

"Maurice Barrès and French Traditionalism"

John Czop

May 23, 1973

Professor Jenks

Library of Washington and Lee University
Lexington, Virginia 24450

JAN 9 1975

Although Maurice Barrès spent twenty-one years in the Chamber of Deputies, the Palais-Bourbon was not the setting for his impact on the political climate of the Third Republic. Barrès' central political contribution lies in the widespread mood of nationalism which his novels and articles created, during the two decades preceeding the First World War. Barrèsian nationalism did not offer a systematic series of pragmatic solutions for the concrete problems which afflicted France. Rather, Barrès' voluminous political writings turned on the problem of rejuvenating France's spiritual energy.

The diminution of French self-esteem, after the disasters of 1870 and 1871, stimulated many of the patrie's intellectuals to investigate the causes underlying her decline. In the aftermath of the débâcle, Ernest Renan, who had previously remained aloof from political questions, wrote La Réforme intellectuelle et morale. Renan's work established the trend of viewing the low state of the Third Republic as a consequence of her spiritual dislocations. La Réforme intellectuelle et morale espoused the causes of: monarchical restoration, patriotic education for the youth, and an increased discipline in private life.¹ Renan believed that these measures would enable France to achieve victory in the inevitable war of revanche against Germany. Hippolyte Taine began his monumental history, Les Origines de la France Contemporaine, in 1872, and he devoted the remainder of his life to its completion. Like Renan, Taine held that France's woes stemmed from an unresolved spiritual crisis which had been afflicting the country since 1789. Both Taine and Renan were hostile to the legacy of the Revolution, and their work paved the way for a more vituperative "second" generation of spiritual regenerators.²

Maurice Barrès was among the latter. He was eight years old when he

witnessed the humiliating plight of a defeated regiment of Zouaves retreating through his native village of Charmes-sur-Moselle. Two days later, an advance guard of Uhlans appeared in his village, brandishing their revolvers. Barrès' father and his grandfather were hostages for the duration of the German occupation. For two years, young Maurice peered out at the enemy from his bedroom window. His family was forced to quarter German soldiers, and Maurice's mother developed a serious nervous disorder as a result of the antics of her German guests. Every morning, a fat Bavarian sergeant escorted Maurice to school. Barres retained a life long hatred for this "cochon bavarois." In the early autumn of 1872, the invaders left Charmes-sur-Moselle. Maurice's village narrowly escaped annexation, and throughout the fall of 1872 he witnessed the pathetic plight of seemingly endless columns of French refugees pouring out of the annexed provinces. These Frenchmen, who preferred to abandon their homes rather than live under German rule, made a profound impression on the young Barrès. The child was convinced that there was something innately reprehensible about Germans.³

When we are all seated in church, each with his thoughts, what is our common thought? We do not want to be Germans. The principal religious thought at home, at Sion, everywhere, is patriotic.⁴

Early in his life, Maurice was exposed to a catechism which preached a hatred for Germany.

In addition to acquiring a passion for revanche, Barrès' youth was also marked by a desire to achieve literary notoriety. Young Maurice was a sickly and introspective child who preferred the solitary pleasures of serene reveries to the comraderie of his contemporaries. When he was four he nearly died of typhoid fever. During his long convalescence, his

mother read the novels of Sir Walter Scott to him. King Richard the Lionhearted in Palestine was Maurice's favorite.⁵ Barrès claims that he derived his incurable "Mal d'Asie" from this work. Young Maurice also enjoyed the novels of Fenimore Cooper, Balzac, and Dumas père. Alfred Muller's La Jeunesse des Hommes Célèbres exercised a powerful influence on the youth. Muller's work traced the childhoods of Napoléon, Michelangelo, Alexander the Great, Balzac, Caesar, and Victor Hugo. Maurice constructed fanciful parallels between his unpromising youth and the early years of the latter. He succeeded in transforming the boring experiences of his frail and sickly childhood into a heroic self-myth.⁶

When he was ten, Barrès' family decided to send him away to school. Maurice spent four of the most terrible years of his life at La Malgrange, a religious college on the outskirts of Nancy. There was a great deal of tension between Maurice's heroic self-image, as the synthesis of the characters in La Jeunesse des Hommes Célèbres, and the way his schoolmates regarded him. Maurice's physical appearance was hardly heroic. He was very slight, he had a dark-olive complexion, and a crop of thick black hair. Furthermore, he had an unusually prominent nose which was not unlike the beak of a bird. These striking characteristics provoked his friends to nickname him "the crow." Maurice decided to remedy the incongruity between his heroic self-image and his epithet through isolation.⁷

After graduating from La Malgrange, he entered the Lycée in Nancy, in 1876. Maurice began to develop the qualities of cynicism and aloofness in order to deter the detractors lurking among his schoolmates. The world of literature became his only solace. His tastes began to shift from swashbuckling historical novels to poetry. Maurice was particularly

enamored of Hugo, Gautier, and Vigny. The idea of "l'art pour l'art" gradually displaced his earlier love of vicarious physical sensations through literature.⁸

While at Nancy, Maurice developed a strong friendship with Léon Sorg and Stanislas de Guaita. They were all interested in poetry and Guaita introduced Maurice to the verses of Baudelaire. The trio devoutly memorized many of the poems in Les Fleurs de Mal. Barrès maintained that his friendship with Guaita and Sorg decided the course of his life.⁹ They decided to establish themselves in Paris and become men of letters. Barrès was the sole member of the trio who succeeded in this fanciful project.

Therefore, the two central concerns of Barrès' career, a personal passion for revanche, and a desire to achieve literary notoriety, were manifest in his early years. The influence he executed on the political climate of the Third Republic represented the fulfillment of both ambitions. Barrès succeeded in creating a voluminous body of polemical literature which advocated the cause of revanche, and which was of high literary merit. Barrès kept the "sacred flame of revenge" burning, through novels which espoused a militant mystico-nationalism for the spiritual rearmament of his countrymen.

Barrès' programs for the resurgence of the national spirit embodied a communality of five central ingredients. Boulangism, which Barrès interpreted as a marriage between Caesarism and revanche, furnished his theories with both a national panache and with a messianic hope for the return of Alsace-Lorraine. Decentralization played a fundamental role in his desire to strengthen the total patrie through a revitalization of regional traditions and regional self-determination. From the writings

of Hippolyte Taine, Barrès adopted environmental determinism as the "scientific" foundation for regionalism. Anti-internationalism involved Barrès' desire to protect the unique French spirit from the corrosive effects of German ideas, Jewish immigrants, foreign labor, and Russian novelists. The "positive" side of Barrès' anti-internationalism dealt with the glorification of the "eternal" patrie; with a strong emphasis on the duty of Frenchmen to venerate "notre terre et nos morts." The fifth element of the Barrèsian program concerned the exaltation which Frenchmen would experience after they had accepted his nationalist discipline.

The eclectic quality of Barrès' theoretical foundations frequently tends to obscure the dynamic underlying the appeal of Barrèsian nationalism. The source of Barrès' power lies in the seductive presentation of his ideas. Tainian determinism is not a subject which is likely to elicit a widespread emotional response if it is presented in a manner true to the scientific inspiration of its creator. However, Barrès was able to present Taine's theories in terms of universally responsive imagery. Among the most famous and best loved scenes in Les Déracinés is the conversation between Taine and Roemerspacher.¹⁰ Tainian determinism is applied to a tall tree in front of Les Invalides. The tree becomes a metaphor for each Frenchman. Like the tree, which could only have developed itself to perfection in its specific milieu, every Frenchman must attempt to accept the determinism which the soil and the blood of his ancestors have imposed upon him. If he accepts this basic determinism, he will become "tall" and "powerful" like the majestic tree.

Barrès' exposition of Tainian determinism is not striking for its brilliance, and perhaps much of the scene's evocative power has been lost. However, Les Déracinés was a very popular novel at the turn of the century,

and it survived twenty-two reprintings.¹¹ Léon Blum, Thomas Mann, Paul Bourget, Lemaître, Proust, and Gide confessed they had fallen under the spell of Barrès' seductive prose.¹² Therefore, any attempt to evaluate Barrès' doctrines of nationalism can not ignore the medium through which they were presented - the novel.

Barrès did not use the novel exclusively for the dissemination of his nationalist programs. He first achieved literary notoriety, in 1888, with the publication of Sous l'oeil des Barbares, the first in a trilogy of ego worship novels appropriately entitled, Le Culte du Moi. Barrès made himself the central character in the three works: Sous l'oeil des Barbares, Un Homme Libre, and Le Jardin de Bérénice. Le Culte du Moi reaffirmed Barrès' individuality through the re-establishment of his ties with the soil and the dead of his native Lorraine.

