelle, Temps Present. . . ." Rémond, p. 280. This last was a weekly which took the place of Sept and later became La Vie Catholique.


Church. When on December 7, 1938 La Croix published a statement by a former professor of law at Oviedo, Alfred Mendizabel on the results of a conference held by the French Committee for justice and peace, Osservatore Romano attacked the publication for its neutralist stand. R. P. Merklen, the editor in chief was forced to publish a retraction declaring: "We adhere, completely, in heart and soul to all the orders and directives coming from Rome; our love for the Holy Father remains the great animater of our life and our pen." Thus was the freedom of the official Catholic press limited by "right reason" and, more importantly, the need for victory in Spain.

The neutral and Leftist press was not so large as that of the Right or of the Catholics, but it was just as deeply involved in the war. Of the important dailies in Paris "Only Le Petit Parisien and Paris-Soir, so as not to offend either their reactionary readers nor their democratic readers, were forced to establish an equilibrium between the information which came to them from the divergent camps. They manifested their impartiality by according, to the texts of their correspondences which survived operations on the side of the Francoists or the government, an equal place, and in composing the titles for these articles of opposite tendencies they used the same amount of space and the same characters." It was by such methods that these two

---

33 R. P. Léon Merklen (1875-1949), entered the Assumptionists in 1896 and was ordained in 1899. Directed La Documentation Catholique from 1923, took direction of La Croix at behest of the pope. In 1937 he was president of the International Commission of Catholic Editors. Rémont, p. 279.

34 Merklen, La Croix (January 20, 1939). Rémont, p. 211.

35 Manevy, p. 181.
The greatest dailies managed to keep between them half the newspaper circulation in France. So successful were these papers that the communists brought out *Ce Soir* during the course of the Spanish struggle, "which borrowed from *Paris-Soir* the form of the illustrated journal. While the editing board of *l'Humanité* was not composed of any but members of the Communist party, as that of *Populaire* was of none except adherents of the Socialist party, the editors of *Ce Soir* comprised journalists from all groups of the Left. . . . However, in the command posts, the Communists were represented by sure men, Louis Aragon and Jean-Richard Bloch. . . . From its birth *Ce Soir* campaigned against nonintervention and for the shipment of war goods to the Republicans, along with *l'Humanité* under the slogan, *Planes for Spain.*36 The circulation of the new daily rose rapidly to half a million.

The Major dailies took an active interest in the progress of the war. Already on July 26, 1936 Jules Souerwein, foreign editor of *Paris-Soir* was writing: "At least four countries are already taking active interest in the battle--France, which is supporting the Madrid government, and Britain, Germany and Italy, each of which is giving discreet but nevertheless active assistance to one group or another among the insurgents. If this civil war lasts several more weeks it is to be feared that a serious quarrel will come out of it, involving these four countries, and Russia might also play a dominant role."37

---

36Ibid., p. 182. Louis Aragon was an avant-garde writer attracted to Communism. *Ce Soir* was suppressed along with *l'Humanité* by the Dadalier government after the signing of the German-Russian pact, August, 1939.

Anderson

Souerwein simply assumed that France was going to aid the Republic, but this, like his assumption that "a few more weeks" might be the duration of the war, proved to be wrong. There was however ample reason to believe that France would come to the aid of Madrid. During that week ... the French press was full of the news that the Spanish government was appealing for help to France. Two Spanish air force officers who had arrived on July 21, together with [Spanish Prime Minister] Giral's telegram had given them all the necessary clues ... only two or three Left-wing papers supported a policy of intervention. But these few Left-wing papers were quite vocal. Simone de Beauvoir, whose sympathies were with the Left recalls; "The Left-wing press gave it so wide a coverage that it might have been a French affair—and in effect it was: at all costs we had to prevent yet another Fascist state from establishing itself on our borders. Such a thing would never come to pass, of that we were convinced: nobody in our camp had the least doubt that the Republicans would win ...".

The Left attempted to rally national opinion to its side. Léon Jouhaux, secretary general of the CGT declared in Le Peuple on August 11: "The French people, with the working class of the nation, cannot be neutral in the drama which is actually being played in Spain." Marcel Déat was meanwhile warning in L'Europe Nouvelle: "If France appeared as the champion of another

38 Van Der Esch, p. 52.

39 Simone de Beauvoir, The Prime of Life (La Force de l'Age), translated by Peter Green (Cleveland and New York, 1962), pp. 221-222.

totalitarian system, there would be danger of war immediately. Europe is overanxious to organize herself into two camps. When Sovietism meets Hitlerism, there is a metaphysical shock which foreshadows the physical shock. . . If France seems to be the ally of fascism, half the people at least will not march. If France becomes the soldier of Stalin, the other half will not want to have anything to do with it."41

There indeed was the problem which faced the Popular Front government in France. The Left was of two minds on the question of direct aid. "The Communists . . . with their Planes for Spain, emphasized the military necessities of effective intervention against the Spanish allies of Germany and Italian Fascism." But "Andre Delmas of the teachers federation [of the CGT] opposed the communist slogan." Writing in La Voix du peuple he "warned that military intervention would lead to general war and therefore should not be advocated by the union movement."42 In Vendredi the editor Guéhenno declared himself unwilling "to sacrifice Peace for Revolution."43 And in l'Humanité itself, M. de Bourchère, president of the International Socialist Workers cautioned that: "It is necessary meanwhile to save the peace while saving

41Marcel Deat, l'Europe Nouvelle (July 25, 1936), in Micaud, p. 116. The journal was a weekly representing many political viewpoints, generally Leftist. Fabre-Luce was editor till 1936, then "Pertinax" (Andre Geraud). Deat was "a prominent member of the Popular Front government."


43Beauvoir, p. 221. This was in August, 1936, but after the fall of Bilbao he declared, "We must accept the possibility of war in order to preserve the peace," p. 240.
the Spanish Republic." 44

With such divided councils, it is not surprising that Léon Blum found himself in a very difficult position. The British had warned him against aid to the Republic and he was under very strong pressure from the Radical Party, the least "radical" party in the popular front alliance, to take no steps which might risk war. The Premier himself was very much a member of the "intelligentsia"; the son of a wealthy merchant he had been an important poet and serious writer as well as a journalist and politician. He was, however, in this period, not his own man, but the subject of external pressures which tore his regime this way and that and finally brought it crashing down like a tree in a windstorm.

"On July 26 the Frente popular appealed confidently to the Front Populaire for supplies of arms. . . . To the consternation of all his followers except the Radicals, Premier Blum returned a downright refusal. . . . The Prime Minister's own newspaper turned on him: each morning Le Populaire vied with l'HUMANITÉ in headlines screaming for intervention." 45 This attack by Le Populaire came in spite of the fact that Blum himself was the titular editor of the paper. It seems unlikely, especially as the Premier was in control of the financial backing of the paper, that it was manifestly disregarding his wishes. A writer hostile to Blum commented at the time: "Le Populaire . . . wrote . . . that the Spanish Civil War was but an incident

---

44 Lombard, p. 126.

in the international struggle. Thus in his own journal the President of the Council did not conceal his intentions to embark the nation upon the revolutionary crusade."\(^{46}\) Or to put it a little differently, *Le Populaire* represented the policy the government wished to follow rather than the official one it was forced to follow.

The trump card in the hands of the interventionist press was fear on the part of the populace that Hitler would succeed in making Spain what we would call, in the journalistic jargon of our day, a "satellite state." The CGT's *L'Oeuvre* continually exaggerated the extent of German influence. One article said that: "Many documents seen by certain governments establish the absolute fact that the Germans have arrived in Spanish Morocco to take a practical hand in the finances, in the administration of the Riff mines, and in the police as well by the installation of numerous functionaries and office holders. The moment is believed to be not far distant when Germany will forment a revolt of leading Moroccans against Franco. Under the pretext of defending the authority of the latter, German troops will be able to land in Spanish Morocco in an organized force and occupy not only the coast but also the principle points in the interior of the country."\(^{47}\)

*Paris-Soir* maintained as its correspondent to the Madrid government in the early weeks of the war, the Left-wing journalist Louis Delaprée, whose sensitive reports appearing in France's largest newspaper influenced French opinion toward the side of the Republic. He also wrote a book titled, iron-

---

\(^{46}\) Lombard, p. 113.

\(^{47}\) Ibid., pp. 143-144.
ally as it turned out, Mort en Espagne. In November of 1936 he described the siege of Madrid, largely in terms of the human suffering involved. "Mothers go back towards the barrio that burns, towards the collapsed house to look for a child who now, though they do not know it, is no more than a little heap of ashes; children mad with terror, call a gamma who has just been carbonized under the ruins."

