Two Intellectual Responses to the Dilemma of Political "Engagement" in Interwar France: André Breton & Pierre Drieu La Rochelle

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THE PERIOD between the First and Second World Wars has become well-known for its political instability, economic unpredictability, and cultural vibrancy. Following World War I, many European artists and intellectuals struggled to express their disillusionment with a world turned upside-down. Many intellectuals found meaning and renewal in the revolutionary possibilities of radical politics. Others, however, were only willing to meet the commitment of political "engagement" in their own very personal and individual ways.

This essay examines the lives of two French intellectuals, the Surrealist writer André Breton and the fascist writer Pierre Drieu La Rochelle. Similar in their bourgeois origins, war experiences, political variability, and artistic preoccupations, they nevertheless gravitated towards opposite political poles: Breton as a communist and Drieu La Rochelle as a fascist and Nazi collaborator. This essay investigates the attractions and dilemmas of intellectual involvement in politics, as well as the forces that propelled two men of similar origins and aspirations toward opposite political ideologies.

HEIGHTENED political activity was not a monopoly held by French intellectuals in the years after World War I. Deep concerns over French diplomatic, financial, political, and social ills prompted many in French society to turn to political extremes in search of solutions. The First World War left much of France in ruins and drained off the vast majority of her young men. Despite victory, France remained concerned with her national security throughout the interwar years. Frenchmen felt betrayed and alone as they faced a rebuilding Germany

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across the Rhine. French financial failures brought hard times, and forced France to lean heavily on financial assistance from the United States.[1] Traditional French party politics were at a loss to redress the nation's many problems. Parliamentary factionalism paralyzed the Third Republic's ability to meet the demands of a changing world order.

In the 1920s and 1930s political activity on the extremes of both the Right and Left increased in intensity. The rise of the French Communist Party in the early 1920s, frequent strikes, mass socialist demonstrations,[2] as well as significant parliamentary victories by the Left in the 1930s, prompted the renascence of many nationalistic, right-wing organizations. By the 1930s, the conservative and nationalistic organizations of pre-war years had evolved into a radical fascist Right, providing a revolutionary "third alternative" between liberalism and communism.[3]

Contributing to the polarization in interwar politics was the wide-spread participation of intellectuals. Interwar intellectuals were heirs to a long tradition of political involvement, building upon precedents set during the Enlightenment and French Revolution. However, it was the Dreyfus Affair in the late 1890s that created the tone and character of twentieth-century intellectual involvement in politics. The highly polarized nature of the crisis between Dreyfusards and anti-Dreyfusards set the stage for Left-Right opposition in the interwar years.

Intellectuals between the World Wars were able to have a profound impact on events and ideas, due to the fact that this long tradition of political activity established intellectuals as defenders of the national spirit, of a great cultural and aesthetic *mission civilisatrice* to the rest of the world which they believed belonged to France alone.[4] French society deemed their pronouncements on political affairs worthy of a respectful hearing. In particular, political parties at the far ends of the spectrum were eager to acquire the credibility gained by boasting well-known literary and artistic celebrities. Correspondingly, interwar intellectuals remained receptive to promises of artistic freedom and reputation offered by both the fascist Right and communist Left. While the Communist Party attracted many intellectuals in the 1920s, most were discouraged by Stalinist excesses in the 1930s and offered their services to the extreme Right by the eve of World War II.[5]

At opposite ends of the political spectrum, communism and fascism seemed to be worlds apart. Yet, if one allows that the political spectrum is not best seen as a straight, but a circular line, it seems possible that at certain points, the two extremes of Right and Left shared affinities in the origins and goals of their radicalism. André Breton and Pierre Drieu La Rochelle may indeed have been ideologically closer than first impressions indicate.

THE EARLY YEARS: FAMILY LIFE, YOUTH, EDUCATION, INFLUENCES

ANDRÉ BRETON (1896-1966) was born in Tinchebray, a small town in Normandy, and grew up in Lorient, a fishing port on the Atlantic. The boy was close to his father, a small businessman, but was often at odds with his straightlaced mother who brought up her son with a puritanical bourgeois morality.[6] Breton's biographer, Anna Balakian, portrays the Breton household as "modest," and his parents "grimly conscious of the economic realities of life" in planning a safe career for their son.[7] Feeling stifled by the conventions and conformity of a typical bourgeois lifestyle, Breton eventually sought to shrug off those institutions and values, such as family and work, that he considered to be intellectually and artistically inhibiting.[8]

Breton received a proper bourgeois education, graduating from the Lycée Chaptal in Paris in 1912, and begining medical studies at the Sorbonne the following year. He records 1913 as the year of his intellectual awakening and points out that while "my physical presence was on the amphitheater benches or at the laboratory tables, my mind was elsewhere."[9] His imagination was roaming the streets of Paris and mulling over the works of Rimbaud, Lautréamont, Valéry, and Apollinaire. These writers taught Breton to commit himself to the problems of life rather than to literature as a means to financial gain and were instrumental in helping him to formulate his own ideas on the role and responsibility of the poet in society.[10]

While Breton was influenced by many writers of his time, he did not heed the patriotic calls of Maurice Barrès, Paul Claudel, and Charles Péguy. He would never forgive these "patriotic" writers whom he saw as opportunists falsely glorifying a war that sent a generation of youth off to its demise. Confessing that "nationalism had never been one of my strengths,"[11] Breton displayed an intellectual independence that isolated him from many of the authors and ideas that influenced many of his generation. He concluded it was useless to devote himself "to that which does not motivate me to my proper impulses."[12] As a youth, Breton was determined to pursue his own ideas and seek out his own inspirations independent of the bourgeois expectations of his family, his schools, and his contemporaries.

PIERRE DRIEU La Rochelle (1893-1945) was born into a middle class, politically conservative, Catholic family. Drieu's childhood seems to have been particularly unpleasant, for he feared and hated his father, an unsuccessful lawyer, who constantly ridiculed him for any displays of weakness or cowardice. Drieu loved his mother dearly, but she often neglected him in the pursuit of her active social life.[13] Consequently, Drieu spent much of his childhood immersed in books and daydreams about Napoleonic grandeur, military heroism, and colonial adventure, which he readily contrasted with his own family's decadent and pusillanimous bourgeois lifestyle. [14] Drieu was very conscious of his family's social status, especially after his father's shady financial dealings had resulted in a sharp decline in the family's economic status while Drieu was an adolescent. Drieu confessed that "family life offered me nothing but repugnant trials, I lived between a father and a mother who were torn apart by adultery, jealousy and financial troubles."[15]

Drieu was able to separate himself from the negative influence of his early family life and began to assert himself in both the upper-bourgeois Catholic *collége* and the École des Sciences Politiques. He enjoyed the "group experience" of his school days, but was often wary of his inferior social position. While he was invited into the upper-class homes of his friends, he often assumed an air of intellectual superiority to compensate for his sense of class inferiority.[16]

Drieu was heavily influenced by his trip to England at the age of fifteen, where he first cultivated a life-long love for all things English. He discovered there an energy and dynamism, evident in the British love for physical sports, which he readily contrasted against his view of France as a weak and decadent country.[17] It was in England that Drieu first discovered the work of Nietzsche, which further reinforced his growing interest in the role of power and responsibility of the individual will and the man of action in society. Drieu reports that his intellectual awakening came at the rebellious age of seventeen when:

> On the eve of my baccalaureate exam . . . [a]bruptly I discovered reactionary thought. Thereafter it was Maurras, the *Action française*, [Jacques] Bainville, Georges Sorel, and by way of them I linked myself to a long chain of French reactionaries. . . . All had the effect of multiplying the formidable blow that I had received at Oxford when I was sixteen: Nietzsche.[18]

Unlike Breton, Drieu was fervently drawn to the call of the nationalistic writers of the older generation, particularly the novelist and political thinker, Maurice Barrès. He admired the Barrèsian emphasis on the individual will, the "Self," which stressed the union of the intellectual life with the life of action and political "engagement." Drieu was inspired by the Barrèsian cult of national energy that glorified "eternal France," but never truly subscribed to the Barrèsian idea of "integral nationalism" which celebrated the intrinsic and native-born qualities of all Frenchmen.

Drieu was also drawn to some of the ideas of Charles Maurras and Georges Sorel. For a time between 1911 and 1914, Drieu was a member of the *Cercle Proudhon*, an antidemocratic, nationalistic, monarchist organization of young right-wing students, many of whom attended the prestigious École des Sciences Politiques with Drieu. Founded in 1911, it sought to revitalize the nation according to the "best" in French tradition, including the ideas of Proudhon, Maurras, and Sorel.[19] Like many of his generation, Drieu was drawn to a rightist stance in reaction to the liberalism, democracy, pacifism, positivism, and narrow rationalism of the older generation. Like so many, Drieu longed for the "realism" of direct energetic action and the glamour of war.[20]

For both Drieu and Breton, intellectual and political initiations seemed to have come less from proper bourgeois institutions of learning than from the wealth of literature and ideas fermenting in the prewar years. Both would draw on these ideas in the formation of their intellectual and political revolt against the bourgeois values of their youth.

THE WAR EXPERIENCE

WHILE both men came of age intellectually and politically in the last years of the *Belle Époque*, it was the First World War that hastened their development and helped to forge beliefs that would be instrumental in their later ideologies. Drieu was drafted in 1913 at the age of twenty and spent the next few months tied to the routines of barracks life, until war was declared in 1914. "What had I felt when war had been declared? Liberation from the barracks, the end of the old laws, the arrival of possibilities for me, for life, for new laws, young laws, bold and surprising."[21] Free from the stifling bourgeois conventions of his family, Drieu rejoiced in the "savage liberty" that military service promised from "social convention, preparations for life, for a career, and for the distant future."[22]

Drieu's romantic notion of war soon changed on the battlefield of Charleroi, where Drieu mused, "war today means being prostrate, wallowing in the mud flattened. Before, war meant men standing upright. War today means every possible position of shame."[23] While Drieu got to know the discomforts and horrors of war, he also discovered its ability to liberate the most primal, virile, and "noble" instincts in man. Achieving the rank of sergeant and serving as a platoon leader, Drieu received three battle wounds in the course of his distinguished service at Charleroi, the Marne, Artois, Verdun, and the Dardenelles. He would always remember fondly the exhilaration of a bayonet charge that he had led in 1914 at Charleroi, where "all of a sudden, I found myself, I found my life. This was now me, this strong man, this free man, this hero. So, this was my life, this sudden joyous surge that would never ever stop."[24] Drieu emerged from the war acutely aware of his own courage and virility, and was determination to find a means of expression that would communicate the intensity of his wartime experiences.

Recovering in a hospital from battle wounds, Drieu discovered the work of the poet Paul Claudel and developed a taste for more "modern" styles of literature. He was done with flowery bourgeois literary styles, and adopted a more direct, abrupt approach: "I had some urgent things to cry about the war, about man in war, about the confrontation of life and death, and it was absolutely necessary that I find a means that measures up to the violence of my cry."[25]

Drieu's first collection of poems, *Interrogation*, was published in 1917 and was very favorably received. Drieu was soon being touted as one of France's most versatile young writers.[26] His early writings revealed a discreet but passionate "cult of France," and a sense of fraternity or love for his comrades in the trenches, the death of whom solidified and internalized his love for his country.[27] Drieu had high expectations for the regeneration of France by the new generation of youth tempered by war and ready to seize political power.[28] He was convinced that his generation had proven itself superior to the older one, for they had held at Verdun and the Marne, while their elders had lost at Sedan. He believed that "now we have the right to speak . . . strong from thousands and thousands of energetic acts . . . and our elders have only to keep quiet."[29]

However, for most veterans, energetic acts had been exhausted on the battlefield. While enough veterans were elected to the Chamber in 1919 to dub it the "blue horizon chamber" after the color of the French army uniform, the victory of the rightist *Bloc national* marked a return to traditional democratic conservatism. Drieu had hoped that his generation would seize power, "[b]ut no. We allowed them to continue and keep their places. The veterans had let themselves be totally frustrated."[30] Drieu was disgusted with the inability of his generation to act, and continued to look for a group dynamic enough to transform French society.