However, the method through which this reaffirmation occurred is worthy of further investigation, since it bears a close affinity with his method for bestirring Frenchmen to the nationalist cause. At the outset of the trilogy, Philippe, like the young Barrès, is completely disgruntled by his milieu. He imagines that the world is moving toward a state of impending barbarism, hence, Sous l'oeil des Barbares. Philippe imagines he is the last repository of delicacy and civilization in a debased universe. Everything is tarnished by a profound deficiency of sensibility and aesthetic merit. Family, fatherland, religion, and friends are devoid of solace. Philippe concludes that his "moi" is the only element of consistency amid the tumult. Therefore, he decides that his "moi" is the only object worthy of cultivation.¹³

The second novel of the trilogy, Un Homme Libre, deals with Philippe's program for his self-development. At first, Philippe attempts to experience

the "rarefied" pleasures of carnal pursuits in the Latin Quarter. He drinks absinthe, smokes Havanas, eats nothing but beef steak, and exhausts several mistresses. Philippe realizes that his program of self-development has become derailed, since he is engaging in the same physical activities as the "common herd." Philippe withdraws from his social diversions and experiences the "voluptuousness of exile." He has nightmares about "les barbares" storming his ivory tower of individuality. He becomes increasingly nervous and he embarks on a cerebral investigation for a more satisfying program of self-development.¹⁴

While the protagonist is searching for the perfect method to enhance his ego, he makes the acquaintance of a mystic, Simon. Simon is absorbed in a similar crisis, and he and Philippe decide to go to the Isle of Jersey. They attempt to create a program of self-development which will be mutually satisfying. However, the two egotists realize that they are incapable of devising a system of their own making. Therefore, they invoke spiritual intercessors who will reveal the road to true self-development.

Philippe and Simon selected a long list of intercessors. The most important ones were: Saint Ignatius de Loyola, Benjamin Constant, Pascal, Sainte-Beuve, Tiepolo, and El Greco. Through Loyola's Spiritual Exercises, Philippe and Simon were able to create a "hygiene of the spirit" which purged lust from their hearts, in order to usher in more profound feelings of sensibility. In short, Philippe and Simon submitted themselves to a rigorous discipline of contemplation and religious devotion. The result of their efforts culminated in the realization that self-development must be a disciplined process. Their discipline consisted of the analysis and the criticism of their sensations.

The two egoists decided to devise two principles to guide their disciplined egoism.

Premier Principe: We are happiest in a state of exaltation.

Deuxième Principe: The only thing which further augments the pleasure of exaltation is analysis.

Conséquence: It is necessary to feel as much as possible, while analyzing as much as possible.¹⁵

Barrès' position that the fullest development of the ego is only possible through the intervention of intercessors, and the submission of the self to a discipline, is also echoed in his political writing. Benjamin Constant, Pascal, Sainte-Beuve, and Loyola played the same role in ego development which St. Joan, Napoléon, Boulanger, and Taine were destined to play in the mystical resurgence of the national spirit. The discipline of Taine's environmental determinism was substituted for Loyola's spiritual discipline. Saint Joan, Napoléon I, and Boulanger were invoked as national deities, as Pascal, Sainte-Beuve, and Constant had been called upon as the saints of individuality.

The third section of Un Homme Libre provides further insight into the esthetic and egoistical antecedents of Barrès' political writings. While they are on the Isle of Jersey, Philippe and Simon quarrel over the merits of Tiepolo. Philippe examines his "moi" and discovers that Simon is no longer compatible with the needs of his ego. Therefore, Philippe decides to leave his friend and change his milieu. He goes to Venice in an attempt to emulate the high priests of egoism. Like Barrès, Philippe is captivated by Venice. Venice becomes the most suitable setting for the cultivation of his "moi." He succumbs to the "cult of beauty and light" and experiences a long series of rarefied

cerebral reveries inspired by the city. Eventually, Venice begins to impinge on his "moi." Philippe fears he has discovered an object of veneration more worthy than himself. This situation is most dangerous for the young egoist, since his "moi" is in danger of merging itself with "something outside the self."¹⁶

Philippe reluctantly decides to abandon his beloved Venice in order to maintain his "moi" as the paramount object of his devotion. Paris is out of the question since it has already been devastated by "les barbares." Philippe returns to his native Lorraine in an attempt to revitalize his program of experimental individualism. He visits the austere shrine of Mount Sion-Vaudémont, he seeks out the graves of his ancestors, and he prays in old churches. Philippe feels the awesome power of the dead gradually taking possession of his "moi." He wishes to escape, but he discovers that his "moi" has completely entered into communion with the "energy of his dead ancestors." The egoist finally reconciles himself with the traditions of his native province. He concludes that the fullest development of his "moi" can only occur through the acceptance of a "Lorrainian determinism," which has been imposed upon him by his ancestors. The discipline of the soil and the dead of his native province have been substituted for his earlier program of disciplined ego-worship. Philippe has found inner peace, and he is absorbed in the process of learning how to exalt in his newly discovered discipline.

Barrès never admitted there was an essential contradiction between the disciplines of ego-worship and regionalism. He maintained that self-knowledge, through an arduous program of self-cultivation, inevitably leads to the individual's desire to merge his "moi" into the collective

soul of his native region.¹⁷ Barrès' position is most illogical, and it is the first of many instances in which Barrès has derived natural rules for Frenchmen from his paradoxical personal experiences. André Gide's example is perhaps the most outstanding case of non-conformity with Barrès' law.

Barrès' ego-worship novels do not maintain a claim of universal applicability. In the 1888 preface to Sous l'oeil des Barbares, the author announced the creation of a new literary genre, "le roman idéologique." Barrès claimed that his innovative contribution to fin-de-siècle letters was conditioned by a desire to immolate himself in the service of his generation. That is, Barrès imagined that the lycée generation of 1880 was in danger of succumbing to the twin evils of nihilism and indifference. They had become disgusted with base opportunism in politics, and banality and folly in the arts. Most importantly, Barrès' generation was devoid of: "an object of emulation, and an ability to attain exaltation." Barrès determined that he would "sacrifice" himself in order to remedy his generation's predicament. He was eager to become their object of devotion, and through his example they would regain their capacity for exaltation.¹⁸

Therefore, in the preface to Sous l'oeil des Barbares, Barrès proclaimed that his novel was addressed exclusively to young Frenchmen of his generation. Throughout his life, Barrès believed that one is unable to conquer the intellectual suffrages of his elders.¹⁹ Barrès held that his "roman idéologique" represented a "tableau" of the different "states of soul" which all the men of his generation had experienced. Through the vivisection of his own ego, Barrès hoped to reveal the underlying malaise which afflicted his rudderless contemporaries. In

Sous l'oeil des Barbares, Barrès diagnosed the disease and formulated a remedy.

Our disease comes from the fact that we live under an order imposed upon us by the dead, and not at all chosen by us. The dead poison us. Let each one satisfy himself and humanity will be a beautiful forest, beautiful in all things, trees, plants, and animals will develop there, and grow taller according to the desires of their inner natures.²⁰

Thus, the free development of each French ego, unfettered by the "poisoning" effects of the traditional order, would restore the vitality of his generation.

However, by the end of the trilogy, the advocate of an unrestrained experimental egoism willingly submitted himself to the discipline of "Lorraine." The protagonist of Sous l'oeil des Barbares (1888), who personifies the tortured fin-de-siècle dandy, becomes, by the end of Un Homme Libre (1889), the devoted worshipper of the land and the dead of his native province. There is a great deal of tension between Barrès' initial advocacy of experimental individualism, as the cure for the spiritual dislocations of his generation, and the final remedy, which holds that the best program of self-development for a Frenchman lies in the sublimation of the individual will into a mystical traditionalist collectivism. Both Sous l'oeil des Barbares and Un Homme Libre are ideological novels in that the action revolves around the protagonist's manipulation of ideas, or the analysis of variations in his different "states of soul." Yet, Barrès does not attempt to reconcile the inherent contradiction between rampant individualism and collectivism. He only offers the reader a moving "tableau" through which to trace this unexpected volte face. After retracing Philippe's successive cerebral

acrobatics, the impression of a contrived transformation still remains.

This artificiality reveals itself through Barrès' style. René Lalou, a contemporary critic of Barrès' works, has perceived a stylistic continuity between the descriptions of Philippe, the egoist, and Philippe, the loyal son of Lorraine. Both Philippes are painted in terms of the impressionistic language and imagery characteristic of the Decadent movement.²¹ In the last scene of the third book of Le Culte du Moi, Le Jardin de Bérénice, Barrès described his Lorrainian traditionalist experiencing the voluptuousness of watching young Bérénice slowly dying of tuberculosis. This scene fills Philippe with both pity and elation. He feels that the pathetic death of young Bérénice is making an enormous contribution to his treasure house of vicarious voluptuous sensations. After his lover's death, Philippe remarked that he will always cherish the memory of Bérénice since she helped him to "objectify his moi."

This suggests that Philippe, even after the miraculous discovery of his ancestral ties, remains basically unchanged throughout the trilogy. Philippe's submission to the determinism of the "land and the dead" of Lorraine, has not produced a corresponding change in his mode of behavior - he remains a decadent dandy, obsessed with the cult of beauty, voluptuousness, and death. This observation suggests a central question: why did Barrès allow his protagonist to discover himself through his submission to the discipline of a mystical traditionalist collectivism?

The possibility always remains that Barrès did not formulate a reason. Barrès was a profoundly disoriented individual who believed that spontaneity supplies sufficient grounds for any action. He was a

lover of complexity and disorder. Throughout his life, he retained the conviction that the world is dominated by a pervasive sense of disorder.²² He was fond of quoting Novalis' remark, "truth must gleam through the regular walls of chaos."²³ However, there is reason to believe that considerations of a more pragmatic order underlined Barrès' decision to allow Philippe to enter into communion with Lorraine.

