

321
THE
POPULIST MOVEMENT
IN
FRENCH LITERATURE

THESIS

presented for

the

DEGREE

of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH

of the

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

by

ELSABE EINHORN, M.A.

1952

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

S U M M A R Y

Introduction

This thesis, based on information collected through interviews or correspondence with living authors, proposes to study the Populist Movement in French literature, as the need is felt for a comprehensive work on the subject.

Chapter 1. The birth of the populist movement.

Since the foundation of the third republic in France, the workers gradually began to write about their own experiences, and upper class writers slowly showed more interest in the people. In 1929 two authors and critics, André Thérive and Léon Lemonnier, conscious of the need for realist novels about the poorer classes, combined to found what they called the "populist movement", and Lemonnier put forward their theories in several articles which were looked upon as manifestos, and caused much comment.

Chapter 2. The populist manifestos.

The programme of populism was explained in five articles by Léon Lemonnier, which appeared from August 1929 to January 1930. They show that populism owed much to the naturalists, although Lemonnier criticised naturalist works for their scientific theories and pretences, their pessimism, and the language they used. Populism appeared also as a reaction to certain escapist, philosophical, or sensational trends in 20th century novels, for populism aimed at drawing inspiration from the lower classes, and at continuing the realist tradition in French literature.

Chapter 3. Populism on trial before France and Europe.

The general interest shown in the populist manifestos gave rise to several official inquiries organised by various reviews. Writers in France or other countries were sent letters summarising the populist programme, and inviting their opinions. Their replies were then published and analysed. The most ambitious inquiry was carried out by "La Grande Revue", and answers from nearly a hundred authors in fourteen countries ~~xxx~~ as far afield as Russia, England and the United States were printed and discussed from October 1930 to February 1931. These inquiries show the reaction of accepted authors to populism, and give some indication of similar literary trends in other countries.

Chapter 4. The first recruits and activities.

The critics claimed many new works as populist, and Lemonnier planned to unite not only novelists, but playwrights and painters as well in the populist movement. Populism gained the support of various groups of painters, who held populist exhibitions, but little interest was shown by playwrights. There were several public discussions on populism in 1930, and Mme Couillet-Tessier, whose first novel was praised by Thérive, founded a prize for populist novels in 1931. The café "Le Mahieu" in the Latin quarter became a populist rendez-vous.

Chapter 5. The literary position of populism.

The populists opposed several literary trends of the time, such as those shown by the surrealists or the followers of Gide. Thérive, greatly interested in language and style, criticised the linguistic style of authors from the Goncourts onwards, praised Duhamel's prose, and pleaded for the use of classical French in literature. There had been various realistic trends in the French novel in previous centuries, and each period brought its own contribution to a general tradition of realism, which finally covered characters, subject matter, social background, treatment, style and language. Various articles and prefaces before 1929 were looked upon as forerunners of the populist manifestos, and populism itself appeared as a culmination of the realist tradition of past centuries, adapted to the social conditions of the 20th century.

Chapter 6. Léon Lemonnier's populist novels.

Léon Lemonnier's novels are important because they were discussed in connection with populism. They were influenced by his experiences in England and in a working-class quarter of Paris. Two main trends are

apparent in his novels; an interest in mysticism, superstitions and religion in general, and a desire to show the lives of less privileged people with a sympathetic understanding. The merits of his style are clarity and simplicity.

Chapter 7. André Thérive and the philosophy of pessimism.

André Thérive was strongly influenced by Schopenhauer, and his novels, analysed in chronological order, show the steady development of his pessimistic philosophy. This pessimistic approach to life led Thérive to write stories about people from less privileged classes, who were more likely to live cramped, unhappy lives.

Chapter 8. Thérive's debt to Huysmans.

Thérive was deeply impressed by Huysmans' work, and Huysmans' influence is apparent in Thérive's application of a pessimistic philosophy to the novel, in his explanation of suffering, his interest in heresy and his choice and treatment of his subjects. Thérive's novels which he calls populist are mainly populist in their presentation of lower class characters and surroundings, for Thérive shows little real understanding for the people. Among Thérive's best works are his short stories, which are less philosophical, and which excell through their humour and their clear and vivid style.

Chapter 9. Henry Poulaille and the proletarian writers.

One must distinguish between "populists", who are middle or upper class authors writing about the people, and "proletarian writers", who belong to the working-class and write about their own experiences. The growing activity of working-class authors since the beginning of the 20th century had hardly been noticed by the reading public, and Henry Poulaille came to champion their cause. He became the leader of the group that called themselves the "proletarian writers", partly in opposition to the populists. Poulaille was the son of a carpenter, on his own before he was fourteen, and his books reflect his life. He entered the publishing firm of Bernard Grasset where he encouraged working-class writers, and constantly stressed the position and the value of proletarian literature. Proletarian writers, Poulaille said, should shun outright political propaganda, should produce works about their own experiences based on the social conditions of their time, and should consider authenticity more important than style.

Chapter 10. The opposition and efforts of the proletarian group.

The proletarian writers were perhaps the chief opponents of the populists. They objected to the confusion which had arisen since the populist manifestos, as many proletarian writers were being classed as populists by the critics; their most serious criticism of populism was that the populists would not be able to write about ~~xxx~~ the working-class with the same life and sincerity as could working-class writers themselves. Inspired by forerunners of the proletarian group, like Jules Vallès and Charles-Louis Philippe, Poulaille and his friends showed their tenacity of purpose by founding many reviews to encourage proletarian literature, and by writing themselves.

Chapter 11. Eugène Dabit and his "Hôtel du Nord".

Eugène Dabit, a working-class writer who won the first populist prize in 1931 for his "Hôtel du Nord", is one of the best authors classed as populist. His early work illustrates the confusion arising between populist and proletarian literature. Dabit's youth and his experiences in poor quarters of Paris led to his first book "Hôtel du Nord", which showed both populist and proletarian elements, but Dabit tried to avoid all literary groups in an effort to retain his literary freedom.

Chapter 12. Dabit's search for fulfilment.

Three periods can be distinguished in Dabit's literary career. In the first period, his works could be called proletarian; in the second period his books are definitely populist; a third more individualistic period was cut short by Dabit's death in 1936. Dabit's development resulted from his desire for freedom, his fear of war, and his urge to live as intensely as possible. His "Journal Intime" suggests possible reasons for his tragic early death.

Chapter 13. Louis Guilloux's proletarian novels.

Louis Guilloux started as a proletarian writer, won a populist prize in 1942, and has since written works which are more individualistic. Like Eugène Dabit, he was acclaimed by both populists and proletarians, and his development helps to distinguish between these two groups. His first books are the reflection of his own experiences coloured by a certain class consciousness, and resemble those of other proletarian writers through their simplicity, their documentary value, their antagonism to the middle classes, their Jauresian socialism, and the value put on truth rather than on style.

Chapter 14. Guilloux, the chronicler of Saint-Brieuc.

The works of Guilloux's second period are more populist than proletarian in character. Although the stories deal with people from the lower classes, and are treated realistically, yet these novels are no longer written from the point of view of a class, but of humanity, and show more regard for style and form. Guilloux's great work of his third period, "Le Jeu de Patience", retains the vividness of his proletarian novels and the concern for style of his populist books, but now reflects Guilloux as an individual. Guilloux's development seems logical and inevitable, and a similar evolution is likely for other great writers of working-class origin.

Chapter 15. The failure of the "Front Littéraire Commun".

The various liberal and left wing political groups had their literary counterparts, and the changing positions of communist, socialist and left centre political groups between 1920 and 1935 were reflected in the positions of communist, proletarian and populist writers. Poulaille and the proletarian writers were in an awkward position between communist authors on the left and populists on the right. Following the political "Front Populaire", the communist "Association des Ecrivains Révolutionnaires" and the populist group each invited all other left wing groups to join them in a "Front Littéraire Commun" in 1935. The populist efforts at a united front failed, partly as a result of the political differences between these three groups, partly because of the superior organisation of the A.E.A.R. and the mistrust of the proletarians.

Chapter 16. Further activities of the populist group.

There were many exhibitions of populist art from 1933 onwards, encouraged recently by the foundation of a populist prize for painting. The populist salon of 1952, which included many different art styles, showed that paintings were classed as populist mainly by their subject matter. In the meantime the populists were meeting regularly in various cafés or restaurants. The "Cahiers de Paris" became for some years a populist review; a populist academy was founded, and a manifesto of populist poetry and two anthologies of poetry were published. Mme Sophie Stambat's monthly populist salon extended its hospitality to other celebrities, and has become one of the most important literary salons in Paris to-day.

Chapter 17. Populism illustrated by prize-winning novels.

In the twenty-three years the populist movement has existed so far there have been eighteen prize-winning novels or groups of novels, which are important because they indicate which authors were, for a period at least, considered populist, and because they tell us what subjects, treatment and language were generally accepted as populist. An analysis of the prize-winning books shows among other things that the majority dealt with the lives and surroundings of people from the lower classes, that a realistic treatment of the subject was encouraged, but was not considered essential, and that the attitude of the authors to the lower classes varied greatly.

Chapter 18. Contemporary trends in populist novels and poetry.

Continuing the analysis of the prize-winning novels, we see that populism from the beginning was an organic movement, and struggled to adapt itself to changing social and literary conditions, often against the wishes of its more conservative founders. The language used gradually became more popular, the distinction between proletarian and populist prize-winning authors grew less clear, and the treatment of the novels now varies greatly, since the subject-matter alone tends to class any work as populist. These trends are evident also in the various volumes of poetry which won populist prizes from 1940 onwards.

Chapter 19. The wider range of populist writing.

Apart from those authors whose works were crowned by the populist jury, there were many writers whose books illustrate populism in practice. Some of these writers openly associated themselves with the populists. Others however cherished their independance. Chief among writers of populist novels before 1929 were Charles-Henri Hirsch, Pierre Hamp, J.-H. Louwyck, Louis Chaffurin, Louis-Jean Finot, Duhamel, Martin du Gard, Romain, and André Chamson. Best among women writers after the populist manifestos were Céline Lhotte, Antonine Couillet-Tessier, Huguette Garnier, Laurence Algan and Sophie Stambat. In addition works by other authors could be classed as populist, with certain qualifications; these would include certain works by Marcel Aymé, Jean Prévost, Henri Troyat, Louis Le Sidaner, Frédéric Lefèvre, Romain Roussel, Jean-Paul Coutisson, and, greatest of all perhaps, Maxence Van der Meersch.

Chapter 20. Conclusion.

Populism spread in literature as a result of a social and literary necessity, encouraged also by the efforts of the populist and proletarian groups, and it is successfully adapting itself to a changing environment. Further research is possible, especially on the proletarian movement. After due consideration we tentatively suggest that the period from 1930 onwards in French literature be called the "populist period". The term "populist" should then be used in a wide sense, to cover both proletarian literature, and various chronicles of our society as a whole, like those by Martin du Gard, Duhamel and Romain, whom the populists admired; and the subdivisions -- introductory period, first and second populist period -- could be made. The terms "populism" and "populist" might be adopted in English, in the sphere of literature and art. A study of populism might help to encourage books about the lower classes in South Africa, which would serve as a valuable contribution to literature, and would help towards a general understanding between peoples and classes in our country.

Appendices, etc..

These include: letters from Thérive to Lemonnier; the first populist manifesto for novels, and for poetry; details of inquiries on populism; populist prize-winners and juries; a list of populist art exhibitions and recent exhibitors; details of various proletarian reviews; lives of authors connected with populism; works of authors connected with populism; some early articles on populism; general references; acknowledgements and indexes.

Illustrations.

Over forty photos of authors etc. are included in the thesis.

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

THESIS

presented for

the

DEGREE

of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH

by

ELSABE EINHORN, M.A.

1952

The copyright of this thesis is held by the
University of Cape Town.
Reproduction of the whole or any part
may be made for study purposes only, and
not for publication.

THE
POPULIST MOVEMENT
IN
FRENCH LITERATURE

To
my parents
Henrietta Christina
and
John Andrew Kuys
in
gratitude

C O N T E N T S

<u>Chapters</u>	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	6
1. The birth of the populist movement	9
2. The populist manifestos	15
3. Populism on trial before France and Europe	21
4. The first recruits and activities	27
5. The literary position of populism	33
6. Léon Lemonnier's populist novels	39
7. André Thérive and the philosophy of pessimism	46
8. Thérive's debt to Huysmans	51
9. Henry Poulaille and the proletarian writers	57
10. The opposition and efforts of the proletarian group	65
11. Eugène Dabit and his "Hôtel du Nord"	74
12. Dabit's search for fulfilment	80
13. Louis Guilloux's proletarian novels	86
14. Guilloux, the chronicler of Saint-Brieuc	91
15. The failure of the "Front Littéraire Commun"	97
16. Further activities of the populist group	103
17. Populism illustrated by prize-winning novels	111
18. Contemporary trends in populist novels and poetry	119
19. The wider range of populist writing	127
20. Conclusion	133
 <u>Appendices</u>	
I. Letters from Thérive to Lemonnier	142
II. The first populist manifestos	144
III. Inquiries on populism	146
IV. Populist prize-winners and juries	148
V. Exhibitions of populist art	151
VI. Proletarian reviews	152
VII. Authors' lives	154
VIII. Authors' works (novels and poetry)	160
IX. Some early articles on populism	166
X. General Bibliography	168
 Acknowledgements	 173
Index of Illustrations	174
Index of Authors	175

I L L U S T R A T I O N S

Mandler: A group of populist writers	page 12a
Céline Lhotte - Louis Chaffurin	17a
Marie Gevers - Emmanuel Roblès	23a
Marcel Aymé - Jean Prévost	28a
"Le Mahieu" - Antonine Couillet-Tessier	31a
Jansem : "Les Buveurs"	36a
Henry Ramey : "La Soupe des Paysans"	36a
Léon Lemonnier	39a
André Thérive	46a
Henri Troyat - Théophile Malicet	52a
Henry Poulaille	61a
Edouard Peisson - Charles-Louis Philippe	68a
"L'Hôtel du Nord"	76a
Eugène Dabit	80a
Louis Guilloux	86a
Georges Palante alias "Cripure"	92a
Tristan Rémy	99a
Henri Van Rugghe - Serge Groussard	104a
Charles Braibant - Louis Le Sidaner	106a
Sophie Stambat	108a
Jean Merrien - Jean Rogissart	112a
Camille François - Marius Richard	115a
Pierre Moussarie - René Fallet	120a
Philippe Dumaine - François Piazza	122a
Lil Boël - Maurice Carême	124a
Scene from film of "Histoires de Tabusse"	128a
André Chamson in the Cevennes	128a
Maxence Van der Meersch	132a
Armand Lanoux - "Photomontage de l'auteur"	135a
Some populists in 1952	137a

I N T R O D U C T I O N

INTRODUCTION

The Populist Movement in French literature came into being in 1929, as a result of a manifesto drafted by Léon Lemonnier and André Thérive, which appeared in the literary columns of "L'Oeuvre", on the twenty-seventh of August that year.

This establishment of a new literary group was by no means unusual in a country like France, which has seen her cultural life strengthened in past centuries by well-defined movements. French writers and artists have tended to join together for mutual support and to spread their ideas.

In the 19th century we think immediately of the Romantics, with their "cénacles" and literary battles, of the Parnassiens under Leconte de Lisle with their anthologies of poetry, and of the Impressionist painters, with their joint exhibitions. In the fifty years between 1880 and 1930 more than fifty literary groups were founded (1). These groups usually had leaders and adherents who met regularly, who published articles or manifestos on their ideas, who sometimes ran their own review which lasted for a few months or even a few years.

Some of these literary schools were hardly heeded at the time, or are little talked of now, like Paul Roux's "Magnificisme", Jean de la Hire's "Synthétisme", and other groups such as "Floralisme", "Simultanéisme", "Machinisme" or "Sérénisme". Some however will find their place in future literary histories, like Jules Romains' "Unanimisme" or Tristan Tzara's "Dadaïsme". And finally a few had enough influence to give their names to a whole period, such as the "Naturalists", who started their movement officially with the publication of the "Soirées de Médan" in 1880, and who went into liquidation after the criticisms following the "Manifeste des Cinq" in 1887.

But "Populisme" differs from most of these movements in one respect, its length of duration. Populism has existed as an official movement for twenty-three years already, and can therefore justifiably claim our interest and attention.

Although numerous articles have been published on the populist movement or on individual authors connected with populism, no comprehensive works have as yet been written on the history of the populist movement as a whole, and it was felt that the study undertaken in the following chapters might help to fill this gap.

.

Various questions might be asked:

1. Who were the leaders of the populist movement?
2. How was the movement founded?
3. What were the theories of populism?
4. How did other writers react?
5. How did the populist movement grow?
6. How was populism related to other social, literary and political trends?
7. Had populism any strong opponents?
8. Apart from the leaders, who were the best writers associated with populism?
9. What are the activities of the populists to-day?
10. Was the long life of the populist movement fortuitous? If not, how can it be explained?
11. How is populism likely to be placed in future histories of French literature?
12. Is a study of the populist movement of any value to us in South Africa?

It is proposed to deal with these questions in detail in the chapters which follow.

.

(1) See Fernand-Demeure: "Les écoles littéraires depuis 50 ans", La Revue Mondiale, 1/3/1930.

An objection might be made: is it not too soon to write the history of a movement still existing to-day?

Although it may be too soon to judge the value and importance of populism as yet, a detailed study will be useful for the following reasons:-

- a) Brief sections have already been devoted to populism in recognised histories of 20th century literature in France, but these sections are fragmentary, and sometimes even misleading or inaccurate.
- b) The same deficiency applies to articles on various aspects of populism, as the critics have often neither the time nor the possibility of a detailed study of the question.
- c) An accurate record of populism at this stage may help to prevent confusion later.
- d) At the same time, inaccuracies or faulty interpretations which may creep into this thesis in spite of the writer's vigilance can more easily be corrected now, while the memory of those involved is fresh, than in ten, twenty-five or fifty years' time.

.

The work of collecting material for this thesis was carried out mainly in 1948, 1950 and 1952. It was conducted as follows:-

- i) A six months' stay in London in 1948 made it possible to obtain part of the information required from French books and reviews in the British Museum.
- ii) Two visits to Paris of a fortnight each, in February and June 1948, enabled the writer to interview over a dozen people connected with the populist movement, chief of whom were André Thérive, Léon Lemonnier's wife, Mme Couillet-Tessier, Henry Poulaille, Louis Guilloux, Henri Troyat, André Chamson and Marcel Aymé.
- iii) It was also possible in Paris to consult works in the Sorbonne library and in the Bibliothèque Nationale, to visit publishers and editors, and to secure books and documents required for further study.
- iv) Subsequent information was gathered through correspondence with authors, editors and publishers, and valuable details were obtained through replies to a general questionnaire sent to many writers connected with the populist movement.

Note: The work was to a certain extent limited, because some books required were out of print and unavailable, and because a few writers did not reply to letters or questionnaires.

.

It was at first feared that the long distance between South Africa and France might form a distinct handicap in writing a thesis of this type. But in practice it was found, if anything, an advantage. Distance in space had one of the beneficial effects of distance in time. One was not overwhelmed by irrelevant details, while most of the essential documents could be obtained.

South Africa's geographical position had one additional advantage. The people approached in France realised the writer's difficulty in getting material. Kindly disposed towards a distant student, they were extremely helpful in making books, manuscripts, photographs and much general information available.

.

Based on the material obtained, it is proposed to discuss the populist movement in French literature as follows, based on the questions set out above:-

1. The leaders of the populist movement and their work will be discussed in chapters 1, 6, 7 and 8.
2. Chapter 1 will give details of the foundation of the movement.
3. The theories of populism will be enumerated in chapter 2.
4. The reaction of other writers will be noted in chapter 3.
5. Chapters 4 and 16 will tell of the growth of the populist movement.
6. The relation of populism to other social, literary and political trends will be discussed in chapters 1, 5, and 15.

7. Chapters 9, 10, and 15 will deal with the chief opponents of populism.
8. The best writers associated with populism, apart from the leaders, will be studied in chapters 11 to 14, and 17 to 19.
9. The present activities of the populists are related in chapter 16.
10. Chapters 18 and 20 offer possible explanations for the long life of the populist movement.
11. Suggestions as to the place of populism in French literature in general are made in chapters 5 and 20.
12. Finally the value of a study of populism for South African writers is put forward in the concluding chapter.

.

Notes, Appendices and References.

The numbers in brackets (1), (2), etc. in the text refer to notes, which for the reader's convenience are grouped at the end of the chapter to which they refer.

To avoid unnecessary notes, the bracketed capitals (I) and (L) indicate that the information referred to was gathered in the first case during a personal interview, and in the second case from a private letter sent to the writer.

Information which is of general interest, but cannot be incorporated in the main chapters of the thesis, is given in the appendices.

The bracketed capital (A), e.g. "Jean Pallu's 'Usine' (A)" refers the reader to Appendix VII on "Authors' Lives" for details of the author in question.

- 1 -

THE BIRTH OF THE POPULIST MOVEMENT

CHAPTER ONE

THE BIRTH OF THE POPULIST MOVEMENT

The year 1871 was a turning point in French history. It saw the birth of the third French republic.

Now there is a tendency for the literature in any country to bear the stamp of the political atmosphere in that country, so after 1871 one might expect to find literary works influenced by democratic ideals.

Such was not the case.

In 1907 Charles Bourcier, an early socialist writer, exclaimed in his "Chimère: Revue de littérature démocratique", "il y aura bientôt quarante ans que nous vivons en République, et nous n'avons pas encore de littérature républicaine" (1).

But no sudden change was possible after 1871. Many of the writers were monarchists; republican writers had to bear in mind an upper class reading public; and as for the working-class, many had only a fragmentary education, and few were able to devote themselves to writing of any kind. The heroes and heroines of novels published in the 1870's still belonged mainly to the upper and middle classes, and the working-class had no literature of their own. But slowly conditions altered.

There were two lines of development. On the one hand the proletariat or working-class slowly aspired to a share in the cultural life of France. A great step forward was taken, when by 1882 primary education was not only free but compulsory for children up to the age of thirteen. The spread of socialism encouraged the proletariat to take a more active part in public life. Some of the workers wrote articles for left wing newspapers or founded their own reviews, and gradually a few began to write books too, mainly autobiographies, laboriously drafted in the evenings after a long day's work. These authors who belonged to the working-class we will call "proletarian authors", and their books were the first steps towards what can be termed a "proletarian literature" of the third republic.