He was adamant in his denunciations of these tactics on the part of the Rebels. The world had not yet become hardened to the cries of the non-combatant victims of air-raids and his brilliant reporting had considerable shock effect. In a more sober mood he proposed the following propositions:

1. The Bombardment has already killed about 2,000 non-combatants.
2. There was no military object within the perimeter that suffered the most.
3. Nobody—I say nobody—has seen the famous tracts thrown—it appears—by the rebel aircraft to warn the population that they should take refuge in the Salamanca borough.
4. This quarter already occupied cannot receive now more than twenty thousand persons. Now, there are a million human beings in Madrid.
5. The caves and underground refuges offering a minimum of security can only hold about one hundred thousand persons. Now, there are a million human beings in Madrid.

Death therefore has an easy prey. Christ said: Forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing. I think that after the massacre of innocents in Madrid, we must say: Do not forgive them, for they know what they are doing.

49 I. id., p. 137.
It was an understandable, if un-theological attitude. Robert Payne, who was with him in Madrid, says that Delapréé became angry by the way his dispatches were cut at Paris-Soir (and the statement of Manevy, who was the editor, that they were trying to give equal space to both sides throws an interesting light on this). "You have made me work for the wastepaper basket," he wrote his editor. "Thanks. I shall send you nothing more." Flying back to Paris on December 11, he was shot down over Guadalajara.\footnote{Ibid., p. 143.}
CHAPTER VII
THE ISOLATED INTELLECTUALS: SAINT-EXUPÉRY, GIDE, SARTRE

The man whom Paris-Soir sent to Spain to replace the ill-fated Louis Delaprée was one of France's most celebrated writers, the novelist and philosopher, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. This man was noted for the adventurous life he had led in various parts of the globe, for, like Malraux, he was as much a professional adventurer as a writer. He had been born in 1900. His father dying when he was very young, he spent his childhood on a country estate near Toulon, the seat of his mother's aristocratic, but impoverished family. As a youth he was sent to study at Fribourg, Switzerland under the Marist fathers, and, as in the case of many other Frenchmen of his generation, a good Catholic education was followed by a loss of faith.

He had ambitions to be a naval officer, but failed his entrance examination and lost his midshipman's appointment. Instead he entered the Air Force and became an officer pilot in 1922. Released from active duty in 1923, he spent three years leading a bohemian existence in Paris, where he met André Malraux and André Gide.¹ Gide was evidently very impressed with the

young man and later wrote the preface to his second novel. An airline pilot, first in Spain and then in Latin America from 1926 to 1931 when he married and returned to France, Saint-Exupéry was also in the process of developing one of the most lucid and brilliant literary styles in modern French literature. His first novel, Courrier Sud came out in 1928 and was followed shortly by the splendid Vol de Nuit (1931). Always improvident, and married to a tempestuous and equally improvident Latin American, Saint-Exupéry was perpetually in debt. Because of his many crashes, Air-France refused to take him back as a pilot, but allowed him to return as a publicity agent in 1934. Finally, in 1935, he accepted a job from Paris-Soir covering the May Day celebration in Moscow. "These were the years when he took the greatest interest in politics," and it was also the time when, more specifically, he "was said to be dabbling in communism. For one thing, Gide's patronage of the young writer led to the rumor, as did his 'left-intellectual' looks and behavior, the remarks he dropped, . . . But Saint-Exupéry never belonged to any political party. Nor was he a Marxist."3

Whatever his views on communism, he did a straightforward job of reporting the routine May Day festivities, with only an occasional lyric passage, as when he described a Moscow street dance. It is safe to conclude that his trip "seems to have made hardly any impression."4


3Migeo, pp. 177-178.

4Rumbold and Stewart, p. 145.
His initial success as a reporter led to an appointment from the Left-leaning *l'Intransigeant* to cover the Republican side of the Spanish Civil War. In August, 1936, he flew over the border in his own plane, an incident which later gave rise to reports that he had acted as a ferry pilot for the Republicans.

Like Simone Weil, he found his first views of the embattled nation surprisingly peaceful. Flying over Barcelona he noted: "Even here I could see nothing out of the way, unless it was that the avenues were deserted." Then he noticed a puff of smoke. "Was that one of the signs I was seeking? Was this a scrap of evidence of that nearly soundless anger whose all-destroying wrath was so hard to measure? A whole civilization was contained in that faint golden puff so lightly dispersed by a breath of wind." Even on the ground the city presented a peaceful exterior. Then, on his first evening in town as he was sitting in a sidewalk cafe four men armed with guns seized the man sitting at the next table and dragged him off. "The man left his half-emptied glass, the last glass of his life, and started down the road. Surrounded by the squad, his hands stuck up like the hands of a man going down for the last time. 'Fascist!' A woman behind me said it with contempt." For Saint-Exupéry no simple heroic view of the conflict, such as that of Malraux was possible. Saint-Exupéry had a deep-seated belief in the sacredness of the human spirit which kept him from committing himself to any ide-

---


6 Rumbold and Stewart, p. 145.
ology. He "sought a fusion of these spiritual impulses with the logical and scientific discoveries of the modern world," as one of his biographers puts it. "This fusion he could not find in any ideology... and so, unlike such men as Malraux and Orwell, he refused to commit himself to any of them." This lack of commitment made him an ideal observer of the events in Spain, an observer capable of assessing the spiritual tragedy which lay behind the material holocaust of the war.

He returned to France after his stint for l'Intransigeant, and then: "In the spring of 1937, Saint-Ex [sic] was sent to Spain as a reporter for the Paris-Soir to replace their special correspondent who had been shot down in an aircraft a month before. Unlike his visit to Russia, these few months of the Spanish Civil War seem to have made a very deep and lasting impression on his mind, for he refers to them at length in two of his works, Wind, Sand and Stars [Terre des Hommes], and much later in Letter to a Hostage. Although Saint-Ex seems to have been attached as a war correspondent to the Republican forces, his attitude on the whole is one of great impartiality for he finds equal sincerity, courage, and cruelty on both sides." For him, as for so many perceptive Frenchmen, the conflict in Spain seemed to mirror the forces which were tearing France apart: the same clericalism and anticlericalism, the same disregard for parliamentarianism and trust in absolute solution, all this is to be found on both sides of the Pyrenees. "As he

7 Ibid., p. 144.
was later to be heartsick at the division of Frenchmen into warring camps, so here in Spain he is impressed above all by the misfortunes and sufferings of individual men and women on both sides, wanting fundamentally the same good, but caught up despite themselves in bloody fratricide.\textsuperscript{9}

This time, instead of flying, he travelled by car from Valence. Writing to a friend he declared, "... I am not interested in seeing towns even bombed ones or dining in hotels and sleeping each night in a bed, nor in interviewing generals. What I want is to be in the midst of the men who are risking their lives, that is to say, men brought face to face with all the urgent and vital problems."\textsuperscript{10} Not for him the doctrinal subtleties of Malraux who managed to reconcile everything to the Marxist faith, nor the violent indignation of Bernanos; he sought to understand the conflict in the hearts of individuals and through it the conflict in the heart of two nations, Spain and France.

"On his experiences during this second visit he wrote six long articles in Paris-Soir, three at once and three a year later. This second group of articles (published 2nd, 3rd, 4th October, 1938) is much more interesting since in them he leavens the narrative with reflective and imaginative writing."\textsuperscript{11} He incorporated most of the material in these articles into Terre des Hommes which he was writing during the same period. "Through Saint-Exupéry’s reports for l’Intransigeant and Paris-Soir there runs a note of

\textsuperscript{9}Ibid., p. 85.
\textsuperscript{10}Rumbold and Stewart, p. 148.
\textsuperscript{11}Ibid.
fervent hope like that which had touched so many others in Spain: "Perhaps mankind is giving birth to something here: perhaps something is to be born of this chaos and disruption."  

But to be born where? He himself admits, "There was not much to choose between Barcelona and its enemy, Saragossa: both were composed of the same swarm of communists, anarchists, and fascists. The very men who collected on the same side were perhaps more different from one another than from their enemies. In civil war the enemy is inward; one as good as fights against one's self." The problem was not one of ideology, for to Saint-Exupéry all ideology was either good or bad depending on whether it made man more or less human. The problem was that: "Men no longer respect each other." As he wrote in one of his Paris-Soir articles: "Hard hearted sheriff's officers, they throw on the rubbish heap furnishing, without realizing that they are abolishing the domaine. You have committees which assume the right to purge, in the name of criteria which, if they change two or three times, leave behind them nothing but corpses. And you have a general leading an army of Moroccans, who condemns whole populations to death with a clear conscience, like a prophet putting down a schism. In Spain there are crowds of people moving, but the individual, that universe, imprisoned in the depths of the mine, calls in vain for help."