Un Homme Libre was published in December of 1889. Throughout the summer of 1889, Barrès was campaigning, in Nancy, for the Chamber of Deputies as an independent left-wing Boulangist.²⁴ In September he was elected on a revisionist platform which he labeled National Socialism. Between the election and the publication of Un Homme Libre, it is probable that Barrès added the concluding chapters to the latter. Thus, Philippe's rapid metamorphosis may be explained by Barrès' desire to flatter his Lorrainian electors. The theme of the return of the prodigal son is apparent. Like his creator, Philippe has returned to his native province, and he has discovered a harmonious milieu for his "moi," through the "mystical music of Lorraine." Therefore, Barrès' decision to launch himself into politics seems to lie at the root of his protagonist's artificial transformation.

Before investigating Barrès' electoral campaign of 1889, it is useful to consider the reasons underlying his entry into politics. On January 12, 1883, Barrès left Charmes-sur-Moselle under the pretext of studying law in Paris. However, young Maurice was hardly interested in a dull bourgeois career. He was intent on realizing his childhood dream of achieving literary immortality. Shortly after his arrival in Paris, Maurice saw Loconte de Lisle, Victor Hugo, and Anatole France conversing in a corridor of the Library of the Senate. Since that day, Barrès

intended to include himself among the three as the representative of a fourth great literary movement.²⁵ The precise nature of the school he planned to create had not yet crystalized, and much of the period between his arrival in Paris and the publication of Sous l'oeil des Barbares was spent in the search for a sensational new genre.

Barrès realized that it is impossible for an obscure provincial to capture the crown of the literary community by storm. It is necessary for a young writer to have a ready-made public in order to insure the success of his début. Before the publication of Sous l'oeil des Barbares, Barrès embarked upon a program of self-advertisement. He was first employed by Albert Allenet, the editor of "La Jeune France." Through Allenet, Barrès met Emile Zola, Théodore de Banville, the Goncourt brothers, Paul Bourget, Jules Lemaître, and Anatole France.²⁶ Allenet paid Barrès a subsistence salary which prevented the aspiring master from maintaining himself in such exalted circles, "Il m'arriva de me nourrir un mois entier avec 35 francs. Mes amis les plus proches n'en ont rien su."²⁷

On the eve of his twenty-second birthday, Barrès determined that his career was not moving fast enough. In August of 1884, a year and a half after he established himself in Paris, Barrès left the staff of "La Jeune France." He embarked on a bold project, the launching of his own literary magazine. This was a very dangerous step, for if the virtually penniless Barrès failed, he would be forced to abandon his Parisian aspirations and return to Charmes-sur-Moselle.²⁸

He succeeded in borrowing enough capital to cover printing costs, and in November of 1884, the first edition of "Les Taches d'Encre" appeared on the boulevards and in the cafés of the Latin Quarter. "Les

"Taches d'Encre" contained a broad spectrum of articles in order to attract as many readers as possible. However, Barrès' appeal was mainly directed toward the men of "his" generation. Barrès' favorite subjects, excluding critical reviews of poetry and novels, were: psychology, contemporary morals, German philosophy, and politics. Barrès' articles concerning politics in "Les Taches d'Encre" reveal an interesting facet of his attitude toward Germany and revanche.²⁹

In the first edition of his review, Barrès reproached a writer of travel books, M. Victor Tissot. Tissot's experiences in Germany were negative: he found German food abominable; he claimed that most Germans were drunkards, thieves, and pimps; he deduced that every woman in Germany must be a prostitute since there was an overabundance of brothels. None of these charges were taken seriously by Barrès. However, when Tissot maintained that German literature and philosophy were the products of brothel keepers, Barrès was infuriated.³⁰

Barrès did not read German, nor is there evidence to suggest that he was familiar with a large portion of German literature.³¹ However, while at the Lycée in Nancy, Barrès was introduced to Kant. His acquaintance with Kantian philosophy convinced Barrès that Tissot was deliberately subverting the minds of the "younger generation." Barrès habitually accused those who offended him of this charge, since Barrès regarded himself as the self-proclaimed leader of young Frenchmen. Barrès continued his admonition of Tissot in more concrete terms which illuminated Barrès' admiration of German contributions to civilization.

He sung the praises of France, and he believed in her so much that he debased the enemy. We will go to the limit. We will say France is great and Germany is great. Whatever future political developments may be, at this moment three peoples guide civilization in this

century: France, England, and Germany too. And it would be a disaster for everyone if one of these flames disappeared. Humanity would die. We have intellectual fathers in all countries. Kant, Goethe, Hegel, have the right to be placed among our finest.³²

Barrès entitled his reproach of Tissot, "Un Mauvais Français: M. Victor Tissot." Tissot was a bad Frenchman because he foolishly underestimated Germany, and filled his French readers with the unrealistic hope of an easy French victory in the inevitable war of revenge against Germany. It is probable that Tissot's impressions of Germany, Voyage au pays des Milliards, were designed to entertain rather than to mislead Frenchmen. However, Barrès found it reprehensible for Frenchmen to underestimate the intellectual accomplishments of the arch-enemy. Barrès insisted that France must diligently prepare herself for a hard struggle against the formidable foe.

And the day our leaders have predicted will come, then it will be a question of raising the flag and sounding the tocsin. One will see what a people who highly regard their adversaries are capable of.³³

In the second edition of "Les Taches d'Encre," December of 1884, Barrès' article on politics forcefully confronted the issue of revanche. This marks the beginning of Barrès' utilization of his literary talents for the promotion of militant French nationalism.

. . . our special task, as young men, is to recover the seized land, to reconstitute the French ideal . . . Our fathers failed one day, it is a task of honor that they have left us. They have pushed so far ahead of the patrie into the land of the spirit that we can, if necessary, devote

several years to the one care of reconquering the exiles. It will require only a little blood and some grandeur of soul.³⁴

It is apparent that Barrès regarded himself as the political spokesman for "his" generation. Barrès' politics were quite simple - revanche. The difficulty in evaluating Barrès' political contributions arises in the examination of the various, and often mutually exclusive, causes he supported in order to realize his ultimate objective. Barrès' political labels oscillated from socialism to the tacit acceptance of the Action Française's program for a return to monarchism. Barrès was forced to switch his party loyalties frequently, since there was never a permanent political party of significance which adopted revanche as a regular feature of their program.

However, in the late 1880's, it seemed a certainty to Barrès that a militant revanchist party was on the verge of crystalization. The messianic hope of revenge appeared close to fulfillment, under the leadership of General Boulanger. With great ardor, Barrès embraced the Boulangist panache and joined the cast of the tragi-comedy.³⁵ Barrès and Déroulède were among the first adherents of General Revanche. Since Boulanger's appointment as the commander-in-chief of the expeditionary force in Tunis, April of 1884, Barrès wrote a constant stream of laudatory articles in behalf of General Boulanger.³⁶ General Revanche became a subject of passionate obsession for him, and Barrès continued to rekindle interest in the Boulangist mystique long after the movement lost its political importance in 1889. Barrès' final tribute to Boulanger was a novel written in 1900, L'Appel au Soldat.

Barrès' propaganda work for Boulanger was conducted from a variety of approaches. In February of 1885, "Les Taches d'Encre" collapsed.

However, Barrès' short-lived review attracted the attention of the most influential Parisian editors. The ex-editor became a well paid free lance writer for: La Revue contemporaine, La Minerve, La Revue de Paris, La Revue indépendante, and La France. Therefore, Barrès was able to communicate his pro-Boulangist ideas to a much larger public than he could have ever hoped to reach through "Les Taches d'Encre." He praised Boulanger for: ordering the Duc d'Aumâle to resign his commission, insisting on the appropriation of funds for the manufacture of the Lebel rifle, and his handling of the delicate situation at a mine worker's strike in Decazeville. Barrès was ecstatic when his hero was appointed War Minister, by Freycinet, on January 8, 1886. Shortly after Boulanger's ministerial début, Barrès and Paul Déroulède, the leader of the League of Patriots, visited Boulanger. They promised "General Revanche" their support, and they encouraged him to "intimidate Bismarck." Déroulède promised him the support of his 300,000 Leaguers, and Barrès placed his pen at Boulanger's disposal.³⁷ Six months later, Barrès and Déroulède were presented with thier first opportunity to illustrate the sincerity of their pledges. On July 14, Boulanger rode at the head of a military review at Longchamp. Déroulède and the League turned out in force to encourage the crowd. They were very successful, and Boulanger was treated to a fervent public tribute which frightened President Grévy, who was also in attendance. Barrès commemorated the event with a strong note of Caesarism.