On the other hand, the upper and middle classes to which the vast majority of writers belonged were gradually showing more interest in the people. The naturalists paved the way by describing peasants, miners, poor clerks or servant girls in their books, but such subjects were the exception, not the rule at the time. But slowly an appreciation was being fostered by socialist writers for the worker, for his qualities and his importance.

Earlier in the 19th century already Lamennais and Michelet had preached a love for the people which spread through intellectual circles towards the end of the century. These rather vague humanitarian ideals of the middle and upper classes showed themselves about the time of the Dreyfus affair in the attempt at founding "Universités Populaires", with the idea of bringing a wider culture to the proletariat. At the beginning of the 20th century came Jaurès, who with his paper "L'Humanité" and his ideal of a "humanité fraternelle et libre" was to influence a whole generation of writers, like Romain Rolland and Jules Romains. But there was still little written about people by the upper classes until men from different social planes were thrown together in the first world war.

After the war more books were gradually written by the lower classes about their own experiences, but "proletarian authors" were comparatively rare, and found as yet little support from the critics and reading public.

Apart from this "proletarian literature" there were two currents apparent in French literature in the first ten years after the armistice. On the one hand a certain tendency to escape from reality, influenced by symbolism, and literary cubism and surrealism. On the other hand a renewed interest in reality, which showed itself in the many critical stu-

(1) For this and other bracketed numbers in the text, refer to the notes at the end of the chapter.

dies of naturalism, and in a number of realist novels, of which a few start describing not only the upper half of society, but the ordinary lives of working-class people.

.....

There were two authors among others who were alive to the possible value of these realist novels about the poorer classes; these were Léon Lemonnier and André Thérive, who were to found the populist movement in 1929 and preach a neo-naturalism. We will see how each of these men in turn came to appreciate the type of literature they were to champion later.

Léon Lemonnier (A)(2) was born in Normandy in 1890, and spent his school-years at Rouen where Flaubert and Maupassant had studied before him. Leaving school he specialised in English, and spent some time in England before the Great War. After the war years, he was forced by the housing shortage to make his home in the poorer quarters of Paris near the Porte de Saint-Ouen. He taught in the daytime, studied at night, but after dinner in the evening he would stroll through the narrow streets near his home till the light faded, or stop to exchange a few words with neighbours who were lounging against the sun-lit wall after a wearing day in shops or factories (L)(3).

Coming from a lower middle class family which had struggled by education and economy to raise its social position, Lemonnier was at first displeased at having to live in a working-class quarter, but he slowly became interested in the people he met in his neighbourhood. He started writing novels, and soon found himself taking as settings and characters the streets and people around him (4).

Lemonnier was reserved by nature, and his simple way of life was reflected in his novels. Their style is direct, clear and sober. But this was partly also the result of hard work, and a voluntary pruning of unnecessary detail, in his novels as in his life. Thus Lemonnier's surroundings and his own temperament led him to write books which followed to a certain extent the naturalist tradition.

André Thérive's history was in many ways different (A). Born at Limoges in 1891, he spent his youth in Paris where he studied at the Lycée Louis le Grand, then at the Sorbonne, where he discovered Huysmans and Schopenhauer. The war broke out and he was drafted into the infantry. A pessimist by conviction, he carried Schopenhauer's "World as Will and Idea" about with him throughout the war years. After the war he taught for four years at the catholic Collège Stanislas, but becoming well-known as a writer, he gave up teaching to devote himself to language, literary and art criticism, and to his own novels.

Thérive was brilliantly versatile, and profiting from his studies under Ferdinand Brunot he became one of the champions of pure French in works such as "Le Français, langue morte?" and "Querelles de langage". In his book-reviews in the weekly "L'Opinion" he showed his preferences for simplicity and sincerity in novels, while he appreciated in Huysmans in his earlier period and in Maupassant their descriptions of people from the lower classes.

It is interesting to note (5) that Thérive was chosen to preface reprints of two of the few 17th century novels which introduce the lower classes: Charles Sorel's "La Jeunesse de Francion", where young Francion's adventures take him through all classes of society, and the "Roman Bourgeois" of Furetière, who had proclaimed his intention of painting the lower classes with truth and realism. (6)

So from an early date already Thérive had proved his interest in various aspects of the naturalist tradition. He was also a member of the "Huysmans Club", and published a book on J.-K. Huysmans in 1924 (7). In the same year already he wrote in the "Revue Mondiale" in May: "Qui sait s'il n'est pas temps déjà de réparer l'injustice dont souffre probablement l'école naturaliste?"

.....

In 1927 Lemonnier's fifth novel appeared, "La Femme sans Pêché". It is the story of the unhappy life of a woman, who through years of trouble, the death of a daughter, the ingratitude of an adopted son, the faithlessness of her husband, still maintains her stable, Christian and very human attitude to others. And the scene is set among working-class people in the poor quarters of the 18th district, where Lemonnier himself lived.

André Thérive read "La Femme sans Pêché", and struck by its setting, finding in it something of Maupassant's realism, he praised it highly in "L'Opinion" (8) and in "Le Nouveau Siècle" (9). A few weeks later, in an article entitled "Plaidoyer pour le naturalisme" in "Comoedia" Thérive asked the public: "Est-ce que vous n'avez pas assez de ces livres où l'on est toujours secrétaire d'ambassade in partibus, littérateur génial, attaché au cabinet des médailles? où la toile de fond n'est pas fournie, comme dans l'immense majorité des âmes, par le soin de gagner sa vie, par les traces professionnels, par la vie pratique, la vie tout court?" (10)

What the French novel needed to invigorate it, Thérive declared, was a new type of naturalism, which did not mean an interest in coarse things or crude details, but rather a love for the lower classes and for the man in the street. Thérive hailed Lemonnier's "La Femme sans Pêché" as a return to realism.

Having read Thérive's articles, Léon Lemonnier went to see Thérive to thank him. The two men found that they had the same interest in naturalism, and they both felt the need for a neo-naturalism to oppose the current tendency to mundane, fantastic, analytical and surrealist novels. Then in June 1929 Lemonnier and Thérive met again by chance at the home of an author friend Jean Guirec (L). Discussing contemporary novels, they realised that gradually more writers were publishing books which followed the naturalist tradition. Lemonnier and Thérive resolved somehow to persuade these authors to form a group, and together they would encourage others to write realistic works showing an interest in the lower classes.

.

From the outset Lemonnier took the lead. He was enthusiastic, decisive, and overrode Thérive's hesitation at making a public stand for their theories. Lemonnier promised to sound out various authors, and to write a preliminary article in the hope of finding other writers sympathetically inclined. André Thérive was to figure as "chef d'école", as this would stimulate interest in their movement because of his prominent position in the literary world.

Thérive was doubtful at first whether they should publish manifestos, which might appear blatant, or over-dramatic, and could give rise to scoffing. But he realised that articles or even books had not enough influence. "Pour une fois je pense en effet qu'il ne faut pas du tout craindre le ridicule," Thérive wrote to Lemonnier shortly afterwards. "Ce sont les manifestes qui s'imposent à l'histoire et aux manuels, non les oeuvres, hélas!" (11)

Before drafting the first article, Lemonnier wrote to three or four other authors without receiving any encouragement. He was pessimistically inclined by nature, and doubted whether the proposed movement would be successful. Nevertheless he stuck dogmatically to his decision, and kept in touch with Thérive by letter.

As yet they had not decided on a name for their movement. They wanted a word that would show their interest in the lower classes without sounding too intellectual. Lemonnier had proposed "Humilisme", but Thérive thought it too reminiscent of Charles Louis Philippe (11). Unable to discuss the matter through the post they agreed to meet again.

On the 8th of August, 1929, Thérive came to see Lemonnier at his home in the Impasse Sainte-Monique (12). This interview was decisive (L). Discussing names for the proposed school, and rejecting "Démotisme" which sounded too pedantic, they finally proposed to risk being thought a political party and decided on "Populisme", which would show their interest in the people.



Mandler: "A group of populist writers"

Exhibited in 1934

Standing, l. to r.: Raoul Stephan, André Thérive, Louis Chaffurin, Léon Lemonnier, Jules Romains.

Seated: Léon Deffoux, Georges Duhamel, Antonine Couillet-Tessier.

At the same meeting they made their final plans, as follows (L). Thérive was to check Lemonnier's article which would be handed to Léon Deffoux, literary editor of "L'Oeuvre" and author of over half a dozen works on naturalism and its chief exponents. Lemonnier's article would not be a manifesto yet, but a preliminary means of testing public opinion and getting support. Léon Deffoux had promised to insert it in "L'Oeuvre" on the 15th of October after the summer holidays (13). André Thérive's novel with working-class characters, "Le Charbon Ardent", having run as a serial in May, June and July was to be published in October, and Léon Deffoux's new work on "Le Naturalisme" would be printed then too. It was hoped that Lemonnier's article, appearing at the same time, would attract more attention, and would lead up to a proper manifesto which they would publish as soon as they had found adherents.

Then came the hot dusty weeks when those who could left Paris. Thérive travelled south, to Savoy, Nice, Italy and Corsica (14). Lemonnier handed his article to Deffoux on the 15th of August, and went north to the farms of Normandy. Strolling across the fields near Rouen with his wife, Lemonnier's conversation would always come back to his article, and the possibility of a future manifesto and a group of populist authors. He was excited and rather worried by that time, convinced that the whole idea would fail (L).

.

Then one morning Léon Lemonnier was drowsing in the sunshine behind his inn, "l'Auberge du Cheval Blanc", idly watching a cock strutting about the yard, when the postman arrived (15). To his amazement, he received a copy of "L'Oeuvre" of the 27th of August, which not only contained his article, but bore the heading in big letters: "Un manifeste littéraire. Le roman populiste." (L) Deffoux was either short of interesting copy, or he had misunderstood the arrangements.

Lemonnier paced up and down exclaiming repeatedly: "Eh bien! mince alors!" as he often did when surprised; he felt that their plans had misfired completely. "Je fus accablé," he writes; "l'époque me paraissait mal choisie, l'article trop vague et trop mince pour mériter d'être pris en considération." (13)

A few days later Lemonnier got a worried letter from Thérive (14). "Cher Monsieur et Ami, je lis dans L'Oeuvre votre article. Il est très au point, suffisamment précis et vague pour passer par les méninges des plus rebelles. Mais pourquoi diantre l'ont-ils publié si tôt? Nul ne le mentionnera si nous ne nous en occupons."

So they did what they could from a distance, planned to notify the critics of "L'Intransigeant", "L'Européen", "Chantecler", as well as Lefèvre of "Les Nouvelles Littéraires", and kept several copies of "L'Oeuvre" to be distributed on their return.

Lemonnier's wife tells that from then on Lemonnier always waited impatiently for the postman. When the first envelope arrived containing several cuttings from papers and reviews with references to populism Lemonnier was very happy and excited, and was only sorry that he was not in Paris. He sat down and wrote a batch of letters which calmed him slightly, but he had lost all interest in the country, his wife says, and wished the vacation were over. (L)

The critics had come back to Paris in September and October, fresh from their holidays, eager for something new. Far from overlooking Lemonnier's article, published during their absence, they devoured it eagerly. Because of Deffoux's title this article was looked upon as the first populist manifesto, and has been accepted as such ever since. Criticisms and comments poured into papers such as "Figaro", "Commedia" and "Les Annales". Populism was discussed in the Paris daily papers and literary reviews, and as far afield as Lyon, Toulouse, Strasbourg and Warsaw (16). "Pouvez-vous venir mercredi à 16h 30," Thérive wrote to Lemonnier on the 5th of October. "On vous attendra et on vous montrera le colossal dossier de populisme." (17) And previously in September: "Je rentre et trouve un gros dossier de coupures sur le populisme ... la Prensa de Buenos-Aires lui consacre un article. Jugez si le poisson mord!" (18)

But in the meantime Lemonnier had been writing other articles on populism, each bringing forward new points or answering opposition. Altogether he published five articles between August 1929 and January 1930, and as these were considered by the public as official manifestos, we will examine them in sequence, and see what contributions each article brought to the theory of populism.

Notes

1. See chapter on Charles Bourcier in Henry Poulaille's "Nouvel Age Littéraire", (Valois, 1930).
 2. The bracketed capital (A) refers the reader to Appendix VII, "Authors' Lives".
 3. The bracketed capital (L) indicates that the information referred to was gathered from a private letter sent to the writer.
 4. Léon Lemonnier: "Populisme", (La Renaissance du Livre, 1931) pp 177/180.
 5. W. L. Schwartz: "A Literary Portrait of M. André Thérive", French Review, March 1932.
 6. Furetière: Introduction to his "Roman Bourgeois".
 7. André Thérive: "J.-K. Huysmans et son Oeuvre", (Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1924).
 8. L'Opinion, 2/4/1927.
 9. "Un Roman sur le Peuple", Le Nouveau Siècle, 10/4/1927.
 10. Comoedia, 3/5/1927.
 11. Letter: Thérive to Lemonnier, see text in Appendix I, dated 14/7/1929.
 12. Léon Lemonnier's booklet "Manifeste de Roman Populiste" (La Centaine, 1930) is dedicated: "A André Thérive, en souvenir de sa visite dans cette impasse du dix-huitième. L.L. 8.VIII.29."
 13. See Lemonnier: "Populisme", (La Renaissance du Livre, 1931), p.109.
 14. Letter: Thérive to Lemonnier, 28/8/1929. See Appendix I for text.
 15. See Lemonnier: "Populism", This Quarter, Jan/March 1930.
 16. See Appendix IX for list of articles in reaction to the populist manifestos.
 17. Letter: Thérive to Lemonnier, 5/10/29, now in the Bibliothèque Nationale
 18. Letter from Thérive to Lemonnier, 24/9/29. See Appendix I.
-

- 2 -

THE POPULIST MANIFESTOS

CHAPTER TWO

THE POPULIST MANIFESTOS

In the five important articles which form the basis of the populist doctrine, Lemonnier does four things. He differentiates between populists and naturalists. The points he makes in this connection will be marked i - viii as they occur. Lemonnier opposes contemporary literature for four main reasons, which will be indicated as A, B, C, and D. His answers to criticisms will be noted as a - g, while all positive ideas put forward as a populist program will be numbered 1 - 12. These four groups of ideas will then be set out in tabular form.

.

In the first article in "L'Oeuvre" of the 27th of August, 1929, headed "Un manifeste littéraire. Le roman populiste" (1), Léon Lemonnier reminds the public that literary manifestos have been traditional in France, and that the Naturalist school was officially born fifty years previously in 1880, with the publication of the "Soirées de Médan". Lemonnier points out that naturalism left its imprint on later writers by encouraging all those who want to leave a true and living work to study reality.

Lemonnier tells at the same time that a literary school of his day, influenced by the best in naturalism, has decided to call itself "populism". At its head is André Thérive, and Lemonnier mentions Thérive's interest in naturalism, and Thérive's belief that naturalism would thrive if adapted to contemporary needs.

The populist authors however, Lemonnier says, condemn two aspects of naturalism:

- i) their use of unusual vocabulary, from neologisms to technical language and the slang of different trades, and
- ii) their social doctrines which tend to deform literary works.

Reacting against certain literary trends of the past few decades:

A) they want to avoid, shabby literature, with characters chosen among the idle and elegant, "les pécores qui n'ont d'autre occupation que de se mettre du rouge, les oisifs qui cherchent à pratiquer des vices soi-disant élégants".

The populist authors, he says, have the following positive aims, influenced by naturalism:

- 1) they want to draw their inspiration from the lower classes, the "petites gens" and "gens médiocres" who form the largest social group, and whose life also has dramas of its own;
- 2) they want a certain daring in the choice of subject matter, and the treatment could even show a certain unstudied vulgarity or triteness, if in good taste;
- 3) but above all, they want to study reality with care, and thus follow, Lemonnier says, the great tradition of the French novel, the tradition of stories that are simple and true.

In this article, Lemonnier invites comments and opposition, maintaining that manifestos are there to encourage discussions and even literary battles which are a necessary background to any living art. And he got his discussions, and even the opposition he wanted. "Le populisme a déjà des ennemis", Thérive wrote, less than a month after the first manifesto appeared (2).

.

Lemonnier's second article, "Du Naturalisme au Populisme" appeared in "La Revue Mondiale" on the first of October. Lemonnier mentions here that what impressed him most as a youth when he read the "Soirées de Médan" and Zola's later works, and what he remembered best afterwards were a few details, striking because of their realism and their very triviality, like the mention of a soldier's pleasure on his return home at being able to use a clean lavatory again. And Lemonnier adds what might be considered a fourth belief of the populists:

- 4) to be a naturalist is perhaps to believe that all natural acts, whatever they are, are worthy of the artist's attention.

But Lemonnier also brings a further criticism against Zola:

- iii) his underlying romanticism, which makes him compose incidents in for effect.

"Quel beau roman Zola aurait écrit s'il avait moins lourdement romancé cette histoire" Lemonnier says, talking of Zola's "L'Oeuvre". "Car tous les personnages secondaires sont observés, sont vus, au point qu'on voudrait connaître leurs noms véritables."

Since Zola's time, Lemonnier continues, the majority of popular novels have tried to escape from reality and seek the unusual, with "des gens chics et des oisifs vicieux" as chief characters. Here he leaves names to our imagination.

Lemonnier does mention though a few writers who are to be praised for continuing in the naturalist tradition. Among the older generation he notes Lucien Descaves, Georges Duhamel and Charles-Henri Hirsch; among younger writers Louis Chaffurin with his "Piqué-Puce", which describes the life of tailors at Lyons, Louis Guilloux's "Maison du Peuple" which shows the struggles of a village shoemaker, Céline Lhotte's record of her contact with poor people in "La Petite Fille aux Mains Sales", and L.J. Finot's "l'Allumeuse", the story of a prostitute, with a preface which is a plea for truth and sincerity in the novel; and finally André Thérive himself, with his "Sans Ame" and "Les Souffrances Perdues" which show people in less privileged surroundings.

It was Thérive who had suggested giving examples of forerunners of populism. "Mon avis est" he wrote, "qu'il faut se réclamer d'ainés plutôt que présenter une équipe formellement constituée dont on nous dirait: 'Peuh! ce n'est que ça.' Cela n'empêcherait pas de citer le plus de noms possible." (3)

Thus even in this second manifesto when Lemonnier writes: "Tous ces romanciers viennent de se grouper et de se donner un nom; ils veulent être les romanciers populistes", we are not told who these novelists are, nor is it clear to whom the "ces" refers. In actual fact there was no definite populist group yet (L). At the most there were a few acquaintances in sympathy with the idea, some of whom wrote themselves (4).

.

In the well-planned articles that follow, Lemonnier's attack on the naturalists and at the same time on post-war literature becomes sharper and better defined, and the populists' own position stands out more clearly. Lemonnier also takes the opportunity of answering criticisms, for the populists were already widely discussed.

The third article, "Populistes d'hier et de demain" in "L'Oeuvre" of the 15th of October, is mainly a reply to criticisms, especially those of Marcel Boulenger whom Lemonnier calls "le romancier des cercles élégants".

- a) Boulenger had reproached the populists with being old-fashioned, but Lemonnier reminds us that fashion changes constantly, and even furniture and clothes of 1880 were appreciated in 1929 again.
- b) He next answers those who confuse populist and popular, and threaten the populists with the example of Eugène Sue. If they have to choose ancestors, Lemonnier says, they would go further back to the "romanciers picaresques", who related the adventures of wandering youths among the people with a dry realism, such as Mendoza in his "Lazarille de Tormes".

Lemonnier mentions the simple narrative language of the author of Gil Blas. He could also have mentioned the picaresque stories of the 17th century, Charles Sorel's "Francion", Scarron's "Roman Comique", and Furetière's "Roman Bourgeois", and reminded the public that Thérive had already prefaced new editions of two of them.

- c) To people who predict that the populists will go too far and end by describing the dregs of society, Lemonnier finally replies that, on the contrary, he fears populism will not go far enough. "Loin de finir en chanson de bouge ou en romance de carrefour, j'ai peur, au contraire, que le populisme ne se guinde très vite."

.



Céline Lhotte



Louis Chaffurin

A longer article on "Le Roman Populiste" appeared in the *Mercure de France* on November the 15th, 1929, the fourth and most complete plea for populism to date.

Here Lemonnier differentiates still further between naturalism and populism:

- iv) Populism rejects Zola's belief that people, even in their complexity, are a coherent result of the influence of heredity and environment.

Lemonnier maintains that just as folly is sometimes cyclic, as in the case of Gérard de Nerval, so in a less obvious way the different character tendencies in people can be cyclic, and any unity that may exist in people is too flimsy and too complex for us to grasp. Populism thus puts forward that:

- 5) real people can be changeable and unpredictable in their opinions and actions.

And a fifth difference from the naturalists:

- v) A realist story cannot be based primarily on documentation. It is not enough, like the naturalist of the caricature, Lemonnier says, to wake at 4 a.m. and exclaim: "Good heavens, it's true, I must go and make notes on the sunrise." Nor is it enough to say: "I am going to write a novel on the habits of rag and bone men, of which I know nothing as yet, so to do it I must interview three ragmen and ransack dustbins for three days."

Ill-digested observation like that is insufficient, Lemonnier says. The only successful way is:

- 6) to live, by choice if necessary, among the people one wants to write about, to absorb the atmosphere, and then transpose it into novels through imagination.

In addition:

- vi) Populism rejects the naturalists' tendency to look upon the poorer classes as "un troupeau bestial, en proie à ses instincts et à ses appétits".

On the contrary:

- 7) the lower classes are human beings, who form a rich and almost unexplored field of literature.

Discussing the literature nearer his own time, Lemonnier shows that many novels are not novels at all, but vehicles for philosophical and social ideas, memoirs, or sheer moralising, written by people who would find no market in other realms of literature. Worse still, says Lemonnier, are the essayists like Paul Bourget, who turn their characters into puppets to prove preconceived ideas. So populism is against:

- B) so-called novels which deviate from the true function of a novel, which is to tell a story, to reproduce life with words, and populism upholds the slogan, based on the mid-nineteenth century's "l'art pour l'art":

- 8) "Le roman pour le roman."