André Breton's war experience was less dramatic, and perhaps less exhilarating, yet no less formative than Drieu's. Mobilized into an artillery unit, Breton was soon assigned to the *Service de Santé*, perhaps because of his brief exposure to medical school. He found himself not very adept at military exercises and could not easily reconcile himself to the prospect of trench warfare. Years later, he still resented the manner in which the war uprooted the aspirations of a generation in order to "hurl them in a cesspool of blood, stupidity, and mud."[31]

While not moved by patriotic appeals, Breton served honorably as a medical assistant assigned to psychiatric hospitals where he participated in the treatment of evacuees from the front suffering from shell-shock, delirium, and other mental disorders. He revealed that some of his first inspiration for Surrealist literature came from the fact that he was "able to do experiments on the patients using the process of psychoanalytical investigation, in particular, recordings, for the purpose of interpretation of dreams and associations of involuntary thoughts."[32]

At this time, Breton became acquainted with the work of Dr. Pierre Janet, a French professor of psychiatric medicine whose books on psychiatry were widely used by French medical students of Breton's era. While Breton and the Surrealists held Freud in high esteem, it was Janet who linked scientific psychology with the pursuits of the creative mind. Janet was a proponent of the therapeutic use of "automatic writing" (a form of Freudian "free association"), but was also receptive to its possibilities on the normal mind. By freeing the creative mind from social constraints, it could uncover the uncharted recesses of the unconscious mind, allowing insight into man's most fundamental understanding of himself. This explosion of the boundaries of reality would eventually abolish the man-made frontiers between material and spiritual existence, revealing all reality to be one continuum.[33] The practice of psychiatric medicine and the study of psychological theory gave Breton an early conceptual basis for Surrealism, while a personal encounter during the war brought him face to face with an individual whose attitudes contributed much to the tone and temper of early Surrealism.

In 1916 Breton befriended Jacques Vaché, a volatile precursor of Dadaist contempt for conventional art and society. In the course of their wartime friendship, he taught Breton detachment and sarcasm, to see life as absurd and to live for the moment. After once watching Vaché parade about in a British officer's uniform, brandishing a pistol in a crowded theater, Breton claims to have realized "the depth of the pit that had come to separate the new generation from the one that preceded it." Vaché had a profound influence on Breton, who would later declare that Vaché "always incarnated for us the very highest power of 'disengagement'."[34] By the time of Vaché's suicide in 1919, Breton had formulated many of his ideas for Surrealism and had been transformed from the sensitive poet to the nihilistic rebel.

Breton's immediate postwar outlook was somewhat different from Drieu's. Having seen firsthand the horrors of war, yet not having experienced the thrill of combat, Breton's response was an ambiguous mix of expectation and disillusionment. He expected that disgruntled veterans would play an active role in the transformation of post-war France. However, he found most veterans apathetic rather than revolutionary, as most were glad to be done with their ordeal, and were hesitant to group themselves into veterans organizations that could channel their discontent.

Breton himself was glad to be out of uniform, but was not willing to return to medicine, and for a time, drifted in indecision, disillusionment, and uncertainty. Ideas and solutions eluded him, and day by day, he was prey to a sense of "fatalism."[35] The only way to deal with recent experiences, he found, was through the response learned from his friend Vaché—derision and scorn for the absurdity of life. He concluded that "no compromise was possible with a world to which such an atrocious misadventure had taught nothing."[36]

DISGUST TOWARDS A BANKRUPT FRANCE

BOTH BRETON and Drieu became thoroughly disenchanted with the condition in which they found post-war France, and decided that politically, morally, and intellectually, French society was bankrupt. In the last years of the war, Breton began to cultivate his literary contacts. Publishing the review *Littérature* along with his friends Louis Aragon, Paul Eluard, and Philippe Soupault, Breton came into contact with the Romanian poet Tristan Tzara who revealed to Breton the artistic movement that seemed to so clearly correspond to Breton's own turbulent sentiments—Dadaism. Tzara was one of the founders of Dadaism, an international pacifist movement born in Zurich in 1916, which repudiated all political, moral, and artistic values held by conventional society. Dada was a pessimistic revolt against all tradition and all rational thought, and as Dada poet Louis Aragon's manifesto of 1920 illustrates, Dada was in effect a revolt against everyone and everything:

> No more painters, no more writers, no more musicians, no more sculptors, no more religions, no more republicans, no more royalists, no more imperialists, no more anarchists, no more socialists, no more Bolsheviks, no more aristocrats, no more armaments, no more police, no more countries, enough of all these imbecilities, no more, no more, no more, no more, no more.[37]

In an early Dada manifesto, Breton explained that "Dada is a state of mind . . . . Dada gives itself to nothing. . . . I speak and I have nothing to say. I do not have the least ambition."[38] Soon after the war, Tzara and his group came to Paris, and with Breton and his friends, began to stage a number of Dada demonstrations consisting of banging drums, obscene insults, parading in outrageous costumes, and reciting nonsense poems, all designed to shock bourgeois society. Dada served Breton well as a release for his anger and disgust, but as time passed, he realized that he did have ambitions and he did have something important to say.

Drieu La Rochelle was also disappointed by the failure of his generation to take action, and was disgusted with a post-war France that was all too identical to pre-war France. In 1922 he wrote that while France had won the war:

> It took half the world to contain a people that my people, alone, had tread on with ease for centuries. . . . On our soil, our flesh no longer held its place. . . . Behind us in each house in the place of those who were dead or of those who had not yet been born there was a foreigner. He was alone with our women. . . . We did not go to bed alone with Victory.[39]

Drieu was disgusted with France's declining population growth, which was made shockingly apparent by the war. He also was ashamed at French weakness in the face of stronger powers and resented the influx of foreign labor following the war.[40] Drieu was sickened by what he saw as the decadence of French society, for he believed that

> sterility, onanism, [and] homosexuality are spiritual maladies. Alcoholism, drugs are the first steps that lead to this failing of the imagination, to this decadence of the creative spirit, when men prefer to submit rather than to assert themselves.[41]

Drieu's search for a group that would transform society with "thousands of energetic acts" led him to the early Dada and later Surrealist group of André Breton. Having befriended Louis Aragon in 1916, Drieu was introduced to the Dada group after the war. He was impressed not only by the group's literary boldness, but also by their youthful energy and independence, their antirationalism, their internationalist opposition to xenophobic nationalism, and hostility towards the older decadent generation.[42] Drieu later wrote that his period with the Dadaists/Surrealists was one of great pleasure, as he believed that "this prodigious troop of young men and poets, I firmly believe, are the most alive group in the world today. . . . This encounter has been for me an enormous event."[43]

The role that Drieu played in the group is sketchy and it is unclear to what extent he participated in Dada and later Surrealist group activities. While he lent his name to a number of Dada/Surrealist documents, Drieu did not always feel comfortable in the group, for he was often torn between both revolutionary and reactionary rebellion.[44] When the Dadaists held a mock trial of Barrès in 1921, Drieu was reluctant to participate. The Dadaists abhorred Barrès as the symbol of stagnant cultural traditionalism and rabid nationalism, yet Drieu was unwilling to denounce his idol. When bluntly prodded by André Breton to confess whether or not he still found Barrès appealing, Drieu replied evasively that he retained a sense of respect for Barrès.[45] For the time being however, he had found a much needed friendship and camaraderie with the Dada/Surrealist group—a sense of attachment and belonging that he had craved since his days in the trenches.

THE PURGING OF WESTERN SOCIETY

THOROUGHLY disgusted with the bankrupt society which sent them off to a war that had accomplished so little, Breton and Drieu both declared war on the decadence that had created it. Both proposed to initiate a thorough regeneration of France and Western society through force and violence, by first wiping the slate clean and starting anew.

Breton had believed in the message of Dadaism, but by 1921, began to feel that Dada had run its course. His article "Après Dada" (After Dada), written in 1922, revealed his concern that "there is more at stake here than our carefree existence and our good humour of the moment. . . . [T]he sanction of a series of utterly futile 'Dada' acts is in danger of gravely compromising an attempt at liberation to which I remain strongly attached. Ideas which may be counted among the best are at the mercy of their too-hasty vulgarization."[46]

By 1921, the two dominant personalities in the group, Breton and Tzara, had begun to clash. Breton's attempts to root Dadaism in a tradition of rebellion and clearer political purpose were criticized by Tzara, who opposed any attempts to treat Dadaism as a serious vehicle of political protest.[47] In 1922 Breton bid adieu to Dada and urged his followers to "Let go of everything. Let go of Dada. . . . Let go of your hopes and fears. . . . Take to the roads!"[48] Breton was now free to translate destructive and pessimistic Dada revolt into a more constructive Surrealist *Révolution*, although the Surrealists would never abandon the Dada propensity for spontaneous violence.

Breton clarified and explained the Surrealist position in the first *Manifeste du Surréalisme*, which appeared in October 1924:

> Surrealism rests on the belief in the superior reality of certain forms of previously neglected associations, in the omnipotence of dream, in the disinterested play of thought. It tends to ruin definitively all other psychic mechanisms and to substitute itself for them in the resolution of the principal problems of life.[49]

To facilitate the Surrealist revolution, the review *La Revolution Surréaliste* was founded in December 1924 proclaiming, "We must arrive at a new declaration of the rights of man!" A "Bureau of Surrealist Research" was also created to investigate and collect Surrealist material, and assured the public that "[w]e are on the verge of a Revolution!"[50] The Surrealists had set out on their quest to transform the world.

The Surrealists' first public "scandal" was a derogatory pamphlet in 1924, *Un Cadavre*, on the death of novelist and national literary hero, Anatole France, whom they despised as the epitome of the pretentious bourgeois literary establishment. This four page tract was a collection of short essays, including contributions by both Breton and Drieu La Rochelle, which ridiculed and defamed the novelist in the most irreverent manner. Drieu asserted that "our devotion rests with those who died young . . . in the blood and scum" of World War I, and asked the youth of his generation, "what good was this old grandfather, anyway?"[51] Breton was less diplomatic:

> Let it be a holiday when we bury trickery, traditionalism, patriotism, opportunism, skepticism, and heartlessness. . . . To put away his corpse . . . throw the whole thing in the Seine. Dead, this man must produce dust no longer.[52]

Breton would later explain that "Anatole France represented the proto-type of all that we loathed. . . . [W]e hold his attitude as the most shady and the most despicable of all."[53]

While *Un Cadavre* had assailed a well-known national figure, Surrealist revolt had not yet adopted a political tone. Many significant political events of the early 1920s, such as the 1922 Rapallo Treaty, Mussolini's march on Rome, French occupation of the Ruhr in 1923, Hitler's Munich putsch, and the death of Lenin in 1924, received no mention in early Surrealist writings.[54]

It was the threat of war in Morocco in 1925 that prompted the Surrealists to assume a more openly political stance. In 1925 they published an open letter to Paul Claudel, the poet and French ambassador to Japan, regarding the French suppression of the colonial uprising in Morocco. The Surrealists asserted that "we hope with all our strength that revolutions, wars and colonial insurrections come to annihilate this Western civilization which you defend." In addition, the grudge was a personal one, for in an earlier letter, Claudel had both referred to the Surrealists as "pederasts" and had exaggerated the importance of his own noncombatant role in the First World War. This was too much for the Surrealists, who retorted by calling Claudel a hypocrite for pretending to be both a poet and a politician, and advised that he "write, pray, and slobber on; we demand the dishonor of having treated you once and for all as a pedant and a swine."[55]

This literary outrage was soon followed by outright violence when the Surrealists instigated a brawl at a banquet honoring the poet Saint-Pol-Roux.