In marked contrast to the dried-up Elysée, inhabited by old legislators incapable of stirring the heart, who alone touches the masses, the youthful Minister of War, riding on his black horse, produced a burst of fervor which always speaks of a nation ready to make war.³⁸

Boulangier's ability to lead France to victory was brought to a test nine months after his triumph at Longchamp. In April of 1887, a French frontier police official, Schnaebelé, was arrested in Alsace by German policemen. It was alleged that Schnaebelé was involved in espionage activities connected with Boulangier's frontier preparations. Since January of the same year, General Revanche was engaged in a series of frontier "inspections" which alarmed Germany. Boulangier's bellicosity was a source of inquietude for Bismarck:

Why then should General Boulangier, if he came to power, not attempt war? If we consider that a military dictatorship is possible in France - and that kind of dictatorship has existed there before - who is to guarantee that that hypothesis will not come true?³⁹

Bismarck's fears were well-founded, and Barrès was among the revanchistes dedicated to the fulfillment of "that hypothesis." However, before the war of revenge could begin, the opportunistic politicians in the Chamber would have to be displaced, in the interest of a strong dictatorship under Boulangier. The Schnaebelé Affair convinced Barrès that France's parliamentary system of government was a severe impediment for "his generation."⁴⁰

Shortly after Schnaebelé's arrest, Boulangier convinced Flourens, the French Foreign Minister, to send a strong protest to the German government. Flourens demanded the immediate release of Schnaebelé based on questionable "facts" revealed to him by Boulangier. It was claimed that: Bismarck ordered the arrest of Schnaebelé to humiliate the French, Schnaebelé was arrested on French soil (Boulangier, in particular, insisted on this point), and Schnaebelé crossed the frontier at the invitation of a

German official.⁴¹ Clearly, the unfortunate Schnaebelé could not have simultaneously fulfilled both of the last two points. Boulanger insisted on the drafting of a note which prevented the Germans from withdrawing from the situation with dignity. Thus, an unnecessary pretext for war came about. Boulanger made a number of speeches in the Chamber designed to convince his colleagues that all measures save a "preventative war" would fail to restore French dignity.⁴² Much to the displeasure of the revanchistes, Grévy, Clemenceau, and Flourens muzzled Boulanger before serious damage was done. After Boulanger stopped hurling invectives and challenges at the German army, Bismarck agreed that the invitation Schnaebelé had received from a German official constituted a safe conduct. Schnaebelé was released, and Boulanger was privately admonished by Grévy for his exuberance.⁴³ Thus, the issue was resolved through Bismarck's prudent decision, rather than through the romantic solution offered by Boulanger.

Barrès was understandably upset. The forces of reason and compromise had triumphed over the youthful audacity which General Revanche personified. Barrès believed that "the natural order" of things had been subverted by opportunistic politicians, who were not refined enough to appreciate the "beautiful passions" which the war of revanche would have produced, had they not stifled it.⁴⁴ Therefore, the Chamber must be filled with pro-German agents. Barrès, as well as Déroulède, was already convinced that Jules Ferry was a German agent.⁴⁵ Clemenceau had abominable taste in art, this was enough to suspect him.

We [the younger generation] can not tolerate that the keys of our frontiers are handed over to the enemy, to the deputies who associate themselves with the pro-German plot that is being woven around the present defender

of the patrie. None of us want to be condemned to speaking German in our old age.⁴⁶

However, the parliamentary "trick" from which Barrès never recovered was the ousting of General Boulanger from his cabinet position. Boulanger was a twofold danger for the opportunists: he represented a threat to peace with Germany, and his domestic popularity smacked of Caesarism. In May of 1887, Grévy, Freycinet, and Rouvier forced the Goblet ministry to resign. The objective of this maneuver was to form a new government under Rouvier which would exclude General Revanche from the War Ministry. The "plot" succeeded and Boulanger was transformed into a popular martyr before the end of May.⁴⁷ Alexandre Zévaès holds that journalists like Barrès, Rochefort, Eugène Mayer, and Louis de Peyramont (the editor of "Revanche") can not claim all of the credit for the fervent public sentiment which demanded the return of Boulanger to his cabinet post.⁴⁸ The public was led to believe that Boulanger was the victim of a pro-German plot by the representatives of the French people, in short they believed that Boulanger was the only patriot among the opportunists. Between May 28 and June 3, there were violent popular manifestations in sympathy for "the poor soldier." Barrès was present at a demonstration in the rue d'Antin, in which over two thousand people shouting "C'est Boulanger, l'ange, l'ange, c'est Boulanger qu'il nous faut" clashed with the cavalry.⁴⁹ The most dangerous demonstration occurred on May 30. A large crowd assembled near the Cercle Militaire, acclaimed Boulanger, and proceeded to march to the Elysée to demand his return to the War Ministry. Barrès noted that many of the demonstrators were seriously injured by the police, and it seemed to him that a war was starting against the "internal enemies" of France, preparatory to

the war of revenge against the external foe.⁵⁰

The Rouvier government was faced with a formidable crisis. They could not carry on efficiently with Boulanger in the War Ministry, yet it was difficult to maintain domestic tranquility without him. On July 4, 1887, it was decided that Boulanger must be separated from his idolators.⁵¹ He was ordered to leave Paris for his new command at Clermont-Ferrand. On July 8, the date of Boulanger's departure, fifteen to twenty thousand Parisians escorted him from the Hôtel du Louvre to the Gare de Lyon. At the Gare de Lyon they clung to the engine of his train and they threw themselves on the track in order to prevent his departure. This fantastic manifestation of public adulation convinced Barrès that a national revolution against the parliamentarians was already under way. With his hero in "exile," there was very little to keep Barrès in Paris. In the middle of July, Barrès departed for Italy. He spent most of his time in Venice; like Philippe, Barrès was captivated by the city. After visiting Ravenna, Rome and Florence, Barrès returned to Paris in November.

While Barrès was in Italy, the Third Republic was absorbed in the first of a long series of damaging political scandals. It was discovered that President Grévy's son-in-law, Wilson, was using his position at the Elysée to secure decorations, in particular the coveted Legion of Honor, for friends and business associates. Furthermore, Wilson was having his private and business letters stamped at the Republic's expense. Grévy refused to disavow his son-in-law. This action suggested that the President was involved in the scandal; however, Grévy was actually motivated by an exaggerated sense of family loyalty. The opportunists were convinced that Grévy must be sacrificed lest it appear to the

country that the Chamber tolerated official misconduct. The enemies of the Republic began to make common cause with each other in order to prevent the opportunists from extracting themselves with dignity from the unpleasant situation. Both Déroulède and the Comte de MacKau encouraged Boulanger to leave Clermont-Ferrand for Paris. However, the general remained at his post despite his growing popularity in Paris. He became the personification of "clean" and disinterested government for the disenchanted. Socialists, particularly Rochefort, saw in the popularity of Boulanger a means to the establishment of the "socialist" Republic. MacKau believed that Boulanger would play the rôle of General Monk and restore the monarchy, and the revanchistes continued to hope that Boulanger would recover Metz and Strasbourg. Thus, Boulanger synthesized the aspirations of widely divergent extra-parliamentary movements.⁵²

Grévy resigned on December 2, 1887. December 2, is an ominous date in nineteenth century French history. However, Boulanger refused to play Louis Napoléon. The next day, Sadi Carnot, a non-entity, was elected President by the Versailles Assembly. Déroulède encouraged Boulanger to leave Clermont-Ferrand and seize the Elysée. However, Boulanger again remained inactive, despite his ill-will toward the new régime created by his enemies. MacKau convinced Boulanger to present himself at the by-elections in order to remain in the public eye. Boulanger was a candidate for the Chamber in seven of the twelve by-elections, in February of 1888. He polled a very impressive number of votes and he won all of the contests. Boulanger was ineligible for the Chamber since he held a military command. However, he succeeded in launching a propaganda effort which Zévaès likens to Napoléon III's skillful use of plebiscites.

President Sadi Carnot relieved Boulanger of his command on March 27, 1888. The result of this action legalized Boulanger's participation in political activity. On April 15, Boulanger was elected to the Chamber by the department of the Nord.⁵³

Barrès was hopeful that his hero would destroy parliamentarianism from within. Barrès began writing articles for "La Cocarde," which was created expressly to support the Boulangist cause.

The "Figaro" is asking me why my friends and I are Boulangists. The answer is that the General is the only person in France capable of expelling from the Palais-Bourbon the chatterers who deafen us and are unpleasant people.⁵⁴

In May of 1888, shortly after Boulanger's election to the Chamber, the Comité républicain de la protestation nationale was founded by MacKau, Rochefort, Eugène Mayer (editor of the "Lanterne"), and Déroulède. The objective of the Comité was to provide General Revanche with a "coherent" program for the expulsion of the "chatterers" from the Chamber. The Comité's slogan, Révision, Dissolution, Constituante, involved the revision of the constitution, the dissolution of the Chamber, and the convening of a Constituent Assembly. Barrès never joined the Comité, since revanche was conspicuously absent from their program.⁵⁵ However, Barrès did maintain that a revision in personnel was in order, since the removal of the "cowardly" opportunists in the Chamber was prerequisite to the establishment of a vigorous government dedicated to revanche. Nevertheless, Barrès remained aloof from the mundane mechanics of parliamentary revision. He was confident that the Comite's cause would be victorious without his participation, and Barrès spent the summer months of 1888 finishing his first novel, Sous l'oeil des

Barbares.⁵⁶

The Comité was successful at the outset. On May 30, 1888, the adherents of the Comité within the Chamber brought down Floquet's government over the issue of revision. Shortly after the Comité's victory, the opportunists decided to launch a full-scale attack against the Boulangists. In June, Clemenceau and two socialists, Joffrin and Allemane, founded the Société des droits de l'homme et du citoyen. The objective of this organization was in direct opposition to the Comité. That is, Clemenceau and his followers, who styled themselves the "true republicans," were dedicated to the unification of "all republicans" against the Boulangist adventure. The foundation of the Société des droits de l'homme et du citoyen marks the beginning of the "republican" campaign to discredit Boulanger. Their most damaging achievement lies in the provocation of the Boulanger-Floquet duel. On July 12, 1888, Boulanger demanded the immediate dissolution of the Chamber and the election of a Constituent Assembly. Floquet responded to the challenge of General Revanche with an indictment of Boulanger's ambitious intentions.