Like Louis Delapréé before him, Saint-Exupéry visited the Madrid front.

---

14 Migeo, p. 182.
His reactions were much the same. Looking at Madrid at night he compared it to a ship at sea. "Madrid, loaded with emigrants, is ferrying them from one shore to the other of life. It has a generation on board. Slowly it navigates through the centuries. . . . A vessel loaded with humanity is being torpedoed. The purpose of the enemy is to sink Madrid as if she were a ship."15 In Madrid he witnessed tragic scenes comparable to those Delapréée had so insistently reported, a young girl being smashed to bits as she walked down the street with her fiancée who "had knelt down, still uncomprehending, had nodded his head slowly, as if saying to himself, 'something very strange has happened.'"16

In such an atmosphere the objective neutrality of the reporter was bound to slip. "I do not care a curse for the rules of war and the law of reprisal." He wrote: "As for the military advantage of such a bombardment, I simply cannot grasp it. I have seen housewives disemboweled, children mutilated. . . . Each shell that fell upon Madrid fortified something in the town. It persuaded the hesitant neutral to go for the defenders. A dead child weighs heavily in the balance when it is one's own. It was clear to me that the bombardment did not disperse--it unified."17

It is not surprising then that Saint-Exupéry, in a letter from Valencia, confesses to certain partialities. "As it happens, there are certain instances where spiritual concepts enter into conflict with sentiment. Other-

16Ibid., pp. 264-265.
17Ibid., pp. 265-266.
wise, I would have been an anarchist. I have found among the anarchists of Barcelona, during the Civil War in Spain, the same comradeship that prevailed among the aeropostale crews. There was the same cooperation, the same willingness to take risks, and the men were of the same type." But he could not, despite his sentimental attachment, join them, for on the intellectual level he could not commit himself to their ideals. Basically what he honored in them were the same qualities which Malraux and Simone Weil had noted: he honored the anarchist "who is willing to risk his life for what he believes and places the sharing of bread with comrades above all pleasures and possessions."\(^\text{18}\)

There are two incidents which best sum up Saint-Exupéry's reaction to the war. One concerned the night he blundered into a secret unloading of arms in Barcelona, was captured by militiamen who spoke no Spanish, but only Catalan, and for lack of communication, he came near to being shot. But as he was sitting with his captors he asked one of them for a cigarette. There was an exchange of smiles, and suddenly they realized that they were not going to shoot him after all. "... The chap who smiled at me and who, a second before was only a function, a tool, a sort of monstrous insect, there he was! revealed a little awkward, almost timid, of a marvelous timidity. Not that he was any less brutal than the other, this new terrorist!--but the appearance of the man in him lighted up so well the part of him which was vulnerable. We put on great airs, we men, but we know in the secret of our

\(^{18}\text{Migeo, p. 178.}\)
hearts, hesitation, doubt, sorrow."

The other incident concerns the battlefield. A Republican soldier shouts across to the other trenches, "Antonio! What are you fighting for?" The answer comes back: "Spain. . . . You?" And the militiaman answers: "The bread of our brothers." Saint-Exupéry comments: "Their words were not the same, but their truths were identical. Why has this high communion never yet prevented men from dying in battle against each other?"

Perhaps he succeeded in answering his own question in a later work, his Lettre à un Otage, addressed to one behind the German lines in France. "Respect for man! Respect for man! That is the touch-stone. When the Nazi respects exclusively that which resembles him, he respects nothing of me. He refuses the creative contradictions, destroys all hope of assent and sets up for a thousand years, in place of man, a robot of limitations."

When the Second World War broke out, Saint-Exupéry was recalled to the airforce and flew a number of extremely dangerous missions before the fall of France. Demobilized, he fled to the United States in December, 1940. There he refused to join either the Gaullist or anti-Gaullist factions, but like Jacques Maritain and Henri de Kerillis, his fellow exiles, he remained isolated and uncommitted politically. "De Gaulle," he wrote, "ceased to be a soldier and became a political leader. I should have followed him with joy

21Saint-Exupéry, Lettre, p. 60.
against the Germans. I could not follow him against Frenchmen."\(^{22}\) In exile he wrote what was to become his most famous work, *The Little Prince*, a children's story for adults. Later, he desired to get back into the conflict, but his political views kept him out of Free-French service. "His refusal, admittedly unjustified, to join the Gaullists was never forgiven, and it caused him many difficulties later on in Algiers."\(^{23}\) He became a reconnaissance pilot for the Americans, and though overage insisted on continuing to fly. On what was scheduled to be his last mission, he was shot down and killed over Southern France. That arch-gossipmonger, Henri de Kerillis wrote: "the mysterious death of . . . Saint-Exupéry, an implacable adversary of DeGaulle, was immediately blamed on the DeGaullist Cagoulards. Some reports say that he was shot down on a mission by the plane sent along to protect him. According to others, a time bomb was set in his plane which exploded while he was in the air."\(^ {24}\) There appears to be no truth in the report.

The death of Saint-Exupéry was a great loss to French letters, and none could have felt it more than his old friend André Gide. Gide, like Saint-Exupéry, had been keenly interested in the progress of the Spanish Civil War. As the acknowledged master of all living French writers, Gide was in a position to have exerted strong influence upon the French mind, but, as it happened, an event that took place just before the war broke out had left him isolated and hesitant. This event was his trip to Russia.

\(^{22}\)Maxwell Smith, p. 116.

\(^{23}\)Rumbold and Stewart, p. 176.

André Gide, born in the period of Louis Napoleon (1869) and living till 1951, encompassed a great deal of history. Corrupted as a young man by Oscar Wilde he lived beyond the death of many writers, such as Saint-Exupéry, whose whole career spanned less than half of Gide's life. The son of a professor of law, Gide had taken a keen interest in the Dreyfus case and been one of the captain's leading supporters. Oddly enough, during the First World War, Gide had given his political allegiance to the Action Française movement, although he himself was a Protestant and anything but a nationalist. "Born in Paris, of an Uzès father and a Norman mother--where, M. Barrès, will you have me become rooted?" he once exclaimed. 25 "When Gide at last gave his nominal adherence to the Action Française he was by no means a royalist but felt that Maurras' group represented the only unifying force in the nation and the only bulwark against socialism." 26 He resigned from the organization in 1921 and quickly moved across the political spectrum till he shone bright red.

As time went on he became more deeply involved in liberal politics. A trip to French Africa resulted in the publication of an exposé of conditions in Equatorial Africa in 1927 and "his accusations were taken up by Léon Blum in Le Populaire." 27 Still more celebrated was the journey that Gide, by this time a "communist" but not a party member, made to Russia in the summer of 1936. It resulted in the publication of two slim books: Retour de l'U.R.S.S. and Retouches à mon Retour de l'U.R.S.S. Gide had envisioned himself as a

26 Ibid., p. 23.
27 Ibid., p. 25.
new Tocqueville going to a new democracy, as his frequent quotations from
the earlier writer show, and he tried to be as objective about the Soviet
system as he could be. He was astonished at the amount of control which the
Soviet state retained over its people. Could this nation of sheep be the
same people who made the Revolution? he wondered, and was forced to answer:
no, these are the ones for whom the Revolution was made.

The publication of his views brought a storm of criticism from the
orthodox Communists, for while he had found much to praise, he had found much
also to criticize. These denunciations of Gide brought about a break in his
relations with the rest of the intelligentsia of the Left just when the Spanish
Civil War was in full swing. The war had broken out while the Russian trip
was still in progress. One of Gide's companions on the trip was a Spaniard
and Gide recalls that he "... was obviously in a great state of distress
about the events in Spain, and his anxiety showed itself by the very fact that
he could not endure it to be doubted, even for a moment, that the Government
side could triumph." 28