Where contemporary literature was concerned, populism was also against:

- C) escapist and sensational literature, what Lemonnier calls "une littérature d'inquiétude et de débilité, un style de jeunes bourgeois qui, rejetés dans leur vie après une période d'action brutale et de danger quotidien, cherchaient à se chatouiller l'âme pour se faire frissonner", and
- D) the presentation of abnormal psychological states, "ce pot pourri de vices qui n'ont jamais existé que dans les maisons spéciales, dans les asiles d'aliénés ou, plus simplement encore, dans l'imagination de psychiatres érotiques."

As for the style of populist works, it should be:

- 9) a simple and unaffected style, with clear, straightforward and vigorous words.

In this fourth article, Lemonnier also answers some objections:

- d) The populists have no political connections.
- e) They are not writing for the lower classes, who would not appreciate their work.
- f) Nor are they writers who have risen from the lower classes, for such writers, Lemonnier says, are rare.

Lemonnier perhaps did not realise that the number of proletarian writers had been increasing steadily, and he could not foresee that several would even be counted as populist one day.

.

In the fifth article entitled "Populisme" in "Les Nouvelles Littéraires" of the 18th of January, 1930, Lemonnier draws further distinctions between populism and naturalism.

- vii) The populists reject the naturalists' general pessimism and their tendency to antipathy to their characters and settings. "Cette antipathie mesquine et tâtilleuse que les naturalistes éprouvaient pour leurs personnages nous choque," Lemonnier writes, "autant que leur besoin maladif de tout diminuer, de tout rétrécir, de tout souiller."
- viii) Even if the populists wanted to imitate Zola's school rigorously they could not, because contemporary social and literary conditions were so different.

Lemonnier also points out that:

- 10) any work which returns to popular tradition, either that of the mysticism of the old demoniacal superstitions, or that of songs and rounds, will be populist.

The idea of encouraging books on mysticism and demoniacal superstitions will be better understood if we note that Thérive was interested in Huysmans, had written "Le Plus Grand Pêché" which deals with heresy, and had produced a series of essays on heresies, spiritualism, cabalism and similar subjects in a book entitled "Les Portes de l'Enfer". Lemonnier's "Le Baiser de Satan", about to appear, had as a subject sorcery in the seventeenth century, while Frédéric Lefèvre, who had written several articles in support of populism, was going to publish the story of a family of sorcerers in his "Samson Fils de Samson".

By the beginning of 1930 the term "populist" was widespread, and people referred to populist books, populist films and even populist scenes. It had become necessary to add to the previous conception of populism. Lemonnier distinguishes in this article between populism in a narrow sense:

- 11) Any book dealing with the lower classes, "dans quelque esprit que ce soit", and populism in a wider sense,
 - 12) any book which in some way continues in the realistic tradition.
- And in Lemonnier's mind these two points are linked, since from the time of the "fabliau" already all art dealing with the people tended to be realistic, and vice versa.

These new definitions seem extremely wide, but Lemonnier hoped to gain the support of as many writers as possible.

- g) In conclusion Lemonnier deals with the critics who say: "to describe the people you must belong to the people", and shows, not without a certain truth, that often the outside observer sees more. In any case, he argues, the above criticism is absurd as it could engender peculiar ethical laws for writers. For instance, could only women write about women, he asks?

In January 1930 Léon Lemonnier collected all the ideas he had developed in the five articles mentioned here, and they were printed in the form of an eighty-four page booklet by La Centaine, entitled "Manifeste du Roman Populiste", dedicated to André Thérive.

.

We could summarise the various points Lemonnier makes in his five articles as follows, by referring to the numbers and letters given in the

paragraphs above. It must be stressed that these criticisms or opinions are Léon Lemonnier's, and are not necessarily held by the writer of this thesis.

The populists differ from the naturalists because they disapprove of:

- i. the naturalists' unusual vocabulary,
- ii. their attempt to prove social doctrines in their novels,
- iii. Zola's romanticism,
- iv. their theory of heredity and environment,
- v. their use of documentation,
- vi. their inhuman presentation of the lower classes,
- vii. their pessimism,
- viii. and because naturalism is not adapted to 20th century conditions.

The populists are against those novels of contemporary literature:

- A. which describe worldly upper class circles only,
- B. which are not just novels, but vehicles for preconceived ideas,
- C. which are escapist or sensational,
- D. or which show an undue interest in abnormal psychology.

Lemonnier answers criticisms by stating that the populists:

- a. are not old-fashioned,
- b. do not pander to popular taste,
- c. will not describe only the dregs of society,
- d. have no political connections,
- e. are not writing mainly for the lower classes,
- f. have not risen from the people,
- g. and do not need to belong to the lower classes in order to describe them.

As a positive program, the populists should:

1. turn to the lower classes for inspiration,
2. be daring in their subject matter and treatment,
3. study reality,
4. consider all natural acts worthy of their attention,
5. treat real people as unpredictable and incoherent,
6. be familiar with the surroundings and people they describe,
7. be alive to the rich human value of the lower classes,
8. treat their novels as novels,
9. write in a clear, unaffected style,
10. and follow popular tradition.

And in general populist novels should:

11. either deal with the lower classes,
12. or continue the realist tradition.

But in spite of all these doctrines and the publicity given to populism, there were, at the beginning of 1930, still no avowed populists besides Léon Lemonnier and André Thérive. And their search for followers is a story in itself.

Notes

1. For the complete text of the first manifesto, see Appendix II.
 2. Letter: Thérive to Lemonnier, 24/9/1929, see Appendix I.
 3. Letter: Thérive to Lemonnier, 5/8/1929, see Appendix I.
 4. Felix Walter in his article "Populism" (P.M.L.A. March 1934) says that half a dozen authors signed the populist manifesto. This is not correct. Only Lemonnier's name appeared.
-

- 3 -

POPULISM ON TRIAL BEFORE
FRANCE AND EUROPE

CHAPTER THREE

POPULISM ON TRIAL BEFORE FRANCE AND EUROPE

The populist school, only a few months old, was rapidly becoming known and discussed all over France, and interest was stimulated by several reviews which published readers' opinions on populism. (1)

Before the first manifesto appeared, L.J. Finot, a friend of Thérive's, editor of the widely-read "Revue Mondiale", had suggested an enquiry on populism (2). Accordingly Gaston Picard of the "Revue Mondiale" drew up and sent out questionnaires to writers and critics towards the end of 1929. Explaining that he was attempting a revision of new values in literature, and hoped at the same time to give authors a chance to express their own aims, he asked three questions:

- 1) "Les 'valeurs nouvelles' ne vous paraissent-elles pas déjà vieilles, tellement rapide fut leur croissance, éclatante leur fortune? Est-ce votre sentiment qu'il n'y aura plus bientôt que poncifs dans les excès d'analyse, les parti-pris d'originalité et d'obscurité, les contorsions d'écriture qui ont trouvé leur vogue à la faveur d'un snobisme littéraire enclin à consacrer les gens chics, les oisifs vicieux dont les cas, souvent pénibles, nous sont exposés selon les rites de l'évangile freudien ou proustien?
- 2) "Gens chics, oisifs vicieux, contre ceux-ci s'élève le récent manifeste du Populisme. Si c'est votre avis ... qu'il est temps d'en revenir à des milieux simples et frustes, ne souscrivez-vous pas au manifeste des écrivains populistes dont M. Léon Lemonnier ... a exprimé le désir, la devise: 'faire vrai et non point bizarre'?
- 3) "Si le Populisme ne répond pas à vos aspirations, et dans le cas où vous aurez à écrire un manifeste, que mettriez-vous, en bref, dans celui-ci?"

In the two December numbers of the "Revue Mondiale" the replies of forty-nine authors and critics were published, and these answers were analysed by Gaston Picard.

On the first question there were great differences of opinion, from Charensol who hailed the bizarre, the strange and obscure, to Noël Sabord who saw the excessive analysis, the desire for originality, the obscure style and literary snobbery not so much as a type of literature, but as the result of French decadence, while Fernand Divoire objected to classing Freud and Proust together, as the first was a scientist, he said, and the second a "désœuvré".

More interesting to us are the replies to the second question. Here Lemonnier could apparently find many avowed adherents to his school. Elie Richard's books, like "Images de Paris" are populist, according to Gaston Picard. Roland Charmy said: "Quant à la devise 'faire vrai et non point bizarre', elle fut mienne avant d'être formulée par mes sympathiques confrères." Marc Elder: "Il y a quinze ans que je fais du populisme." Jehan Rictus: "Et qui donc, autant que moi, n'approuverais le 'Populisme'?" N'ai-je pas dressé une œuvre à la gloire de la langue populaire parlée?" Saint-Georges de Bouhélier: "Personnellement, dans mes années de début, j'ai commencé par prêcher le retour au peuple." Jean Gaumont and Camille Cé: "Nous sommes avec le populisme, nous étions avec lui avant le manifeste, quand avant la guerre nous donnions nos histoires de petites gens."

Other people who agreed with populism were Mme Isabelle Sandy: "Il y a beau temps que pour ma modeste part, je chante les humbles parce que je crois les bien connaître." Gabriel Reuillard: "Mes livres sont là pour prouver que j'étais populiste avant le populisme," and Marcel Millet asked: "Suis-je populiste sans le savoir?"

Further enthusiasts were Paul Brulat, Léon Frapié, Mme Marion Gilbert and Joseph Jolinon. Other writers were more doubtful. What is the borderline between truth and fantasy, they asked. Can anyone without a

spontaneous love for the lower classes bring them to life? And is the unusual not just as much a part of nature as the usual? In any case, many people agreed that the populists will be judged in the end by the works they produce, not by their manifestos.

Superficially it would seem from Gaston Picard's summary that many of the writers questioned could be called populists, and that more than half were in sympathy with the movement. Yet a deeper analysis of each case would show that this is not quite true.

Let us look at Jehan-Rictus, who describes his unhappy childhood in the story "Fil de Fer", and who wrote poetry in popular slang. He belongs more to the people, to the proletarian writers (3) who would understand his:

"Merd' v'là l'hiver et ses dur'tés,
V'là l'temps qu'i faut p'us s'mett'à poil,
Les ceuss's qui tienn'nt la queue d'la poêle
Dans l'midi vont s'carapater."

Lemonnier and Thérive prefer to avoid slang, and aim at a clear, simple and classical French.

Other authors may deal with the lower classes, but their treatment may not be realistic. Saint-Georges de Bouhélier, though founder and propagandist of the "naturalist school" which purported to continue Zola's tradition, tends to a certain symbolism and heroism in his treatment. Some, like Mme Sandy with "L'Homme et la Sauvageonne" write about peasants and the simple country life, but it is very difficult in this case to avoid over-simplification, idealism or sentimentality, and we must remember that Thérive had no time for George Sand (4). Others, like Marc Elder, and Jean Gaumont and Camille Cœ with "Chandelles éteintes" are really writers with social aims, whose works have propaganda value, and are not just novels for their own sake.

Then we have Léon Frapié with his description of a nursery school teacher's experiences among poor children in "La Maternelle", and Gabriel Reuillard with "La Fille", his moving story of a woman who is forced into prostitution through poverty. These authors might have been populist, were it not for their strong fellow-feeling with the working-class to which they belong, which colours their work, and makes their novels documentary rather than pure stories (5).

The replies do show though that many writers were in theory, if not always in practice, in favour of turning to the lower classes for inspiration. The populists hoped to make authors conscious of this tendency, and thus encourage it.

.

Enquiries on populism became fashionable (1). In October 1929 already ~~Georges~~ Rageot opened an enquiry in "Monde" on "La jeune génération et Zola". In 1930, in the March April and May numbers of the Brussels journal "Savoir et Beauté", Constant Burniaux asked Belgian writers what they thought of populism. Belgium's interest is not surprising, when one remembers that the picaresque story Till Ulenspiegel was taken as a model by Belgian writers in the 19th century, and that there were many populist writers in Belgium even before the Great War (6). The prolific writer Camille Lemonnier was Belgium's naturalist novelist, and in the 20th century we think of Eekhoud with "Kees Doorick", Johan Bojer, and that wonderful woman Neel Doff, who counts as more Belgian than Dutch, and who has given such vigorous and moving sketches of poor people in books like "Jours de Famine et de Détresse" and "Keetje" (7). Another Belgian woman, Marie Gevers, was to be acclaimed by the populists in 1934 (8).

Populism was judged by writers all over the world, when "La Grande Revue" opened in October 1930 an extremely ambitious enquiry organised by Jacques Cossin, which ran for five months. Collaborators were appointed in thirteen countries to translate the questions and collect information, and replies came from almost a hundred writers as far away as the United States, Norway, Greece and Russia.

Jacques Cossin, to explain the position in France to the outside world, mentioned that populism had arisen as a reaction to the current



Marie Gevers



Emmanuel Roblès

literature of the time.

"Les auteurs, dits nouveaux," he continued, "s'occupent trop souvent, d'après l'école populiste, des oisifs et des gens chics. Ils négligent la partie la plus vivante, la plus vigoureuse, la plus saine de la nation: le peuple.

"Cette erreur sociale les conduit à une erreur littéraire. Ils ont poussé l'analyse psychologique à ses dernières limites; ils en ont fait le but même de leurs romans au détriment de la peinture sociale, de la vie des personnages et de la rapidité de l'action.

"Enfin les populistes français veulent combattre tout maniérisme et toute vaine recherche dans le style; ils demandent donc le retour à une forme plus simple et plus directe."

His three questions are:

- 1) "Ne pensez-vous pas que les romanciers d'aujourd'hui doivent préférer la peinture des classes populaires à celle des hautes classes sociales?
- 2) "N'est-ce pas en faisant ainsi qu'on obtiendrait la réaction nécessaire demandée par l'école populiste française contre le mauvais goût, la préciosité et les excès de l'analyse psychologique? N'est-ce pas vrai qu'on arriverait, selon l'idéal populiste, à faire "vrai plutôt que bizarre"?
- 3) "Que pensez-vous de l'avenir d'un mouvement littéraire ayant un tel objet?"

.

This enquiry served to bring populism to the notice of authors outside France, mainly in Europe, and the chief interest in their replies lies in the revelation, however incomplete, of the type of literature current in other countries at the same time.

Belgium, we find, had numerous populist writers in recent decades, like Georges Virrès with "Les Gens de Thiest", Eekhoud, and Louis Delatre with his "Contes de mon Village". Perhaps because of this the writers who replied, though still strongly under the influence of populist tendencies, saw the dangers in populism. André Baillon thought that writing about the people would only create a new type of literary snobbishness, and Paul Fierens warned against affected simplicity, like that of Giono. The populists were alive to this though, and Thérive had mocked styles such as that of Ramuz, which he called "pseudo-naïf, parbleu, et pseudo-paysan aussi"(9). Mottart argued that the novelist instinctively described the bourgeois better than the people, because he knew them better, and Paul Frist maintained that only the people could describe the people.

From America, the few opinions expressed were not favourable, from Hergesheimer's curt three syllable query ~~text~~ "How? Why? When?" to the three questions, to Sinclair Lewis who warned against schools, since art has many forms.

The danger of schools or enforced programmes was shown even more strongly by the ten replies from Russia. Ilya Bounine said: "You cannot order writers; even if they describe the people as they have to in Russia, that does not make their works good." Ladinsky and Nabokoff-Sirine directly attributed the poor quality of contemporary Russian literature to the fact that the authors followed the dictates of the communists. But one cannot judge Russian literature in general from the replies of a few authors who may have been prejudiced against the new literature in their country. In any case the populists were purposely avoiding the idea of a rigorous school.

Greek writers were not hopeful. A change of ideas was important only if it was backed by the opinion of a large number, it was argued (10). Literature could only come from a change in social conditions, and the sincerest writers of their time were perhaps those very writers who reflected its decadence (11). N. Kazantzakis, talking about conditions in Greece, wrote: "All our literature, like our soul, is alexandrin. Long ago -- when another decomposition was taking place, that of the greco-roman world -- writers were calling for the same things: simplification, purity, while they themselves were the most complex and the most perverse -- and just because they were like that."

Other countries, like Switzerland, Norway and Poland which were more agricultural, seemed to have a rich literature about peasants, if not about working classes, and they were therefore not so interested in Thérive and Lemonnier's aims. Whether their literature would be realist and objective enough to be considered populist is questionable.

A country though that had already produced a populist movement of its own was Rumania, and replies from Rumania told of Nicolas Jorga, who had created the influential review "Samanatorul" in 1904, which was the point of departure of the literary "poporaniste" movement (12). This called to writers to abandon foreign inspiration and devote themselves to what was typically Rumanian, namely the description of the life of the country people. This plea apparently had a widespread influence, and led to many personal and vigorous works.

Jorga himself wrote that his movement was aimed against writers of lifeless and unreal prose, lasted for about twenty years, and had recently been replaced by a sort of "literary intellectualism -- where triviality had the upperhand." This artificial literature, like that of France, Jorga said, was totally separate from the real life of the man in the street.

It would appear that the populist experiment had already been carried out, were it not for the reply of V. Demelrius, who said that the majority of writers before the war were socialist, and wrote in a populist style, but because the socialists had not prevented the war there was a decline in populist novels when the war was over. Jacques Cossin failed to point out that Demelrius here identified socialist writers with populists, whereas in fact they differ widely, since Lemonnier and Thérive thought that political aims should not be introduced in novels. If Jorga's followers, as it might appear, had socialist leanings, they would correspond more to the proletarian writers in France, or to social writers like Barbusse, Lucien Descaves, or in a wider sense to Romain Rolland. But this is not clear from the replies (13).

English writers adopted rather non-committal and reserved attitudes, except George Bernard Shaw who, in his polemic way, maintained that neither the life of society people nor of the working classes can be natural, as the one is lived in an economic vacuum, and the other under excessive economic pressure; in any case, he said, no readable novels should deal with petty money worries.

As a whole the replies were cautious, perhaps because the writers did not know enough about French literature or conditions to make a definite assessment of the situation. While they wished the populists luck, many felt that future works alone would show whether populism was successful or not.

We must remember that the answers to these various enquiries are not representative, and that replies from authors in France do not necessarily reflect the opinion of French writers as a whole, as they were drawn from a relatively small number only, probably weighted in favour of those who would not condemn populism (14).

We notice also that the writers in their replies to enquiries paid little attention to the question of a realistic style and treatment of the subject. The questions were perhaps badly worded, but it is more likely that attention was drawn immediately to the more sensational and controversial suggestion of novels inspired by the life of the people.

Notes

1. See Appendix III for details of these official enquiries.
2. Letter: Thérive to Lemonnier, 10/8/1929, in Appendix.
3. ~~Letter~~ See chapters 9 and 10.
4. See Thérive: "Le Retour d'Amazan, ou une histoire de la littérature française", (Le Livre, 1926), p.365.

5. The story of Léon Frapié's "La Maternelle" became well-known through the film version. For Gabriel Reuillard see Poulaille: "Nouvel Age Littéraire", (Valois, 1930) pp. 172/8.
 6. According to replies from Belgian authors in November 1930 to the "Enquête Internationale sur le Populisme" run by La Grande Revue.
 7. For extracts from her books, see chapter on Neel Doff in Poulaille's "Nouvel Age Littéraire", (Valois, 1930).
 8. Marie Gevers won the populist prize in 1934 for her novel "Madame Orpha ou la sérénade de mai".
 9. See Thérive: "Galerie de ce Temps", (Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1931), chapter on C.-F. Ramuz.
 10. By Tello Agras.
 11. According to Mme Galatée Kazantzaki.
 12. "Popor" = people.
 13. Nor is the position clarified by Jorga's article: "La littérature populaire, source de haute littérature", Mercure de France, 15/4/1925.
 14. See Thérive to Lemonnier in Appendix I. "N'omettez pas d'apporter la liste que nous avons dressée, de gens à questionner".
-

- 4 -

THE FIRST RECRUITS AND ACTIVITIES

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FIRST RECRUITS AND ACTIVITIES

How did the populists gain supporters? And what form did the populist movement take in practice? In this chapter we will see how a growing number of authors became known as populists; and we will show how populism took its place in the cultural life of Paris, and spread to other arts.

The critics played an important part in acquiring adherents for populism. These men readily accepted the term "populist", which provided an easy classification for a certain type of novel. The authors of these novels thus found themselves looked upon as populists. They could protest, as some did, or perhaps proclaim certain reservations; they could ignore this arbitrary classification, which in the eyes of the critics or reading public meant a tacit assent; or they could openly show their interest in populism.

Let us take as an example the book reviews of Louis-Jean Finot in "La Revue Mondiale" which had organised one of the enquiries on populism. Finot himself had written a novel in the populist tradition, "l'Allumeuse", and had shown a consistent interest in the new movement.

In December 1929, Finot exclaims in the write-up of Marcel Aymé's new book: "Si le populisme cherche des recrues qui s'enrolent sous sa bannière, l'auteur de la "Table-aux-crevés" est tout désigné pour ajouter sa signature aux manifestes de la nouvelle école." (1) In 1930, discussing Jean Prévost's "Frères Bouquinquant" (2), he says: "Ce roman 'populiste', (n'est-ce pas, André Thérive?) analyse et comprend des gens du peuple." In July (3) it is Marcel Aymé's "La rue sans nom", and Finot states: "Populiste, il l'est, et sincèrement. Quelle belle recrue -- une des meilleures -- pour l'école de M. A. Thérive! N'est-ce pas une rue populaire dont il nous peint la vie, avec quelle intensité et quelle force!" Later Céline Lhotte's "Choeur triste chez les Sans-repos", as well as Dabit's "Petit Louis" (A) and Jean Pallu's "Usine" (A) and "Port d'Escale" are also called populist (4).

All of these authors, Marcel Aymé,^(A) Jean Prévost,^(A) Céline Lhotte,^(A) Eugène Dabit, and Jean Pallu were, as a result of reviews like this, grouped together with the populists in the minds of the reading public.

We must remember that Léon Lemonnier and André Thérive were critics themselves, and Thérive had recently been appointed as successor to Paul Souday, as literary critic of the Paris newspaper "Le Temps". (5) From this influential position he could watch, with the necessary reticence, the interests of his school.

.

Lemonnier's wife tells that with his habitual doubts, it took Lemonnier some time to realise that populism was really accepted as a movement. He only started to believe it after a few months, when numerous press-cuttings had shown the interest of authors and critics (L).

From then on though Léon Lemonnier, with his vision and buoyant enthusiasm, started dreaming of extending populism to other spheres of art besides the novel. He realised that any strong cultural tendency would tend to show itself in all arts at the same time, and he planned to unite novelists, playwrights and painters in one movement for mutual encouragement.