But we must take heart. At your age, General
Boulanger Napoleon was dead, and you will never
be more than the Siéyès of a still-born constitution.⁵⁷

Boulanger resigned his seat and challenged Floquet to a duel. Déroulède was among the General's seconds, and the leader of the League of Patriots was certain that Floquet's career was at an end. Déroulède wrote a poem before the duel took place in the form of an epitaph for Floquet. The last couplet has an ironical interest.

Floquet's death will tell the people of Metz,
General Boulanger is not far away.⁵⁸

However, General Revanche was beaten, and injured, at foils by the

"cowardly chatterer," Floquet. The General's inglorious defeat severely detracted from the Boulangist panache, and Boulanger was not to reenter the Chamber until January 28, 1889. Barrès sabre-rattling hero was discredited, and Barrès did not write any pro-Boulangist articles for the remainder of 1888.

In October of 1888, Sous l'oeil des Barbares was published. Paul Bourget enthusiastically reviewed the novel, and Barrès was placed in the limelight of the literary community. He began work on Un Homme Libre, the second novel of Le Culte du Moi, in November. Therefore, Barrès was absorbed in the fulfillment of his desire to attain literary notoriety during the most difficult period in General Revanche's struggle for revenge against the opportunists whom he held responsible for his removal from the Chamber. This fact brings into question the sincerity of Barrès' commitment to his hero's cause. Barrès maintained that he was among Boulanger's most loyal followers. However, Barrès' primary concern, until he firmly established himself as the most promising young writer in France, in 1889, was his passion for literary notoriety. It is also possible that Barrès lost faith in Boulanger's ability to regain Alsace-Lorraine. However, the latter explanation is less likely, since Barrès maintained a fervent belief in the power of the Boulangist mystique at least until he wrote L'Appel au Soldat, in 1900. Barrès' description of the most dramatic event of the Boulangist adventure, in L'Appel au Soldat, reveals Barrès' faith in the cause of General Revanche.

On January 27, 1889, Boulanger stood for election to the Chamber in the Department of the Seine. Boulanger was supported by MacKau and the monarchists, Rochefort and the non-Marxist socialists, Déroulède and his League, and a large measure of Boulanger's funds were contributed by

Jerome Bonaparte. It was of crucial importance for Boulanger to win the Paris region for his cause. While the votes were being counted on the night of the twenty-seventh, Boulanger and his chief supporters were awaiting the decision at a restaurant, Durand, in the Place de la Madeleine. The restaurant Durand is just across the Seine from the Palais-Bourbon, and the Elysée is also a short distance away. The word spread, most likely through the League of Patriots, that General Revanche was at Durand's. Over six thousand Parisians flocked to the Place de la Madeleine to acclaim Boulanger. The crowd, with some coaxing from members of the League, demanded that Boulanger march on the Elysée. The police and the gardé republicaine were in sympathy with the crowd. Déroulède encouraged Boulanger to take advantage of this moment of destiny. Thus, the ingredients for the type of coup which Paris had witnessed before were present. Boulanger was given the opportunity to excoriate the opportunists and to establish himself at the head of an authoritarian government capable of leading France to victory against Germany. However, as Floquet had acutely observed, Boulanger lacked the dynamism of Napoléon Bonaparte, Boulanger remained inactive and the enthusiasm of the crowd abated. By one o'clock on the morning of the twenty-eighth, Boulanger's adventure came to an end. His lieutenants were disillusioned and they left in disgust, while General Revanche slipped out of the restaurant Durand for a rendezvous with his lover, Marguerite de Bonnemain.

Barrès' description of these events takes the form of a laudatory apology for General Boulanger. Furthermore, Barrès would have the reader believe that Boulanger refused to march on the Elysée because the General believed in the sanctity of parliamentary institutions.

If he were less honest and driven by personal ambition,

he would have marched. He was also a sage, a clairvoyant man and sustained by central ideas, would he have placed his sword, in the name of political science, at the service of the confused passions of France? With the full powers which the Parisians gave him, the General should have been the brain of the nation and should have directed the national instinct. He failed, because of the lack of a doctrine, which may have sustained and authorized him to command this movement of salvation which those beneath him attempted to execute. Around him, the unconscious will rose to a magnificent state of fervor, but the lack of principles prevented the success of a positive program. General Boulanger, in the last analysis, lacked the faith of a Boulangist which would have destroyed the life of parliamentarianism in the name of the national instinct.⁵⁹

This passage is of great importance in the determination of Barrès' conception of the Boulangist mystique. First, Boulanger is the man of destiny, chosen by providence to articulate the collective desires of his people. Boulanger knows the "instinct national," and he can never be wrong since the national instinct is of such paramount importance that it can never be wrong.

Boulanger failed for two reasons. The notion that Boulanger refused to march on the Elysée because he respected the Chamber is nonsense. Clemenceau's explanation of Boulanger's inaction is much more plausible, i.e. that Boulanger was a coward. However, Barrès' second reason for the failure of the Boulangist adventure is a great deal more credible. Barrès maintained that Boulanger failed thanks to the lack of a positive program. Barrès realized that Boulangism was directed by numerous "volontés confuses." This lack of a coherent program for the counter-

revolution, which would ensure France's victory against Germany, troubled Barrès. He devoted a large measure of the remainder of his life to the construction of a program for the resurgence of the national spirit, which would guarantee the success of future "Boulangist" movements. At the end of Les Déracinés, Sturel, the protagonist, a disenchanted Boulangist, refuses to abandon his faith in the counter-revolution and in revanche: "Nous retrouverons d'autres boulangismes."⁶⁰

Sturel's cry described the concern which dominated Barrès' life between his election to the Chamber in 1889, and his break with the "League de la Patrie Française" in 1901. This period of Barrès' political writing is dominated by the conviction that French unity of purpose and spiritual regeneration can best be effected through common objects of hatred. Jews, Protestants, Free Masons, treasonable Frenchmen (particularly Clemenceau), and opportunists become the vehicles which will carry "true" Frenchmen to a greater national consciousness. Barrès' system was simple: the debasement of everything and everyone that is not French will cause Frenchmen to realize the beauty of their nationality.

Barrès attempted to use the Chamber to secure the success of his program. In September of 1889, Barrès was elected to the Chamber from Nancy on a "flexible" platform which revolved around: Boulangism (strong authoritarian governmental leadership), socialism, and revisionism. He appealed to the young on the basis of Boulangism, and on his own merits as a successful young man of letters from Lorraine. Barrès' socialism was not socialism in the usual sense of the word. He promised the workers that they should be protected against cheap foreign labor. Furthermore, Barrès held that the working classes would be more ferocious in the war of revenge if they were given a stake in the nation. However, Barrès was

very vague on the mechanics of giving the working classes a vested interest in the continuation of the "bourgeois" republic. Yet, he was convinced that the resurgence of France must be an effort which would mobilize every class in the country. Revision of the Constitution was central in his campaign. In 1888, the first rumors of governmental corruption in the Panama scandal were brought to the public's attention by Numa Gilly. By the time Barrès was campaigning in Nancy the evidence against the chéquards was increasing. This "fortunate" scandal allowed Barrès to pose as the champion of clean government. Furthermore, Barrès held that imperfections, of an unspecified nature, in the parliamentary system were responsible for corruption. Thus, Barrès succeeded in creating a platform which would appeal to the electorate. Barrès' precise reason for entering the Chamber is hazy.

"I was unable to content myself with an easy life, the easy game of literature became a cursus honorum. I wished to experience difficulty. . . Perhaps politics and parliament will furnish me with a favorable milieu for my self-enrichment.⁶¹

Barrès also believed that his election to the Chamber would add to the legion of his admirers. Furthermore, his name would be associated with politics and he would popularize himself among a larger public than his ego-worship novels could ever hope to reach. Barrès was following in the footsteps of men of letters like Disraeli and Lamartine, and he was certain that he would be as successful as they were in satisfying their two-fold ambitions. In the interest of success, Barrès compromised himself. In his campaign, Barrès completely avoided the issue of revanche. He probably believed that the workers of Nancy were not yet spiritually prepared to assume their rôle as cannon fodder.

Barrès was ineffective in the Chamber. He spent most of his time formulating clever anecdotes about the private lives of his colleagues. "His first joke in the Chamber was to propose that the still-living Jules Simon be added to the list of Republicans whose bodies were to be transferred to the Panthéon." Barrès frequently insulted Jean Jaurès, who entered the Chamber the same year that Barrès did as a right-wing deputy. Barrès succeeded in making Clemenceau a life-long enemy. He was particularly insulted by Clemenceau's comment after General Boulanger committed suicide on the grave of his mistress, "He died as he had lived, a Second lieutenant." When he was not amusing himself in the Chamber, Barrès spent most of his time writing. Le Jardin de Bérénice, the third novel of Le Culte du Moi, was finished in 1891. Barrès used Le Jardin de Bérénice as a part of his campaign for reelection to the Chamber. The novel is packed with nostalgic memories of his youth as a sensitive product of a "Lorrainian determinism." Shortly after the publication of Le Jardin de Bérénice, Barrès made a quick visit to Lorraine and then departed for a long voyage to Spain. He spent most of the latter portion of 1891 in Spain, despite the fact that the Chamber was in session.

In 1892, Barrès contributed to his political self-development by examining the viability of an anarchistic solution for the problems of the patrie. L'Ennemi des lois reflects Barrès' contempt for the parliamentary system. The novel is a political conversation set against the background of a love story. A Russian princess, Marina, and an intellectual anarchist, André Maltère, discuss the theories of Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Proudhon. Bakunin is absent from the dialogue since both André and Marina agree that Bakunin was a terribly repulsive figure. André attains exaltation when he realizes, "In this world the only things which are

real are strength and the willingness to destroy; while I rub my arms in this new knowledge I am participating in the most pleasing and perfect confusion of our time."