Gide and his travelling companions found it particularly distressing

---

28 André Gide, *Afterthoughts on the U.S.S.R.* (Retouches à mon Retour de l'U.R.S.S.), translated by Dorothy Bussy (New York, 1938), p. 84. His books on Russia gave some imperceptive people the idea that he was denouncing the Revolution: One reviewer stated: "His disillusion has been grand, so grand that it has proved the need for different motivation and the need to make a break. In this the book is just, but cruel. We would almost say: unjust in its rigor. Is it the fault of Scythia if the ultra-civilized mixes himself up with her, idealizing her and is fooled by this fiction?" François Herbette, "M. André Gide et l'URSS," originally published in *Bulletin Quotidien de la Société d'Études et d'Informations économiques*, and reprinted in Herbette's *L'Expérience marxiste en France, 1936-1938: témoignage d'un cobaye conscient* (Paris, 1959), p. 144.
that they could get no news on the events in Spain. "In a certain oil-refining factory . . . we went up to the Mural Gazette under the heading Red Help, where as a rule foreign news is to be found, we were surprised not to see any allusion to Spain, news from which had been giving us cause for anxiety for some days past. We did not hide our surprise or our disappointment. Slight embarrassment ensued. We were thanked for our remarks; they would, we were told, certainly be taken into consideration." Later on, at a banquet, when one of the party, "proposed to empty a glass to the triumph of the Spanish Red front," this "was warmly applauded, although with a certain amount of embarrassment, it seemed to us . . . ." The fact of the matter was, as Gide pointed out: "With regard to the disturbances and the struggle in Spain, opinion, public and private, was awaiting the leadership of Pravda, which had not yet declared itself." This was another example then of the sheep-like Russian mentality. Nevertheless, Russia did form an opinion on the events in Spain, and the concluding remark in Return de l'U.R.S.S. praises her for it. "The help that the Soviet Union is giving to Spain shows us what fine capabilities of recovery it still possess. The Soviet Union has not yet finished instructing and astonishing us." Unfortunately, the Soviets, not as used to criticism as Tocqueville's Americans,

30 Ibid., pp. 43-44.
31 Ibid., p. 44.
32 Ibid., p. 62.
were astonished at Gide's whole attitude. His sympathy for the Left became
an increasing source of embarrassment to the Reds. "Unconcerned with party
discipline, he spoke and wrote in defense of a number of individuals mistreated
for political reasons, whether by the Nazis as in the case of Dimitrov or
Thaelmann, by the Spanish or Greek government, or even by the Soviet oligarchy.

As late as December, 1936, a month after the publication of his Retour
de l'U.R.S.S., he signed a petition against the policy of nonintervention in
the Spanish Civil War, and explained his action in exalted terms.\textsuperscript{33} This
petition was published in \textit{Commune} for December, 1936 and the defense was pub-
lished as an article in Jean Guehenne's \textit{Vendredi}: "Il Va De Soi."

"The great proletarian cause unites the peoples," Gide's \textit{Vendredi}
statement declares. "Nationism divides them. Oh! I have no doubt that the
army of Franco also has some 'Volunteers,' some martial young men coming
from elsewhere, ready to take part in a massacre there. For what ideal, great
gods?"\textsuperscript{34} Like most people, he could not credit the sincerity of those on the
other side of the firing line, nor could he see that the idea of "class
struggle" might be equally divisive.

"The Spanish people have declared themselves," he went on to say. "It
is by the way of suffrage and pacifically that they have obtained their goal,
so that legally the people have the power. For the first time, when I read
in the papers, I had to make an effort to remember it. 'Ah yes!' when they

\textsuperscript{33}Georges I. Brachfeld, \textit{André Gide and the Communist Temptation} (Paris, 1959), p. 126.

say "the government," this time it is our own kind." But Franco came along. He did not have a majority, he sought to obtain one by suppressing those greater numbers and massacring Spaniards with Moors and this in the name of tradition, of religion, of culture and of honor."

Gide, remained in contact with such people as André Malraux, who made a point of visiting him on one of his trips back from the Spanish fighting. Malraux, Gide recalled, seemed extremely nervous. "He spoke with such extraordinary volubility that I had a hard time following him. He painted their situation for me, which was in his estimate desperate if the forces of the enemy are not diverted. His hope is in a regrouping of the Governmentals: at present it can still be made. His intention on his return is to organize the attack on Oviedo."

In May, 1937 occurred the tragic fratricidal struggle between the various Republican factions in Barcelona. The defeated anarchist leaders and their fate became a celebrated cause for liberal writers outside of Spain. The Republic lost some of its attraction as it demonstrated that the Left too was capable of persecution of political dissenters. Along with François Mauriac, Gide made a protest against the extra-legal procedures of the Republic. This called down on his head the wrath of Ilya Ehrenbourg, writing in Pravda, who called Gide "a new ally of Moroccans and Black Shirts." Despite his re-

---


37 Gide, Littérature, p. 197.
pudiation of much that the Russian state now stood for, Gide was profoundly wounded by this attack from the pen of a fellow writer.

Writing in Gaston Bergery's La Flèche, Gide defended his protest. "Ehrenbourg is astonished and indignant not to see me protest against the denial of justice, the abuses and cruelty committed by 'the Moroccans' and in general by those in the camp of Franco on the Republicans. It is true: however profound and unhappy be my indignation, all remonstrance to Franco seems vain to me as he is a declared enemy. Injustice, when it is on our own side, I must affirm causes me pain. My attachment to the anti-fascist cause is too great for me to support without pain all which is able to tarnish it in my eyes." Gide refers several times in his correspondence to Ehrenbourg's denunciation which evidently had hurt him deeply. It is odd to note that his reason for denouncing the Republic rather than Franco is the same one that Mauriac gave for denouncing Franco rather than the Republic: "our side should not behave that way," though, of course, Mauriac also signed the petition against the treatment of the anarchist leaders.

Manifestos and petitions flew thick and fast in those days, and in December, 1937, Gide was asked by a friend to countersign a petition denouncing the Spanish Republic which had appeared in Occident on the tenth of the month over the signatures of such writers as Paul Claudel, Léon Daudet, Henri Massis and Henri de Kerillis. Gide felt it necessary to reply in an open letter. "You ask me today to countersign a manifesto to Spanish Intellectuals which appeared in Occident and would, you say, be proud to see my
name among the illustrious first signers. Not I." Gide reaffirmed then his conviction that whatever the crimes of the Republic it was infinitely to be preferred to Franco. Evidently his correspondent had invoked the traditions of France, especially its aid to the United States in its revolution as an excuse for aiding Franco. To this Gide counters: "How, and with what extraordinary lack of conscience, dare you invoke the intervention of France, and its aid to the nascent United States? It is we, the defenders of the Spanish Republic, to whom that glorious 'tradition' pertains, and if this appears as obvious to you as to all Frenchmen, how dare you seek to apply it to your thesis."40

Gide never abandoned his support of the Spanish Republic and when, "after the victory of Franco a great number of Spanish Republicans fled to France and were put in concentration camps, André Gide was not only generous, but a very active member of the Comité d'Aid aux Intellectuels Espagnols." Gide recognized in the defeat of the Spanish Republic the defeat of the democratic ideals of the West. He saw that it opened the way for a greater, international war. "This war had now become unavoidable due to the inept foreign policies of the Western Democracies, culminating in the farce of nonintervention in Spain and the abdications of Munich and Prague. In 1937 André Gide noted with disabused perspicacity: "Nous entrons dans une ère nouvelle: celle

---

39Gide, La Flèche, December 25, 1937, Littérature, p. 211.
40Ibid., p. 112.
41Littérature, p. 201.
de la confusion."\(^{42}\) Gide, old as he was, lived well into that era, long enough indeed to see the fall of Hitler and long enough to denounce, at the war's end, Charles Maurras, of whose Action Française he had once been a member.

If, at the time of the Spanish Civil War, André Gide was drifting away from Communism, many of the younger writers were just moving toward the Communist position. One of the more important of them was Jean-Paul Sartre, who in many ways was to be the André Gide of the new generation.

Sartre was born in Paris in 1905 and had in common with both Saint-Exupéry and Gide that he lost his father at an early age. He lived with his maternal grandfather, professor Schweitzer, a cousin of Albert Schweitzer to whom Sartre is related. From a mixed Catholic and Protestant background, he was evidently never very religious as a young man. In 1924 he became a student at the École Normale Supérieure and there met Simone de Beauvoir (b. 1908) who later became a novelist of stature in her own right as well as Sartre's Boswell and official mistress. Sartre's first publications were in the field of philosophy rather than literature, beginning with \(1\)'Imagination (1936) a study based on Husserl and Heidegger. His first novel, \(La Nausée\) came out two years later. In both these works he laid the foundation of the "Existentialist" school whose principles Sartre was the first to give conscious formulation.\(^{43}\) There was little political consciousness in his early work. "Sartre's anti-bourgeois opinions in his early manhood were moral rather than political; in the election of 1935, when the Popular Front Gov-

\(^{42}\) Brachfeld, pp. 122-123, quote is from \(Journal\), p. 1261.