Amidst a tension created by their recent letter to Claudel, the Surrealists became even more agitated at the presence at the "table of honor" of two guests: Mme. Rachilde, an outspoken anti-German chauvinist and M. Lugne-Poe, suspected of counter-espionage against France during the war. When Breton rose to defend his friend Max Ernst against the anti-German diatribes of Mme. Rachilde, Maurice Nadeau reports that:

> Suddenly a piece of fruit . . . flew through the air and splattered on an official amidst cries of "Long Live Germany!" The uproar quickly . . . turned into a riot. Philippe Soupault, swinging from a chandelier, kicked over plates and bottles on the tables. Outside, idlers gathered. Blows rained down from right and left.[56]

Many Surrealists were beaten and arrested. Right-wing journals, such as the Action française, demanded reprisals and the Surrealists' expulsion from France. For Breton, "the importance of this episode is that it marks the definitive rupture of Surrealism with all conformist elements of the period."[57]

As Breton assumed greater influence over *La Révolution Surréaliste*, the movement began to take on a more clearly political tone. Their opposition to the Moroccan uprising of 1925 united them with the Marxist group *Clarté*. Founded after World War I by such French liberal intellectuals as Henri Barbusse, Jules Romains, and Romain Rolland, *Clarté* was originally conceived as an "international of the mind" in defense of vague socialistic, humanitarian, and pacifist ideals.[58] United in their distaste for conventional society and its imperialist wars, the Surrealists and members of *Clarté* jointly published in 1925 *La Révolution d'abord et toujours!* (Revolution Now and Forever!):

> Well aware of the nature of the forces disturbing the world at the moment, we want . . . to proclaim our total detachment, and in a sense our uncontamination, from the ideas at the base of European civilization. . . . [W]hat disgusts us the most is the idea of the *Patrie* which is truly the most bestial concept.[59]

Inspired by the success that cooperation with the *Clarté* group had achieved, Breton considered alliance with a political party a way to assure that Surrealism would not sink into the same sterility that had buried Dadaism. In order to assist the revolution of the mind, Breton aligned Surrealism with the Communist Party. Inspired by Leon Trotsky's biography of Lenin, Breton reviewed the book in *La Révolution Surréaliste* in 1925, and concluded that:

> Communism, existing as an organized system, alone permits the accomplishment of the greatest social upheaval. . . . Good or mediocre, in itself defensible or not from the moral point of view, how can we forget . . . that it has revealed itself as the most marvellous agent ever for the substitution of one world for another?[60]

While Breton and several friends would not join the Communist Party until 1927, he and the Surrealists had committed themselves to Marxist revolution and embarked on a tumultuous journey with communism that would last for ten trying years.

Having found a group of young men with whom he could relate, Drieu La Rochelle began to identify with the early Surrealists' urge to destroy bourgeois society. He also expressed the belief that the old order had to be eliminated before a regeneration could begin. Drieu was no stranger to the idea of violence, for even before his days with the Dadaists, he had been drawn to the philosophical language of violence preached by Nietzsche, Barrès, Péguy, Maurras, and Sorel, the renowned author of *Réflexions sur la Violence* (1908). Drieu marvelled that "all of them sang to me of violence. Without doubt I was born to reverberate to this call rather than to some other."[61] Drieu's notion of violence saw no exceptions in its need to destroy traditional society, and often directed itself towards the old order as it was defined through its art and culture:

> We will destroy. . . . With a bitter joy, we will strike down this civilization. . . . What will remain of beauty? Of that which our ancestors brought into the world? . . . We will put that beauty to the torch in the houses of the rich where its presence for us is a malediction. Too bad if the flames do not stop, too bad if they consume everything.[62]

Drieu cherished his bonds of friendship with the Surrealists and admitted that "I found among you a nourishment more substantial than ever before."[63] However, while Drieu was not a monarchist or a racist, he was also attracted in the early 1920s to the friendship offered by the Action Française on the extreme Right. Drieu was torn between two poles: "I have been solicited by the only two groups that exist in France in our time, where one can think and where one can act passionately." He rightly feared that fully embracing one would irrevocably alienate him from the other. However, Drieu realized that the two were incompatible, and regretted that "I can no longer hold them in balance."[64]

In many ways the Surrealists made his choice for him when they embraced communism in 1925. Drieu was too much a man of his class and was repulsed by communism which he regarded as too materialistic, rational, egalitarian, and non-

European. He believed that communism promoted intellectual and artistic mediocrity and stressed a naive collectivity that denied the value of the individual will.[65] Interestingly, he established his political position in response to the leftist turn of the Surrealists: "I called myself a man of the Right, by a scruple that, not without irony, imitated your inconsiderate dash towards communism. . . . [T]he moment that I was not communist, I was against communism, and therefore a man of the Right."[66]

However, Drieu's notion of the Right evidently did not include the Action Française, for he found it and other right-wing groups too nationalistic, monarchist, and decadent. In addition, the threat from the extreme Left seemed reduced since the return to moderate policies after the fall of the *Cartel des Gauches* in 1926. Having left the Surrealists, Drieu announced in an open letter to them that he had taken a political stand "equal distance between M. Bainville [of the Action Française] and M. Francois Poncet [Radical Party politician]." He proclaimed himself a "national republican" with an eye towards the "elegant possibilities of a modern conservatism."[67] In reality, Drieu was disenchanted with parties on both the Left and Right, and was more confused than firmly committed. Drieu began to formulate his own political position after 1925 which would take nearly a decade to materialize into his own brand of fascism.

TOWARDS A "SPIRITUAL" REGENERATION OF SOCIETY

BOTH DRIEU and Breton were proponents of violent rebellion based on vigorous action, change, and renewal. In addition, both were more concerned with a "spiritual" revolution than a material one—placing morals, aesthetics, and ideals above economics, finance, and production. Drieu would stop at the doors of many political organizations in his search for the means to the spiritual revitalization of Europe. He had been disillusioned by the decadence he saw both in the Action Française and in communism. Determined to pursue his own political ideology, Drieu founded in 1927 with his friend Emmanuel Berl, the journal *Les Derniers Jours* (The Last Days). Drieu hoped to save France from sinking into utter decadence by cutting across traditional party lines in creating an amalgamation of the best in capitalism and communism to achieve a political monopoly by the big capitalists of the upper bourgeoisie. Political control in the hands of big capitalist cartels would lead to greater European unity, perhaps a United States of Europe, which would abolish in turn the evils of parliamentary democracy, petit bourgeois capitalism, and chauvinistic nationalism.[68]

However, in the relative security of the moderate Poincaré government (1926-29), big business did not feel the need for such drastic measures, and lack of substantial support resulted in the failure of *Les Derniers Jours*. Drieu, however, still focusing on spiritual ideals rather than economic realities, by 1928 had shifted his allegiance to the petite bourgeoisie. While he called for a "Young Right" of dynamic enlightened capitalism, he now really had in mind a nineteenth-century ideal of rugged individualism and small, risk-taking economic enterprises.[69]

Such radical economic and political proposals would attract little attention until the Depression of the early 1930s brought about new political alignments. The elections of 1932 gave an alliance of parties of the Left a parliamentary majority, and initiated a rightist backlash seen in the increased membership in veterans' organizations and paramilitary leagues. Fascism was on the rise in France, but Drieu was still in search of a less nationalistic solution. In 1933, he joined Gaston Bergery's *Front commun*, a pacifist and anti-fascist organization of Right, Center, and Left ideologies. Drieu hoped that the *Front commun* would unite the petite bourgeoisie against both big capitalism and communism. However, Drieu left the organization in 1934 as he sensed that it was leaning too heavily toward communist control.[70]

Drieu's political wanderings even included cautious flirtation with the Left, as he later admitted in his diary, "from 1926 to 1935 I had come close to Communism."[71] Drieu apparently inquired into membership in the Socialist Party in 1933, and also attended a meeting of the Amsterdam-Pleyel movement in 1933. This French Communist Party initiative led by Henri Barbusse and Romain Rolland was designed to consolidate a united leftist front against the threat of fascism.[72] Drieu later recalled in 1942 that: "I [had] dreamt of becoming a communist. A strange sort of communist, in order to push [France] to utter decadence . . . to put everyone against the wall [to be shot], especially the masses."[73] Despite his attraction to the "spiritual" qualities of force, destruction, and radicalism that he saw in communism, Drieu realized that "I could not do it, [due to] my bourgeois blood. . . ."[74] Drieu could never reconcile himself to the hard realities of communist economic and social programs.

Finally, in 1934, Drieu abandoned all reservations towards fascism following the nights of bloody rioting in Paris from 6-12 February which arose out of the Stavisky scandal. Drieu was exhilarated by the apparent solidarity between communists and fascist leagues fighting together in the streets against the corrupt liberal Third Republic: "And then all at once there was fascism. Everything was possible again. Oh, how my heart soared!"[75] Drieu believed that he had finally found the means to combat decadence and to propel France towards spiritual regeneration.

For André Breton the idea of "spiritual" regeneration was a fundamental point of interest, for Surrealism proposed a "spiritual" rather than materialist revolution.

This would bring the Surrealists into conflict with the Communist Party to which they had committed themselves in 1925. The *Clarté* group had been serving as interpreters of Surrealism to the party, but a falling-out between the Surrealists and the *Clarté* group in 1926 left the Surrealists isolated, and their usefulness to the party in question. Party officials argued that only by abandoning fundamental Surrealist principles and fully devoting themselves to the proletariat could the Surrealists be useful to the party.[76]

Breton responded in 1926 with the pamphlet, *Légitime défense* (Legitimate defense), which attempted, with assertions such as "Long live the social revolution!", to convince the communist world that the Surrealists could play a "legitimate" and meaningful role in social revolution. However, Breton maintained that revolution must proceed beyond the narrow aims of Marxist ideology, for he believed that "it is not by 'mechanism' that the Western peoples can be saved. . . . [W]ages cannot pass for the . . . cause of the present state of affairs."[77] Breton believed that *all* forms of revolt, political *and* artistic, were creative and valid, and proposed that the Surrealists continue their literary efforts to tear down bourgeois barriers that restrained mental and spiritual advancement, while the communists continued the war on capitalist social and economic barriers. It was imperative that Surrealist "experiments of the inner life continue . . . without external or even Marxist control."[78]

The Communist Party continued to view the Surrealists with suspicion, and constantly questioned the abstract artwork and bizarre literature of *La Révolution Surréaliste*. Breton hoped to silence his critics by joining the Communist Party in 1927 along with four of his Surrealists friends. He also continued to affirm his commitment to communism in the *Second Manifeste du Surréalisme* in 1929, which guaranteed: "[P]rovided that communism does not treat us as merely curious animals . . . we will show ourselves capable of doing our full revolutionary duty." However, Surrealism would not be compromised: "[W]e have not found any valid reason to change the means of expression that are uniquely ours."[79] In 1930, Breton affirmed his commitment to the cause by changing the name of *La Révolution Surréaliste* to *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution*, and pledged it to the service of the Third International and the French Communist Party.