After Barrès' superficial examination of anarchy, he made the most important contribution of his early career to the definition of nationalism. Prior to his article "La Querelle des nationalistes et des cosmopolites," which appeared in Figaro on July 4, 1892, Barrès defined nationalism in terms of Philippe's experiences with the rediscovery of the "land and the dead" of Lorraine. Barrès' article took the form of a protest against the vogue of Russian and Belgian literature in France. He admonished the "Théâtre Libre" for their production of the works of Maeterlinck and Ibsen. In short, Barrès suggested that French writers and playwrights draw on the classical tradition of Molière and Racine. He encouraged his comrades in letters to become nationalists, that is, to adopt an exclusively French style of writing which would protect the French language from the corrosive effects of foreign literature.

Until Barrès, it [nationalism] had been used to refer to a person (or policy) that supported by word or deed the principle of nationalities. Such a person favored the principle of self-determination and its corollary, the equal rights of peoples; he advocated freedom of intercourse between nations. . . ; in short, he was a "liberal nationalist." Nationaliste, and with it nationalisme, now experienced a peculiar metamorphosis so that in general parlance it came to mean the opposite to what it had formerly stood for. And to Barrès is given the credit for having initiated the change.⁶²

Thus, Barrès began the process of associating the idea of a nationalist with a set of exclusive values peculiar to the nation. Hostility toward

foreign ideas was a natural consequence of this attitude. Like one's "moi," which must attempt to remain the exclusive object of devotion despite the intervention of factors "dehors moi" (outside the self), one's nation must maintain its paramount position in every field, despite the machinations of foreign writers who are impinging on the aesthetic foundations of the patrie. Charles Maurras was also of the opinion that Barrès was responsible for the transformations in the meanings of nationalism and nationalist. "C'est Maurice Barrès qui de'tourna nationalisme de son sens européen. Il le fit dans un article qui parut au "Figaro" d'alors sous ce titre 'La Querelle des Nationalistes et des cosmopolites.'" Maurras was the founder of the Ecole romane; this organization of poets and novelists was dedicated to the maintenance of the Classical tradition in French letters. Like those of Barrès, Maurras' aesthetic predispositions were eventually translated into the language of politics.

Barrès' initial preoccupation with aesthetic purity developed into an obsession with the more mundane problem of national purity. That is, Barrès' xenophobia was transformed from the domain of ideas to people. The Jews became his principal target. Barrès always maintained that Jews were neither superior nor inferior to Aryans in general and Frenchmen in particular. This is the factor which distinguished Barrès' brand of anti-semitic propaganda from the cruder, Aryan supremacy, varieties of Drumont, Morès, and Gobineau. Barrès held that Jews were different from Frenchmen because the former were not raciné, or rooted, in the mystical traditions of "the land and the dead" which cemented all Frenchmen into a powerful nation. Yet, Barrès realized that it is improper to speak of a French race, and that Frenchmen represent a "virile nation of heroes" was a matter of considerable doubt in his own mind. However, Barrès was

determined to forge his "decerebrated and dissociated" countrymen into a dynamic nation for the sake of the reconquest of Alsace-Lorraine. The Jews were destined to play a key role in Barrès' program for revanche.

The observations which Barrès recorded during his participation in the Dreyfus affair, Scènes et Doctrines du Nationalisme (1902), form the central tenets of his plan to unify Frenchmen through the hatred of Jews. The term Jew eventually became identical with anything that was not rooted in the mystical traditionalistic collective, which Barrès claimed was France. Barrès' method was simple, Scènes et Doctrines du Nationalisme described Frenchmen as completely honorable, good, and beautiful; while Jews, who fed on the poison of Kantian philosophy, were evil, deformed, enemies of the French nation. Although the Dreyfus affair was not the original stimulus for Barrès' anti-semitic propaganda, Scènes et Doctrines du Nationalisme is a far more vituperative account of violent Barrèsian nationalism than Leurs figures, Barrès' reflections on the Panama scandal. However, it was in Leurs figures that Barrès developed the maxim which he would improve upon in his anti-Dreyfusard crusade.

It is through having common objects of hatred that people unite! Execrating the same man (in this case Baron Reinach)! Ah, what a powerful reason for loving one another. Hatred carries all, it has absolute reign over the heart. But the most intense, the most beautiful hatred is that which arises from civil wars.⁶³

Leurs figures was concerned with the negative effects of Jewish money, Baron Reinach's, on the political integrity of France's legislators. Reinach, "the pig of the boulevards," corrupted honest Frenchmen by

encouraging them to line their pockets rather than act in the national interest. However, there were also French criminals, particularly Clemenceau and Burdeau, Barrès' philosophy teacher at the Lycée in Nancy. Clemenceau had been Barrès' foe since the Boulangist adventure, and Barrès was jubilant when Clemenceau's political career was temporarily derailed as a result of his involvement in the Panama scandal. Burdeau was responsible for the perversion of young French minds with Kantian ethics. Barrès felt that Kant's philosophy of absolute moral standards, was incompatible with the relativist frame of mind which good French nationalists must possess. When Burdeau, the proponent of an absolute set of moral standards, was found guilty of accepting bribes, Barrès was ecstatic. Thus, Leurs figures represents Barrès' feeling of victory that: Baron Reinach, a Jew, was a principal figure in the scandal, and two of his old enemies received severe blows to their political careers.

Scènes et Doctrines du Nationalisme does not betray the slightest hint that Barrès was merely interested in deriving a sense of personal fulfillment from his brutal descriptions of Dreyfus and his supporters. On October 15, 1884, Dreyfus was arrested under charges of espionage. He was condemned to deportation for life to Devil's Island. However, the beginning of the Dreyfus affair occurred on November 20, 1897, with the appearance of Zola's "J'accuse!" in "Figaro." Zola was convinced that the evidence on which Dreyfus was convicted was not at all conclusive. Zola attacked the army for the manner in which the trial had been conducted. By January of 1898, a large number of prominent Frenchmen, largely men of letters and lawyers, believed that Dreyfus' conviction was secured on the basis of forged evidence. Thus, the Dreyfusards were casting serious aspersions on the integrity of the army.

Déroulède was among the first to blast the Dreyfusards for undermining the only remaining bastion of French stability. The credibility of parliamentary institutions was severely tested by the Wilson scandal, the Panama scandal, and General Boulanger's escapades. The position of the Church had been undermined by the "anti-Clerical chatterers." Barrès believed that the Republic's educational system was pernicious. Thus, the army remained the only institution to avoid a major scandal since the establishment of the Third Republic. Déroulède held that the respect and the dignity of the army should not be called into question for the sake of any individual, and certainly it would be folly to assume that the fate of one Jew is worth the debasement of the army. Déroulède's formula became the raison d'être of the anti-Dreyfusard movement, "There is no probability that Dreyfus is innocent, but it is absolutely certain that France is innocent." The issue of Dreyfus' guilt receded into the background, and the conflict between the Dreyfusards and the anti-Dreyfusards assumed the proportions of a philosophical debate on the importance of individual legal rights against the well-being of the nation. Clemenceau founded the Ligue pour la défense des droits de l'homme et du citoyen on February 20, 1898, in the same spirit in which he had organized the Société des droits de l'homme to combat the pro-Boulangist activities of the Comité. Thus, Barrès' prophecy that "Nous retrouverous d'autres boulangismes" assumed a haunting quality, which had already been borne out previously in the Panama scandal.

The similarities between the Dreyfus affair and the Boulangist adventure extend further. In January of 1898, Déroulède revived his League of Patriots, which had been outlawed in 1889 following the collapse of Déroulède's intended coup. However, Déroulède was not alone. In April of 1898 Maurice Pujo and Henri Vaugeois founded the Comité de l'Action française.

Jules Guérin's anti-Semite camelots joined the fray as well as the Jeunesse anti-sémite and André Buffet's Comité de la jeunesse royaliste. These groups engaged in a series of bloody street battles with Jews and Dreyfusards during the spring of 1898. However, the defenders of Dreyfus in the Chamber, particularly Clemenceau and Rouvier who were eager to restore their credibility after their involvement in the Panama scandal, succeeded in forcing President Faure (an anti-Dreyfusard) to have Dreyfus' case reviewed by the Court of Appeals. The anti-Dreyfusards were infuriated by Faure's capitulation. Dreyfus' hearing was scheduled for August 7, 1899 at Rennes.

The bulk of Scènes et Doctrines du Nationalisme deals with Barrès' impressions of the Rennes trial. Barrès did not deal with the facts of the case, since after the suicide of Colonel Henry, Dreyfus' guilt was impossible to prove. Therefore, Barrès realized that his actions were directed against an innocent French soldier. However, Barrès was not inhibited by this "detail." Both he and Maurras subscribed to the latter's formula, "Si Dreyfus est innocent, il fallit le nommer Maréchal de France et fusiller ses principaux défenseurs." Barrès' comments on the proceedings at Rennes were calculated to convince his countrymen that: even if Dreyfus and his supporters were on the right side of the law, they were reprehensible individuals alienated from the well springs of the French nation.