\(^{43}\) Maurice Cranston, \(Jean-Paul Sartre\) (New York, 1962), pp. 1-5.
ernment was returned, he did not even vote; he was then thirty. He was of the
Left, but optimistic enough about the passing of the old order and the coming
victory of socialism, to leave day-to-day politics alone.\textsuperscript{44}

In the summer of 1936 Simone de Beauvoir and Sartre were busy with
their literary, philosophical and amatory affairs (they were engaged in what
might be described as a five-sided triangle) and evidently paid little atten-
tion to the tensions building up South of the frontier. And then came the
Spanish Civil War. "For the first time in our lives," records Simone, "be-
cause the fate of Spain concerned us so deeply, indignation \textit{per se} was no
longer a sufficient outlet for us: our political impotence, far from furnish-
ing us with an alibi, left us feeling hopeless and desolate. And it was
absolute: we were mere isolated nobodies. Nothing we could say or do in
favor of intervention would carry the very slightest weight. There was no
question of our going off to Spain ourselves; nothing in our previous back-
ground inclined us to such headstrong action. . . . Simone Weil had crossed
the frontier determined to serve with the infantry but when she asked for a
gun they put her in the kitchens. . . ."\textsuperscript{45} This last is not quite accurate
as we have seen, but evidently Simone de Beauvoir feared that a similar dis-
illusioning experience might be hers.

Nevertheless they were extremely interested in the progress of the
fighting. At first it appeared that Franco would win easily:

\textsuperscript{44}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{45}Simone de Beauvoir, \textit{The Prime of Life (La Force de l'Age)}, trans-
But the people had rallied to the defense of the Republic with immense enthusiasm. The accounts we read in the papers and the information that Fernando [a Spanish friend of theirs] and his friends passed on fired our imagination. . . . No country was nearer our hearts than Spain; and Fernando was one of our closest friends. We had shared in the rejoicings over the first year of the Republic, in sunny Madrid; we had mingled with the delirious crowds in Seville, after Sanjurjo's flight, 1934, when they set the aristocratic clubs on fire and the firemen failed to extinguish the flames. We had seen for ourselves the bloated insolence of the priesthood and the bourgeoisie and the wretched poverty of the peasants, and had prayed that the Republic might speedily fulfill all its promises."

For them there was no hesitation over the subtleties of right and wrong which perplexed Saint-Exupéry. They saw with the clarity of metaphysicians into the essence of the matter, or at least, so they thought.

"But there was another, angrier side to our enthusiasm," records Simone de Beauvoir. "To insure a quick victory France should have at once flown to the succor of the Spanish people, and sent them artillery, machine guns, aircraft, and rifles of which they were so desperately short. . . . Blum's neutralism was all the more disgusting in that Hitler and Mussolini were openly supplying the rebels with both men and material. . . . We had great admiration for Malraux and his squadron, who had volunteered for service with the Republic; but how could they possibly face up to the Nazi Air Force singlehanded?"

The helplessness and isolation which they felt was underscored by the incident of a young German friend of theirs who "wanted to shake himself free

---

46 Ibid., p. 220.
47 Ibid., p. 221.
from the stagnating depression. . . . He asked Sartre whether Nizan [the foreign affairs editor Louis Aragon's Ce Soir] might not be able to help him get through illegally. Sartre pondered the request with some anxiety: should he agree to Bost's request or not? . . . In the end he mentioned the matter to Nizan, and the latter put Bost in touch with Malraux, who explained that what the Republic needed was trained men, specialists, and military equipment, not raw recruits.48

In his writing, Sartre had always inclined to the Left. "A study of Sartre's literary work is a good introduction to his more openly political activity," remarks critic Philip Thody. "In his novels, plays and essays, sympathy is always given, first of all, either to those who are excluded from bourgeois society or those who wish to overthrow it."49 The Spanish Civil War inspired him to write a short story called *The Wall* which he set in Spain. This story became one of his most celebrated works and part of the existentialist canon. It concerns some captured loyalists awaiting execution by the rebel forces. In describing their situation, Sartre does not overlook the possibility of making a little propaganda for the Republican cause. "You know what they do in Saragossa?" one of the characters asks. "They lay the men down on the road and run over them with trucks. A Moroccan deserter told us that. They said it was to save ammunition. . . . Then there's officers walking along the road . . . supervising it all. They stick their hands in their pockets and smoke cigarettes. You think they finish off the

48Ibid., p. 232.
guys? Hell no. They let them scream. Sometimes for an hour. The Moroccan said he damned near puked the first time."\(^{50}\)

For Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir as for Gide, the period of the Spanish Civil War was a disillusioning one. They were properly impressed and shocked, first by the publication of Gide's *Retour* and then, almost simultaneously, by the second wave of Moscow purge trials. "We had never pictured the U.S.S.R. as a paradise, but we had never before seriously questioned the basis of the Socialist State either. It was galling to be driven to do so just when the policy of the Western democracies had aroused such antipathy in us. Was there no corner of the world left on which we could pin our hopes. Certainly Spain was no longer the Promised Land, but a field of battle; and the issue of that battle was becoming steadily more uncertain."\(^{51}\)

This dismay was sharpened in mid-1937 by the Barcelona fighting and the strange behavior of the Spanish government. "Their internal dissensions, especially the P.O.U.M. trial now taking place in Barcelona, sowed seeds of doubt in our hearts. Was it true that the Stalinists had 'assassinated the Revolution,' or should we believe that it was the Anarchists who played ball with Franco?"\(^{52}\) And then in March, 1938: "the Fascists broke through on the Eastern front . . . Resistance stiffened in Barcelona, but production was practically reduced to nothing by the bombing, and Catalonia . . . was in a


\(^{51}\)Beauvoir, pp. 230-231.

\(^{52}\)Ibid., p. 283.
Anderson

It was during Christmas season, 1938, records Simone de Beauvoir, that she and Sartre first read Malraux' *l'Espoir* "with an excitement that far outstripped any purely literary emotion." It was not as a work of art that it interested them, for: "As in his previous novels, Malraux' characters lacked human solidity, but this mattered little, since the action was far more important than its protagonists, and Malraux narrated it brilliantly. He stood very near to us both as regards his apocalyptic predilections and his resentment of the inherent contradiction between enthusiasm and discipline."  

The defeat of the Republic came, slowly, agonizingly for its supporters, but it came all the same. ". . . I remember," Simone tells us, "a discussion that took place between Colette Audry and Sartre. She had been so shaken by the Spanish disaster that politically speaking she no longer had any beliefs at all. 'Anything is preferable to war,' she said, to which Sartre replied: 'No, not anything, not Fascism for instance.'" Actually, the Spanish Civil War marks the start of Sartre's political consciousness. When

53 Ibid., p. 255.
54 Ibid., p. 257.
55 Ibid., p. 284.
the great European War broke out it found him prepared to give himself to
the Resistance without hesitation. During the bleak days of the Second World
War, he drew closer to the Communists and after the war emerged as the chief
literary spokesman of French Communism. But like Gide before him, he was an
independent spokesman, ready to criticize as well as defend when he thought
the Soviet Union in the wrong. "In company with François Mauriac he was al-
most the only leading French intellectual to attack both the Suez expedition
and the repression of the Hungarian revolt." 56 To Sartre as well could be
applied the words which Simone de Beauvoir spoke of herself: "there is no
doubt that the spring of 1939 marked a watershed in my life. I renounced my
individualistic, antihumanist way of life. I learned the value of solidar-
ity." 57 What various lessons did men and women draw from the Spanish Civil
War!

Forming a sort of spiritual link between the age of Gide and the age
of Sartre, is a less formidable writer of the Left, Louis Aragon. Born in
1897, he was of the generation of the tens that fought in the trenches. He
was primarily, all his life, an artist, a writer of the avant-garde. His name
is associated with the group of writers and painters known as the DADA artists,
who flourished in the period during and after the Great War. 'From Zurich,
'Dadaism' came to France with prophets like Tristan Tzara and André Breton
ready to upset the bourgeoisie. . . . Young poets, painters, exhibitionists,

56Thody, p. 195.

57Beauvoir, p. 285.
playboys joined the new movement. ... Some of the playboys were simply playboys, some, like Louis Aragon ... were, to use the symbol of another generation, 'waiting for Godot.' They, too, were to find him in Moscow."\(^{58}\)

There, in D. W. Brogan's picturesque language, one can see the typical metamorphosis of the poet of the war generation, the generation between Gide and Sartre: "after Tzara, Stalin."\(^{59}\)

But Louis Aragon was not simply another writer turned Marxist, for he was a poet and novelist of genuine talent, and a sincere humanitarian, genuinely pacifistic. "Many writers besides Malraux felt an emotional and humanitarian attraction for communism in the 1930's and in France Louis Aragon remained loyal to the party as man's only hope ... Aragon ... adopted the official Soviet watchword of Socialist realism in his poems, novels, and criticism. He used current political issues and overemphasized the scandalous side of French middle- and upper-class life as backdrops for his glorification of the working class. In this way he tried to expose what Marx called the defensive superstructure of bourgeois culture."\(^{60}\)

Aragon was closely associated with Thorez and the group around \textit{L'Humanité}, and he became, as noted above, the editor of \textit{Ce Soir}, the extreme Left daily designed to compete with \textit{Paris Soir}. As editor he followed the confusing shift of the Left from being the party of pacifism in the early thirties, to being the party of active patriotism after the start of the Spanish Civil


\(^{59}\)Ibid., p. 291.