In November 1929 Marcel Achard's play "La Belle Marinière" was produced at the Comédie-Française. Lucien Descaves wrote in "L'Intransigeant" "Le populisme a reçu hier, des mains de M. Marcel Achard, ses lettres de naturalisation au théâtre." (6)

That inspired Lemonnier, and in an article on "le Populisme au Théâtre" he examines several successful plays of the previous ten years which had at least some populist elements. He mentions, among other plays, Le-normand's "Les Ratés", with its pity for the poor; Jean-Jacques Bernard's "Martine" and "Le Printemps des Autres" which show lower class people, as does "La souriante Madame Beudet" by Denys Amiel and André Obey; and



Marcel Aymé



Jean Prévost

Gantillon's "Maya" which stages the daily life of a prostitute. Lemonnier points out that it might be just those populist qualities which led to the success of these plays (7).

Lemonnier's idea of annexing painters to the populist movement was born soon afterwards. Early in 1930 Georges Cresson gave an exhibition of what he called "populist paintings" (8). Soon afterwards Lemonnier got in touch with a group of painters who were to join the populists. He tells how going up the rue de Clichy by bus, he noticed a poster announcing an exhibition of the painters of "l'Ecole de Montmartre". He wrote to them, and they invited him to give them a short talk on populism, which he did (9) and which led to their affiliation with the populists.

In the meantime populism had been discussed, not only in newspapers and reviews, but in conferences and debates and over the wireless (9). The first discussion took place on the 30th of November 1929 in the hall of the "Studio 28" in Montmartre, for the benefit of a group of students and young people of the club "l'Effort". Then came a dialogue over the wireless, said to be the first broadcast interview in France, between Frédéric Lefèvre and Léon Lemonnier (10). Frédéric Lefèvre was the editor of "Les Nouvelles Littéraires" and literary critic of "La Voix", and was responsible for the well-known series of interviews: "Une heure avec ...". A month later on the 15th of March there was a debate "Pour ou contre le populisme" at the Gaité Rochechouart in Montmartre, in front of the members of the debating group of "La Tribune Libre".

Then, on the 2nd of May, 1930, a broadcast discussion was organised on populism, from the point of view of a novelist, a playwright and a painter. Lemonnier represented the novelists; the Rumanian Matéi Roussou, a medical doctor who had written several plays, stood for the playwrights; and André Hofer was the protagonist of the painters of "l'Ecole de Montmartre".

These three men analysed the position of their arts in 1930, and agreed that a "populist" approach was necessary to revive novels, plays and paintings (11). Matéi Roussou summed up their conclusions: "en somme, nous trouvons tous trois que les différents arts se sont, en ces dernières années, étrangement appauvris, parce qu'ils se sont écartés de l'humanité, parce qu'ils se sont contentés d'une simple acrobatie intellectuelle." After the broadcast talk these three friends went to join their friends in the hall of the "Théâtre Albert Ier"; at this important meeting, after further discussion, a pact was agreed on with "l'Ecole de Montmartre". The painters were henceforth to associate themselves officially with the populists and with their doctrines (12).

.....

"L'Ecole de Montmartre" in actual fact did not last more than a year or two, but from 1930 onwards there were always painters who associated themselves with the populists, one of the first being Germaine Estival whom Thérive discovered, and whose paintings he used to demonstrate the meaning of populist art.

Other groups of painters in Paris were beginning to adopt the term "populist" (14). Several of these painters joined Lemonnier and Thérive's movement and the first official "Salon Populiste" was held in the "Galerie Bareiro" in the autumn of 1933.

The beginnings were small, and little notice was taken of the first salon, but the second "Salon Populiste" in November 1934 had more publicity (13). Thérive in his capacity of art critic attempted to define populist painting in the brief preface in the catalogue of the 1934 exhibition. One can only "délimiter la peinture populiste par ses nuances sentimentales et son choix de thème," Thérive writes. "Le populiste peintre s'écarte de parti pris de la peinture d'histoire, de l'art hagiographique et de tout ce qui n'est pas la vie moderne et populaire. Il semble cependant que le populiste, amoureux du décor vétuste de vieux quartiers, aime à y retracer des spectacles de misère; la soupe populaire est populiste. Le prolétaire et le clochard sont populistes."

So it was apparently mainly the subject matter of a work of art which classed it as populist. At this second exhibition, for instance, there

was the painting of a "bistro, couleur d'assassinat et de sang caillé" (15) by Serge-Henri Moreau, who had already made a name with his renderings of the poor quarters of the zone and outskirts of Paris. Populist too were some picturesque ragmen, vigourously drawn by Zanaroff. André Thérive himself, having always been interested in art, exhibited a portrait of Lemonnier; he perhaps argued that the author of the populist manifestos must needs be a populist subject. To counter this there was a portrait of Thérive, head of the populist school, painted by Germaine Estival. André Hofer and Jean Lebedeff as a side line showed illustrations for populist stories (15).

In spite of Lemonnier's hopes in 1930, populism was never successful in the theatre. No interest was shown by critics or playwrights; Matéi Roussou soon left their group and no one came forward to take his place. In the meantime though an important role had been taken among the populists by a young authoress, Mme Antonine Couillet-Tessier (A).

.

Early in 1930 a book appeared, "Marthe, Femme Seule." It is the very human story of a young and attractive woman, who is forced to work because her husband is an invalid; it tells of her experiences as employee, of her temptations, and her victorious struggle to overcome them and remain loyal to her husband. The writer was Antonine Couillet-Tessier, who had worked five years in hospitals as a chemist in contact with the people and, now married, was living in one of the poorer quarters of Paris. She had put the people and surroundings she was familiar with into her book, and not knowing any authors had expected it to pass unnoticed. But "Marthe, Femme Seule" was highly acclaimed by critics such as John Charpentier (16), and Thérive enthusiastically devoted a section to it in "Le Temps".

"I will never forget that evening", Mme Couillet-Tessier said. "I was busy making onion soup in the kitchen, when my husband rushed in waving a newspaper. I found that André Thérive had thought enough of my book to write an article on it, in which he exclaimed: 'Here is a real populist!' I had never even heard about populism before, and I felt like M. Jourdain -- that I had been writing populism without knowing it! We were so excited over the article that my onion soup got burnt, but we didn't mind." (1)(17).

She and her husband decided that it would be only fitting for her to see Thérive and thank him personally. Expecting an elderly grey-haired critic she went timorously up the stairs to his flat at 110 rue Denfert-Rochereau where he lived with his mother, and was amazed to find him young, round-faced, gay, with a ready wit. He for his part had imagined that the intuition shown in "Marthe, Femme Seule" could only come after a long life of experience, and was surprised to find the writer so young and eager (1). After the first meeting she and Thérive became good friends, and the next step in encouraging populism came from her.

.

France has many literary prizes to encourage authors, Prix Théophraste Renaudot, Prix Sainte-Beuve, and so on, including several hundred offered yearly by the Académie Française. Some prizes, like the Prix Goncourt, originate through the desire to spread the aims of a group of writers, and one day Mme Couillet-Tessier suggested to Thérive: "Why not found a 'Prix Populiste'?"

She herself generously offered the sum of 5,000 francs to encourage a tendency which was dear to her. Her plan was thought excellent, and in 1931 authors were invited to submit books for the first populist prize to be given in May that year (1).

A jury was chosen, under the presidency of the elderly Pierre Mille, consisting mainly of critics: John Charpentier, literary critic of the "Mercure de France"; Léon Deffoux, literary editor of "L'Oeuvre", and author of works on naturalism; Daniel Halévy, critic and literary historian, continuator of Charles Péguy with his series "Cahiers verts"; Edmond Jaloux, critic and moralist; Robert Kemp, humanist, and Frédéric

Lefèvre, who published a work on Huysmans in 1931 and was acclaimed as a populist with his novel "Samson fils de Samson" the previous year.

Georges Duhamel was also on the jury, as the populists admired him for his genius as a writer, and for his fraternal interest in less privileged people, like the moving figure of Salavin. In addition the jury included Lemonnier, Thérive, Mme Couillet-Tessier, Gabriel Marcel, critic and dramatist, and Robert Bourget-Pailleron, who was beginning his career as novelist (18). A mixed crowd, all of them competent as critics, but not necessarily whole-hearted in their approval of populism, as their own works show.

They met in the offices of "L'Opinion", 8 rue des Beaux Arts, to discuss the books submitted. It is interesting to see that they renounce the word "school", as their communiqué states: "Le Populisme n'est pas une Ecole littéraire. C'est seulement le nom symbolique qu'on a pris habitude de donner à une tendance qui semble fort à encourager chez les romanciers modernes, celle de l'observation sociale, de l'étude des divers classes de professions d'aujourd'hui."

A populist principle that had been gaining ground comes out clearly in the above programme. The characters of populist novels should be integrated into the life of their society as a whole, and should be shown in their daily activities, their work or their professions.

In an interview with Frédéric Lefèvre in January 1931, Thérive had given the three essential points of populism, according to him, which were also quoted in connection with the prize (18).

- 1) "Tout roman qui présente des personnages ayant une vie sociale, quelle qu'elle soit, relève du populisme.
- 2) "Le Populisme est tout simplement un réalisme nouveau.
- 3) "Le Populisme n'a pas d'autre ambition que de rappeler aux romanciers qu'ils doivent s'enrichir continuellement par l'observation, la compréhension et la traduction du réel."

In May 1931, the first populist prize was given to Eugène Dabit for his "Hôtel du Nord", a cross-cut of the life of working-class people in a lodging house near the Gare de l'Est in Paris. We will discuss this work in a later chapter (19).

.

Since the summer of 1930 a growing number of populist Supporters, critics, writers and painters, were meeting once a week to keep in contact with each other and to discuss their ideas.

Their headquarters were the café "Le Mahieu" in the Boulevard Saint-Michel in the Latin quarter, conveniently near Thérive's flat (I). Thérive at that period would spend much of his time in cafés, and he was at home in "Le Mahieu". Lemonnier on the contrary was retiring by nature and rarely went out. It was only to please the others and Thérive that he joined the group at "Le Mahieu", as Lemonnier believed that more could be achieved by hard work in front of a typewriter than by discussions in cafés (L).

Antonine Couillet-Tessier usually joined them, then critics and writers like Frédéric Lefèvre, Louis-Jean Finot, Léon Deffoux and Louis le Sidaner^(A), as well as Louis Chaffurin whom Lemonnier had hailed as a forerunner. Roger Martin du Gard, Duhamel (A) and Jules Romains (A), whom the populists honoured and respected above all other authors, would sometimes be present. Other members of the jury of the "Prix Populiste" would come too, as well as painters like André Hofer, Zingg, or Le Scouëzec, back from another year of travel under tropic suns (20). These meetings would lose their usual dignity and become particularly lively just before exhibitions.

Raoul Stéphan, author and critic, describes a typical scene at "Le Mahieu": "Les favoris d'Antral voisinèrent avec ceux d'André Thérive et l'on put voir, entre le sourire inquiet de Mme Couillet-Tessier et le profil gallois de Louis Chaffurin, la méfiante barbiche de Zingg, les



"Le Mahieu"



Mme Couillet-Tessier and the writer - Paris 1948

moustaches de Le Scouëzec ou les yeux inquisiteurs du peintre tchécoslovaque Mandler qui songeait à être le Fantin-Latour des écrivains populistes." (21)

Mandler was in fact to paint a group of populist writers and supporters, which was exhibited in the "Salon des Indépendants" in 1934. Seated at a table strewn with plates, books and a wine-glass are Antonine Couillet-Tessier and Georges Duhamel. Léon Deffoux leans over, perhaps to tell of a new article on populism he will be printing in "L'Oeuvre". Behind them, Thérive draws Lemonnier's attention to a recent publication, while Louis Chaffurin and Raoul Stéphan look on with interest. Slightly to one side, perhaps aware of their homage, stands Jules Romains, questioning us with a slight smile(22).

Mandler's painting is to-day believed lost; all we have are a few reproductions. It is probable that Mandler himself went back to Central Europe. According to some, he was Austrian, not Czechoslovakian. He has not been heard of since the occupation and may not have survived the war (L).

Notes

1. La Revue Mondiale, 15/12/1929.
 2. Ditto, 15/5/1930.
 3. Ditto, 15/7/1930.
 4. La Revue Mondiale, 1/9/1930, 1/1/1931, 1/4/1931 and 1/12/1931.
 5. His first article, "La Critique et ses Dangers", appeared in Le Temps of 11/10/1929.
 6. L'Intransigeant, 6/11/1929, (not 6/11/1930 as stated by Lemonnier in his "Populisme").
 7. Lemonnier: "Le Populisme au Théâtre", La Grande Revue, Nov. 1929.
 8. According to André Sévry in his pamphlet "Henry Poulaille, son oeuvre et le Musée du Soir", (Les Humbles, revue littéraire des primaires, March 1939), Georges Cresson was a poor painter who spent nine months of the year wandering on foot through France; on his return in winter he joined the proletarian writers at their "Musée du Soir" (see chapter 10). So Cresson probably belonged more to the proletarian group than to the populists.
 9. For the early history of populism see Lemonnier: "Populisme" (La Renaissance du Livre, 1931), part three.
 10. The complete dialogue, broadcast on the 17/2/1930, is included in Lemonnier's "Populisme".
 11. This discussion is also included in its entirety in Lemonnier's "Populisme".
 12. See Lemonnier: "Populisme", pp 147/8.
 13. See Appendix V for list of populist salons.
 14. See the many references to populist paintings in the catalogue preface of the 18th exhibition of "La Compagnie de Peintres et Sculpteurs Professionnels" in the 1931/2 season.
 15. See article on "Le Salon Populiste", Mercure de France, 15/11/1934.
 16. Mercure de France, 15/1/1930.
 17. The bracketed capital (I) indicates that the information referred to was gathered during a personal interview.
 18. See article "A Propos du Populisme et du Prix Populiste", Mercure de France, 1/2/1931, for details of the jury and the definition given of populism.
 19. See chapter 11.
 20. See chapter on Le Scouëzec in Michel Georges-Michel's "Peintres et Sculpteurs que j'ai connus", (Bréntano's, New York, 1942).
 21. Raoul Stéphan: "Le Populisme et le Roman Populiste", La Grande Revue, July 1938.
 22. See p. 12a.
-

- 5 -

THE LITERARY POSITION OF POPULISM

CHAPTER FIVE

THE LITERARY POSITION OF POPULISM

Although the populists explained their principles clearly, their attacks on contemporary literature were more veiled, and it was not easy to see whom they were opposing. Probably they were not so much against the masters, as against the many imperfect followers; probably they opposed widespread tendencies rather than particular books. A survey of Thérive's many critical works and Lemonnier's articles and prefaces give us some idea of what they were fighting.

Briefly they opposed novels that were not reflections of real life, from the fashionable works of the anti-dreyfusard Paul Bourget, with his admiration for everything aristocratic, to the sentimental and pseudo-naïve treatment of stories, like those of the Vaudois C.F. Ramuz, with his use of peasant language, and his intentional simplicity and lyricism (1).

The populists also stood in opposition to Gide and his disciples, and to symbolist and surrealist literature. In the second section of his book "Populisme" Lemonnier openly attacks Gide. "Ceux qui, comme André Gide, ont évité le romanesque et le comique, sont tombés, non seulement dans l'excès d'analyse, mais encore dans l'immoralisme. Et c'est contre Gide surtout que paraissent vouloir se liguer les jeunes écrivains qui s'appuient sur Zola." (2)

Later, in his article "Front littéraire commun" (3), and repeated in his preface to "Poèmes Populistes du Deux" (4), Lemonnier clarifies the populists' position, and their attitude to the symbolists, to the surrealists, and to "Gidism", which is the name Lemonnier gives to an anti-social trend he finds in the works of Gide and of his followers.

According to Lemonnier, Art has two tendencies, i) to examine life, and ii) to escape from life; and he shows that literature from romanticism to surrealism has gradually turned more and more away from everyday life.

Romantic literature forgets the real and seeks the ideal. Symbolism, he says, goes further, discards ideas and feelings, and tries to communicate with an inner world through mysticism and extasy; but in spite of this, symbolism retains visual images and the idea of logic and order. Surrealism, Lemonnier maintains, goes still further, denying interior unity and logic, and leading to the break-up of personality itself.

In poetry, Lemonnier shows the same evolution; through the romantics, through Verlaine and Mallarmé, to Gustave Kahn with his free verse and neglect of syntax, and finally to the surrealists, who rejected the only remaining logical element, the relationship of words to one another.

The same thing happened in the social plane, Lemonnier argues. The romantics questioned authority; symbolists like Rimbaud turned away from authority and several became anarchists; the surrealists went further, he says, and attacked established society openly.

That is why the populists, Lemonnier maintains, who shun all attempts at evasion and want to replace the individual in his work and in his surroundings, are diametrically opposed to the surrealists. That is why the populists are social, not anti-social.

The case Lemonnier brought against "Gidisme" is somewhat different (5). Lemonnier looks upon Gidism with its excessive analysis as classicism pushed to its furthest point. Classic art deals with man in general, based on the theory that men are the same in all periods and places; classic literature is thus asocial, Lemonnier says, because it discards the influence of man's place in society; and the renaissance and reformation contributed further to the asocial nature of classicism by spreading the belief that each individual was free and responsible for himself.

Lemonnier then suggests that once a man is responsible for himself, he has to judge on his own ^{the} merits of all his acts; this leads, as in the case

of the Protestant Gide, not only to excessive self-analysis which comes out in the author's books, but to a contempt for authority and for society. This contempt, Lemonnier argues, is not only asocial; it is anarchical and amoral, and the amoral elements are reinforced where Gide is concerned, he says, by Gide's acceptance of the aesthetic principles of Keats and Oscar Wilde, namely that Beauty is an Ideal to be sought out and enjoyed, and all social morals which prevent this can be discarded.

"Ainsi née du classicisme, du protestantisme et de l'esthétisme, la doctrine impliquée dans l'oeuvre de Gide ou de ses disciples est antisociale au premier chef", Lemonnier concludes.

.

The populists had strong views on language and style, as well as on the treatment of stories. Thérive, previous to the formation of the populist group, had done excellent work in the battle for good French, for having learnt philology under Ferdinand Brunot, Thérive started his career as much as a student of language as a writer or literary critic.

In 1923 already Thérive's "Le Français, langue morte?" shook many accepted theories. Here he argues strongly for maintaining a pure and classical written French, instead of making literature the reflection of the language of the time. Fashion in language changes from year to year; slang varies from town to town, even from one quarter of a town to another, he says, and it alters rapidly; dialects have no life outside their own province.

"Les styles livrés non plus à la seule diversité des tempéraments, mais à la fantaisie expresse et réfléchie," Thérive points out, "revêtent un caractère artificiel dont on voit ~~aux~~ assez les défauts. Ils vieillissent fort vite ... instables par tyrannie, et par essence peu durables. En ce sens on a pu dire que le style Goncourt a plus vieilli que le style classique, et même le style pré-classique." (6)

Since only this classical French has a chance of immortality, let us try to stabilise it. Let the written French no longer be a living changeable language but a fixed literary language. "Tuons-la donc," Thérive cries, "puisque c'est morte qu'elle peut survivre." (7)

This does not mean that language should be lifeless. In an article on the prose of Duhamel, Thérive praises him for his mastery of style, which can be adapted from extreme simplicity to dramatised descriptions, from dry, narrative styles to intentional virtuosity. But this ability arises partly because Duhamel considers language worth studying (8). In spite of the example of newspapers, reviews and reports of the past fifty years, Thérive says, Duhamel realises that instead of saying: "Ses investigations demeurèrent infructueuses", it is better to say: "Il chercha en vain"; while it needs a great integrity and a real power of observation to say simply: "Il pleut" instead of something like: "Le ciel lance vers le sol l'appel d'un treillage d'argent".

In works like his "Querelles de Langage" (9) and in his "Soirées du Grammaire-Club" brought out with Jacques Boulenger, Thérive fights against pretentious language, against artificial or pedantic neologisms, against what he considers bad style, like the "style artiste" of the Goncourts and their descendants.

Thérive partially exonerates Huysmans for having written badly, and goes on to condemn the Goncourts when he says: "Je sais qu'il (Huysmans) fut très mal instruit, à une époque où le crime de Goncourt portait ses fruits abominables: j'appelle crime l'action d'employer une langue entièrement arbitraire et faussée, sans aucune justification dans le présent (puisqu'on ne la parle ni ne la saurait parler) ou dans le passé (puisqu'elle jure avec les règles et la tradition), plutôt que la langue naturelle qui doit constituer la norme des écrivains honnêtes. C'est un crime aussi que de rompre tout l'équilibre musical que les Français ont toujours laissé à leurs phrases, en même temps que l'ordre épuré de leur syntaxe." (10)

Elsewhere Thérive attacks the style of many contemporary works: "Le style haché, trépidant, anti-oral, à partir des Goncourt, c'est quelque chose d'entièrement neuf ... Elle englobe la prose pointilliste et menue,

et la prose volontairement inégale, encore que musicale fort souvent, qui est aux confins de Gide et de Barrès, et aussi la prose peu "respiratoire" de Proust ou de Giraudoux." (11)

In place of these, Thérive would put as models earlier writers, like Rousseau or Diderot. "Tout bien considéré, n'est-ce pas la fin du XVIII^e siècle qui a laissé le modèle de toutes les bonnes proses françaises? Les écrivains éminents de l'époque suivante n'ont guère, quoi qu'on dise, enchéri sur cet art. Et ainsi, selon une théorie qui m'est chère, mais non singulière, le français n'a guère évolué depuis ce temps-là, où sa pureté et sa richesse ont atteint un degré difficile à surmonter." (8)

A few years later, Lemonnier sums up the populists' attitude to style when he says: "Nous voulons que le style se garde de toute préciosité. Un mot doit s'entendre sans cette méprise que voulait Verlaine, une image ne doit point laisser le lecteur bouche bée devant l'ingéniosité de l'écrivain. La chose exprimée a plus d'importance que l'expression. Usons, comme le peuple, de mots francs, directs et drus." (12)

.