Perhaps the point of closest cooperation between Surrealism and communism occurred in 1930 in the context of incidents following the debut of the Surrealist film *L'Age d'or* (Golden Age). This film by Surrealists Salvador Dali and Luis Buñuel outraged the reactionary Right through its mocking of traditional values, and the right-wing paramilitary *Ligue des patriotes* responded by harassing the audience and destroying the theater.[80] For the first time, the communist press came to the defense of Surrealism against the encroachments of fascistic power and censorship. This period of solidarity between the two groups would prove brief, however.

The falling-out between the Surrealists and the communists began with a falling-out between members within the Surrealist group. In 1930, Louis Aragon travelled to the Soviet Union where he participated in the Second International Congress of Revolutionary Writers in Kharkov, only to put his signature on documents that criticized and repudiated many of the major principles of Surrealism. Breton's response was one of shock and dismay, and many Surrealists used this opportunity to reassess the dilemma of their allegiance to both artistic freedom and party doctrine.[81]

The final break between Aragon and Breton occurred after the appearance of Aragon's 1931 poem *Front rouge* (Red Front) in a communist journal. Aragon's poem encouraged workers to "kill the cops" and "blow up the Arc de Triomphe," and urged them to: "Fire on Léon Blum/Fire on Boncour Frossard Déat/Fire on the trained bears of social democracy."[82] Several months after its publication, Aragon was indicted by French authorities on charges of inciting murder and provoking military insubordination. Breton mounted an extensive petition campaign to clear his old friend, but in the process, seriously compromised Surrealist doctrine by arguing that poetic texts should not be taken literally as weapons in the revolutionary struggle. Breton's critics did not miss this inconsistency. In spite of it all, Aragon refused the efforts of his old Surrealist friends, for the new communist no longer considered himself a Surrealist. Breton realized that this incident "removed our last illusions on the compatibility of Surrealist aspirations and communist aspirations. . . . [N]o longer was there a possibility of a political and cultural reconciliation."[83]

However, for the time being, the alliance held as the two groups remained united in their opposition to fascism. The February 1934 riots prompted leftist parties to join in alliance against the fascist threat and prompted the Surrealists to organize a meeting of prominent leftist intellectuals to coordinate a united response against what Breton called the "fascist putsch."[84] They published the tract *Appèl à la lutte* (Call to the Struggle) that warned: "[W]ith a violence and an unheard of rapidity, the events of these last few days have brutally put us in the presence of an immediate fascist danger." Noting Hitler's sudden rise to power and the facility with which he suppressed leftist groups in Germany, Breton called for worker solidarity and immediate action in the form of a general strike.[85]

While the Surrealists supported the communist struggle against fascism, their disenchantment grew in 1934 as the party abandoned its "class against class" strategy and joined in cooperation with bourgeois governments. The Surrealists were also alienated by the Franco-Soviet Pact of 1935 which abandonned the "revolutionary defeatism" that had attracted the Surrealists at the time of the Moroccan war.[86]

The final parting of ways between the two groups occurred at the communist-sponsored, anti-fascist International Congress of Writers for the Defense of Culture held in Paris in 1935. Organizers intended the meeting to promote the new Soviet artistic policy of socialist realism that had been decreed in September 1934, but the Surrealists suspected that the congress had also been timed to win favor for the recent Franco-Soviet Pact. Groups such as the Surrealists that were eager to debate both the aesthetic and political issues were excluded.[87] After much maneuvering, Paul Eluard was finally allowed to read a statement by Breton, but not until well after midnight, when the hall was nearly empty, and to prevent any discussion, the lights were turned off immediately afterwards. In response, Breton published a manifesto declaring the end of all formal Surrealist association with communist organizations. Breton regretted that "it was . . . the collapse of the hopes we had placed for all these years in the reconciliation of surrealist ideas with practical revolutionary action."[88] It is quite evident that this break was the product of many years of friction and tension between two movements that were fundamentally incompatible. In his *Entretiens* (1952), Breton explained why the Surrealists had adopted communism even though the two ideologies seemed an unlikely pair. He conceded that developing an independent political program would have been his preference, but the urgency of circumstances demanded the adoption of the pre-existing solution of marxism-leninism. He added that at the time, "we still had no reason to suppose that this position would become poisoned."[89]

THE NEW SOCIETY AND THE "NEW MAN"

BOTH DRIEU and Breton ultimately conceived of revolution in "spiritual" terms and had "spiritual" conceptions of a future re-generated society that would give birth to new conceptions of man himself. Once Drieu accepted fascism in 1934, he promptly presented his political position as "fascist socialism." While his political position was fascist, it was nevertheless one of his own invention and was socially and economically quite conservative. Drieu generally believed in a social revolution of the petite bourgeoisie, for he saw the modern French proletariat as too decadent and oppressed to act heroically as a revolutionary force. He believed that Marx's faith in a revolutionary proletariat was based on an obsolete nineteenth-century class of artisans and peasants rather than an actual urban proletariat. Drieu also rejected the Marxist view of class struggle as the real inspiration for historical change. Refuting the very idea of a proletarian class, he also denied the existence of a bourgeois ruling class, for he saw a clear separation between political power (controlled by a political elite), and economic power (controlled by the bourgeoisie).[90]

Against the Marxist view, Drieu proposed a fascist revolution by an elite drawn from the petite bourgeoisie and peasantry. Drieu saw these groups, threatened with extinction by big capitalism above and marxism below, as receptive to revolutionary action leading to a return to a "heroic" vision of nineteenth-century artisan and peasant society. Political power would be more "elitist" than democratic, residing in the natural leaders of society (an elitism in keeping with the Maurrasian tradition), motivated by *noblesse oblige* rather than democratic electoral politics. The upper bourgeoisie and aristocracy, who controlled big business, would retain their economic hegemony, but political power would be relinquished to the fascist elite of the petite bourgeoisie.[91] In his article "The Young Man and the Older Man," written in 1935, Drieu revealed through the young man that:

> Fascism will be nothing other than a new Radicalism, . . . a new movement of the petite bourgeoisie, disciplined and organized in a party that inserts itself between Big Capitalism, the peasantry, and the proletariat, and that, through terror and authority, imposes on these different interest groups an old charter under a renovated form. But this new charter instead of being liberal, will this time be socialist.[92]

Drieu's concept of "socialism" was political rather than economic, meaning an authoritarianism imposed by the petite bourgeoisie rather than a socialism of humanitarian concerns, social reforms, or working class interests. This socialism was also in many ways nationalist, in that it did not serve the interests of foreign powers such as the Soviet Union, as Drieu believed international socialism and communism did.[93]

While Drieu's economic and social views were reactionary, his political and cultural conceptions were radical. Economic systems were less to blame for present conditions than the bodies and minds of Frenchmen that had grown soft and decadent. Drieu was especially sensitive to these shortcomings, as he had always been tall, awkward, and unathletic. Seeing himself as the product of a too-comfortable bourgeois upbringing, he sought to compensate for his inadequacies by attaching himself to various sources of strength outside of himself.[94] Drieu projected his own self-disgust onto France, and blamed his country, not himself, for his own physical and moral weakness. Drieu now saw fascism not only as the best way to combat decadence, but also as a way to reconcile and elevate both the physical body and the spiritual mind:

> The deepest definition of Fascism is this: it is the political movement which leads most frankly, most radically towards the restoration of the body—health, dignity, fullness, heroism—towards the defense of man against the large town and the machine.[95]

Drieu saw the need for the emergence of a "new man" created from the ground up, a man able to combine political idealism and physical strength, both a militant and an athlete.[96] Drieu hoped fascism would produce a man of a new "virile disposition" who would only reach his fullest potential by acquiring the courage "to have advanced his body to reach the point to which he has advanced his thought."[97]

Drieu was like many fascist writers who expected the creation of a fascist state to bring about a new breed of man, the *homo fascista*, a "complete" man overcoming the fragmenting forces of mass society and industrialization. Standing triumphant in a Darwinian world where might always makes right, he was to be a man of energy, virility, force, and action—a hero, yet an individual who recognized the value and strength of the cohesive group, of order, discipline, and authority.[98]

Drieu's conception of the "new man" first found its concrete form in the person of his friend, André Malraux. In 1930, Drieu had published "Malraux, the New Man," praising Malraux for boldly addressing the most fundamental problems of the times. Malraux's leftist leanings did not initially bother Drieu, because he saw in him the "raw man" who had found the perfect union of a life of vigorous action with a life of intense thought, which gave his writing the force and conviction of reality.[99]

By the late 1930s, Drieu seemed to think Jacques Doriot of the Parti Populaire Française (PPF) was also an embodiment of this "new man." Doriot had been a communist mayor of Saint-Denis, but had been expelled from the party due to conflicts with Party discipline. Formed in 1936 in reaction to the leftist Popular Front government, the PPF was an amalgamation of rightist ideology and communist organizational structures which drew from both Right and Left. Drieu was inspired by Doriot's physical vigor and athletic appearance, and rejoiced that Doriot:

> [S]tands before France not as a fat-bellied intellectual of the last century watching his 'sick mother' and puffing at his radical pipe, but as an athlete squeezing this debilitated body, breathing his own health into its mouth.[100]

There is some suggestion of latent homosexuality in Drieu's attraction to force, strength and masculine group experiences.[101] More important, however, were the results of such attractions, for in the case of Doriot, Drieu hoped that his youth, energy, and physical vigor would transform a France of apathy, flabbiness, and decadence into a land of youthful vigor that relished sports and outdoor activities. Drieu also hoped that the PPF would instigate a fascist coup, defend French national security, and provide the type of joyful camaraderie that he had missed since his days with the Surrealists. It provided none of these for Drieu, and he left the PPF in 1938 over Doriot's open support of the Munich Settlement. His letter of resignation to Doriot complained that "you betrayed us, you did not want to save France. You remained inert, enveloped in disbelief and bad faith."[102]

With the failure of the PPF or any other French fascist party to seize power, along with French appeasement of Hitler in 1938, Drieu realized that "in France, a revolution instituted by Frenchmen was impossible. A revolution could come only from outside."[103] No longer believing in the political resources of France or England, and fearing the intrusion of foreign empires such as the United States and the Soviet Union, Drieu lamented that "I have seen no other recourse than in the genius of Hitler and Hitlerism. . . . Hitlerism appeared to me more than ever as the last rampart of any liberty in Europe."[104] Drieu had visited Nazi Germany in 1934 and had attended the Nuremberg rallies. Visiting again in 1936, he was impressed by the fascists' ability to galvanize and remold the state and inject it with a sense of rediscovered spiritual values. Drieu believed that the German fascists were moving towards a "spiritual" and aesthetic conception of society.[105]

Drieu had now put his faith in "Hitlerian man," a new breed of German youth—tough, athletic, and Spartan. He believed that Germany had produced legions of this new prototype which had surpassed the physically and morally inferior Anglo-Saxon man. He conjured up images of a German "wolf-man" from ancient German lore, but this time clad in black leather and armed with American gangster machine guns. While Germany had succeeded in cultivating this "new man," Drieu also pictured various antecedents, such as the Christian crusader, the Spanish conquistador, the colonial adventurer of the nineteenth century, and the American gangster of the 1920s.[106]

French fascism relied heavily on myths. Its proponents conjured up a glorious mythical past based on ancestor worship and the *"pays réel"* or the "eternal" nation characterized by order, hierarchical elitism, and authority. This language of mythical symbols and images that had provided the foundation of past order had to be reasserted in the modern day in order to provide fascism with an identity. These myths were conjured up to betray and deceive a believing public by appealing to irrational passions rather than intelligence.[107] However, fascists like Drieu seem to have left themselves susceptible to the power of their own deceptions.