War. "And the sparkling Louis Aragon," fumed Jacques Chastènet, "who formerly vilified the flag in verse and prose, wrote now in a tricolour refrain. An about face important in the history of the communist party: the antimilitarist of old, the partisans of peace, above all peace, those contemptuous of country had become bellicose, almost chauvinistic." Thus, in the chapter of the press, we noted that Ce Soir combined with the other Left journals, including Léon Blum's own paper, to advocate the patriotic course.

Aragon the man, however, was not one to put propaganda undigested into his poetry and novels the same way that Malraux did. Instead, "he translated this utopian myth into terms that were meaningful within the tradition of class antagonisms in his own country. What he did in literature the Communist party tried to do in propaganda." Perhaps his propaganda was more distilled and less direct because his form was often the historical novel. He wrote little, outside what is contained in his newspaper, on the war itself, but some of his statements in The Bells of Basle (Les Cloches de Bâle) which appeared the year the Civil War broke out, seem to echo sentiments expressed by other writers, and though he was writing about the coming of the Great War of 1914, it can easily be seen that he wrote with an eye on the future as well.

"Across the whole sky of Europe and far-away America dark clouds gather, charged with the electricity of wars. The people see them accumulate, but at the same time their shadows hide their source. . . . Figures are inscribed on blackboards. Little perforated ribbons unwind in automatic machines. War.

62 Tannenbaum, p. 104.
War is preparing. It is there. 'I call the living, I mourn the dead, and I shatter the lightening.' 63 And as Gide and Sartre and Aragon wrestled with the problems of class loyalty and conscience, the hand of Hitler reached for the lightening bolt like the hand of Thor.

CONCLUSION: THE TWO NATIONS

When I first began work on this topic I asked the opinions of some writers whose interests seemed to lie in similar fields. Maurice Duverger of the Foundation Nationale des Sciences Politiques thought that it could be a "very important study," but Stanley Payne, the author of Falange, cautioned me that while the topic suggested was "a respectable one" if I were really interested primarily in the Spanish Civil War: "there are about 137 topics of greater significance than the reaction of Parisian esthetes." He also cautioned that: "most of these big foreign intellectuals who brayed so loudly had little real understanding of anything going on in Spain. What they wrote about was largely the result of political and ideological problems at home, catalyzed by the Spanish conflagration." This caution is entirely justified. As was stated in the introduction, Frenchmen especially were all too ready to find parallels, some of them false parallels or at best but half true, between the French Third Republic and the Spanish Second Republic. But once this has been admitted, one is still left with the fact that, misunderstanding the phenomenon of the Spanish Civil War or not, these writers shaped the conscience of France at a crucial moment in her history, on the very eve of the worst ordeal that France has ever undergone. In the writings of these men and women certain themes are repeated again and again, themes
basic to the consciousness of our age.

Nor is it surprising to see that such basic themes should be there. The writer of intellect, the poet, or philosopher or historian has a role to play in the world, the "big foreign intellectual" has a task which he must fulfill. As Julien Benda points out in his excellent study, _The Betrayal of the Intellectuals (La Trahison des Clercs)_ it is when the intellectual fails in his critical role that he betrays society. It is when, because he takes no stand, or, more commonly in our age, when his stand is a partisan one based on emotional reflex or calculated self-interest, that the intellectual forfeits his right to comment, however inadequately, on history. The special fault of intellectuals in our age, and of many of those we have seen in this study, is that they no longer act as a brake on the emotions of others, but instead are swallowed up in the fanaticism of fascism or communism or some other creed. Of these Benda says: "First of all the 'clerks' have adopted political passions. No one will deny that throughout Europe today the immense majority of men of letters and artists, a considerable number of scholars, philosophers, and 'ministers' of the divine, share in the chorus of hatreds among races and political factions. Still less will it be denied that they adopt national passions."¹

To some extent at least, Maurras, Malraux, Claudel, and even Maritain, committing themselves to one cause or another without strict respect for nonutilitarian justice, were "treasonous clerics." Those who remained true

to their trust would be Simone Weil, Saint-Exupéry, and perhaps Bernanos and Gide, whose outlook was disinterested, and as Benda would say Utopian. It is of them that a tyrant of the Right or Left might say: "There are a few just men who prevent me from sleeping."²

But treasonous or not, all these "clerics" (in the special, medieval sense) performed the vital role of commentators on the historical drama, and pointed out the issues with clarity. One of these issues is the question of personal freedom in a revolutionary situation. "I don't countenance, . . . any conflict between all that revolutionary discipline stands for and those who are still blind to its necessity. Even the wildest dreams of absolute liberty, of power given to the worthiest and all the rest of it—all these things, as I see them, are what I'm here to implement."³ So speaks one of the characters in Malraux's L'Espoir. Another states that one of the things that worries him most is seeing how in every war each side adopts the characteristics of the enemy, whether they wish it or not.⁴

Simone Weil understood this problem well when she wrote that the atmosphere of the civil war suppresses the aspirations which one seeks to defend by means of civil war.⁵ And again: The man of the Left forgets that even on his own side liberty is suppressed far more drastically by the necessities of the civil war itself than it would be by the coming to power of a

²Ibid., p. 154.
³Malraux, Man's Hope, p. 116.
⁴Ibid., p. 506.
⁵Weil, " Reflexions pour deplaire," Écrits, p. 218.
party of his enemies on the extreme Right.\(^6\)

Saint-Exupéry put it most clearly of all when he pointed out that the very men who collected on the same side were perhaps more different from one another than from their enemies, for in a civil war, the enemy is inward.\(^7\) How far could one compromise personal freedom and liberty of conscience for a cause? This was an essential point. Perhaps André Malraux was willing to go farthest in that direction. "The communists," one of his characters explains, "want to get things done. Whereas . . . the anarchists, want to be something." But integrity is not enough, and he saw that it was necessary to turn their apocalyptic vision into an army or be exterminated.\(^8\)

Hand in hand with the question of personal freedom is the question of the means which a group or a nation can use in modern war to attain its ends; it is the question of massacres, either by bombs dropped from the air, or behind the lines by the bullets of a firing squad. "Without justification or excuse is the bombing of such open cities as Guernica,"\(^9\) states the manifesto For the Basque People. And Saint-Exupéry wrote from Madrid that he did not care a curse for the rules of war and the law of reprisal. "As for the military advantage of such a bombardment, I simply cannot grasp it. I have seen housewives disemboweled, children mutilated. . . . A dead child weighs


\(^7\)Saint-Exupéry, Wind, Sand and Stars, p. 274.

\(^8\)Malraux, Man's Hope, p. 212.

heavily in the balance when it is one's own."\textsuperscript{10}

"Do not forgive them, for they know what they are doing,"\textsuperscript{11} was the agonized demand of Louis Delapréé. So it was also with the massacres behind the lines. Georges Bernanos on Majorca professed to be unaware of what the Crusaders of the Peninsula did or did not do, but he knew that the Crusaders of Majorca put to death all the prisoners who were huddled in the Catalonian trenches.\textsuperscript{12} And on the other side, by some coincidence Simone Weil saw the reprisals which the Catalans took for their losses in that very raid. "In that little town, in which nothing at all had happened in July, they killed nine so-called fascists. Among the nine was a baker, aged about thirty, whose crime, so I was told, was that he had not joined the 'Somaten' militia."\textsuperscript{13}

The massacres of the religious were perhaps the worst of all. "Eleven bishops, seven thousand priests massacred and never an apostasy," exulted Paul Claudel. "The ports of heaven are not wide enough for all the host which tumbles in as best it can."\textsuperscript{14}

The question of the Church, especially for Catholics, was one of the dominant ones during the course of the Spanish Civil War. For Frenchmen it was an especially agonizing question because of the long history of the strug-