Before analysing the works of the protagonists of populism, let us glance at what Lemonnier calls "la grande tradition du roman français", the realist tradition, with its "observation sincère et courageuse." (12)

Now there are many types of realism in art, and interest in the normal everyday life and in the common round of existence has shown itself throughout centuries of French literature in many different ways. We have the humorous, often coarse realism of the late Middle Ages, with the fabliaux and farces; this is followed by a psychological realism in the 17th century. In the 18th century there is the beginning of a more scientific attitude to life which reached literature too, while Diderot suggested a "drame bourgeois" which would be nearer to real life than the tragedies or comedies in vogue at the time.

In the 19th century Balzac and Flaubert pay more attention to realistic detail, the external realism of the environment; then come the naturalists, with their social realism which shows the characters against the background of their class or time. Each period has added something to the realist tradition of the past, and each succeeding period is built up on and differs from the previous ones, partly because of a wider background and different social conditions, partly due to the individual stamp of its leading writers, who influence a whole period through their followers and imitators.

Yet few works before the 20th century have been completely realistic. Racine with his excellent studies of women uses the fashionable language of the upper classes, and places his plots in more romantic times, while details of surroundings are hardly given. La Fontaine on the other hand, renowned for his accuracy in external descriptions, has animals, seldom men, as his actors. Marivaux in his "Paysan Parvenu" and in "Marianne" brings in characters from all classes, even cabmen and washerwomen, yet his subject matter is romantic; while in Diderot's dramas the treatment is sentimental and melodramatic. Voltaire's stories are not just stories, but vehicles for philosophy and satire. Balzac at times mixes accurate descriptions with highly romanesque plots; George Sand's peasants are often idealised; the Goncourt's language is artificial, and Zola's works are planned often to prove his theories.

Which works before the 20th century have been realistic in language, style, subject matter, characters, descriptions and treatment? In short, which have been truly realistic?

.

And which novels in past centuries have been realistic? Perhaps the picaresque novels of the 17th century might be mentioned, the works of Sorel, Scarron and Furetière, with all their imperfections due to their experimenting with the new genre of the novel, and their use of a language that was still unwieldy for literature. These authors, although to our mind romanesque themselves, were fighting against the Rostands and Bourgets of their time, and Lemonnier might well have acclaimed them as forerunners of populism; Sorel wanted to oppose the pastoral novels of d'Urfès school,



Jansem - "Les Buveurs"
Prize-winning painting - 1951



Henry Ramey - "La Soupe des Paysans"
Prize-winning painting - 1950

with their unreal people, conventional emotions, highly romanesque adventures and affected language (13); Scarron dared to write a book about the adventures of a group of comedians in a century which refused Molière a Christian burial, and explained in his preface that he was against poetry and novels which gave people a false idea of life, and particularly of love.

Finally Furetière gave us what we might call the first populist manifesto, for he began his "Roman Bourgeois" by saying: "Je vous raconterai sincèrement et avec fidélité plusieurs historiettes ou galanteries arrivées entre des personnes qui ne seront ni héros ni héroïnes, qui ne dresseront point d'armées, ni ne renverseront point de royaumes, mais qui seront de ces bonnes gens de médiocre condition qui vont tout doucement leur grand chemin... Pour éviter encore davantage le chemin battu des autres, je veux que la scène de mon roman soit mobile, c'est à dire tantôt ~~en~~ en un quartier et tantôt en un autre de la ville, et je commencerai par celui qui est le plus bourgeois." What was "bourgeois" in 17th century literature would certainly be populist to-day.

In the 18th century we might consider among realist novels "Manon Lescaut", and certainly Lesage's "Diable Boîteux" and "Gil Blas". Later, in the 19th century, there are perhaps few well-known authors beside Stendhal, Flaubert and Maupassant, who could be called realist from all points of view, and even then of these three, Stendhal wrote mainly about and for the upper classes, and neither he nor Flaubert can quite escape from romanesque or exotic influences; one might also reproach Maupassant his use of the supernatural, which, as in the case of J.-K. Huysmans, links reality to the intangible and irrational.

In our own century we at last get nearer a complete realism with writers such as Duhamel, Roger Martin du Gard, and Jules Romains, whom the populists considered their masters (I)(14). Populist authors like Lemonnier, Thérive and Mme Couillet-Tessier have constantly stressed their admiration for these three authors whose outstanding work shows so many populist elements (I,L). Here at last we have a realism which affects characters, subject matter, social background, treatment and language. Here we have stories about ordinary people with their struggle for existence and for happiness, told without pretension in clear and simple language.

It must not be forgotten that this type of literature which we take for granted now has been introduced very recently only. In 1929, when the first populist manifesto appeared, Duhamel had not finished the Salavin series, and had not even begun the first volume of the "Chronique des Pasquier"; Roger Martin du Gard was only to complete his series of "Les Thibault" eleven years later, and Jules Romains' "Hommes de Bonne Volonté" was still a project for the future.

.

Before the populist manifestos however there had already been articles or prefaces preaching some aspects of populism. The preface of "Germinie Lacerteux" is one of the first of these.

It is populist in its disdain of false and snobbish literature: "Le public aime les romans faux: ce roman est un roman vrai. Il aime les livres qui font semblant d'aller dans le monde: ce livre vient de la rue." It is populist also through a deliberate choice of subject matter suited to our times. "Vivant ~~aux~~ au dix-neuvième siècle, dans un temps de suffrage universel, de démocratie, de libéralisme, nous nous sommes demandé si ce qu'on appelle "les basses classes" n'avait pas droit au Roman; si ce monde sous un monde, le peuple, devait rester sous le coup de l'interdit littéraire et des dédains d'auteurs qui ont fait jusqu'ici le silence sur l'âme et le cœur qu'il peut avoir."

The Goncourts' preface is definitely not populist though with its attitude: "le Roman s'est imposé les études et les devoirs de la science." And these forerunners differ from the populists with their aim of showing "des misères bonnes à ne pas laisser oublier aux heureux de Paris; -- la souffrance humaine, présente et toute vive, qui apprend la charité;" and they add: "que le Roman ait cette religion que le siècle passé appelait de

ce large et vaste nom: Humanité." Their approach is wider than that of the populists because of the idealism implied, but at the same time there is a danger of distorting reality due to this very idealism.

Over twenty years later, in 1888, Maupassant made a plea for realist literature in his article "Le Roman" which serves as a preface to his novel "Pierre et Jean", and he defended a logical and clear French style. "Il n'est point besoin du vocabulaire bizarre, compliqué, nombreux et chinois qu'on nous impose aujourd'hui sous le nom d'écriture artiste." He also put forward the idea of "Le Roman pour le Roman" which Lemonnier took over later with a different interpretation.

Then in 1897, Paul Crouzet, at one time editor of the "Grande Revue", published an article (15) which defined "Le Génie du populisme". Here Crouzet said: "Pas plus qu'il ne se ravalera aux basses œuvres littéraires, à l'excitation des grossiers instincts ou à la recherche des gros effets, l'artiste populaire ne peut prétendre rivaliser avec les virtuosités et les raffinements des dilettanti. Son esprit aussi juste que simple fera bonne et prompt justice des subtiles complexités ou des fictions trop savantes qui sont d'ailleurs les signes d'un art en décadence. L'art populaire, au contraire, vivra en pleine vigueur, guéri des névroses et des neurasthénies, des morbidesses et des 'rosseries'."

At the turning of the century the naturalist movement founded by Saint-Georges de Bouhéliér, in spite of rather vague, heroic doctrines, preached at the same time an interest in the workers and their work, and a return to the realism of the naturalists in opposition to the symbolists.

Much later, Thérive's "Plaidoyer pour le naturalisme" in *Comoedia* in May 1927 was really a plea for populism; and again in 1929, shortly before Lemonnier's first article, the preface to Louis-Jean Finot's "L'Allumeuse" showed a disdain for society literature and a preference for the sincerity of the people. "Sans prétendre, nous voulons dévoiler ici l'âme de ces créatures dont la noce est le métier," said Finot, "et de ces confidences, le lecteur pourra peut-être juger qui, dans le roman d'aujourd'hui, de la femme de joie ou de la femme du monde, semble la plus sincère, la plus normale."

Thus Lemonnier's manifestos were the outcome of a long growth and maturing of realism in literature. In themselves they offered perhaps little new, yet they served to crystallise the stage that realism had reached at their time, and helped to make other writers conscious of the forces at their disposal.

Notes

1. Thérive's article "Les véritables Romans", *Opinion*, 20/7/1923, mentions "l'affectation de primitivisme et de naïveté, la préciosité rustique de C.F. Ramuz."
2. See Lemonnier: "Populisme", chapter "De la Synthèse Littéraire".
3. Lemonnier: "Front Littéraire Commun", *Mercure de France*, 15/7/1935, also chapter 15.
4. "Poèmes Populistes du Deux", an anthology of poetry published by the *Cahiers de Paris* in 1943, see chapter 16.
5. For Lemonnier's attitude to "Gidisme", consult sections mentioned under notes 2, 3 and 4 above.
6. Thérive: "Le Français, langue morte?", (Plon, 1923), p.178.
7. Ditto, p. 36.
8. Chapter by Thérive on "La Prose de Georges Duhamel" in "Georges Duhamel" (Ed. de la Revue le Capitole).
9. Thérive: "Querelles de Langage", Vols I, II, III, (Stock, 1929, '33, '40)
10. Thérive: "J.-K. Huysmans et son Œuvre", (*Nouvelle Revue Critique*, 1924) p. 67.
11. Thérive: "Le Français, langue morte?", (Plon, 1923), p.214.
12. Lemonnier: "Le Roman Populiste", *Mercure de France*, 15/11/1929.
13. See "Romanciers et Conteurs du XVIIe siècle", (Ed. Mignot) p.21; also "Le Roman au 17e siècle" by André le Breton, (Hachette), p.34.
14. See for instance Thérive's letter to Lemonnier, 10/8/29, in Appendix.
15. In "Littérature et Conférences populaires", (A. Colin, Ed)

- 6 -

LEON LEMONNIER'S POPULIST NOVELS



LEON LEMONNIER

CHAPTER SIX

LEON LEMONNIER'S POPULIST NOVELS

"Beau Sieur et bien cher Président
Et Saint-Père du Populisme
Où chacun, sans esprit de schisme
Est populiste cent pour cent."

from "Réponse à Léon Lemonnier",
Jean-Louis Vallas (A) 1952.

Léon Lemonnier was born in Rouen in 1890. He came from a lower middle class family that struggled hard to keep above the working class in manners, language and dress. Lemonnier's father was the only boy in a large family of girls, and Lemonnier's grandmother, poor herself, had struggled hard to make her son a "monsieur". Lemonnier's father thus became a bank employee, but he died when Léon was barely three years old. Then the attention of the family was concentrated on Léon. "On avait tenu à faire de moi un monsieur plus haut encore," Lemonnier said, "qui ne se salirait pas les mains pour gagner sa vie." (1)

Thus Lemonnier grew up like so many others with a background of class pride, and a desire to rise in society by economy, education and sheer hard work. Any contact with the working-class was frowned on. "Dans ma famille," he wrote, "il y avait un reproche redoutable et qu'il fallait éviter d'encourir. Quand on avait dit: 'Ça fait ouvrier', on avait prononcé une parole grave, qui couvrait d'opprobre certain costume et certaines mœurs, depuis le port de la casquette jusqu'à la fréquentation du bistrot." (1)

Lemonnier, having finished school at Rouen, decided to teach English. After his university years he spent some time in England, boarding in middle class homes in the London region, and teaching in schools. Lemonnier was profoundly interested in the life of the bourgeoisie in England, and he was sometimes surprised or disturbed by the outlook and customs which often differed radically from those of the same class of people in France. These experiences in England were to influence several of Lemonnier's novels.

After the first world war Lemonnier taught English in schools in Paris, and worked for his "doctorat ès-lettres". This degree could have earned him a lectureship at one of the provincial universities, but he chose to stay in Paris, where he gave classes at the "Lycée Rollin" (now "Lycée Jacques Decour") and later on at the lycées "Louis-le-Grand", "Henri IV" and "Condorcet". In addition he lectured at the Sorbonne (L).

If we look at Léon Lemonnier's literary production, we are struck by the large number of works on literature, history and biography. Less than a third of his forty odd books are novels. Speaking generally, his novels and manifestos were published first, then he turned to his documentary and critical works which won him four awards from the French Academy. We must remember when reading his books that Lemonnier was not primarily a novelist.

Most of his novels, though, were written before or soon after the foundation of the populist movement, and were discussed in connection with the movement. Thus they play a role in the history of populism, and interest us also because they show how far Lemonnier put his populist theories into practice.

.

Where settings for his novels are concerned, Lemonnier turns mainly to surroundings he knew. Most of his stories thus fall into two groups: those showing middle class English life, and those set in working-class quarters in Paris.

There are four novels influenced by Lemonnier's stay in England, or by his knowledge of English people and customs. These are "Entente Cordiale" which shows up some of the differences between English and French, and

"L'Amour Interdit" which describes the flavourless and dreary atmosphere of a London suburb, Clapworth, with its winter fogs, and its oppressive Sundays ("Grand'mère ne veut pas que je joue, parce que c'est dimanche"); then comes "Le Sang qu'elle n'avait pas versé", which tells of an English lady who renounces her wealth to expiate for her past, and becomes a charwoman; and finally "La Maîtresse au coeur simple", which plays partly at Le Havre in the British atmosphere of the prosperous Mr. Lawrence and his sportive daughter Berthe.

On the other hand we have a series of novels written about poor quarters in Paris, mainly about the region near Avenue de Saint-Ouen near Montmartre, because Lemonnier knew it well. It was chance that led Lemonnier to take up his quarters in the Impasse Sainte-Monique, but having lived there some years, he found that he could not ignore the people around him. When Frédéric Lefèvre remarked to him: "L'observation sympathique, telle est donc l'un de vos dogmes ... Dans "La Femme sans Pêché", vous nous faites le tableau d'une famille ouvrière du dix-huitième arrondissement," Lemonnier answered: "C'est là que j'habite, mon cher Frédéric Lefèvre." (2) And in this simplicity, in this belief that one can only write about what one knows, lies much of Lemonnier's strength.

Among these stories of people in poor quarters we have "Le Passé des Autres", "La Femme sans Pêché", "Les Destins sont Solidaires" and "Coeur Imbécile". M. Coutrot's little draper's shop of "Le Passé des Autres" was placed at the top of Ave. de Saint-Ouen, while M. Coutrot's mother lived round the corner in Boulevard Bessières. From several indications the dead end road where the Martins lived, in "La Femme sans Pêché", can only be Impasse Sainte-Monique, where Lemonnier stayed.

There are less precise indications about the Mirault family of "Les Destins sont Solidaires"; we are only told that they lived in "une impasse du 18e", but as they stayed near the Gare des Batignolles, and as Mme Ciamet who figures in "La Femme sans Pêché" was also a neighbour of the Miraults, we probably again have Impasse Sainte-Monique. The setting of these stories is being stressed, because they show that Lemonnier put into practice his belief that a writer should live among the people he wants to describe, in order to absorb the atmosphere before transposing it in the novel.

.

Two main trends are apparent in Lemonnier's novels. First, an interest in mysticism, in superstitions and in religion in general. Secondly, a desire to show the lives of less privileged people with a sympathetic understanding. We will discuss each of these trends in turn.

Three books, "Le Baiser de Satan", "L'Amour Interdit" and "La Femme sans Pêché" all deal with religion or mysticism, which Lemonnier finds in its simplest form among people of the lower classes.

"Le Baiser de Satan", based on documentation, deals with the terror of sorcery and sorcerers in the early 17th century, with the people's anguish over a child who is believed to be bewitched and who dies, and with their fear of a man who is supposed to have concluded a pact with the devil.

The subject might seem far from the normal realms of populism, were it not that in January 1930 Lemonnier had stated: "Toute oeuvre qui reprendra une tradition populaire, fût-ce celle des vieilles superstitions démoniaques, ou celles des chansons et rondes, sera une oeuvre populiste et sera qualifié de telle par le bon sens public." (3) A month later, in an interview with Frédéric Lefèvre, Lemonnier said: "Dans 'Le Baiser de Satan', j'ai voulu montrer que, en prenant justement pour sujet le peuple, on pouvait renouveler le roman historique et même peut-être l'histoire. Car, avez-vous remarqué, ce ne sont partout que rois et princesses. Mais les gens du commun, qui formaient la majorité de la nation, personne ne se soucie de les décrire, de nous rendre leurs moeurs, leur foi, leurs superstitions..." (4)

"L'Amour Interdit" is nearer our own time. It gives, in the form of a theme and variations, the strongly puritanical attitude towards life and love found in certain circles in England. A young Frenchman, Paul Barel, goes to London to teach French in a boys' school; he meets three different

types of women; his middle-aged landlady, Mrs Perkins, who while encouraging him keeps him at a distance; her niece Mabel who allows Paul many liberties though her code of honour forbids a complete surrender; and Paul's elderly neighbour, the impressive Mrs Bamton, half methodist, whose strict religion overshadows all the joy of life, and who prevents her lonely widowed son marrying his sister-in-law, because though legal, it is against the scriptures.

These are three puritanical attitudes that are straightforward, well-observed, and require little comment. More controversial is the case of Mme Martin, whom Lemonnier tries to show as a catholic mystic in "La Femme sans Péché". Encouraged by a priest to marry a man younger than herself whom she hardly knew, her interest is centered, not on her husband M. Martin, but on her little daughter Claire. "Je suis plus mère qu'épouse", she admits to a friend, and partly influenced by her religious upbringing, she now looks with distaste on the affections of her husband. Anxious however for his happiness, she sacrifices herself to allow him unlimited freedom, thus almost encouraging him to seek compensation with other women.

Tit-Jean, a rather vicious young nephew Mme Martin adopted gets scarlatina and recovers, having passed the disease on to Claire, who dies of it. M. Martin, tied mainly to his home by Claire, whom he adored, now departs to live with his mistress; Tit-Jean, having shown himself thoroughly ungrateful, leaves with a woman also, and the book ends when Mme Martin meets her husband at Claire's tomb, and forgives him before she tells him to go his way.

In "La Femme sans Péché" Lemonnier apparently looks upon Mme Martin as a sort of saint. This is indicated by the title of the book, then towards the end Lemonnier says of her: "Ses malheurs étaient nés d'un acte charitable. Elle avait recueilli un orphelin, et c'était lui qui l'avait séparée de son mari, lui qui avait amené dans la maison la maladie et la mort, lui qui avait si cruellement insulté sa bienfaitrice. Mais elle ne regrettait rien, elle ne pensait même pas qu'elle eût pu regretter ce qu'elle avait fait. Il y a des êtres humbles que l'on effaroucherait en leur révélant leur propre grandeur." (5)

Critics like Thérive even agree with Lemonnier in idealising Mme Martin (6). Yet one cannot help thinking that this rather stupid woman caused her own misfortunes. First, if she had been wiser, she would not have taken Tit-Jean into her home, especially after Abbé Daniel's warning. It seems almost fortunate that Claire died when she did, as she would not have been able to defend herself against the vicious inclinations of ~~the~~ her cousin, as could her mother.

Then also, if Mme Martin had had more understanding, she would have thought twice about marrying a man six years younger than herself, whom she did not love; but having decided to marry him, she should not have repulsed and avoided him, or accepted his frequent absences with resignation. Surely as a Christian she should have thought that warmth, even feigned on her part, would be more moral than this tacit encouragement of adultery. When M. Martin leaves her, although we may find her resignation and understanding saintly, we realise that his desertion was after all what she wanted. If Mme Martin is a saint, then we feel glad that many women are just human.

These three books, "La Femme sans Péché", "L'Amour Interdit" and "Le Baiser de Satan", with their interest in mysticism and the irrational, show the link the populists felt with Huysmans, perhaps the least naturalist and the most mystic of Zola's friends and followers. And Lemonnier was conscious of this link. "Catholicisme, puritanisme, diabolisme," he said to Lefèvre, "il ne me manque que le mysticisme révolutionnaire." (7)

.

In "La Maîtresse au Coeur Simple", "Le Passé des Autres", "Les Destins sont Solidaires" and "Coeur Imbécile" Lemonnier draws his inspiration from the lower classes.

"La Maîtresse au Coeur Simple", one of his most straightforward and best

books, shows that social prejudice need not stop a man from taking a girl from a lower class as a wife. In fact, if he finds her unassuming, devoted and kind as a mistress, he will probably be happier in marrying her, than he will be if he marries a more sophisticated girl of his own class for reasons of social convenience.

"Le Passé des Autres" is also a plea for marrying a girl from a lower class, but here the story is more complicated. In spite of Marcel Coutrot's love for Suzanne, who acts as servant and assistant in the Coutrots' small drapery shop, Marcel's mother refuses permission for them to marry, and M. Coutrot is too weak to interfere. Marcel's horizon seems limited by Suzanne and his former schoolfriend Jambert, till a *deus ex machina* arrives in the person of Mme Coutrot's former lover and Marcel's real father, an adventurer named Buat, who encourages Marcel to defy his mother and escape with Suzanne.

Later, with a cynic humour, Buat urges Marcel to desert Suzanne when she becomes pregnant, just as Buat himself deserted Marcel's mother. After a lot of hesitation and conflicting action, Marcel decides to marry Suzanne, while Buat conveniently sets off for China.

"Le Passé des Autres" is built up as an attack against Zola's doctrine of the influence of heredity. Marcel is not forced to follow the steps of his real father Buat and desert Suzanne, but is free to choose his own path, and Lemonnier ends this book with the words: "Aucun homme n'est le forçat de son hérédité, aucun homme n'est lié par le passé des autres."

But this principle of the freedom of the individual does not come out clearly in "Le Passé des Autres", where the "dénouement" is uncertain until the last few pages, for the end is unsatisfying, and appears mere chance.

We find the opposite theme, the influence of heredity, in the book "Les Destins sont Solidaires." Here we have two young people, a brother and sister, who follow their father's footsteps in an urge for fast and reckless living which leads to their destruction; their mother, who comes from a more placid, resigned and hard-working stock, looks on and cannot help them.

"Elle n'était pas de la même race que ceux qui étaient sortis de son ventre, et elle ne pouvait rien pour eux. Elle avait causé la perte de sa fille en s'abstenant d'agir, elle avait causé la perte de son fils en intervenant maladroitement." (8)

"Les Destins sont Solidaires" is well planned, well carved out, both extremely readable and artistically satisfying. It was criticised for its pessimism, yet it is not pessimistic, because the main characters are exceptional; they believe in a crowded hour of life, and consciously forge their destiny, rather than submit to it.