Communism had provided Breton and the Surrealists with some degree of direction and cohesion and had served as proof of their revolutionary committment. While the Surrealists may have used communism as a shield against absorption into the dilettant and bohemian Parisian artistic world,[108] Breton nevertheless had a "spiritual" conception of society and man that far surpassed the communist vision. While the Surrealists had always supported the need for social revolution, Breton saw it as an oversimplification to suppose that the barriers that kept man from fully adapting himself to life "would fortuitously disappear with the abolition of classes." Only when the revolution of the human mind and spirit could be freed from the inhibitions of artificial social concerns, would "the human spirit raised to new levels . . . break away for the first time towards a road without obstacles."[109]

For Breton, the true revolution of human consciousness and understanding would lead to the unification of the interior reality of dreams and the exterior reality outside of the mind, thus re-creating man as a more "complete" being. By the late 1930s, Breton was convinced communism could not address these goals. He realized Marxist man was artistically and intellectually confined to mediocrity, unable to pursue personal initiatives. Marxist man was no more than a slave to materialistic and economic forces. Lost as a cog in a machine in this collectivity, Marxist man could never achieve intellectual and spiritual emancipation.

One finds that Breton does not dwell on this concept of the "new man," perhaps because of his greater concern for the collective good, the liberation of *all* minds; yet he does consider the role of man and the poet in a future society. It was Surrealism itself that was expected to facilitate the formation of a "new man" by immersion into the "unknown," madness, insanity, dreams, chance, the subconscious, antirationalism, and the occult. Surrealist art and poetry would teach man to expand his vision of what was possible, and then lead the struggle to elevate reality to the level of his dreams. In addition, the Surrealist role in a post-revolutionary society would be to facilitate, guide, and encourage an emerging working class in the formation of an artistic identity that would be the first truly "human" culture.[110]

To facilitate and sustain the transformations that would bring about the "new man," the Surrealists would employ new myths and emblems through the creation of new objects or beings in painting, sculpture, and writing.[111] These new myths would be the foundation for a future society and provide a collective sensibility, neither particularly political, scientific, or religious, but addressing basic human problems that had been neglected by all previous erroneous systems of thought.[112]

Traces of this *"mythe nouveau"* could already be found in modern art and poetry, in the "poem-objects" of Breton, the collages of Max Ernst, the paintings of Salvador Dali, René Magritte, Giorgio de Chirico, Joan Miro, and the sculptures of Alberto Giacometti. Breton would proclaim that "the hour has come to promote a new myth, one that will carry man forward a stage further towards his ultimate destination. This undertaking is specifically that of Surrealism."[113]

After the break with communism, the Surrealists denounced political parties on both the Left and Right. They protested the spread of fascism, yet also faulted the communists and socialists for preserving capitalism by participating in bourgeois parliaments. In 1936, the Surrealists published *Neutralité? Non-sens, crime et trahison!* (Neutrality? Nonsense, crime and treason!), which assailed the French Popular Front government's policy of neutrality in the Spanish Civil War: "Get hold of yourself, Popular Front! Help the heroic *Frente popular!* Not just with speeches and resolutions, but with volunteers and equipment!"[114]

While the Surrealists faulted the French Popular Front for its non-intervention, they opposed Stalin's support for the Spanish Republic. They accused the Stalinists of fomenting intrigue and dissension among leftist parties and sabotaging the chances for proletarian victory by their support of a Republican government.[115] Breton became even more disgusted with Stalin when the Moscow trials surfaced between 1936 and 1938. His 1937 essay on the Second Moscow Trial likened Stalin's purges to the witch-hunts of the Middle Ages and lamented that "socialist thought will no longer be anything the day when it accepts the cheapening of human dignity."[116]

Breton argued that the trials were really an extension of the Stalinist vendetta against the exiled Leon Trotsky. Breton had always been sympathetic to Trotsky, and the Surrealists' break with the Communist Party left the group free to take the Bolshevik intellectual and revolutionary war hero as their champion. Breton admired Trotsky's consistent revolutionary position and his interest in the arts with a veneration that bordered on hero-worship. While he never referred to Trotsky as a "new man," he regarded him in much the same manner that Drieu had regarded Malraux and Doriot. Breton was able to visit Trotsky in Mexico in 1938, and he admitted that "my heart beat fast" at the prospect of meeting one whose life was "incomparably more dramatic than any other." The very appearance and presence of Trotsky moved Breton:

> The deep blue eyes, the remarkable face, the abundant silver locks. . . . [H]e radiates from his whole person something electrifying. . . . a depth of unaltered fresh youthfulness. . . . [T]here is no greater intensity of spirit than his.[117]

In the course of their visit, Breton and Trotsky jointly produced *Pour un art révolutionnaire indépendant* (Manifesto for an independent revolutionary art), which emphatically demanded freedom for art in the face of repressive fascist and communist regimes. Their argument was not for the freedom of "pure" art for art's sake, for they believed that true art could be nothing but revolutionary. However, the artist would never be able to adequately serve the struggle unless he was entirely free to express his own inner interpretation of the struggle. Their manifesto ended with the exhortation: "The independence of art—for the revolution. The revolution—for the complete freedom of art!"[118]

Back in Paris, Breton remained faithful to Trotskyite ideas, writing against the French Popular Front government, Stalinism, and fascism, while supporting the working class and the individual liberties of all men.[119] While playing the role of guardian of political and artistic liberties in the repressive atmosphere of the 1930s may have been an admirable pursuit, their voices went unheard in the swirling maelstrom of approaching war.

COMMITMENT TO PERSONAL BELIEFS

While both men had searched for a political party that would be compatible with their larger aesthetic, spiritual, and intellectual philosophies, neither was permanently able to embrace any political formula other than one of his own creation. Consequently Drieu remained committed to fascism, and Breton continued to stress the political and humanitarian elements of Surrealism. Having settled upon their respective positions, they remained committed to the end.

With the fall of France in 1940, Drieu had thrown in his lot with the Nazis as the greatest possibility for the political federation of Europe and the spiritual regeneration of Frenchmen. By the end of 1940 Drieu was the editor of the collaborationist *Nouvelle Revue française* in Paris and the close friend of Otto Abetz, the German ambassador to France. Drieu never saw his collaboration as treason, for he believed that France had to be radically transformed by the violent revolution of an outside force in order to survive. In 1945 he explained, "I have always been a nationalist and an internationalist at the same time." He argued that "ever since my first poems written in the trenches and the hospitals in 1915 and 1916, I have aligned myself as a French patriot and a European patriot," and that even "after the First World war, I continued to concern myself with France, her survival, her pride."[120] Drieu claimed to be devoted to France, but as Grover points out, his passion had the characteristics of an illness, as his concern for France was often expressed in anxiety, spite, and even hatred.[121]

Drieu's hatred was at times directed against his own countrymen. As his collaboration deepened, he accepted and supported the anti-Semitic policies of the Nazis. He identified Jews with a decadence that he had previously blamed on all Frenchmen. Despite his acceptance of racial theories in the abstract, Drieu did use his influence to save several Jewish friends, including his first wife, from the hands of the Gestapo. In *Fascist Intellectual Drieu La Rochelle*, Robert Soucy points out that Drieu's acceptance of racism contradicted basic conceptions of man and nationalism that he had embraced most of his life. The late adoption of anti-Semitism seems to have been a reflection of personal weakness in failing to resist adherence to the "intellectual vogue" of the Nazi ideology of the 1940s.[122]

By 1942 the Allies had turned the tide of the war by landing in North Africa and Hitler had been put on the defensive. Drieu now expressed disgust with the Nazis for failing to bring about social revolution, European unity, or spiritual regeneration. While many collaborators were withdrawing their support from Hitler after 1942, Drieu increased his by rejoining the PPF, by now one of the most committed collaborationist organizations.

Yet, in the face of such trying times, Drieu lamented that he had not remained outside of political affairs. In his diary of 1944-45, Drieu revealed that "politics were only really a source of curiosity for me and the object of distant speculation. I have a horror of everyday affairs and men quickly disgust or bore me."[123] Had he afforded himself the luxury, Drieu might have lived his life in utter detachment from political affairs. Yet, in addition to rejoining the PPF, Drieu also claimed in the last weeks of his life to support Stalin as the last hope for Europe. The eleventh-hour conversion to these positions was most likely an act of exasperation and a parting shot at his critics, as he once told a friend that he just wanted to give his many enemies a good reason for loathing and killing him.[124]

He also realized that upon the liberation of France, the Resistance, including many communists, would instigate a bloody purge of all collaborators. Drieu turned down chances to seek asylum in Spain, Argentina, England, or Switzerland and decided to stay in France to face defeat. Historian Barnett Singer confirms that Drieu was locked in the "prison of his [fascist] personality," a slave to the emptiness that his shattered dreams had left him.[125] In his *Exorde* (Final reckoning), he presented a hypothetical trial defense in which he explained his duty as an intellectual to take risks, to act outside of the crowd, as a Europeanist, not just a nationalist; yet in the end he insisted on perishing with his cause by demanding that his jurors: "Be true to the pride of the Resistance as I am true to the pride of the Collaborators. . . . [W]e played and I lost. I demand the death penalty."[126] Rather than facing a real trial, Drieu played the part of his own executioner by taking fatal doses of poison on 15 March 1945. Drieu's commitment to his cause and acceptance of death reveals that to Drieu, fascism *as he knew it* was much more than a political expedient, but a way of life based on heroism, risk, and ultimately, sacrifice.

André Breton remained faithful to his belief in the political, artistic, and spiritual powers of Surrealism. Years of criticism, opposition, and distrust had never forced Breton to flag in his defense of Surrealism against external constraints, especially Communist Party directives:

> I have defended for the author, for the painter . . . the right to act not in conformity with political orders. . . . I have always shown myself irreducible on this point. . . . [W]hen I wanted to join the Communist Party, this attitude brought me before numerous control commissions. . . . I fought ceaselessly . . . to allow art to continue to be an *aim*, under no pretext becoming merely a means.[127]

The outbreak of World War II found Breton back in uniform until his demobilization after the fall of France, at which time he sought safe haven in Marseilles. In the hostile atmosphere of the Vichy government, Breton found himself under arrest and his works censored. His release was obtained by the American Committee of Aid to Intellectuals, and Breton spent the rest of the war in the United States. While in the United States, Breton published an uncharacteristically apolitical review, *VVV*, and did broadcasts for the Voice of America radio program. With some free time on his hands, Breton had an opportunity to investigate some interests congenial to Surrealism: he read a collection of works by the nineteenth-century utopian socialist Charles Fourier, and visited American Indian reservations in the Far West. Yet his thoughts never strayed far from the conflict at hand. In 1942, he gave a speech at Yale University reaffirming his commitment to:

> Liberty! . . . it is the only word which could burn the tongue of Goebbels, it is the one word that his colleague, Petain, could not stand. . . . From one war to the other, one can say that the passionate quest for liberty has constantly been the motivation of Surrealist activity.[128]

Despite Breton's exhortations of liberty, many of his critics did not miss the fact that Surrealism was almost entirely absent from World War II France. Yet, Breton had never claimed to be a patriot. As an early Dadaist and Surrealist, he had insulted and denounced nearly everything that France held as sacred. Anna Balakian points out that the artists who came from all over Europe to join the Surrealists left their ethnic differences behind. While Surrealism was internationalist, it produced a *de*nationalization as well.[129] In 1935 Breton had written that they believed in a European-wide, or a universal culture rather than nationalist ones, and made it clear that this allowed them to value aspects of German as well as French culture. Breton remained "firmly opposed to any claim by a Frenchman to the sole cultural patrimony of France, and to all exaltation of a sentiment of Frenchness in France."[130] Yet, Breton's consistent opposition to fascism and defense of the artistic, intellectual, and social liberties of all men encompassed the boundaries of France no less than other countries.