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{10}Saint-Exupéry, \textit{Wind, Sand and Stars}, pp. 265-266.
\item \textsuperscript{11}Delapréé, "Madrid," \textit{The Civil War in Spain} (ed. by Robert Payne), p. 143.
\item \textsuperscript{12}Bernanos, \textit{Diary}, p. 153.
\item \textsuperscript{13}Weil, "Letter," \textit{Essays}, p. 173.
\item \textsuperscript{14}Claudel, "Aux Martyrs," \textit{Oeuvres Poétiques}, pp. 559-564.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
gle between clericalism and anti-clericalism. Malraux has one of his characters in *L’Espoir* say that he was appealing to the soul of the Church against its body.\(^{15}\) Certainly many Catholics felt this way; Mauriac, Maritain, Bernanos, all saw the Church taking what appeared to them an unholy stand, siding with a bloody dictator in a phony "holy war." Jacques Maritain point out that war is not holy and it risks blasphemy to say it is.\(^{16}\) But not everyone in Catholic France was willing to agree with him. Many would have said with Henri Massis that the furious iconoclasm of socialism was opposed to civilization. Therefore, Catholics had no choice but to support Franco who was the champion of order and religion.\(^{17}\) Claudel conceived of the anti-clericalism of the Republic as a part of a premeditated attack on the essence of religion itself and all that was worthwhile in the human spirit and tells us that throughout Spain, the government of the popular front has favored the use of all forms of outrages against religion since its election.\(^{18}\)

Those deeply steeped in the traditions of the Republic and either of non-Catholic background, or, like Simone de Beauvoir, in rebellion against Catholicism and the whole bourgeois atmosphere the French Church represented, tended to be delighted by the persecution of the clergy. "We had seen for ourselves the bloated insolence of the priesthood and the bourgeoisie and the wretched poverty of the peasants, and had prayed that the Republic might

---

\(^{15}\) Malraux, *Man’s Hope*, pp. 312-313.


\(^{17}\) Massis, *Maurras*, II, 94.

\(^{18}\) Claudel, *Persecution*, p. 23.
speedily fulfill all its promises.\textsuperscript{19}

The whole question of nationalism, or in its extreme form, fascism, was tied to the fate of the Church. For some, Franco's fascist state represented a "Crusade against Soviet Atheism," and represented the order which they hoped could be duplicated in France. To some extent they were to have their way in the regime of Marshal Pétain. This identification of Nationalism and Catholicism was strongest in the Action Française movement, but seemed to permeate the Right-wing press. "The cruelly anti-religious character which is taken by the governments of Left well shows that there is no choice but the government of Bolshevist communism or the solution of Franco on the other hand which is the resurrection of the national soul that does not want to become the slaves of foreigners—any foreigners,"\textsuperscript{20} stated historian Jean Giraud in 	extit{La Croix}.

If the members of the French intelligentsia whose thoughts have here been analyzed did not understand the peculiarly Spanish elements in the struggle they did, at any rate, understand the essentially human elements which raised the conflict out of the narrow confines of Spanish history and gave it a truly universal significance at a moment when Europe and the world stood on the brink of war. "The fate of Europe was sealed in 1935–1936. Everything happened as if the enemies of peace had accepted the fundamental assumption of the defenders of international institutions, namely, that international order could be guaranteed by a system of collective assistance and

\textsuperscript{19}Beauvoir, 	extit{Prime of Life}, p. 220.

\textsuperscript{20}Giraud, 	extit{La Croix}, August 20, 1937. Rémont, p. 199.
only by such a system." And their alliances paved the way for war.

For France this period of the Spanish Civil War had a special significance. "The ideological struggle between the socialist and liberal forces of the Left and the authoritarian and conservative forces of the Right thus appears to have been crystallized by the Spanish Civil War, which followed France's shift to the Left," Charles Micaud tells us in his study of the French Right and its relations with the Nazis.

As a result of the intense ideological dispute that accompanied the war, the old standby of the Catholic-conservative forces, the Action Française movement gained a new impetus and really a new lease on life. "Powerful among the intelligentsia, the Action Française exercised . . . an almost complete dictatorship over Catholic intellectual circles." The revived popularity of integral nationalism stemmed in large measure from the growing fear which conservative elements in France felt, after witnessing the Leftist Revolution triggered by Franco's rising, that France might be in line for a similar catastrophe. There were many ready to see in the advent of the French Popular Front the first steps toward a Russian-style take-over by Blum. The humiliation which the bourgeoisie suffered at the Hotel Matignon undoubtedly added to their fears and frustrations and made them all the more anxious to back Franco and his cause. If they could also be convinced that they were participating in a Crusade on behalf of all Christendom against Eastern Bol-

21Yves Simon, Road to Vichy, p. 115.
22Micaud, The French Right, p. 131.
23Yves Simon, p. 42.
shevism, then so much the better. Nothing could be more satisfactory than to save one's property and one's soul at the same time.

"But the reaction of the Right to the Spanish war was not purely negative," Micaud reminds us, "or based solely on fear of socialism. The outcome of the struggle, they believed, would indirectly determine the future regime of France and therefore, the ultimate triumph or defeat of fascism in Europe." As Spain went, so would go Europe. Surely, few Requets or Anarchists fighting in the trenches of Aragon imagined that they had any such exalted role to play in the history of the West.

The French Catholic writer Yves Simon has written a long and thoughtful study of the causes of the fall of France in which he states: "I intend to refrain from any judgment on what was, or what might have been, French policy toward the Spanish tragedy. I simply point out the importance of this psychological fact: for a long, painful and heartbreaking period which came to an end only a few months before the official outbreak of the World War, innumerable Frenchmen, possibly the majority, were morally at the side of Hitler and his allies in a struggle to which everybody ascribed a decisive importance. Was it psychologically possible for these millions of Frenchmen, in a few months after the (official) conclusion of hostilities, to turn as one man on Hitler and his allies, and fight them with unwavering resolution? It was too much to hope for." According to Simon's view at least, support for Franco led to support for Pétain. In the case of many of the

---

24 Micaud, p. 116.
25 Yves Simon, pp. 164-165.
figures we have discussed this was true. Maurras, Massis, even Claudel at first, lined up behind the defeatist government. Order and religion, it appeared, could only be obtained in the camp of the most disordered and irreligious tyranny ever seen.

But one asks how it could be that Frenchmen had allowed themselves to become so divided over a civil war in another country that they were willing to support forces which ultimately would destroy France. The answer lies, so it seems, in a basic cleavage in French life, a cleavage that made moderation impossible and forced men either into the camp of the Action Française or the Popular Front, made them ready to cry either "Better Hitler than Blum" or "No enemies on the Left." This is the well-known theory of the "Two Nations," two Francs, each one unable and unwilling to communicate with the other. It is traced by many to the original French revolution, with its alienation of the Church and destruction of the monarchy, through the 1848 revolution with its division between bourgeoisie and proletariat. According to the idea of Two Nations, France is divided sharply into a secularist, republican and socialist Left and a monarchist, clerical, anti-semitic and authoritarian Right. Like most such divisions it is an oversimplification, but one with a large degree of truth. It took a man of the burning integrity of Georges Bernanos to remain a man of the Right and yet denounce passionately the crimes of the forces of order and clericalism. Such high standards of integrity were seldom achieved. Thus we can concede that, "The war in Spain produced . . . open antagonism between the two Francs, an antagonism that lacked the overtones of personal drama of the Dreyfus affair and did not end with the vindication of the hapless captain and a renewal of
democratic faith but one that was more far-reaching and fatally corrosive of
the national spirit, resulting in a paralysis of French initiative during a
most critical period of history." 26

The sensitive political philosopher Alexandre Werth, writing in a publica-
tion of 1938 called, so tragically, War is Not Inevitable, put it this way:
"Spain has in the last two years been one of the most vital issues not only
in French foreign policy, but also in French home politics. The country was
sharply divided on this issue from the outset, and, what is even stranger, it
has remained divided on it even after it had become clear that Italian and
German intervention in the Spanish was ultimately directed against France
and France's most vital interest." 27 If one recalls the poetry of Claudel,
the commentaries of Daudet, Maurras, Massis and others, one is not so sur-
prised. Among the bourgeoisie, especially the Catholic bourgeoisie, there
was ample reason for this division of loyalty. In their executions of the
"Spanish Martyrs" the Republicans were unwittingly pointing their guns at
France and the defense of the West against Hitler.

Surveying the shambles of France's military power in 1940, historian
André Maurois ascribed the fall of France to this very cleavage discussed
above. Speaking of the role of the the conservative middle class in the re-
sistance of France, he declared that: "It cooperated because of military dis-
cipline and because of its old tradition of patriotism, but with no enthusiasm.

26 Puzzo, Spain and the Great Powers, p. 85.

27 Alexandre Werth, "French Policy and Currents of French Opinion," War
For more than twenty years the newspapers they read had been saying the worst things they could think of about the government . . . it was a dangerous preparation."²⁸ No small part of this preparation had been the Spanish Civil War.