Lemonnier's fourth book about less privileged people, "Cœur Imbécile", deals with the life of a concierge. Mme Pinjon did not realise, when taking on the post of concierge, how little privacy would go with her position. Her husband, mentally weak, who had been left in comparative liberty, falls in love with a little actress. Mme Pinjon can neither leave her office to join him, nor can she quarrel with him, for everyone would hear.

.....

If we look at Lemonnier's treatment of his novels, we are struck by his understanding of different types of women.

Here is Suzanne of "Le Passé des Autres", attacking Marcel with the sudden illogical anger of the first months of pregnancy.

"Il ne sortit pas assez vite, comme il trempait son démêloir dans la cuvette (elle dit):

- Ne jette pas des gouttes d'eau comme ça partout! Ça t'est bien égal que j'aie du mal, que je me fatigue. Tu ne vois rien, d'abord. Tu ne t'aperçois même pas de ma position.

Il ouvrit de grands yeux:

- Ta position? Quelle position?

Elle haussa les épaules, enfonça ses poings rageurs dans les

couvertures:

- Ah! je t'en prie, ne m'agace pas avec tes questions. Tu sauras toujours bien assez tôt, va." (9)

Then there is the unfortunate Mme Martin of "La Femme sans Pêché": "Moi qui vous parle, voici dix ans que je suis mariée, n'est-ce pas? Eh bien, pas une fois, pas une seule fois, vous m'entendez, je n'y ai trouvé le moindre plaisir." (10)

And the whole story of "L'Amour et les Soupçons" shows the reaction of a woman pushed to extremes by the constant suspicions of her husband; when her daughter's young painter fiancé treats her with kindness and consideration, the jealous husband accuses the painter of being in love with his wife; and in the end the wife and the fiancé, infuriated, tell him that he is right and run off together.

.

Lemonnier's characters are not imaginary people. With a few exceptions we feel that they are taken from life, as they probably were. Lemonnier tells us how "La Femme sans Pêché" was composed. He got to know a workman who lived in the Impasse Sainte-Monique; this man took him to a sports meeting at a young people's institution, to an organised outing at Saint-Cloud, and invited him to his flat one evening, to listen to a home-made wireless set. These three scenes form part of the book.

Then the confidential remark of a woman that someone repeated to him: "Je suis plus épouse que mère" is reversed in the book to give him an interesting main character, while he drew his central incident from a tragedy he had witnessed, in which a family, having taken in an orphan, finds that after a serious illness their own child dies, and the orphan recovers. "Ce drame, en sa simplicité", he says, "me parut poser la question de la charité et de la récompense sur cette terre. Je tenais mon roman, puisque j'avais un milieu, un caractère et une leçon cachée." (11) Probably other stories were constructed in the same way.

Yet though Lemonnier's characters are drawn from life, we feel he does not go far enough. His main figures live, yes, but for the story only, except for a few characters like Estelle in "La Maîtresse au Coeur Simple" and Lucien Mirault in "Les Destins sont Solidaires". It is as though Lemonnier, having found real people that interest him, has too reserved an attitude to follow them in life, and makes them play out their story in his mind only, to fit in with a suitable ending.

The people who seem alive in his works are those who enter the book for a moment and escape again, their lives shooting out at a tangent where we can follow them with our imagination -- people like Mabel, like Berthe, and like Mathilde of "La Maîtresse au Coeur Simple", or like the sister in "Les Destins sont Solidaires", who appears for a few lines only:

"Une soeur traverse, qui vient des communs pour rejoindre le bâtiment principal. Elle aussi, de loin, se meut dans la tristesse, avec ses longs voiles noirs et cette cornette rigide qui lui cache le visage. Mais comme elle approche, on aperçoit son visage juvénile et l'éclair amusé de son regard. Elle passe auprès d'un banc où sont assises deux vieilles, et elle veut les égayer par une phrase aimable:

- Beau temps, n'est-ce pas, mesdames?

- Mais oui, ma soeur.

- C'est le printemps qui commence.

- Il n'y a plus de printemps pour les vieilles comme nous.

- Allons donc, le bon Dieu n'oublie personne. La preuve, c'est qu'aujourd'hui, pour la première fois, vous pouvez vous asseoir dehors. Il ne fait pas meilleur que dans la salle commune?

- Bien sur, ma soeur.

La religieuse est passée et les deux vieilles restent seules dans le jardin. (12)

Perhaps Lemonnier finds it difficult to make his main characters live because he clearly takes his stand outside them. He knows them, he shows them with a certain understanding and a very real sympathy, yet Lemonnier is not only reserved himself, but by tradition he has con-

sidered himself above the working-class since his early youth. "J'appartenais à in milieu de petits bourgeois" he tells us, "où l'on se distinguait d'autant plus jalousement du peuple que l'on se sentait plus proche de lui par les origines"(1). Lemonnier does not know the people from inside, so he cannot show the daily trivialities, the thought tracks of working-class people's minds because they are foreign to him. His characters are just ordinary people who happen to belong to the lower classes; they are not "le peuple" in its very essence, as we find it later with Henry Poulaille (A), Eugène Dabit (A), Louis Guilloux (A), and other writers who themselves belonged to the people.

.

Lemonnier's style at first reading appears simple, yet an enormous care has gone into this simplicity. There is seldom a phrase too much, as one can see from the short extracts above. If Lemonnier's care for his style shows the influence of the classical tradition, there is something classical too in the narrow circle of characters for each book, and in the psychological presentation.

Lemonnier has very real qualities as a writer, and the merits of his books are the merits of the man himself, moderation, simplicity, and understanding. Yet these qualities are easily overlooked. Readers who are used to more romantic plots, more dramatic situations, and characters who appear more striking because they are shown as exaggerated types, such readers might be disappointed with Lemonnier, and it is true that Lemonnier's books have not been widely popular. Perhaps his very honesty is against him, and the simple lives he wants to show become dull, as are many lives, while the people he hopes to bring alive by showing all the irrationality of human behavior become merely vague and formless, because they are not dominated by single ideas.

His characters appear strongest in "Les Destins sont Solidaires", where Madeleine and Lucien know from the outset where their paths lie, and follow them to the tragic conclusion without being able to do otherwise. This book has something of the simplicity and grandeur of a classic tragedy, and coupled with Lemonnier's purity of language and form, it is one of his best books.

Had Lemonnier been less honest to himself, had he shown more force and vigour, played up to popular taste, he would almost certainly have achieved greater success immediately. That perhaps is his tragedy. But however future generations may value his books, his importance in the history of populism is undeniable.

Notes

1. Lemonnier: "Populisme", p.177.
2. Ditto, p.123.
3. Lemonnier: "Populisme", Les Nouvelles Littéraires, 18/1/1930.
4. See Interview reproduced in Lemonnier's "Populisme", p.119.
5. Lemonnier: "La Femme sans Pêché", (Flammarion, 1927), p.238.
6. Thérive: "Galerie de ce Temps", (Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1931), chapter on Léon Lemonnier.
7. Lemonnier: "Populisme", p.125.
8. Lemonnier: "Les Destins sont Solidaires", (Flammarion, 1931), p.272.
9. Lemonnier: "Le Passé des Autres", (Flammarion, 1926), p.181.
10. Lemonnier: "La Femme sans Pêché", p. 109.
11. Lemonnier: "Populisme", p. 178/180.
12. Lemonnier: "Les Destins sont Solidaires", p.273.

- 7 -

ANDRE THERIVE

AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF PESSIMISM



André Thérive

CHAPTER SEVEN

ANDRÉ THERIVE AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF PESSIMISM

André Thérive is best known in France as a linguist and literary critic. As in Lemonnier's case, Thérive's novels form less than half his total of published works. But Thérive was the official head of the populist movement, and as many of the novels he wrote were accepted as populist by the critics and reading public, and were discussed as such, they will be analysed here to show what aspects of populism they introduce, and how far they are populist or not.

André Thérive as a novelist is first and foremost a pessimist. With a few exceptions his individual novels are gloomy, imbued with a sense of the futility of existence, the uselessness of effort, and the hypocrisy of seemingly good lives. In his early "storm and stress" works, each book is haunted by a few aspects only of the philosophy he was developing, while in his later works like "Fils du Jour" and "Comme un Voleur" the mature philosophy emerges clearly.

As a writer, Thérive came under three clear influences: J.-K. Huysmans, Schopenhauer and Maupassant. Maupassant he read at an early age, and this influence was chiefly one of style, and shows itself best in Thérive's use of language, and in his short stories, where he is a master. Huysmans, who was to influence his conception of the novel, the young André discovered when he was twenty and found of absorbing interest, while Schopenhauer he calls "l'influence la plus intéressante que j'aie subie" (I).

It might be said that Schopenhauer gave Thérive his philosophy of life, Huysmans showed him how it could be applied in the form of novels, and Maupassant taught him something of the craft of the writer.

.

Now in how far is Thérive influenced by Schopenhauer? One might recall briefly that Schopenhauer believed the world to be the manifestation of an irrational force which he called Will, and thus to be dominated by suffering and pain. The man who penetrated the secret that all suffering was the result of existence could play his part in minimising this suffering by avoiding all encouragement of life, and by renunciation and asceticism.

Thérive's ideas are built up point after point in his first books, "L'Expatrié", "Le plus grand Pêché", "La Revanche", "Les Souffrances Perdues", "Sans Ame" and "Charbon Ardent".

"L'Expatrié" is written in the form of a monograph, the story of a middle-aged intellectual and pessimist, Taillandier, who concludes that the greatest sin is man's pride and his revolt against the normal imperfect order of things. In "Le Voyage de M. Renan", an amusing fantasy of an intellectual who doubles for the historian Renan, Thérive concludes that it is better to renounce the pleasures of life than to accept them. This conclusion is studied further in "Le plus grand Pêché", again a monograph.

In the middle of the 19th century a young lieutenant, Léonard Vallade, falls under the influence of a heretic M. Buysse, who makes use of Vallade's naturally pessimistic temperament to convince him that existence, which contains so much horror and suffering, was created by the Devil. The worst crime, Vallade first thinks, is that of increasing suffering, therefore of desiring life, of bearing children. Too weak-minded himself to stick to his convictions, Vallade prevents his young sister Aména from marrying, and tries to inculcate in her all the horror of those sins of the flesh he cannot resist himself. Goaded to breaking point by his uncompromising attitude and his brutality, Aména commits suicide, and Vallade finally realises that the greatest sin, "le plus grand péché", is not the sin of the flesh, but that of a proud and revolted spirit who refuses to accept life.

Here as in "L'Expatrié" there is little outward action, merely the analysis of spiritual development. In quoting I Timothy IV.v.3 on the title page, Thérive shows that Buysse's doctrines are to be condemned as heretical, and that he merely analyses their effect on a sensitive man like Vallade. Vallade's conclusion however is apparently Thérive's own.

.

"L'Expatrié" and "Le plus grand Pêché" show the futility of revolt. Thérive's next books preach acceptance of life as it is, but try to explain its apparent injustice. These works are "La Revanche", "Les Souffrances Perdues", "Sans Âme", and "Le Charbon Ardent".

"La Revanche" is soberer, simpler, more optimistic, and better composed. It is also Thérive's first story to expose the dangers of hypocrisy. The elderly M. Blancherie is looked after by relations, the Antheaumes, on condition that he does not see his illegitimate son Armand. Armand however vows revenge on the family who cut of a hypocritical bourgeois prudery kept him from his father, and plans to seduce their granddaughter Cécile. But Cécile's understanding and warm welcome break his scheme of revenge, and Armand realises, as did his father: "Il ne faut jamais se révolter. Il faut se soumettre, mais sans y songer. Voilà le vrai bonheur". (1)

"Les Souffrances Perdues", Thérive's pendant to "La Femme sans Pêché", is the story of a woman, Mme Plavigneux, who suffers through her husband's neglect and the loss of her two daughters, but who finds consolation in the end through bringing up the baby of her servant whom her husband had seduced.

This book not only attacks bourgeois hypocrisy as did "La Revanche", but the story, overshadowed by constant deaths and the fear of death, also centres round the problem of suffering. Thérive feels instinctively that no suffering is in vain. Suffering may be in expiation of something, he suggests; on the other hand suffering, "la douleur qui n'expie rien, gratuite, absurde, absolue," may be of importance in the final count one day (2). Thérive leaves us with these two ideas, and brings no final solution to the problem.

"Sans Âme" is again a monograph, the first of the novels Thérive calls populist. Julien, the son of bourgeois parents, leaves his own class to associate with a working-class girl Luce and her young friend Lydia. The people "sans âme" in the book are the materialists, "les gens qui tiennent à ce qu'ils ont, et à ce qu'ils sont" (3); the people who have a soul are those who in some way question the justice or the goodness of our existence, who need a belief to compensate for life.

Julien for instance has no soul according to Thérive, for in spite of his vague doubts on existence, his academic interest in popular religions, his scruples, and his attachment to people like Lydia who suffer in the world, yet he still prefers one night of material conquest to a long comradeship he might otherwise have enjoyed with the sensitive young Lydia. When Luce leaves him and Lydia dies after an accident and a miscarriage, Julien feels surrounded by "une présence universelle ... la conscience d'une souffrance humble et nécessaire, qui rachetait l'ignominie et l'aveuglement des gens heureux" (4). He signs on as an employee in a large store and asks himself: "ne vaut-il pas mieux désormais être des victimes que des bourreaux, s'il y a quelque part un jugement pour remettre les humiliés dans la gloire et peut-être dans l'éternité?" (4).

This tentative solution however does not satisfy Thérive, and he returns to the problem of suffering in "Le Charbon Ardent", which is a turning point in his career as a writer. Thérive has at last discovered his position, and advances his ideas clearly without condemning them as heresies, or questioning them too much.

Jean Soreau, a poor book-keeper in a private bank is married to a dominating intellectual Emilie Sazaret, who despises him for his weak will and his illegitimate birth. She leaves Jean in order to help the pushing Dr Lardy found advanced institutions in her home town. Relieved at being free again, Jean gets interested in little Gabrielle, who earns a scanty living as cinema violinist. But Jean has not the will-power to fight for a divorce, and Gabrielle, tired of uncertainty, drifts on her way to becoming a street-girl.

Jean realises that he is too weak to revolt against society or against the unknown force ruling the world. He feels that he is one of those people who, like Julien,

people who are chosen and marked, like Isaiah the prophet of old, whose lips were burnt with a glowing coal, "un charbon ardent". These people know that "il n'y a de vrai au monde que la douleur, le reste est illusion" (5). It is only by accepting this suffering as an expiation for others, Jean thinks, in his own case perhaps for the sin of his father, that we discover a meaning for it. Thus when Emilie, finding she cannot dominate Dr Lardy, returns to tyrannise her husband, Jean submits again to her authority in order to suffer as much as possible.

In "Le Charbon Ardent" Thérive gets as far as accepting suffering as necessary and useful, but it is an instinctive belief, and Thérive can only explain it with the idea that suffering must be in expiation of something.

.

In the various ideas current in all these works we clearly see the influence of Schopenhauer, except in the concept of suffering as an expiation which, as will be shown, Thérive derived from Huysmans. Thérive's philosophy is summarised in "Comme un Voleur" (1947) which he considered his best book (I).

This is the story of the elderly Hippolyte Messay, who, haunted by the fear of death, lives a retired life surrounded by memories of his earlier years. He cannot take enough interest in others to have any friends, and his main acquaintances are his charwoman, a colleague at office who irritates him, a nephew whom he despises. He gets interested in a middle-aged woman, yet cannot be bothered to see her again. He is offered high pay for almost nominal work, yet again does not trouble to accept. He dies, having by this time understood how to renounce life.

But throughout his meditations in "Comme un Voleur", Hippolyte Messay gives a clear though rather one-sided Schopenhauerian interpretation of existence, leaving aside this time the more doubtful point of expiation.

The world, Hippolyte Messay says, is meaningless, zero, null. All human works are useless, absurd, monstrous. There is no real sin, apart from the primary sin of existence itself, but anything which encourages existence is bad. Those who enjoy living, or even accept life and are satisfied are to be condemned. So too are women who create new life, "qui représentent toujours un attachement à la vie, et pis encore: un des moyens dont l'adversaire, la vie, se sert pour nous faire capituler" (6).

Although Hippolyte Messay argues that we should suppress the will to live, yet this is made difficult, he says, through our terror for death, which comes "comme un voleur" by night, and which is the final and greatest punishment on man for having been born. Thus acceptance of death is our highest achievement.

Yet strangely enough, in the ultimate summing-up on his deathbed, and due perhaps to a return of innate superstition, perhaps to an acuter insight, Hippolyte Messay feels that there is some Thought or Spirit which is the contrary of nothing and englobes all, which by its very Being justifies our own existence. "Ce sera bientôt fini", he sighs ... "Mais rien n'est fini ... Tout continue, tout est, oui, oui, tout est bien..." (7)

Does Thérive thus renounce his theories on the last page? Does he merely query them? Perhaps his next books will help to explain the ending of "Comme un Voleur".

But apart from the end, this book is a pure acceptance of Schopenhauer's pessimism, unrelieved even by Schopenhauer's two main remedies, the contemplation of *Art* and the moral life. Thérive himself is conscious and rather proud of this literary expression of Schopenhauer's philosophy. He readily draws attention to the mention of his own works in the "Jahrbuch der Schopenhauer-Gesellschaft" (I), where they point, in 1936 already, long before the publication of "Comme un Voleur", to "André Thérive, qui s'efforce d'exprimer dans ses oeuvres une sorte de Schopenhauerisme intégrale" (8).

One might finally ask: "If negation of life is praiseworthy, why are

Thérive's heroes never tempted to commit suicide?" Very early already. Thérive gives the answer when his M. Buyse says in "Le Plus grand Péché": "Je lus les écrits inconnus de M. de Schopenhauer, un allemand, qui renferment de grandes et sévères délices; c'est à celui-ci que je dois d'avoir repoussé le faux appât de suicide: que servirait de détruire notre corps, notre apparence, si notre essence vitale n'a pas été détruite dans le domaine de la pensée?" (9).

.....

What is the connection between Thérive's pessimistic philosophy and populism? The link is perhaps explained by Hippolyte Messay who was attracted to misery, unhappiness, mediocrity, and to anything which proved the futility or the crime of existence. "Aussi loin que je puisse me souvenir," he says, "j'ai été attiré par les exemples de misère ou de tristesse affreuse; comme si ma vocation m'eût poussé à rassembler, parmi mes autres paperasses vaines, un dossier contre la vie." (10)

Lemonnier, describing Thérive in 1930, seventeen years before the publication of "Comme un Voleur", shows that Thérive's own attitude was a similar one: "André Thérive ..." Lemonnier says, "est né avec le goût de la douleur, avec le sens de tout ce qu'il y a d'inachevé et d'imparfait dans le monde; aussi aime-t-il, comme l'image même de sa pensée, ces existences étroites où la souffrance elle-même reste comprimée, renfermée, incapable de se soulager par la grandeur de l'expression tragique." (11)

Thus it was this very pessimistic approach of Thérive's which led him to write books about the less privileged classes, books which because of their characters and setting were classed as populist.

After studying his works one might expect to find Thérive a misanthropist, old, disillusioned and bitter; on the contrary, he has retained an amazingly youthful vitality. He is warmhearted, demonstrative, fond of company, proud of his charming fair-haired wife. He has a ready sense of humour and admits himself: "J'ai des goûts frivoles; aussi dans un journal commencé-je toujours par lire les Echos et même la page consacrée à l'humour..." (12)

This seeming discrepancy can be explained when we remember that temperament and conviction are two separate things; a man may be by temperament a pessimist, although he believes in an optimistic philosophy, like Hegel's doctrines of Reason and Progress; yet a man who accepts Schopenhauer's beliefs is a pessimist by conviction, although he can be a cheerful optimist by temperament. Such a person is Thérive, who is highly amused at the reader's misconception, and points to Molière's plays to prove that a man's works can differ widely from his temperament, though in Molière's case the roles were reversed (I).

Notes

1. Thérive: "La Revanche", (Grasset, 1925), p.10.
2. Thérive: "Les Souffrances Perdues", (Grasset, 1927), p.47.
3. Thérive: "Sans Ame", (Grasset, 1927), p.170.
4. Ditto, p.273.
5. Thérive: "Le Charbon Ardent", (Grasset, 1929), p. 160.
6. Thérive: "Comme un Voleur", (Ed. du Cheval Ailé, Geneva, 1947), p.208.
7. Ditto, p.305. The title "Comme un Voleur" is probably drawn from I Thessalonians, 5, v.2, "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night".
8. "Jahrbuch der Schopenhauer-Gesellschaft", 1936, Vol 23, p. 201.
9. Thérive: "Le Plus grand Péché", (Grasset, 1924), p.82.
10. Thérive: "Comme un Voleur", p.71.
11. Lemonnier: "Populisme", p.174.
12. Thérive: "Chantiers d'Europe", (Ed. Excelsior, 1933), p.163.

- 8 -

THERIVE'S DEBT TO HUYSMANS

CHAPTER EIGHT

THERIVE'S DEBT TO HUYSMANS

André Thérive readily admits that Huysmans, whom he discovered as a student, left a profound impression on him. His appreciation of Huysmans becomes clear when Thérive writes about him: "Il est celui qui fut créé et mis au monde pour déguster ses semblables de l'univers créé..." (1). This sweeping statement would not be taken seriously by other critics, but for a study of Thérive's work it is important to know what Thérive himself found in Huysmans (2). "Il n'est pas possible," Thérive writes, "de n'être point touché, saisi, poursuivi par l'atroce tristesse qui monte de ces romans où se refait perpétuellement le bilan maudit de l'existence" (3).

Certainly Thérive himself was touched and influenced. He probably found in Huysmans' works, not only the reflection of Schopenhauer's philosophy, but at the same time the culmination of a strong vein of dissatisfaction with life which had run through French literature in the 19th century, through Baudelaire, Leconte de Lisle (4), Flaubert, the Goncourts and Maupassant. According to Thérive, this dissatisfaction crystallised in Huysmans, who saw the misery of the world not so much in a few major catastrophies, which might challenge the existence of a paternal God, but in the numerous annoying details of everyday life, where men are slaves to trivial things, to an inescapable dreariness, boredom and mediocrity.