Even after World War II, when Breton returned to France to find Surrealism under attack and the existentialism of Sartre and Camus *au courant*, he stood firm by the tenets of Surrealism. In response to post-war criticisms that Surrealism had exhausted its historical purpose, Breton argued that the very criticism of his opponents "was the most certain guarantee of the deep insertion of Surrealist ideas into the soil on which we walk," as it served to reiterate and reinforce the longevity and timelessness of Surrealism.[131]

DIVERGENT PATHS: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BRETON AND DRIEU LA ROCHELLE

HAVING traced their lives from early childhood, through intellectual adolescence, to the maturity of their political thought, it is evident that Drieu La Rochelle and Breton shared a number of intellectual, aesthetic, and political goals. The following pages will address on more conceptual lines some of the major differences between the two in order to account more fully for the vast divide between their final political positions.

IN SEEKING to understand the political and intellectual evolution of Drieu La Rochelle, one must examine the forces that turned Drieu towards fascism, and when exactly he can be said to have become fascist. Drieu had been hesitant about fascism before 1934, as fascism was not as prevalent in France as it was in Germany and Italy. However, he became convinced of the dynamic and virile possibilities of fascism after the 1934 Paris riots. While Drieu may not have fully realized his fascistic tendencies until 1934, Frederic Grover argues that Drieu was fascist ever since the Great War. Grover notes that a number of Drieu's wartime writings, such as *Interrogation* (1917) and *La Comédie de Charleroi* (1934), reflected an underlying fascism. Grover notes that these works emphasized such themes as an antibourgeois sentiment, hatred of the old generation, a general antirationalism, a preoccupation with death, a sense of social elitism, and a clear hierarchical sense of the leader/follower relationship.[132] In *La Comédie de*

Charleroi, Drieu depicted his fellow soldiers as "mediocre" and weak, and boasted of the courage and social position that allowed him to rise in the heat of battle to assert his natural leadership abilities. Having proven himself a leader, he believed that men "would be unable to refuse me anything I might ask from them. . . . [D]eep down . . . they were only waiting to be called."[133] Indeed, Drieu later wrote in 1934 that "In my first civilian suit, holding the passionate ideas of *Interrogation*, the collection of my war poems, I was entirely fascist without being aware of it."[134] What Grover seems to miss in this effort to explain how the First World War made Drieu a fascist is the fact that many of the themes and issues that Drieu was addressing during and after the war were being discussed by many intellectuals, including those of a leftist ideology such as the Dadaists and Surrealists. He is correct in pointing out that fascist movements of the 1930s were comprised largely of First World War veterans, but only a small minority of those who fought in the war were later drawn to fascism. Many leftist movements after World War I were also heavily comprised of veterans.

Certainly the war helped to intensify many of Drieu's beliefs concerning the decline of Western civilization, yet there is evidence that his fascist roots predated 1914. Drieu's membership in the antidemocratic and nationalistic *Cercle Proudhon* between 1911 and 1914 exposed him to elitist ideas concerning the virility of youth, the value of hierarchy, and the preservation of order and tradition. In a 1934 article, Drieu recalled the group's early fascism:

> There were young men . . . who were animated by a love of heroism and violence. . . . The marriage of nationalism and socialism was already projected. In France, about the *Action Française* . . . there existed the nebula of a kind of fascism. It was a young fascism that feared neither difficulties nor contradictions.[135]

The predisposition for fascism can arguably be seen in other areas as well. Drieu was raised a conservative, and may not have had far to go to become a fascist. Barrie Cadwallader argues that Drieu was a "victim" of an inevitable and "pre-existing" fascism deeply smoldering under bourgeois class comforts and values.[136] Drieu had admitted in 1934 that "for me, I know that there is something in fascism that responds to my natural tendencies."[137]

The product of a comfortable petit bourgeois upbringing and education, Drieu returned from the Great War deeply disenchanted with the decadent bourgeois society that had led him into the trauma of war and its turbulent aftermath. Jean-Paul Sartre pointed out in 1949 that while many fascist intellectuals came from the bourgeoisie, they were those who had rejected their bourgeois class origins, and consequently, were "elements poorly assimilated by the indigenous community."[138]

Fascism appealed to bourgeois like Drieu who were least sure of their footing in bourgeois society. Perhaps Drieu saw in fascism a chance to regain this footing, for Soucy notes that Drieu found fascism a "logical, coherent, inspiring philosophy of life" deeply rooted in many of the intellectual traditions of the West.[139]

Perhaps the most compelling reason for Drieu's fascism was his overwhelming moral obsession with decadence. Drieu admitted that "I am a fascist because I have measured the progress of decadence in Europe. I saw in fascism the only way to contain and reduce this decadence. . . ."[140] Fascism seemed to be the only way to awaken Frenchmen and pull them out of the cafes, bistros, and dance halls, and to compel them to regain a long since forgotten tradition of political activism and physical virility. For Drieu, fascism was the last hope for France, Europe, and Western civilization.

BRETON's bourgeois upbringing, education, and military service were similar to Drieu's, yet he followed quite different political possibilities. Perhaps Breton did not have far to go to become a communist. Breton's call issued after the First World War for a radical transformation of society and a new definition of man was soon to be echoed by the Communist Party in the early 1920s. By the mid-1920s, he was convinced of the value of political alignment, just as the Communist Party began to appreciate the value of intellectual support. The mid-1920s was an "inspirational phase" for communism as the party officially adopted a position of neutrality towards the arts. The promise of free artistic expression seemed to be offered by the Soviet Union under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky.[141] Helena Lewis notes that for a time in the 1920s, the Surrealists *were* the intellectual voice of the Communist Party, and by their initial participation, encouraged other intellectuals to commit themselves to the party.[142]

For Breton, communism offered not only a revolutionary program, but also an internationalism and a philosophical tradition based upon the dialectical historicism of Hegel, the pragmatic applications of Marx, and the humanitarianism of Lenin and Trotsky. He was moved by Trotsky's biography of Lenin and came to see in marxism both a revolutionary and an intellectual system that promised a dramatic and far-reaching reorganization and a new dynamism unattached to the familiar French revolutionary traditions of the Jacobin Convention and the Commune.[143]

Breton saw communism as the movement most likely to achieve the social upheaval that would propel Surrealism closer to its goal of the liberation of the mind. He believed that these two revolutions complemented one another and affirmed that "we live established on the principle of all revolutionary action, even when it takes as its point of departure the class struggle."[144] Even after the

Surrealists had broken with communism, they always admired the humanitarian and liberating aspirations of marxism.

PESSIMISM VERSUS OPTIMISM

BOTH DRIEU and Breton were drawn to their respective political philosophies due in part to differing personality traits that made their respective choices, if not inevitable, then at least natural. A closer look at their respective personalities reveals that a certain innate pessimism may have turned Drieu toward fascism, while a greater optimism may have directed Breton towards communism.

DRIEU wanted to rejuvenate and reinvigorate France, a task accomplished only by joining in federation with all of Europe to resist outside threats posed by expanding foreign empires. Drieu saw fascism as the only way to impose this new strength upon a weak and decadent France. He was drawn to the notion of Spartan sacrifice entailed in fascism. He believed that "fascism facilitates the open recognition of one fact: universal impoverishment, the necessary reduction of the universal standard of living," for he felt that there was "at the basis of the moral force in all fascism, a disposition for sacrifice, a willingness to fight."[145] In the mid 1930s, Drieu observed this propensity for sacrifice and deprivation in totalitarian Germany and wondered "if the poverty that shows itself in Germany does not hide a moral richness," for he believed that the only real hope for Europe could be found "under the sign of stoicism."[146]

It is apparent that Drieu's fascism was meant to be restrictive and domineering, not a means of elevating man, but of forcing him into the correct physical posture and fixed mindset. Frenchmen were to give themselves over to the Nazis. Sartre suggested that a certain sexual relationship characterized the collaborator's submission to his master. The collaborator played the feminine role of charmer and seducer in order to gain the strength that he did not possess. He perceived "a curious mixture of masochism and homosexuality" in the collaborative relationship.[147] Drieu's submissive fascism held little hope for any true regeneration of his countrymen.

Having grown up enduring the scorn of his father, sensing the coldness of his bourgeois family life, tasting disappointment after the war and discontent with politics, Drieu's outlook was pessimistic. His self-hatred and disgust at his own physical weakness and proclivity for pleasure were also profound. He despised himself for being too weak to mould himself physically and mentally into the ideal man he hoped to be. Drieu was also plagued by an inner dilemma which could only resolve itself in pessimism. Throughout his life, Drieu aspired to be both the writer and intellectual, as well as the man of action, the warrior, the hero. During the First World War, Drieu had revelled in his new-found capacity for heroic action; but after 1918, began to question his ability to answer the call to action ever again. Consequently, his later fascism was a yearning to regain the lost vigor and dynamism that he had not seen since his days in the trenches. He desperately wanted to wield both the sword and the pen, and felt that it was absolutely necessary for an artist to "have actions accompany his thoughts," and that there be "a direct connection, apparent to all, between this action and this thought."[148]

The "Cult of Self" had been split in two: the Self of imagined grandeur and dynamism, and the actual Self of hesitation, ambivalence, and self-doubt. He had "loved the war because for four years I could dream of action and act enough for my dream to appear to me 'to be real.'"[149] For Drieu, action had been replaced with the romanticism of action. Drieu never succeeded in regaining the force and vigor that he had known in combat. He remained only an observer of many of the events and uprisings of the interwar years. As Grover notes, Drieu remained a "philosophy of violence in slippers."[150]

One gets the sense that the despair shared by writers like Drieu was a very personal, egocentric concern less for the condition of France or others, than for their own artistic and social contentment. In 1927, the renowned leftist writer, André Gide, recorded in his diary:

> Met on the boulevard Drieu La Rochelle. . . . All these young men are frightfully concerned with themselves. They never know how to get away from themselves. Barrès was their very bad master; his teaching leads to despair, to boredom. It is to get away from this that many among them hurl themselves headlong into . . . politics.[151]

Many disillusioned intellectuals sought escapes such as politics, Catholicism, and literature in order to separate themselves from their own egocentric selves that fed on self-doubt and despair. Many were concerned with the frightening possibility of losing their identities in the modern world of large mechanized industry, high technology, and mass political movements. As intellectuals abandoned the democratic ideal that jeopardized the role and merits of the individual, fascism appeared to offer the exaltation of the individual as well as his protection within the traditional group structure.[152] In his essay on Drieu's political thought, William R. Tucker argues that Drieu's attraction to fascism was not simply a response to conformist or totalitarian values, but was inspired by an individualist orientation. For men like Drieu, fascism offered the opportunity to fulfill their heroic visions of the dynamic individual creating a new world.[153] Yet Sartre believed that Drieu's self-hatred could only translate into a hatred of the new world, and explained that "for this pessimist, the ascension of fascism ultimately corresponded to the suicide of humanity."[154]

André breton had certainly at times felt the grip of despair and emptiness, yet had been able to rise above it. He also wanted men to wake up and open their eyes to a much larger and richer world. His was a revolution of the spirit, a broadening of human consciousness for artistic liberation as well as the improvement of all human conditions. It was based on a profound respect for life and a great confidence in the possibilities of man.