But, really, is it not infantile to feel ill at ease and pronounce mysterious the fact that an alien does not react to events as we Frenchmen would? We do not demand from this child of Sem the beautiful characteristics of the French nation. He is not susceptible to the emotional stimuli that we derive from our soil, our ancestors, our flag, the word honor. . . That Dreyfus is capable of treason I conclude from his

race. . . The Jews belong to the country in which they find their greatest gain. As a consequence of which it can be said that a Jew can never be a traitor.⁶⁴

Barrès' description of the courtroom at Rennes is highly imaginative, though he claimed that Scènes et Doctrines du Nationalisme contained a large measure of objective reporting.

Or, frequently on the way out of the courtroom I thought I could see slime under the tables (of the Jews), on which the feet of these ladies and swine might slither. Perhaps these dirty people had simply spat on the floor.⁶⁵

Barrès attempted to incite his countrymen to hostility against the Dreyfusards. The following lines reveal Barrès' use of the principle that a common hatred forges a powerful feeling of unity.

It is to discover our innate qualities, to bring forth those a priori correlations between ideas which are buried in the conscience of the citizens of one nation. Once those spectacles, like the hideous faces of the Dreyfus mob, enter into our souls, they will produce a response which will never be experienced by men in whom there was not our innate hereditary equipment. This has nothing to do with intelligence.⁶⁶

Therefore, Barrès' appeal was based on the notion that Frenchmen must hate Dreyfus and other foreigners, since Jews and Italians, like Zola, can never understand the mysteries reserved for Frenchmen; by virtue of their birth, foreigners lack the "hereditary equipment" of Frenchmen. Thus, Barrès has created a highly exclusive form of nationalism based on heredity, and the tradition of "our land and our dead." Dreyfus and the Jews, as well as any other foreigners, should not expect a fair trial in France, since Frenchmen can only judge them according to the only

standard available to them - Barrès' concept of the French nation. The consequence of Barrès' position is the negation of an absolute standard of justice. Barrésian nationalism revolves around the conception of a relative French justice which must always be subordinated to the highest form of justice - the mystical national consciousness.

The Dreyfusards rejected Barrès' concept of relative justice. His adversaries were particularly inflamed by Barrès' insistence on his version of the "true" tradition of the French nation. Péguy insisted that the anti-Dreyfusards were blind to another aspect of the French tradition. Péguy held that Dreyfus must be acquitted since France, above all, is the nation of "the Revolution, Justice, and the Law."⁶⁷ If an innocent man was convicted, at whatever cost to the dignity of the French army, France would "lose her soul." Therefore, the struggle between the Dreyfusards and the anti-Dreyfusards was reduced to a different, and a highly conflicting, understanding of the essence of the French tradition.

Péguy's challenge to the Barrésian dogma of relative justice was most formidable. Péguy invoked the French tradition of human rights associated with the Enlightenment. Péguy stood on much firmer historical ground than Barrès. All of Barrès' attitudes on the legacy of the French nation were heavily conditioned by his doctrine of mystico-nationalism. From a legal point of view, a system of justice based on the interpretation of the groans of the dead would transform Barrès into a witch doctor rather than a judge.

It was clear to the anti-Dreyfusards that they were fighting a hopeless "civil war" after the suicide of Colonel Henry. More than a year and a half before the Court of Appeals voted unanimously for the

annulment of the charges against Dreyfus, La Ligue de la Patrie Française was founded. The objective of the Ligue was to refute Péguy's position. The secondary purpose of the Ligue was to demonstrate that a large number of French intellectuals were anti-Dreyfusards. Three months before the Ligue's foundation on January 15, 1899, the "intellectuals" who supported Dreyfus, particularly Anatole France, claimed that all of the intellectuals in France had rallied to the Dreyfusard cause. This pronouncement was inaccurate, and the Ligue manifested the fact that twenty-five académiciens were firmly anti-Dreyfusard, and members of the Ligue. François Coppée was the President of the Ligue, Jules Lemaître was the power behind Coppée, and their membership consisted of a distinguished collection of intellectual talent ranging from Brunetière and Paul Bourget to Maurras and Barrès. It is significant that Paul Déroulède was refused admission to the Ligue because of his violent tactics. Therefore, the Ligue was an intellectual arm of the anti-Dreyfusards. Barrès became responsible for the refutation of Péguy's charges.

Barrès invoked the thesis he demonstrated in Les Déracinés to illustrate that Dreyfusard intellectuals were not responsible for their follies, but that they were the products of "false Kantian" mentalities. That is, Barrès held that the educational policy of the Third Republic had "uprooted" his generation by teaching them Kantian ethics rather than "tales of heroes." Barrès claimed that Kantian ethics presupposed a universal moral standard which the youths of his generation had been taught to rely on under all conditions. Yet, Kantian philosophy had the unhappy effect of filling young men's heads with pernicious abstractions. Barrès held that French youths must be taught to accept the determinism of "the land and dead," since he believed that universal moral standards were useless in

a world guided by selfish passions. In the political sphere, Barrès believed that Kantian abstractions encouraged cosmopolitan ideas in the younger generation. Thus they became "uprooted" from the mystical collective. Furthermore, those who possessed a "Kant ridden soul" were blinded, as the Dreyfusard intellectuals were, to the exigencies of the patrie. Barrès advocated the abandonment of Kantian philosophy in favor of a program of "exaltation" in the discipline of one's native province.

The idea of regional pride was closely associated with Barrès' desire to achieve decentralization. Decentralization, with a strong measure of regional autonomy, was necessary for the resurgence of the patrie. In particular, the educational system would be decentralized so that young Frenchmen would receive an education "in harmony with the music" of their native provinces. Thus, through the decentralization of the administrative and educational systems, France would grow strong through the revitalization of each of her provinces. The "decerebrated patrie" would recover from an overdose of Kantian abstractions and return to the firm base of moral conduct grounded in regional traditions.

The Dreyfusard intellectuals were regarded as déracinés for they had lost touch with the energy of the patrie by absorbing themselves in Kantian abstractions. Barrès believed that these poor confused déracinés are valuable examples of a deluded sense of nationalism. Their negative example will allow Barrès' true énracinés to avoid their errors.

While rejecting the intellectuals, we must pity rather than curse them. In their own way they are promoting French good sense although they themselves lack it. The brainless dog has rendered considerable service to the studies of psycho-physiology; the poor animal, despite its empty head, has more than anyone else helped us to understand the functioning of intelligence.⁶⁸

Barrès encouraged "true" Frenchmen to save the intellectuals from their misguided fate. Unlike Dreyfus, whose salvation was impossible because of his blood, the intellectuals were not the unsalvageable enemies of France.

Barrès' conciliatory attitude toward his former enemies, the Dreyfusards, became more sincere as the First World War approached. He never joined the Action Française, despite his close friendship with Maurras. His third trilogy, Les Bastions de l'Est, dealt with the problem of Alsace-Lorraine. Barrès had neglected this issue during his long years of strife with "the internal foreigners." Au service de l'Allemagne (1905) laments the fate of a young Alsatian, Ehrmann, who is forced to serve in the German army despite his conviction that he is committing a treasonous act against his true patrie. Colette Baudoche (1909) describes the plight of an Alsatian girl who is forced to marry a brutal German professor. Herr Asmus destroys Colette's spirit and forces her into a life of isolation and abject servitude. These two novels were designed to cause indignation among Frenchmen over the treatment of their fellow countrymen at the hands of the Germans. The last novel of the trilogy was written in 1920, Génie du Rhin. This work reveals Barrès' position that Germany must be partitioned, in order to avoid a future war with the arch enemy; Germany should be kept in a state of perpetual weakness. Barrès traced the historical record of Franco-German rivalry, and he concluded that an autonomous Rhenish state must be created as a buffer zone. The ancient kingdom of Lothar, in an abbreviated form, would function as a protective mechanism for the victorious Franks. Génie du Rhin popularized Poincaré's intention to create a buffer state in the Rhineland through Barrès use of historical data which suggested that the Rhine frontier would continue

to be a trouble spot as long as the antagonists share this common border.

However, Barrès' principal political impact was felt before the war. Despite his withdrawal from chauvinistic politics in 1901, the Action Française adopted a large measure of his program for the creation of a "militant nationalism." The Action Française espoused Barrès' program of decentralization in education and in administration. Maurras carried Barrès' ideas to their ultimate conclusion in Maurras' program of integral nationalism, based on provincial decentralization. The notion of the province, as opposed to the republican administrative unit, the département, fitted in with Maurras' program for monarchical restoration. The Action Française also improved on Barrès' xenophobia, through their doctrines of the supremacy of the Latin race. Most importantly, Barrès' popularization of the Boulangist mystique articulated with the panache of the Action Française. There was very little difference between Barrès' Caesarism and Maurras' monarchism.

The reasons for Barrès' decision to disassociate himself from extreme political activism involve a combination of factors. Barrès' initial decision to renounce extremism came shortly after his mother died on July 30, 1901. After her death, Barrès was determined to turn his back on the bitter factionalism he participated in during the Dreyfus affair. He decided to spend the rest of his life writing. His works after 1901 lack the invective which made him the hero of the anti-Dreyfusards. Furthermore, Barrès finally succeeded in attaining the realization of his twofold dream in 1906. He was elected to the Académie Française and to the Chamber. Barrès continued to represent his electors in the first arrondissement of Paris until his death in 1923. Thus, Barrès reached the summit of literary notoriety and he obtained a tribute from his Parisian

constituents. Therefore, he did not feel a need to participate in a movement dedicated to the disruption of a society which embraced him. Furthermore, Barrès began to sense a feeling of repulsion for the Action Française, who opposed his new program of uniting the patrie through accommodation. He captured a prophetic insight into the disastrous consequences which would befall his patrie.