It was thus Huysmans who showed Thérive how a pessimistic philosophy could be applied to the novel, for Huysmans in his stories points to the same conclusion as Schopenhauer in his intellectual works. Living is mainly suffering, Huysmans argues, so we should neither encourage nor increase that suffering, and we should not allow new lives to be born. Thus Huysmans' M. Folantin exclaims: "Si encore l'on ne procréait aucun enfant! ... C'est une lâcheté que d'enfanter des mioches ..." (5)

Yet Huysmans tried to find some consoling reason for humanity's suffering, and he evolved the theory which Paul Souday (6) called "Dolorisme", and which was to influence Thérive. Dolorism is the belief that suffering is necessary as an expiation for the crime of existence. "Soyons justes", cried Durtal in "En Route", "sans la douleur, l'humanité serait trop ignoble! car elle seule peut, en les dépurant, exhausser les âmes." (7)

According to Thérive, it was this theory of Dolorism that led Huysmans to seek out the misery of other people, and feel his own misery as poignant as possible, so as to suffer more, to expiate as much as possible for the sins of the world, above all for the sin of existence.

In taking over Huysmans' attitude to suffering, Thérive draws away from Schopenhauer, whose philosophy had no room for sin or expiation. It is difficult to see how Thérive himself could accept the theory of Dolorism in a Schopenhauerian "Weltanschauung". There are perhaps two possible explanations.

On the one hand, Thérive's own beliefs might have been arrived at without reasoning, as in the case, he argues, of Huysmans' chief characters which are Huysmans himself. "Ils vont tout droit, et d'instinct, à ce qui pourra leur donner l'expérience la plus riche et la plus faisandée de la misère des âmes ou des corps ... Après quoi ils ne refuseront pas de faire de cette tristesse sensorielle une tristesse métaphysique. C'est que du pessimisme matériel, entretenu par les impressions physiques, le pessimisme moral s'engendre tout naturellement: et ce sont des doctrines qui le soutiennent ensuite." (8)

Thus Thérive himself might be eclectic in his philosophy, not caring if his system as a whole is slightly illogical, if it explains his emotional reactions to his experience of life.

On the other hand, it is more likely that Thérive's God is not the blind irrational Will of Schopenhauer's. For in spite of his belief that existence is mainly evil, Thérive hesitates in all his books about the cause of existence, and a few of his chief characters are openly Christian.

.



Henri Troyat

(Chaliapine)

Un Poète : Théophile MALICET



Portrait de Théophile MALICET, par L.-G. Croison

Several of Thérive's works, "Les Portes de l'Enfer", "Le Plus grand Péché", "Sans Ame" and "Le Troupeau Galeux" introduce heresy. Does Thérive get his interest in heresy from Huysmans? He certainly knew "La-Bas", which deals with magic and the black mass. But it seems more probable that here again Huysmans merely showed Thérive that the subject could be successfully studied in novels.

Thérive's early work "Portes de l'Enfer" (1925) deals with different types of heresies, the whole of "Le Plus grand Péché" is looked upon as a work on heresy, and in "Sans Ame" he introduces the heresy of Antoinism, which has nothing to do with the story directly. Finally Thérive's "Le Troupeau Galeux" could be a pendant to Lemonnier's "Le Baiser de Satan", for it is also a historical novel centered round popular superstition.

"Le Troupeau Galeux" is the story of a heretic, Antoinette Bourignon, who lived towards the middle of the 17th century in Holland and preached the evil of the world and the necessity for extreme asceticism. This book combines three interests of Thérive's: asceticism, erudition, and heresy. The need for asceticism is stressed in most of his works; Thérive's own love of erudition, the same shown by the chief characters of "Le Voyage de M. Renan" and "Comme un Voleur" helped him to make the story historically true, for "Le Troupeau Galeux" is based on an extensive research; in addition the subject gives an outlet for analysis into superstitions and heresies.

Thérive has a twofold interest in superstitions; they are common in many forms among the people and so worth examining; also traces of superstition are still found in the most developed men, so it must be watched for, analysed, in order to understand our own complicated natures better. Thérive is also attracted to the study of heresy because, to him, it is linked like all religion to superstition, and is the outcome of the unhappiness of poor people, who need some creed to console themselves for their suffering.

But perhaps Thérive's interest results also from the conflict between a Christian upbringing and his adopted philosophy? He certainly realised that the various beliefs of intellectuals could also be heretical. Even the mere use of the word "heresy" shows that Thérive cannot shake himself free from Christian doctrine, and he must constantly weigh himself or others in the balance. Huysmans even is criticised, perhaps indeed praised by Thérive, who finds him not untainted by heresy; for summing up Huysmans' beliefs Thérive says: "Tel est le petit Credo, passablement hérétique, mais pittoresque, haut en couleur, et assez dramatique après tout, qu'on peut tirer de l'oeuvre de Huysmans" (9).

.

Huysmans' example affected Thérive's choice and treatment of his subjects, but Huysmans' influence was also very important on the form of Thérive's novels.

Schopenhauer had stated and Huysmans felt that the only person we know well is the "I". That is why Huysmans' novels are in the form of monographs. Even though in the third person, the stories revolve round the heroes, Folantin, Des Esseintes, Durtal, who are all projections of Huysmans himself at certain stages of his development.

This had been done before; we have the autobiographical novels of Chateaubriand, of Benjamin Constant, and of many of the romantics, and we have the works of the Goncourts, who claimed that they had initiated the monograph, but according to Thérive it had never been done with the same intensity or consistency. The result is that the central figure is analysed in the smallest detail, into the innermost depths of the subconscious.

Thérive realised the usefulness of this treatment from the literary point of view, (10). Of Thérive's own works, several are monographs, and we have a striking example of this technique in "Fils du Jour", one of his best works.

The title is a biblical one (11). A middle-aged bourgeois, M. Beau-

camp, considers himself among the elect, the "fils du jour", and tries by good works and methodical piety to be a pillar of the Church and of the State. He condemns his son Jacques who, sickened by an atmosphere of loveless righteousness, leaves home to join the courageous young waitress Jeanne who has been deserted by her husband. M. Beaucamp, at the dangerous age, finds more and more proof that the fallen, like his rakish brother Aimé or his son Jacques do not repent, and are rewarded with a happy life, whereas he, the just one, suffers. Jealousy and passion break down his self-control; he murders Aimé's mistress, then finally gives himself up when he hears that his brother is accused of the crime.

This book demonstrates Thérive's belief that, for a realist writer, the unity of any novel lies in the logical development of one character only, in this case M. Beaucamp whose innermost thoughts are analysed to unmask his hypocrisy. The secondary characters therefore must retain the transient and incomprehensible nature they have in life (12), their adventures cannot be followed, they flit in and out of the story and disappear. Thérive was conscious of this technique in Huysmans' works, and it fitted in with his own convictions both as thinker and as writer.

It is questionable though whether this treatment is always successful. "Fils du Jour" is perhaps an extreme case, but here Thérive only follows the story of M. Beaucamp himself to its conclusion; Mme Beaucamp we last see in hospital about to undergo a serious operation; Jacques, who gains our sympathy, is left stranded one night with some rag and bone men, and never mentioned again; the lovable Jeanne, we hear, is out of work and penniless. Our interest in all these people is left unsatisfied, and in spite of the skillfully drawn characters, the shrewd and courageous analysis of society, and the strong and lucid style of "Fils du Jour", the average reader is merely irritated by what seems an unnecessary disregard for his curiosity.

.....

How far is Thérive a populist? He himself says that his books only become populist from "Sans Ame" and "Le Charbon Ardent", and admits that he has since continued writing in the same style out of habit (1).

Now the characters and settings of these two books may class them as populist, for "Sans Ame" and "Le Charbon Ardent" show girls drawn from the working-class, while the men, Julien and Jean, both belong to the lower middle class.

But these books are not essentially but only incidentally populist; they are populist in the surroundings they show, the narrow streets and the dingy interiors near the rue Vaugirard, the outskirts of Paris at Arcueil; they are populist also in their realism where external details are concerned.

Here for instance we have the description of a street at Vaugirard, where both subject matter and accurate observation follow the naturalist tradition:

"Quant à la rue Du Cange, c'est un misérable boyau sans pavés, sans réverbères; un ruisseau intarissable y baigne des maisonnettes de banlieue, qui ont gardé des jardinets où la volaille picore les poubelles, des perrons d'auberge, des cours de ferme, des balcons de bois, des fils de fer chargés de linge, des murs étayés où quelque enfant pâle a accroché une balançoire." (13)

The most realist novel we have of Thérive's, and the most populist, not only in subject matter, but in the sense of being merely a novel, and not a vehicle for philosophical ideas, is the book "Anna".

Anna, a young married woman, is involved in an incident which she resolves to hide from her husband Edouard, fearing that he will not understand that she is completely innocent. Deriving a vague pleasure at first from this secret withheld from a prosaic and mediocre husband, Anna's craving for romance leads her to exaggerate the importance of her experience, to play the part of a woman who has had a lover, later, taken up with her role, even to announce it openly. Menaced by her husband she trips, falls from a window, and is killed. The second part of the

story deals with Edouard's efforts to prove his innocence, and with his transfer to Oran, and his infatuation with a café singer Jenny who ignores him. The same violent jealousy shown towards Anna leads Edouard to a fight with Jenny's lover, culminating in a rather forced conclusion where Edouard stumbles and falls to his death from a balcony.

"Anna" is Thérive's "Madame Bovary"; in style and construction too it has something of Flaubert's reticence, simplicity and severity. But Anna is no more a proletarian than Emma; she also belongs to the bourgeoisie, or rather to the lower middle class.

In "La Fin des Haricots" we also have lower middle class workers as heroes, but this is hardly enough by itself to class the book as populist. This novel is more a fantasy in a cosmopolitan Paris of the 20th century, with improbable of not impossible adventures. And the workers are certainly not in their milieu, since they end on holiday in Switzerland, with a new car, new clothes, and plenty of cash.

In all Thérive's novels, except "Anna", the populist elements are secondary ones only. Their real importance lies elsewhere, in their philosophy, their experiments in form and construction, their analysis, their style.

Thérive's claim to populism therefore comes mainly from his descriptions of superstitions and heresy, and above all from his general interest in the lower classes, an interest which springs however not from a love for the people, but from his urge to collect proof and food for his intellectual pessimism.

The result is a twisted view of the poorer classes, an exaggeration of the sordidness, of the futility of their lives. With rare exceptions, Thérive is incapable of showing the people as they see themselves; he cannot understand their real problems, their uncertainty about the future, their sense of social injustice, which are questions that are tragic enough. But he cannot understand their pleasures either; their pride in their work, their reverence for that simple yet essential item, their daily bread; he does not see that their struggles are not philosophical, but social and economic.

Thérive describes the people as he wants to see them, from the pessimistic side. Here a remark of Jean Soreau's in "Le Charbon Ardent" is significant: "J'é ne m'intéresse qu'au plus malheureux que moi, et Dieu sait s'il y en a, car je ne me vante point d'être un sujet romanesque." (14) To Thérive therefore, the unhappier the poor are, the more interesting they become. That is why André Thérive will never mean much to the real working-class people, who would revolt against this rather inhuman attitude.

.

It is in his short stories that Thérive shows up best as a populist. "Noir et Or" are sketches of the war which are still in the apprenticeship stage; "Cœurs d'occasion" and "Tendre Paris", his later collections, contain masterpieces.

In these stories Thérive forgets Huysmans and Schopenhauer and turns to Maupassant, who influences both his form and treatment. Leaving aside Maupassant's interest in the supernatural, Thérive gives stories of the bourgeoisie and the people, often just sketches, like "Enfants Perdus", or incidents showing the weakness of human nature in the most sedate people ("Un homme sérieux"), or the dignity of the poorest people ("L'Aumône"). Sometimes we have trivial accidents and their consequences ("Odeurs Suaves"), incidents that promise well but finish lamely, like life itself so often ("Vadrouille"), or the humorous incongruities of our existence ("Feu Minouchet"), or again that same haunting fear of death that we find in many of Thérive's as well as Maupassant's works, shown by the soldier, for instance, who tells his story to sub-lieutenant Devinck in "Noir et Or".

Were it even only for his short stories, André Thérive would be a writer of merit. He observes, and notes what he sees, unhampered by philo-

sophy. Here, taken from life, a poor street-seller, sketched with humour, pathos, imagination and accurate observation:

"Elle attachait une vieille ombrelle beige à fleurs jaunes au-dessus de son éventaire. La marchandise était amoncelée dans une voiture d'enfant décorée en modern-style avec des roseaux pâles. Les ressorts ravaudés avec de la ficelle, une chaise de fer pliante amarrée au-dessus, comme une échelle de pompiers, deux ou trois bouquets lamentables en proue, un petit chien en poupe, voilà quels accessoires complétaient l'équipage." (15)

Here again, the brisk and humorous beginning of a story told in the first person:

"Parfaitement, Boudreau, Jean, âgé de cinquante-sept ans, né à Alençon, Orne, et de sa profession sous-aide-comptable à la Solidarité textile... Vous voyez que je suis un homme tout ce qu'il y a de rangé et d'honorable. Jamais je n'ai eu affaire à la magistrature de mon pays.

"J'habite 31, avenue Robespierre, et vous le savez aussi bien que moi, puisque vous m'avez fait convoquer. J'ose dire que je jouis de l'estime de mon concierge et de tous mes voisins, tandis qu'eux, bien souvent, ils ne méritent pas la mienne avec leurs radios, leurs disputes de famille, leurs chiens, leurs tapis à la fenêtre. Mais, motus, je suis un citoyen discret et je ne veux de tort à personne.

"J'arrive à l'affaire, puisque vous tapotez avec votre coupe-papier, et que vous me jetez un oeil. Je l'ai déjà dit: oui, les lettres sont de moi. Je reconnais mon écriture, mon style, et tout... Pas mes sentiments, bien entendu, car aujourd'hui ... Enfin, je m'en vais vous expliquer." (16)

In these short stories, told in a vivid and rapid style, Thérive's great interest in language and its use bears fruit. Essential details are well introduced, and there is the same humour which is apparent in Thérive's lighter works like "Le Voyage de M. Renan" and above all in "La Fin des Haricots".

These versatile short stories with their human interest, their people from all classes, their realism, their clarity and shrewd observation, perhaps form Thérive's most valuable contribution to the movement of which he was the official head.

Notes

1. Thérive: "J.-K. Huysmans et son Oeuvre", (Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1924), p.12.
 2. This section as a whole is based on Thérive's attitude to Huysmans, shown in his study "J.-K. Huysmans et son Oeuvre".
 3. Thérive: "J.-K. Huysmans", p.33.
 4. See discussions on Leconte de Lisle's pessimism in Thérive's "Le Par-nasse", (Les Oeuvres représentatives, 1929), pp 31/37, 73, 112/118.
 5. Quoted in Thérive's "J.-K. Huysmans", p. 52.
 6. Paul Souday, who died in 1929, was Thérive's predecessor as literary critic of *Le Temps*.
 7. Quoted in Thérive's "J.-K. Huysmans", p. 51.
 8. Thérive: "J.-K. Huysmans", p.40.
 9. Ditto, p. 20.
 10. For Thérive's reasons, see his "J.-K. Huysmans", pp 21/22.
 11. See I Thessalonians, 5, verse 5 onwards.
 12. See Lemonnier's article "Le Roman Populiste", *Mercure de France*, 15/11/29 discussed above on p. 18, where similar beliefs are put forward.
 13. Thérive: "Sans Ame", p. 116.
 14. Thérive: "Le Charbon Ardent", p. 156.
 15. Thérive: from the story of "Didi", "Coeurs d'Occasion" (Gallimard, 1937)
 16. Thérive: from the story "Déposition", "Coeurs d'Occasion".
-

- 9 -

HENRY POULAILLE
AND THE PROLETARIAN WRITERS

CHAPTER NINE

HENRY POULAILLE AND THE PROLETARIAN WRITERS

In the preceding chapters we have dealt with the early development of the populist movement, and with its literary tendencies, and we have discussed some trends shown in the works of the two leaders of populism. Now we must turn to examine another literary movement which played an important role in the history of populism. This was the movement sponsored by the proletarian authors, with Henry Poulaille as their leader.

A rough distinction can be attempted between populist and proletarian writers in France in the 1930's.

A populist author tended to belong to the middle or even the upper class, to have enjoyed a complete school education, and often a university training, and to be occupied in intellectual not manual work. The populist author frequently had a profession connected with literature, such as a position as teacher, journalist or critic, and he may even have been a full-time writer.

A proletarian author on the other hand tended to belong to the working-class, to have left school before the final exam, to be largely self-taught, and to be occupied in manual or clerical rather than intellectual work. A proletarian author usually took up writing only as a side-line to his main work.

A discussion of the proletarian literary movement is essential to a complete understanding of populism for the following reasons:

- a) The proletarian writers were doing what the populists planned to do, namely writing books about people from the lower classes.
- b) It was partly as a result of the populist manifestos that the proletarian authors became more conscious of their role in literature, and drew together to defend their interests.
- c) It was the proletarian writers who voiced the strongest and most serious opposition to populism.
- d) This very opposition served to show up the qualities and weakness, and at the same time the limitations of the populist movement.
- e) Many proletarian writers were termed "populist" by critics. Some were even awarded populist prizes.
- f) Among the best authors commonly accepted as populist were men who combined in their works essential qualities of both proletarian and populist literature.

.

What was the immediate background of these proletarian authors?

Since the beginning of the 20th century, the lower classes had been showing an increasing interest in literature. New laws of 1881 and 1882 had made primary education for the first time free and obligatory for children from the ages of six to thirteen, and scholarships had been created to enable children of poor parents to continue further if they showed promise.

Compulsory education made itself felt in the generation rising to maturity about the turn of the century, and from then onwards there was a growing realisation on the part of the working classes in France that they too had a part to play in literature; they felt that books should not only be written for the upper more leasured classes, but for them too. As yet there were few works which reflected the life, the problems and the hopes of the common people, and it was to fill this gap that these people themselves sought gradually to write books that would mirror their own experiences.

Thus by the time Lemonnier hesitantly handed his first article to Deffoux much had already been written about the people -- about peasants, sailors, artisans -- in books by authors such as Jules Vallès, Charles-Louis Philippe, Emile Guillaumin, Marguerite Audoux (1) Edouard Peisson (2) or Henry Poulaille. Names such as these had forced their way

across class distinction into the columns of bourgeois or upper class reviews.

Behind these authors however there were a score of more of writers, who were workers themselves and had experienced and described in their books the bitter struggles and the simple and hard-won pleasures of the poor, yet who passed almost unnoticed. Certainly when Lemonnier talked of choosing the lives of the people as a new subject matter for novels, he did not mention that this had already been done by several authors who themselves belonged to the people.

It was to repair this omission that Henry Poulaille (A) took up a firm stand for working-class authors with the publication of his "Nouvel Age Littéraire" in 1930.

.

Henry Poulaille was the leader and spokesman of the proletarian writers, and he was probably the strongest single opponent of the populist school. A short sketch of his life will show how his background differed from that of André Thérive or Léon Lemonnier.

Born in 1896, Henry Poulaille's childhood years were spent at Javel, in a working-class and industrial quarter of Paris. Poulaille's father was a carpenter, his mother a caner of chairs. His was no sheltered childhood; he played in the streets and in vacant lots with all the ruffians of the quarter; from his windows, over street or busy courtyard hung with washing, he watched the daily dramas of other needy families. And in those bustling quarters there was a lot to see and hear, for no one could hide his life from his neighbours.

Then one day in 1903, leaning from the window, Henry Poulaille saw a cab stop outside, from which friends carried his father, who had escaped with a broken back when the scaffolding he was working on collapsed. His two companions had been killed. No insurance money was paid out, and for many months Poulaille's mother, helped by weekly donations from comrades of her husband, worked hard to support her three small children and their crippled father.

Soon after Poulaille's father could work again, there came the strike of 1906 which affected the carpenters too. This was followed by a period of unemployment, another long strike in 1907, then a few years of comparative security, until his father's health gave in as a result of his accident. When Poulaille's father died in hospital early in 1910, young Henry found work as an errand boy to a chemist, to help his mother and younger sister and brother. Later the same year, worn out by hardship, Poulaille's mother died of tuberculosis; the younger children were taken over by relatives, and Poulaille, not yet fourteen years old, was left to fend for himself (3).

For comfort the boy turned to books. His father had taught him to appreciate Zola, and when Poulaille started work as a chemist's boy, the owner of a bookshop, interested in this precocious reader, lent or gave him all the books he wanted. Thus, in the evenings after rinsing bottles or delivering medicines, he devoured Michelet, Cladel, Rictus, Descaves, political works and symbolist reviews, like "L'Ermitage", "La Plume", "Le Coq rouge" or "La Société nouvelle" (4).

The war came, Poulaille was conscripted, and returned to the frustration of unemployment, with odd jobs unloading trains, selling newspapers, working in hospitals and factories (5). Poulaille's father had been a keen syndicalist; young Poulaille, influenced by the extreme left tendencies traditional for the workers of Paris, became an anarchist, and took an active part in the anarchist movement in the early twenties.

It was about 1920 also that Poulaille first thought of founding a review that would group proletarian writers and give them a means of expression. Poulaille had as a friend Tristan Rémy (A), a year younger than he was, a railway clerk who was also interested in writing. It was in Tristan Rémy's cramped sixth floor rooms in Boulevard Ornano that the question of a cyclostyled review was discussed, but the idea was aban-

done as they were too poor even to hire a duplicator (L).

Then, five years after the war Poulaille, helped by Frédéric Lefèvre, entered the publishing firm of Bernard Grasset; he was put in charge of the press service, and at last found work to which he was suited. There, with untidy hair and an eternal cigarette dangling from his lips, he would hunt, swearing, for documents he had somehow mislaid, or would interview a stream of writers, poets, journalists, many of them working-class people. Poulaille had an uncanny flair for appraising the merits of new writers. Those in whom he found promise he encouraged, correcting their works with his shockingly illegible handwriting, and advising them what to read (6).

.

Late at night Henry Poulaille would write himself, and his early works "Ils étaient quatre" and "Ames neuves" were published by Grasset in 1925. Then came his first documentary book about the working classes, "L'Enfantement de la Paix" (1926), drawn from his own experiences. In this vivid story he discusses through his characters the various sides of post-war problems, the tragedy of the wasted lands, the position of trade unions, the reasons for the failure of strikes, and other topical themes.