For a time, Breton viewed communism as the greatest hope for the liberation of man from his social and economic fetters. Many of his writings reflected a Marxist emphasis on class struggle and capitalist exploitation, and conveyed a deep concern for the human condition, the quality and sacredness of life, and basic rights of justice and decency. The 1925 Surrealist manifesto against the Moroccan war, *La Révolution d'abord et toujours!*, protested exploitation by Western imperialists where "for over a century human dignity has been dragged down to the level of an exchange value."[155] Breton would continue to write in support of subjected peoples and exploited races in addition to the French working classes.

In the 1930s, Breton's deep commitment to efforts opposing the "frightful disease . . . called fascism,"[156] were motivated by his association of fascism with all the worst aspects of exploitive and repressive capitalism. Lamenting fascism's subversive influence on standards of living and basic human rights, Breton's 1934 essay complained that "Hitler, Dolfuss and Mussolini have either drowned in blood or subjected to corporal humiliation . . . generations straining towards a more tolerable and more worthy form of existence."[157] Breton opposed fascism not because it was the enemy of communism, but because it rejected the freedom and liberty so inherent to Breton's humanistic concept of Surrealism.

In the 1940s, Breton renewed his committment to human social conditions. He found in the French utopian socialists of the early nineteenth century a philosophy blending poetry and social reform that was infinitely more congenial to Surrealism than had been the dogmatic materialism of the communists. Breton admired Charles Fourier's (1772-1837) vision of universal harmony achieved through peaceful means, where human thoughts and passions were in total accord with the laws of nature.[158] His interest in Fourier and other utopian socialists reflected his aspiration to find a humanitarian philosophy that was above party politics and offered hope and optimism for the future social condition of man.

In his later years, Breton's biting political attacks mellowed as his optimistic outlook and lust for life were ever prevalent. Anna Balakian describes his later years as dedicated to art, love, and friendship, offering his knowledge and creativity to a whole new generation of enthusiastic seekers. He worked to advance the development of international Surrealism while keeping ever abreast of new intellectual, artistic, and political currents in society.[159]

Perhaps Breton's most deeply moving work, displaying his lust for life and optimism in the future, was the 1937 letter he wrote to his eight-month-old daughter, Aube, which appeared at the end of *L'Amour fou* (Mad love). He expressed what he considered in retrospect to have been his *raison d'etre*: "I had chosen to be the guide . . . to not become unworthy of that power which, in the direction of eternal love, had made me see and granted me the rarer privilege of *making others see*." He hoped that his daughter would "take joy in living," and in the last line, bestowed what is perhaps André Breton's greatest blessing: "My wish is that you may be loved to the point of madness."[160] Breton later explained that his life had been dedicated "to that which I hold as good and just. . . . I have lived even up to today as I had dreamed of living. . . . I have never been short of companions . . . and I have never been deprived of human warmth."[161]

In addition to an optimistic outlook on life, Breton was also able to spare himself the agony over the dilemma of action and words that frustrated Drieu by generally confining his political involvement to the realm of literature. Breton relied on the power of the word to provoke awareness, to outrage bourgeois society, and to spark social revolution. Breton and the Surrealists were often criticized for esoteric and introverted behavior at times when others were mobilizing for action. In his memoirs, Ilya Ehrenburg recalled that he had attacked the Surrealists in the late 30's for "organizing discussions on the sex, character, and potential behavior of a glass bead or a scrap of velvet at a time when the fascists just across the Rhine were burning books and killing people."[162] It is true that when he had the opportunity to act on behalf of the Communist Party or take part in the wars or upheavals of the interwar years, he usually found it convenient to avoid direct action. Yet, by living his life according to his own standards of action, Breton was able to avoid the pessimism and self-doubt that plagued Drieu.

CONCLUSION

BRETON and Drieu La Rochelle were intellectuals with far-reaching visions for the future of humanity who found themselves inhibited by the inability to reconcile the roles of artist and political activist. Since neither could fully commit to pre-existing political positions, each devised his own eclectic arrangement, which more often than not, proved as ephemeral as the realm of dream and imagination from which they were born. Breton stood behind an artistic philosophy that was incompatible with communism or any other practical political program. Drieu's fascism was vague and independent and made meaningful action nearly impossible. Sartre pointed out that both Drieu and Breton were artists in search of the *absolute*, but identified the absolute with the impossible, and so sought the violent means of political extremism to bring about the final apocalypse, that would somehow result in man's salvation and resurrection. Living in a "comfortable and lavish period when despair was still a luxury," both were merely "proclaimers of catastrophe in the time of the fat cows."[163] Yet Sartre believed that when the time for action came, they were silent.

Drieu and Breton were not alone, for many of the individuals and organizations on both the Right and the Left had built doctrines on principles that were too esoteric and idealistic to be effective. Young interwar intellectuals placed their blind faith in fascist leagues in search of answers and leadership, but discovered only empty rhetoric and inactivity. Fascist groups paraded in sharp uniforms, collected arms, and drew up plans for overthrowing the state, but never implemented them. Even the promises of Maurras and the Action Française proved hollow. At the time of the 1934 riots, it looked to many as if Maurras could easily have seized power to create a fascist state. However, brave talk translated into inactivity when the time for action came and went. Eugen Weber observes that perhaps rhetoric and saber-rattling was all that many Frenchmen really wanted, for during the riots:

> Men had stampeded, fought, and died so that a coalition government, yet one more, could reassure the country. Perhaps the country really did not want more than such reassurance; it welcomed tin soldiers painted to look like steel, clay senators painted to look like marble, and soft words disguised to look like facts. All sides competed in the make-believe.[164]

For those who had placed their hopes in such futile delusions, disappointment, disgust, and despair were the inevitable consequences. Fed by extremism aggravated by the vitriolic campaigns of both the Right and Left, much of the interwar period seems to have been plagued by a fear and hatred that poisoned political problem-solving. Caught up in this cycle of fear, mistrust, and recrimination, national solutions were impossible, and no one person or party could ever emerge victorious.[165]

Definitive explanations for the political orientations of Drieu La Rochelle and Breton are difficult to ascertain. This paper has sought to supply a number of viable possibilities, and discuss a wide range of issues and concerns of the period in order to illuminate the political and social decisions of Drieu and Breton. It is obvious that both saw similar symptoms of a sick world, and both diagnosed these ills in similar ways, yet Drieu had a dim view of the prognosis, while Breton remained optimistic. Accordingly, each prescribed quite different courses of rehabilitation for an infirm Europe.

Neither man can be lauded for political achievements, but while each might be faulted for the extravagance and impracticality of his political vision, it is evident that practical solutions to the political, economic, and intellectual dilemmas of interwar France were elusive. The dilemmas and issues that plagued Drieu and Breton were the questions of their times, faced by thousands, from the young veterans of 1914, the radical extremists of the 1930s, and the Vichy collaborators of 1940. In struggling to face and overcome the crucial issues of the interwar period, Drieu and Breton can be said to be representatives of their age, sharing concerns with one another, and with many other Frenchmen as well. Both men sought solace and stability by trying to sort out what it meant to be an artist, a Frenchman, a European, and indeed, a human being, in a world assaulted on all sides by the uncertainties of change and the mixed blessings of modernity. But in a testament to the uncertainty and disorder of their times, they, like so many others, failed to arrive at truly satisfactory solutions to the problems of their world.

ENDNOTES

1. Stephen A. Schuker, *The End of French Predominance in Europe: The Financial Crisis of 1924 and the Adoption of the Dawes Plan* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1976), for a discussion of the financial and economic reasons for French decline.

2. Eugen Weber, "France," in Hans Rogger and Eugen Weber, *The European Right: A Historical Profile* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 104. Weber cites the interment of the ashes of Jean Jaurès in the Pantheon on 23 November 1924 as the date which spurred vigorous reaction on the part of Right-wing fascistic groups in France.

3. Ibid., 40.

4. Barrie Cadwallader, *Crisis of the European Mind: A Study of André Malraux and Drieu La Rochelle* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1981), 26.

5. David Caute, *Communism and the French Intellectuals* (New York: Macmillan, 1964), 136.

6. Anna Balakian, *André Breton: Magus of Surrealism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 9-10.

7. Ibid., 11.

8. Ibid., 12.

9. André Breton, *Entretiens* (1913-1952) (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), 10.

10. For a more in-depth discussion of these writers' literary influence on Breton, see Balakian, *André Breton,* 17-23.

11. Breton, *Entretiens,* 22-23.

12. Ibid., 40.

13. Robert Soucy, *Fascist Intellectual Drieu La Rochelle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 25-28.

14. Ibid., 34-37.

15. Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, *Récit Secret suivi de Journal* (1944-1945) *et d'Exorde* (Paris: Gallimard, 1951), 21.

16. Soucy, *Fascist Intellectual,* 119.

17. Ibid., 44-45.

18. Drieu La Rochelle, quoted in Pierre Varillon and Henri Rambaud, *Enquête sur les maîtres de la jeune littérature* (Paris, 1923), as found in Soucy, *Fascist Intellectual,* 46.

19. Jack J. Roth, *The Cult of Violence: Sorel and the Sorelians* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 121-23.

20. Soucy, *Fascist Intellectual,* 47.

21. Drieu La Rochelle, *La Comédie de Charleroi* (Paris: Gallimard, 1934), 66.

22. Drieu La Rochelle, "Débuts littéraires," (1943) in *Sur Les Écrivains,* ed. Frédéric Grover (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), 36.

23. Drieu La Rochelle, *La Comédie de Charleroi,* 31.

24. Ibid., 70.

25. Drieu La Rochelle, "Débuts littéraires," 36-37.

26. Soucy, *Fascist Intellectual,* 54.

27. Frederic J. Grover, *Drieu La Rochelle and the Fiction of Testimony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958), 58.

28. Soucy, *Fascist Intellectual,* 103.

29. Drieu La Rochelle, *Interrogation* (1917), quoted in Soucy, *Fascist Intellectual,* 103-4.

30. Drieu La Rochelle, "Mes premiers écrits . . . ," (Winter 1939-40), in *Sur les Écrivains,* 177.

31. Breton, *Entretiens,* 21-22.

32. Ibid., 29.

33. Balakian, *André Breton,* see pages 28-34 for a more complete discussion of Dr. Janet's

influence on Breton.

34. Breton, *Entretiens,* 27,45.

35. Ibid., 50-51, for discussion of Breton's disillusionment, lack of direction.

36. Ibid., 40.

37. Louis Aragon, "Manifeste du mouvement dada," in Helena Lewis, *The Politics of Surrealism* (New York: Paragon, 1988), 5.