The themes which various Frenchmen understood as the real issues of the Spanish Civil War: personal freedom versus order and discipline, the refusal or acceptance of war waged by all the most brutal methods known to modern men, the standards one placed on personal conduct, and, perhaps, most important, the question of whether the Church in Spain should be looked upon as a helpless victim of persecution, or a rapacious and corrupt institution finally getting what it deserved; all these may not have been the issues Spaniards thought their war was about, but these were the issues on which Frenchmen were deeply divided and on which they would be unable to agree in time to face with any degree of efficacy the German onslaught in the Spring of 1940.

These "Parisian esthetes," if you want to call them that, inheritors of the time honored French tradition which pushed literary men to the forefront of national life, played their part, for good or evil, in shaping France's consciousness of itself. Just as few of them could rise far enough above their own side of the division into two nations, so few Frenchmen would in the end be able to unite for effective action in the crisis. The universal human understanding of a Simone Weil or an Antoine de Saint-Exupéry could not be transmitted to the majority of Frenchmen faced with the threat of

rival totalitarian orders.

And yet these writers who were unable to speak to their own generation, appear to speak, across the gulf of war, to us and to our generation, and their concerns: the questions of individual rights in a revolutionary situation, the questions of freedom of action versus the mobilization of all resources, the question of allowing religious liberty, even to a clergy which denies the right for others, all these are still alive. The history of the modern age is the history of revolutions, beginning with the French Revolution as the first of a new type of socio-political struggle. In the period before the Second World War there were the Russian and Mexican revolutions, the continuing revolution in China, and the unsuccessful revolution in Spain—to mention only the most prominent of the struggles. The march of Hitler's Germany and the war, that forever deserves to be called "Hitler's War," interrupted rather than ended this revolutionary series. It began again, most notably, in China and in Cuba.

And all these revolutions have in common a tremendous paradox, a joke that man appears to play upon himself; that these struggles, begun in the name of human freedom, and carried out, without doubt, by men of good will who seek to free man from want and fear, end by enslaving and enmeshing mankind in a huge bureaucratic machine, in mobilizing him into a militaristic society worse by far that that created by capitalism. And so we are reminded again of Simone Weil's dictum: "Of necessity the atmosphere of the civil war suppresses the aspirations which one seeks to defend by means of civil war." The revolution is but a civil war of all mankind.

Speaking of those who sympathized with revolutionary movements, in the
manner in which Malraux, Sartre and Simone Weil sympathized with the revolution in Spain, Hannah Arendt has written: "What they had looked forward to was the establishment of new institutions and the creation of a new code of law which, no matter how revolutionary in content, would lead to a stabilization of conditions and thus check the momentum of the totalitarian movements. . . . What happened instead was that terror increased both in Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany. . . ."29 The reason is that: "Totalitarian policy does not replace one set of laws with another, does not establish its own consensus iuris, does not create, by one revolution, a new form of legality. Its defiance of all, even its own positive laws, implies that it believes that it can do without any consensus iuris whatever, and still not resign itself to the tyrannical state of lawlessness, arbitrariness and fear."30

In a Spain torn between fascism and communism one would expect to find the reliance on brute force alone, which infuriated Simone Weil and Bernanos with their respective causes. But can, in reality, the Social Revolution promised by the Spanish Republicans be equated with the Vertical Revolution of the Falange? Saint-Exupéry would have said they are as alike as brothers.

André Malraux, however, pointed out what he thought were the essential differences between Nazi and Italian fascism on one hand and Social Democracy (that is, communism) and political democracy on the other. "The fascist ideologies by their very nature are static and particular. As for democracy

30Ibid., p. 462.
and communism; they disagree in respect to the dictatorship of the proletariat, but not in respect to their values, since the dictatorship of the proletariat is in Marxist eyes, the concrete means of obtaining real democracy—all political democracy being delusion so long as it does not rest on economic democracy." Thus an essential difference exists between the totalitarian democracy of the Right and that of the Left because of the basic humanism of the latter and the anti-humanism of the former. Even Malraux could not accept this dogma permanently and in Spain, especially in the writing of L'Espoir, we found him struggling with the question of subordinating human values to the good of the party.

Yet of all the basic questions raised by the Spanish Civil War, this is the one still most with us. It has been raised again in regard to the most vital of the post-war revolutions; that in Cuba. The Cuban revolution is in a way a strange sort of bastard child of the revolution in Spain that was crushed by Franco's guns. Herbert Matthews who covered Madrid during the siege and seems closer to the government of Fidel Castro than any other American has remarked that Dr. Castro "has long reminded me (having covered the Spanish Civil War for the New York Times) of the Anarchists who have played such a strange and persistent role in the history of Spain for almost a century."

---

31 André Malraux, "Forging Man's Fate in Spain," The Nation, March 20, 1937, pp. 315-316.

32 Herbert L. Matthews, "Return to Cuba," Hispanic American Report, Special Issue, 1964, p. 5.
Is it coincidence, or fate, that Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir also visited the Cuban revolution and wrote a glowing account of the "direct democracy" practiced by the Cuban dictator? They would, it seems, agree that a democracy without elections, a dictatorship of the proletariat, can be humanistic in content, if totalitarian in form. Quite different was the view of another eloquent witness of both Revolutions, José María Gironella, who testified to the uniqueness of the Spanish experience. In Cuba he witnessed a speech by General Lister, formerly head of the Lister Brigade in the Spanish Civil War. And there beside him was Colonel Bayo, who led the ill-fated attack of the anarchist militia on Majorca, and who had trained the Fidelista army in Mexico. "The Cuban people," commented Gironella, "were advancing toward who-knows-where, riding on an unpredictable green flying carpet, between twisted palm trees and 'consolidated' business firms. Nobody knew what the government might decide that night or the next day. It might just as easily abolish the currency in circulation as decree that everyone on the island must study Chinese. One thing sure was that before long the last traces of individual freedom and private property would disappear. . . ." His judgment in the concrete is frighteningly like that of Hannah Arendt in the abstract.

In a wider context, the Spanish Civil War has even greater significance than the immediate psychological impact that it had upon a generation of

33Jean-Paul Sartre, Sartre on Cuba (New York, 1961).

Europeans. It is part of a continuing historical chain of events which one
might properly style, "the ambiguous revolutions," revolutions fought os­
tensibly for "the bread of our brothers," as the anarchist militiaman hollered
across the trenches, and yet which seem inevitably to end in a totalitarian
dictatorship. But somehow, in a larger context still, these ambiguous revolu­
tions transcend even this hostile judgement and seem still to attract us and
still, by some process not yet discovered, to advance the cause of man; and
herein lies their ambiguity. This is the reason for the perplexity of the
emotions that the issues in Spain raised for the French intelligentsia.

These struggles, of which the Spanish Civil War is but one link in the
chain, are part of a great dialectic between freedom from want, and freedom
of action, between social democracy, as Malraux would say, and political
democracy. It is a dialogue pronounced with anguish and created by the in­
dividual suffering of countless human beings for the sake of causes which
they cannot comprehend. To cope with it requires the sanctity of a Simone
Weil, for if one is not to give way to a pessimism like that expressed by
Hannah Arendt one must believe in the soul of man and the immutability of
human nature which is truly man's hope.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Relevant writings by the authors discussed in this dissertation.

Books


———. *Plea for Liberty; Letters to the English, the Americans, the Europeans*. Translated by Harry Lorin Binese. New York, 1944.


Anderson

---. Man's Hope. Translated by Alastair MacDonald from L'Espoir. New York, 1938.


---. The Things that are not Caesar's. Translated by J. F. Scanlan. New York, 1931.


---. La Contre-Révolution Spontanée, la Recherche, la Discussion, l'Émeute. Lyon, 1943.


---. The Wall and Other Stories. Translated by Lloyd Alexander. New
York, 1948.

____. Gravity and Grace.

Articles

____. "This Is War," Colliers (May 29, 1937).

____. "War and the Bombardment of Cities," Commonweal (September 2, 1938), pp. 460-461.


II. Writings on general background, and about the authors discussed.

Books


Anderson


Van Der Esch, P. A. M. Prelude to War: The International Reprecussions of the Spanish Civil War. The Hague, 1951.


Articles


Frohock, W. M. "Notes for a Malraux Bibliography," Modern Language Notes, LXV (June, 1950), 392-395.


APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Thomas P. Anderson has been read and approved by five members of the Department of History.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the dissertation is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

[Signature]

Date: Nov 7, 1915

Signature of Adviser: [Signature]