The day will come when it will be the conservatives who will accept and call in the foreigner. Yes, those who today are the patriots, the proud, will become tired of living in a France that is decayed, a life full of humiliation, and they will call for the intervention of the foreigner who can give them at last the joy of participating in a great, collective life.⁶⁹

Therefore, Barrès believed that the super-patriots of the Action Française would eventually turn against the patrie in the interest of their dogmatic preoccupation with the establishment of an authoritarian régime. Barrès knew Maurras' character well, and Maurras' slogan "politique d'abord" placed the patrie in a subordinate position to doctrine. Despite Barrès' fervent commitment to his doctrines for the resurgence of the national spirit, he always attempted to distinguish between loyalty to doctrine and loyalty to country. He was not always successful, yet Barrès was astute enough to realize that the Action Française represented a threat to France.

Barrès was a novelist who dabbled in the politics of the Chamber. His involvement with political organizations espousing a program of extra-parliamentary action was considerable. Yet, he was first and foremost a novelist. Barrès' themes inspired a host of younger writers to emulate their master's traditionalist frame of reference. Thus, Barrès was the

motivating force behind the "regional novel." François Mauriac, André Maurois, and Pierre Loti were his most distinguished followers. André Malraux, while a traditionalist, acquired Barrès' taste for the description of murders, political intrigue, and Oriental landscapes. Barrès was not an "action novelist," like Malraux, yet he did introduce a feeling for the sensuality of death into the history of fin-de-siècle French letters.

The most accurate adjective in a description of Barrès character is romantic. Since his early youth, Barrès demonstrated the qualities of a romantic: the love of action, vicarious at first, and the desire to attain exaltation through aesthetic contributions. Though he was neither a Disraeli nor a Lamartine, Barrès was able to articulate a traditionalist solution for the political problems of his patrie which captivated many of his countrymen. The various doctrines within his system of mystico-nationalism were never accepted by the country at large. Yet, when the inevitable war of revanche came, Barrès had let off his histrionic steam, and he attempted, with a large measure of success, to act as a force of solace for his countrymen. The Boulangist, revisionist, and anti-Dreyfusard attempted to repair the divisiveness he had helped to foment.

Catholics, Protestants, Israelites, Socialists, Traditionalists, suddenly drop their differences. The knives of hatred miraculously disappear. Everyone says: "I shall not, even with a secret thought, stand in the way that makes for the salvation of the patrie."⁷⁰

Footnotes

1. William C. Buthman, The Rise of Integral Nationalism in France. (New York, 1939), pp. 15-17.
2. Ibid.
3. Maurice Barrès, "Mes Mémoires," L'Oeuvre de Maurice Barrès. I (Paris, 1967), pp. 21-23.
4. Ibid.
5. Pierre de Boisdeffre, Maurice Barrès. (Paris, 1961), p. 8
6. James Huneker, Egoists. (New York, 1910), p. 239.
7. Maurice Barrès, Le Départ pour la vie. (Paris, 1954), p. 38
8. Maurice Barrès, "Mes Mémoires," L'Oeuvre de Maurice Barrès. I (Paris, 1967), p. 29.
9. Ibid.
10. Maurice Barrès, Les Déracinés. (Paris, 1938), pp. 249-252.
11. René Lalou, Maurice Barrès. (Paris, 1950), p. 108.
12. Pierre de Boisdeffre, Barrès parmi nous. (Paris, 1952), p. 97.
13. Maurice Barrès, Sous l'oeil des Barbares, L'Oeuvre de Maurice Barrès, I (Paris, 1967).
14. Maurice Barrès, Un Homme Libre, L'Oeuvre de Maurice Barrès, I (Paris, 1967).
15. Ibid., p. 260.
16. Ibid., pp. 294-352.
17. Maurice Barrès, Un Homme Libre. (Paris, 1954), pp. ii-ix.
18. Maurice Barrès, Sous l'oeil des Barbares. (Paris, 1954), pp. iii-xi.
19. Maurice Barrès, "Mes Mémoires," L'Oeuvre de Maurice Barrès. I (Paris, 1967).
20. Maurice Barrès, Sous l'oeil des Barbares. (Paris, 1954), p. 52.
21. Lalou, op., cit., pp. 129-133.

22. There are many references, the earliest is in Barrès' 1888 preface to Sous l'oeil des Barbares.
23. Michael Curtis, Three Against the Third Republic. (New York, 1959), p. 57.
24. Maurice Barrès, "Ma Vie Politique," L'Oeuvre de Maurice Barrès. XIII (Paris, 1967), p. 33.
25. Pierre de Boisdeffre, Maurice Barrès. (Paris, 1961), p. 18.
26. Maurice Barrès, Le Départ pour la vie. (Paris, 1954), p. 46.
27. Ibid., p. 58.
28. Ibid., p. 63.
29. Maurice Barrès, "Les Taches d'encre," L'Oeuvre de Maurice Barrès. I (Paris, 1967), p. 438.
30. Ibid., p. 441.
31. Pierre de Boisdeffre, Maurice Barrès. (Paris, 1961), p. 81.
32. Maurice Barrès, "Les Taches d'encre," L'Oeuvre de Maurice Barrès. I (Paris, 1967), p. 441.
33. Ibid., p. 442.
34. Ibid., p. 453.
35. Alexander Zévaès, Au Temps du Boulangisme. (Paris, 1930), p. 48.
36. Pierre de Boisdeffre, Maurice Barrès. (Paris, 1961), p. 22.
37. Zévaès, op., cit., p. 63.
38. Maurice Barrès, L'Appel au Soldat, L'Oeuvre de Maurice Barrès. III (Paris, 1967), p. 387.
39. Herbert Tint, The Decline of French Patriotism, 1870-1940. (London, 1964), p. 242.
40. Maurice Barrès, "Mes Cahiers," L'Oeuvre de Maurice Barrès. XVI (Paris, 1967), p. 17.
41. Tint, op., cit., p. 243.
42. Ibid.

43. D. W. Brogan, France Under the Republic. (New York and London, 1940), p. 190.
44. Maurice Barrès, L'Appel au Soldat, L'Oeuvre de Maurice Barrès. III (Paris, 1967).
45. Buthman, op., cit., p. 54.
46. Maurice Barrès, L'Appel au Soldat, L'Oeuvre de Maurice Barrès. III (Paris, 1967), p. 403.
47. Zévaès, op., cit., 122-125.
48. Ibid.
49. Maurice Barrès, 1908 Preface to L'Appel au Soldat.
50. Ibid.
51. Brogan, op., cit., p. 193.
52. Ibid., pp. 195-196.
53. Ibid.
54. Maurice Barrès, 1908 Preface to L'Appel au Soldat.
55. Maurice Barrès, "Ma Vie Politique," L'Oeuvre de Maurice Barrès. XIII 9 (Paris, 1967), p. 56
56. Pierre de Boisdeffre, Maurice Barrès. (Paris, 1961), p. 28.
57. Tint, op., cit., p. 105.
58. Ibid.
59. Maurice Barrès, L'Appel au Soldat, L'Oeuvre de Maurice Barrès. III (Paris, 1967).
60. Maurice Barrès, Les Déracinés. (Paris, 1954), p. 456.
61. Maurice Barrès, "Mes Mémoires," L'Oeuvre de Maurice Barrès. I (Paris, 1967), p. 18.
62. Buthman, op., cit., pp. 61-62.
63. Maurice Barrès, Leurs figures. (Paris, 1954), p. 42.
64. Maurice Barrès, Scènes et Doctrines du Nationalisme, L'Oeuvre de Maurice Barrès. V (Paris, 1967), p. 78.

65. Ibid., p. 38.
66. Ibid., p. 107.
67. Pierre de Boisdeffre, Maurice Barrès. (Paris, 1961), p. 74.
68. Maurice Barrès, Scènes et Doctrines du Nationalisme, L'Oeuvre de Maurice Barrès. V (Paris, 1967), p. 208.
69. Maurice Barrès, "Mes Cahiers," L'Oeuvre de Maurice Barrès. XIV (Paris, 1967), p. 264.
70. Maurice Barrès, Les Diverses Familles Spirituelles de la France, L'Oeuvre de Maurice Barrès. XVII (Paris, 1967), p. 21.

Bibliography

I. Primary Sources

1. Barrès, Philippe A., ed., L'Oeuvre de Maurice Barrès. 20 vols. Paris, 1967.

II. Secondary Sources

2. De Boisdeffre, Pierre, Barrès parmi nous. Paris, 1951.
3. De Boisdeffre, Pierre, Maurice Barrès. Paris, 1961.
4. Brogan, D. W., France Under the Republic. New York and London, 1940.
5. Buthman, William C., The Rise of Integral Nationalism in France. New York, 1939.
6. Curtis, Michael, Three Against the Third Republic. New York, 1959.
7. Domenach, Jean-Marie, Barrès par lui-même. Paris, 1954.
8. Huneker, James, Egoists. New York, 1910.
9. Lalou, René, Maurice Barrès. Paris, 1950.
10. Tint, Herbert, The Decline of French Patriotism, 1870-1940. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1964.
11. Rémond, René, The Right Wing in France, from 1815 to de Gaulle.
12. Zévaès, Alexandre, Au Temps du Boulangisme. Gallimard, Paris, 1930.