38. Breton, "Deux Manifestes Dada," in *Les Pas perdus* (Paris: Gallimard, 1924), 64-66.

39. Drieu La Rochelle, "Le Retour du Soldat," in *Mesure de la France suivi de Écrits 1939-1940* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1964), 26-29.

40. James F. McMillan, *Dreyfus to De Gaulle: Politics and Society in France 1898-1969* (London: Edward Arnold, 1985), 77-78.

41. Drieu La Rochelle, *Mesure de la France,* 114.

42. Soucy, *Fascist Intellectual,* 58.

43. Drieu La Rochelle, in an interview with Frédéric Lefevre, "Une Heure Avec Drieu La Rochelle," *Nouvelles littéraires,* 2 January 1926, quoted in Soucy, *Fascist Intellectual,* 58.

44. Soucy, *Fascist Intellectual,* 58.

45. Drieu La Rochelle, Breton et al., "L'Affaire Barrès," (1921) in *Oeuvres Complètes,* ed. Marguerite Bonnet (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), 430-433.

46. Breton, "Après Dada," (1922) in *Oeuvres Complètes,* 260-61.

47. Balakian, *André Breton,* 56.

48. Breton, "Lachez Tout," in *Les Pas perdus,* 110.

49. Breton, "Manifeste du Surréalisme," (1924) in *Manifestes du Surréalisme,* ed. Jean-Jacques Pauvert (Montreuil: Les Presses de la S.I.P., 1962), 40.

50. *La Révolution Surréaliste,* 1 December 1924: 1-2.

51. Drieu La Rochelle, "Ne Nous la Faites pas à L'Oseille," statement appearing in *Un Cadavre* (18 October 1924), in *Tracts Surréalistes et Déclarations Collectives 1922-1939,* ed. José Pierre, vol. 1 (Paris: Le terrain vague, 1980), 22.

52. Breton, "Refus d'Inhumer," statement appearing in *Un Cadavre* (18 October 1924), in *Tracts Surréalistes et Déclarations Collectives,* 24.

53. Breton, *Entretiens,* 95.

54. Herbert S. Gershman, *The Surrealist Revolution in France* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969), 85.

55. André Breton, "Lettre Ouverte à M. Paul Claudel, Ambassadeur de France au Japon,"

(1 July 1925), in *Tracts Surréalistes et Déclarations Collectives*, 50.

56. Maurice Nadeau, *Histoire du Surréalisme suivi de Documents Surréalistes* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1964), 82.

57. Breton, *Entretiens*, 111-14. See also account of Saint-Pol-Roux Affair in Lewis, *Politics of Surrealism*, 25.

58. Lewis, *Politics of Surrealism*, 37.

59. Breton, "La Révolution D'Abord et Toujours!," *La Révolution Surréaliste*, no. 5, 15 October 1925: 31.

60. Breton, "Leon Trotsky; Lenine" *La Révolution Surréaliste*, no. 5, 15 October 1925: 29.

61. Drieu La Rochelle, "Mes premiers écrits . . . ," in *Sur Les Écrivains*, 175.

62. Drieu La Rochelle, *Écrits de Jeunesse* 1917-1927, in Soucy, *Fascist Intellectual*, 111.

63. Drieu La Rochelle, "Troisième Lettre aux Surréalistes sur l'Amitie et la Solitude," in *Sur Les Écrivains*, 67.

64. Ibid., 60.

65. Soucy, *Fascist Intellectual*, 59.

66. Drieu La Rochelle,"Troisième Lettre aux Surréalistes," in *Sur Les Écrivains*, 84.

67. Drieu La Rochelle, "La Véritable Erreur des Surréalistes," in *Sur Les Écrivains*, 47-48.

68. Soucy, *Fascist Intellectual*, 66-67.

69. Ibid., 67-68.

70. Ibid., 72.

71. Drieu La Rochelle, *Récit Secret*, 41.

72. Frank Field, *Three French Writers and the Great War: Studies in the Rise of Communism and Fascism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 101. See also Helena Lewis, *The Politics of Surrealism*, 120, for a brief explanation of the Amsterdam-Pleyel movement.

73. Drieu La Rochelle, "J'aimais la force . . . ," (1942) in *Sur les Écrivains*, 188.

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid.

76. Lewis, *Politics of Surrealism*, 56-57.

77. Breton, "Légitime Défense," (September 1926) in Maurice Nadeau, *Histoire du Surréalisme*, 235, 239.

78. Ibid., 237.

79. Breton et al.,"Second Manifeste du Surréalisme," (1930) in *Manifestes du Surréalisme*, 173, 185.

80. Lewis, *Politics of Surrealism*, 93.

81. Ibid., 97-106.

82. Louis Aragon, "Front rouge," (1931) in Maurice Nadeau, *Histoire du Surréalisme*, 336. Léon Blum and Ludovic-Oscar Frossard were socialist ministers, as was Marcel Déat until the early 1930s. Paul Boncour was a conservative politician.

83. Breton, *Entretiens*, 168.

84. Ibid., 173-74.

85. Breton, "Appèl è la Lutte," (10 February 1934) in *Tracts Surréalistes et Déclarations Collectives*, 262.

86. Robert S. Short, "The Politics of Surrealism, 1920-36," in *The Left Wing Intellectuals Between the Wars 1919-1939*, ed. Walter Laqueur and George L. Mosse (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966), 18-19.

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88. Breton, *Entretiens*, 176.

89. Ibid., 134.

90. Soucy, *Fascist Intellectual*, 152-54.

91. Ibid., 157-58.

92. Drieu La Rochelle, "L'Homme Mûr et Le Jeune Homme," *La Nouvelle Revue française*, no. 257 (February 1935): 202.

93. Soucy, *Fascist Intellectual*, 159-60.

94. Ibid., see the following pages for discussion of Drieu's concern for his own physical shortcomings: 39, 44-45, 204.

95. Drieu La Rochelle, *Chronique Politique 1934-1942*, quoted in Alastair Hamilton, *The Appeal of Fascism: A Study of Intellectuals and Fascism 1919-1945* (New York: Avon, 1971), 251.

96. Field, *Three French Writers*, 119.

97. Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, "Guerre et Révolution," *La Nouvelle Revue française*, no. 248 (May 1934): 887.

98. Robert J. Soucy, "The Nature of Fascism in France," in *International Fascism 1920-1945*, eds. Walter Laqueur and George L. Mosse (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 50-51.

99. Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, "Malraux, l'Homme Nouveau," *La Nouvelle Revue*

française (December 1930), in *Sur Les Écrivains*, 278-283.

100. Drieu La Rochelle, *Chronique Politique* 1934-1942, quoted in Alastair Hamilton, *The Appeal of Fascism*, 254.

101. Soucy, *Fascist Intellectual*, see the following pages for discussion of Drieu's possible homosexuality: 286, 291-92, 324-28.

102. Drieu La Rochelle, "Resignation Letter to Jacques Doriot," (6 January 1939), quoted in Grover, *Drieu La Rochelle, Vie, Oeuvres, Témoignages* (Paris: Gallimard, 1979), 40.

103. Drieu La Rochelle, *Récit Secret*, 93.

104. Drieu La Rochelle, "Bilan," *La Nouvelle Revue française*, no. 347 (January 1943): 105-106.

105. Drieu La Rochelle, "Mesure de l'Allemagne," *La Nouvelle Revue française*, no. 246 (March 1934): 458-59.

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107. Eugen Weber, "The Right: An Introduction," in *The European Right*, 21-24.

108. Short, "The Politics of Surrealism, 1920-36," in *The Left Wing Intellectuals Between the Wars*, 23-24.

109. Breton, *Les Vases Communicants* (Paris: Gallimard, 1955), 185, 190.

110. Balakian, *André Breton*, 165.

111. Balakian, *André Breton*, 156.

112. Clifford Browder, *André Breton: Arbiter of Surrealism* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1967), 146-47.

113. Breton, "Inaugural Break," (1947), in Rosemont, *What Is Surrealism?*, 343.

114. Breton et al., "Neutralité? Non-Sens, Crime et Trahison!," (1936) in *Tracts Surréalistes et Déclarations Collectives*, 303.

115. Lewis, *Politics of Surrealism*, 142.

116. Breton, "Discours d'André Breton à propos du Second Procès de Moscou," (1937) in *Tracts Surréalistes et Déclarations Collectives*, 308-309.

117. Breton, "Visite à Leon Trotsky," (talk given at the meeting of the *Parti Ouvrier Internationaliste* to commemorate the October Revolution, on 11 November 1938), in *La Clé des Champs* (Paris: Jean-Jacques Pauvert, 1967), 56-57.

118. André Breton and Leon Trotsky, "Pour un Art revolutionnaire independant," (25 July 1938) in *Tracts Surréalistes et Déclarations Collectives*, 337-39. This tract was originally signed by Diego Rivera in the place of Leon Trotsky, who was forbidden by the Mexican government to participate in any political activities.

119. Lewis, *Politics of Surrealism*, 154-59.

120. Drieu La Rochelle, *Récit Secret*, 91.

121. Grover, *Fiction of Testimony*, 249.

122. Soucy, *Fascist Intellectual*, 179-87.

123. Drieu La Rochelle, *Récit Secret*, 71.

124. Alastair Hamilton, in his introduction to Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, *Secret Journal and Other Writings*, xxxiii.

125. Barnett Singer, "The Prison of a Fascist Personality: Pierre Drieu La Rochelle," in *Modern France: Mind, Politics, Society* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980), 105.

126. Drieu La Rochelle, *Récit Secret*, 99.

127. Breton, "Visite à Leon Trotsky," in *La Clé des Champs*, 61.

128. Breton, "Situation du Surréalisme entre les deux guerres," (1942) (speech to French students of Yale University, 10 December 1942) in *La Clé des Champs*, 80-81.

129. Balakian, *André Breton*, 100.

130. Breton, "Discours au Congres des Ecrivains," (1935) in *Position Politique du Surréalisme* (Paris: Jean-Jacques Pauvert, 1962), 88.

131. Breton, *Entretiens*, 210.

132. Grover, *Fiction of Testimony*, 56.

133. Drieu La Rochelle, *La Comédie de Charleroi*, 39.

134. Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, *Socialiste Fasciste* (Paris: Gallimard, 1934), 220, as quoted in Grover, *Fiction of Testimony*, 22.

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136. Cadwallader, *Crisis of the European Mind*, 262.

137. Drieu La Rochelle, "Guerre et Révolution," *La Nouvelle Revue française*, no. 248 (May 1934): 887.

138. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Qu'est-ce qu'un Collaborateur?" in *Situations*, 3 (Paris: Gallimard, 1949), 46.

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140. Drieu La Rochelle, "Bilan", *La Nouvelle Revue française*, no. 347 (January 1943): 105.

141. Donald Drew Egbert, *Social Radicalism and the Arts, Western Europe: A Cultural*

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142. Lewis, *Politics of Surrealism*, 76.

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144. Breton, *Entretiens*, 111.

145. Drieu, "Mesure de l'Allemagne," *La Nouvelle Revue française*, no. 246 (March 1934): 450-51.

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147. Sartre, "Qu'est-ce qu'un Collaborateur?," 58.

148. Drieu La Rochelle, "Deuxième Lettre aux Surréalistes," *Les Derniers Jours* (15 February 1927): 3.

149. Drieu, "Deuxième Lettre aux Surréalistes," 4.

150. Frederic Grover, quoted in Soucy, *Fascist Intellectual*, 276.

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154. Sartre, "Qu'est-ce qu'un Collaborateur?," 58-60.

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