But "L'Enfantement de la Paix" was only an experiment, a preliminary sketch for the work he was planning, which was to run to several volumes. For at night Poulaille was busy on his main novels, the series of "Le Pain Quotidien", based on his own experiences.

The first volume, "Le Pain Quotidien" dealing with the years 1903 - 1906 was published by Valois in 1931; this was followed by "Les Damnés de la Terre" covering the period 1906 - 1910, while "Pain de Soldat" and "Les Rescapés" which tell about the years 1914 - 1917 and 1917 - 1919 continue the series. In these volumes the carpenter Magneux is Poulaille's father, Hortense the chair-canner his mother, the wide-awake boy Loulou is Poulaille himself. Of the large number of secondary characters the majority really existed, and in many cases they are described in the books under their real names (I).

Poulaille's own story runs as a leading theme against the broad fresco of the life of the people around him; and in this vivid description of the environment in which he grew up, each character is shown not only as an individual, with his tricks of speech or action, with his adventures, sometimes amusing, sometimes tragic, --- but he is shown also related to the society in which he lived, with the hopes, the fears, the problems, the political and moral implications of his struggle for existence, of the struggle of those of his class.

Here we have a documentary passage, relating to the wine-growers' uprising in the south of France in 1907:

"A la Chambre, Jaurès interpelle, Guesde le suit à la tribune. On refuse de s'entretenir de ces "gueux" qui sont en insurrection, mais l'on se réjouit de la condamnation de Marck et d'Yvetot, l'un à deux ans, le second à quatre ans de prison. "On a un gouvernement à poigne". Il ne perd pas son temps! Le 100e de ligne qui avait refusé de marcher est déplacé. Cela n'intimide pas les vigneron révoltés. Environ 150 municipalités sont démissionnaires et Marcelin Albert, au nom du Comité d'Argelès, télégraphie à M. Clemenceau: "Nous n'avons pas d'ordre à recevoir de vous..."

"A Perpignan, des soldats du 12e chantent l'Internationale. Un mandat d'arrêt est lancé contre Ferroul. On monte la garde pour empêcher la prise.

"Le Général commandant le 16e corps fait part de ses craintes. Il a peur de ne pas pouvoir compter sur ses troupes." (7)

Here, a scene of men at work, as Magneux watches his friends on the scaffolding:

"Les coups de marteaux sonnaient clair leur chanson rude, les hommes s'interpellaient. Un jeunot s'occupait au treuil à la montée de madriers. Il sifflait comme un pinson.

"En haut, plusieurs compagnons clouaient des poutres. Magneux regardait son ami Lunel. Il admirait sa précision de lancer

du lourd marteau. A peine en équilibre, se retenant au mât, il tapait, à coups répétés et sûrs.

"Son camarade, en bas, déjà oublieux du risque perpétuel de ce métier, le regardait avec une pointe de jalousie.

"Que n'était-il à sa place?

"Il songeait. En somme c'était là sur l'échafaudage qu'on se sentait maître de sa force, maître de soi!

"A vingt mètres au-dessus du sol, à peine retenu, semble-t-il, mais tandis que le bras droit frappe, le gauche tient serré, et il n'est ni peur ni vertige; on est là solide. Et l'odeur du bois aux effluves ranimées par le sciage, le rabotage, les relents de résine vous montent aux narines, comme un alcool." (8)

Here, a street incident. Hortense's aunt, Mme Mulot, tries to hide that her brother is a street-singer. She tells what happened when, drunk, he came to shout under her window:

"Il était saoul comme une vache, c'était pas Dieu possible pour faire l'idiot comme ça, et raconter ces histoires-là! Qu'est-ce que les gens avaient à savoir que ce chanteur d'occasion était d'ma famille! Tu vois d'ici, ma pauv' Hortense, les cancans qu'y a d'puis. Et si ton père avait été là quesque ça n'aurait pas fait! J'étais furieuse, tout le monde rigolait aux fenêtr's ... Si bien que j'ouvre la mienne:
- Vieux saoulard, j'lui criai.
- Ah! vieille rapiate, te v'là! Tu les lâches tes deux ronds?
- Attends, attends qu' j'y dis, et j'avais chercher un grand pot d'eau. J'reviens, mais i'm'avait d'vinée, i' s'était écarté. J'étais tellement en colère qu'j'y avais pas fait attention. Et la Cabosse, la voisine d'en d'ssous, qu'est curieuse comme une chatte, qu'avait les yeux en l'air, j'ai pas pu m'arrêter à temps! C'grand imbécile riait à en crever..... et l'aut'e gourde en bas, qu'avait pris la potée d'flotte sur la tête, qui m'engueulait comme du poisson pourri! Avec tout l'monde aux f'nêtres qui s'en payait une bosse! Ah! les rosses. Ah! là là, c't'histoire!"(9)

For Poulaille, a novel should not be looked upon as a thing in itself, apart from life. A novel should form a document of life at a certain time, or of a certain section of society. That is why Poulaille's characters speak the slang that is in daily use; that is why Poulaille tells us more than just his own life; that is why he does not hesitate to introduce quotations from newspapers, headlines from notices, extracts from speeches, as long as they help to explain the background to his characters (I).

Thus Poulaille is extending Zola's idea of a documentary novel, with the difference that Poulaille's work is more alive than that of Zola, because it is a record of life itself, a report of actual experience, and because it is told with imagination and an astounding memory for detail, and with a very real sympathy for the people.

.....

During his early years at Grasset's, Poulaille met many writers -- working-class people, men or women who wrote at night after a ten or eleven hour day, not because they hoped to earn extra thereby, but because they wanted to express themselves; people like the miner Constant-Malva (10), Lucien Bourgeois, (a workman (11), the sailor Edouard Peisson, Louis Guilloux, son of a shoemaker (12), and the former liftman and locksmith's apprentice Eugène Dabit (13).

Poulaille was shocked by the public's indifference in general to stories or books by the people, and profoundly moved at the same time by the courage and sincerity of these unschooled writers. "Je l'ai vu écrire," he says of Lucien Bourgeois. "Il n'avait qu'une pièce dans un taudis du quartier Clignancourt. Il avait fait sa journée, sa femme et sa fille étaient près de lui, et je pense aux riches bureaux des autres, à leurs bibliothèques. Il avait, lui, quelques livres, dont un tout petit dictionnaire. Il écrivait et peut-être personne ne le lirait." (14)

The difference in background between two men like Thérive and Poulaille



Henry Poulaille

cannot be stressed too much, and the populist manifestos and the success of the populist movement came to accentuate the differences between bourgeois and lower class authors.

Poulaille felt populism as a direct insult to writers of the working-class, because their contribution to literature had been completely overlooked by the populists. Also the upper classes were gaining fame through their plea for a return to reality and to the people, while for years the workers who had written with sincerity about their own lives had been neglected. In spite of Poulaille's genuine admiration for Lemonnier and for Thérive (15), he saw their movement as a menace to the recognition of a proletarian literature; for although Thérive as befitted an impartial critic had devoted articles to authors like Bourgeois and Poulaille himself (16), yet populism as a movement ignored the spadework done by the proletarians.

Moreover a confusion was arising in the use of the term "populist", for plays like Charles Vildrac's "Paquebot Tenacity" were classed under that heading (17) and authors with a proletarian background such as Charles-Louis Philippe, Neel Doff and Eugène Dabit were called "populist" (18). Unless immediate action were taken, Poulaille felt, this confusion would survive, and true proletarian literature would suffer.

.

In order to clarify the position of proletarian writers, Poulaille brought out a pamphlet in March 1930, "Charles-Louis Philippe, le populisme et la littérature prolétarienne." (19) This was followed in July 1930 by a more complete work, "Nouvel Age Littéraire" (20), where Poulaille discusses populism and proletarian literature, and deals with forerunners of working-class writers, as well as with the proletarian authors of his day, and their attitude to populism.

In these two works Poulaille gives his definition of proletarian literature. "Elle est l'expression d'une classe et dit les aspirations, les volontés de cette classe souvent, car la plupart de ses manifestations sont des oeuvres de combat. Elle n'est sans doute pas autre chose qu'une formule d'art en réaction contre la littérature bourgeoise. En fait, si intéressante qu'elle puisse être -- je donne ici mon opinion personnelle -- elle ne saurait se substituer à la véritable littérature, vers laquelle d'ailleurs l'artiste prolétarien tend, même s'il l'ignore. Elle est une manifestation artistique de transition. En tout cas, elle existe, elle a apporté un accent neuf, elle est nette, et répond à un besoin d'une classe se sous le joug d'une incertitude continuelle du pain quotidien. On ne saurait plus la nier." (21)

Poulaille distinguishes proletarian literature clearly from books classed under the vague heading of "art social", which would cover populism too. "La littérature prolétarienne n'est pas précisément catalogable comme représentation des théories de l'Art social. Elle est l'expression d'une classe, elle est spontanée. Elle est un phénomène momentané et admirable. Elle n'a pas la prétention d'être le but de l'Art, mais un moyen de combat. Elle est d'ailleurs, en général, plus objective que subjective, ce que ne pourraient des oeuvres se réclamant des théories dites d'Art social." (22)

This objectivity arises because true proletarian works will never romanticise misery, he says, but they are reticent and profoundly human, and draw their power of propaganda because of this; while many books written about the people, he points out, tend to draw inspiration from misery, not to fight its causes, but to use this misery as a romantic theme (23).

Working-class literature in France, Poulaille says, was not influenced by Russia, as some people thought. Rather it had arisen in many countries at the same time, due to similar circumstances, which proves that it was the result of a social necessity (24). As he sees it, it should have no political bias. Proletarian writers feel that the name "proletarian" with its slight political flavour, can be blamed on the populists, who first, through the formation of their school, accentuated the difference between these two groups of writers (25). "La vie du prolétariat ra-

contée par des auteurs qui sortent de ses rangs: voilà la littérature prolétarienne," (25) wrote Tristan Rémy (A), who worked side by side with Poulaille to encourage the authors of their class.

.

Poulaille suggests that part of the value of proletarian literature should be to form a testimony, a document on the social conditions of our time for both immediate and future use. In this way, after a type of field-work, where books are published on all sections of the working-class, the economists and militants for better conditions will have a foundation from which to plan (26). Thus the value of workers' literature lies in the fact that it should be absolutely true and genuine, not only as regards material facts, but in the human interpretation of these facts, which would then influence the reader. This literature should "charger les faits observés et vécus d'une émotion humaine, qui puisse ébranler par contre-coup l'homme social, l'homme tout court, en l'obligeant à prendre position." (27)

Literature for the working-class should therefore not be a means of evasion, but a responsibility undertaken. "Voilà le mot, 'responsabilité'", exclaims Poulaille. "Il faut exiger de l'écrivain qu'il sache faire don de soi, qu'il sache prendre ses responsabilités. Nous n'avons que faire des bavards et des dilettantes." (28) This implies for the working-class authors a refusal to rise in society, for as soon as they accept anything from the upper class, rank, honour, prizes such as the populist prize, they no longer have an undivided loyalty. "Celui qui accepte un poste, celui qui accepte une décoration, Légion d'honneur même donné par le Front populaire, se range. Si belles que puissent être ses phrases, elles ne sont plus l'expression nette de sa classe, elles ne reflètent plus que 'Lui'." (29) Thus wrote the idealist Poulaille, but not all his associates had the same courage, or the same beliefs; and in the years to come it was to be a series of disappointments and an increased sense of frustration each time a successful proletarian author joined the interests of the upper classes.

Poulaille also deals with the question of style, and here he again differs radically from the populists. The most frequent criticism of proletarian authors was that they had never learnt the art of writing -- "le métier d'écrire" -- and that their works were often poor from the point of view of style.

This Poulaille did not deny, in fact he used to boast the lack of style in his own works (6). But he saw that any consideration for style imposed some measure of artificiality on the presentation of the subject, and for him truth mattered more. That is why, in his own works, not only the people who are speaking use slang; often, in the descriptive or narrative passages he continues in popular style deliberately so that we see the scene coloured by his own vivid experience, through his eyes; for few people, as Thérive is the first to admit (30), are capable of thinking in literary French.

Style is a matter of choice; the author has to decide what he is after. Poulaille brings this out clearly. "On nous dit encore: 'mais vous n'avez pas les qualités d'art, la perfection formelle qu'ils (accepted writers) ont acquis par leur culture.' Ici nous sommes au coeur du débat. Deux cultures s'affrontent, -- deux qualités très dissemblables -- une qui est spécifiquement formelle, l'autre nettement d'instinct. Esthétisme d'une part, authenticité de l'autre." (31) One could argue at length on the merits of style versus truth, but at least Poulaille's position is understandable.

In any case, Poulaille never claimed that proletarian literature should be a model for all literature; he went out of his way to emphasise that it was only "une littérature de transition" (32) and had as yet produced no masterpieces (33). But it was a literary current that existed, and should therefore be recognised and reckoned with.

Notes

1. For further information on these authors, see the following chapter.
 2. Wrote many books about the sea, starting with "Ballero, Capitaine", (Ed. des Portiques, 1928), "Le Courrier de la Mer Blanche" (Ditto, 1929) and "Hans le Marin", (Grasset, 1930).
 3. Poulaille tells the story of his youth in his "Le Pain Quotidien", (Grasset, 1934, previously Valois 1931), and "Les Damnés de la Terre", (Grasset, 1935).
 4. See Poulaille: "Les Damnés de la Terre", chapter XCIV.
 5. See Poulaille: "Nouvel Age Littéraire", (Valois, 1930), p. 366.
 6. See the vivid sketch of Poulaille in the article "Un homme et sa Revue", by "Le Magot Solitaire" in Vrai Bruxelles, 18/4/1948.
 7. Poulaille: "Les Damnés de la Terre", p. 92.
 8. Poulaille: "Le Pain Quotidien", p. 137, chapter XXVIII.
 9. Ditto, p. 127, chapter XXV.
 10. Author of "Histoire de ma Mère et de mon Oncle Fernand", (Valois, 1932)
 11. Bourgeois' autobiography, "L'Ascension", was published in 1925.
 12. See chapters 11 and 12.
 13. See chapters 13 and 14.
 14. Poulaille: "Nouvel Age Littéraire", chapter on Lucien Bourgeois.
 15. See Poulaille: "Charles-Louis Philippe, le populisme et la littérature prolétarienne", (Cahiers bleus, No. 55, 29/3/1930, Valois), p.1.
 16. See Thérive's article "Les Romans et le Peuple", L'Opinion, 24/10/1925, from which extracts are quoted in Poulaille's "Nouvel Age Littéraire" pp. 145/149.
 17. By Paul Chauveau in Les Nouvelles Littéraires; extract quoted by Poulaille, "Nouvel Age Littéraire", p.30.
 18. By Jean Vignaud in Le Petit Parisien, according to Poulaille in his "Nouvel Age Littéraire", p. 31.
 19. No. 55 in the series Cahiers Bleus, (Valois, 29/3/1930).
 20. Published by Valois, 1930. Extremely readable. Sections on populism, culture and the people, proletarian literature, proletarian forefathers, and over 200 pages on contemporary proletarian writers.
 21. Poulaille: "Charles-Louis Philippe, le populisme et la littérature prolétarienne", p. 4.
 22. Ditto, p. 6.
 23. Compare with Thérive's attitude to the misery of the people, see above, p. 55.
 24. Poulaille: "Nouvel Age Littéraire", chapter on "Littérature prolétarienne".
 25. See Tristan Rémy's article "Qu'est-ce un Ecrivain Prolétarien?" First printed in L'Université Républicaine in 1931, it was reprinted in the pamphlet "La Littérature et le Peuple", (Les Humbles, revue littéraire des Primaires, Dec. 1937).
 26. For further mention of the documentary value of proletarian literature, see the article by the peasant writer Lucien Gachon on the page published by the "Groupe des Ecrivains Prolétariens" in Monde, June, 1932.
 27. Léon Gerbe in the "Bulletin des Ecrivains Prolétariens", 1932. Refs. 26 and 27 quoted by Poulaille in "La Littérature et le Peuple", p. 25.
 28. Poulaille: "Nouvel Age Littéraire", p. 106.
 29. See Poulaille's first article in "La Littérature et le Peuple", p. 9.
 30. See Thérive: "Le Français, langue morte?" pp 24/27.
 31. Poulaille, article on "Jules Reboul" in "Nouvel Age, revue mensuelle de littérature et de culture", No. 6, June, 1931.
 32. Poulaille: "Nouvel Age Littéraire", pp. 47, 157, 437.
 33. Poulaille in his article "Littérature prolétarienne" in "La Littérature et le Peuple", p. 26.
-

- 10 -

THE OPPOSITION
AND EFFORTS OF THE PROLETARIAN GROUP

CHAPTER TEN

THE OPPOSITION AND EFFORTS OF THE PROLETARIAN GROUP

Let us discuss briefly the main direct criticisms of populism, voiced by Henry Poulaille. These criticisms were endorsed by proletarian writers (1) in prefaces and articles, discussions and book reviews in the many proletarian booklets and reviews that were to come.

1. Proletarian writers objected to the confusion arising between proletarian and populist works, due to the formation of the populist movement.

This criticism certainly had some justification.

2. Populism, they argued, was too indefinite; the populists had and could have no school, and it was too difficult to limit books according to Lemonnier's manifestos.

But in actual fact the populists did not claim to form a school, and books were counted as populist if they fitted most, not necessarily all Lemonnier's theories.

3. The populists may have been trained well, the proletarian authors said, and may have written excellently, but they never wrote with the accent of sincerity found in proletarian works; very few of their stories were based on real life, and the workers could sense this at once. "Le ton manquait. Le ton..." Poulaille said, speaking of former so-called 'études de mœurs'. "Un ouvrier qui sait lire ne s'y trompe jamais. Pour parler de la misère il faut l'avoir connue." (2)

This objection was perhaps the most serious one brought against the populists, and contained a large element of truth.

4. The proletarian writers questioned whether populism would find much favour with the public. The average reader would not be interested, nor would the people about whom the populists were writing. "A dire vrai, on voit mal à qui le populisme veut s'adresser." (3)

A counter-criticism might be made. Would the average working-class man be interested in proletarian literature? Do not uncritical readers from all classes tend to prefer romantic or escapist books?

5. Books should be useful, the proletarian writers argued, and they criticised the populists for upholding the idea of "le Roman pour le Roman". "Le romancier, l'auteur dramatique devrait prendre à coeur d'être le témoin impartial de son époque, ou partial même ... sa première condition d'être devrait l'amener à recréer la vie, à dégager les grandes lignes des problèmes de la vie. Avoir une utilité en somme." (3)

Here there is a certain element of confusion. If recreating life or showing up the problems of life made a novel useful, the populists would have been the first to agree. Populism however was against two things: (a) the partial witness, who would not give an accurate reflection of life, and (b) any attempt to use the novel to suggest preconceived solutions to life's problems.

One might object that completely impartial witnesses are rare, as writers, if they do not show individual reactions, tend at least to hold the point of view of their class; also there are few novels which do not bring some solution, expressed or implied, to the problems they show. The need for resignation to life preached in Thérive's "Le Charbon Ardent" colours his novel at least as much as does the need for unity among workers implied in Poulaille's "Les Damnés de la Terre".

It is certainly true that in 1930 already, fifteen years before Sartre expressed the general need for "une littérature engagée" (4), the proletarian writers had rejected the idea of "le Roman pour le Roman" and suggested that the writer, who inevitably took up a position by his works, should be alive to his responsibility. "Il n'y a pas d'Art pour l'Art..." Poulaille wrote, "le maçon ne fait pas de la maçonnerie, il bâtit." (3)

The proletarian writers were thus conscious of a responsibility to-

wards their class and their time which the populists were not.

6. Populist works tended to stress the hardship of manual labour, or the physical suffering of the poor; yet according to proletarian writers the drama of the poor did not lie in these things, which were accepted, but rather in the continual uncertainty about the future, in that anguish of insecurity which was only known to the really poor.

The case was quoted of a man, who, through love for the people, had left his rich parents and for ten years had been working and suffering with the poor; yet his fellow-workers still realised that there was a difference between them. "Quand il en aura marre, il ira retrouver les siens, sa famille qui est aux as ... Nous c'est notre route qu'il faut suivre et même qu'on soit 'crevé' il faut continuer." (5) Even living as a worker, a writer would never experience real uncertainty, for there would always be the possibility of a return to better conditions; so what populist could understand the worker?

Here the proletarian writers seem to deny the role of imagination in any literary work. A writer living in close contact with the poor might through imagination recreate their emotions even if he did not share them. But in general imagination might equally well lead an author away from reality as closer to reality.

7. The proletarians suggested that populism and bourgeois authors in general were against the books of working-class authors, because they were jealous of their own privileges. "C'est resté une question de pognon, d'arrivisme et de vanité. Et c'est pour sauvegarder ces privilèges que la caste écrivassière, qu'elle soit de gôche ou de droite est contre la littérature prolétarienne;" (6) Poulaille wrote in his outspoken way; and again: "Ils ont admis, une fois pour toutes, qu'ils avaient eux seuls droit à parler; et ils ferment leurs yeux et leurs oreilles, leurs revues, leurs groupes, leurs maisons d'édition, leur porte-monnaie aussi bien entendu, à cette rivale sans titres ni fiefs qu'est la littérature des prolétaires!" (7)

Poulaille was speaking from experience, for he had difficulty in finding publishers for proletarian novels, and the articles his group got accepted by reviews usually went unpaid. But his criticism is probably only true if qualified. In general editors and publishers would turn down works by bourgeois as well as proletarian writers, if they would not appeal to the reading public; proletarian works were therefore likely to be unsuccessful as they did not cater for this public. Several early proletarian authors though had been accepted and enjoyed by the general public, and they will be dealt with below.

8. Finally the proletarian authors argued that the greatest writers of all times and all countries had written about the people, and the populists could not claim a monopoly on the subject. In 1830 instead of 1930 there might have been a chance for starting such a school, but since then there were Sue, Hugo, Balzac, the Goncourts, Zola and Huysmans in France (8); there were also writers like Hamsun, Johan Bojer, Thomas Hardy, Gorky, Ramuz and Féodor Gladkov in other countries who had roots in the lower classes themselves, and who had produced works about the people which were enjoyed, not by a class or a nation, but by humanity as a whole (9). What had the populists to offer that was new, they asked, in the face of men like these?

But Lemonnier himself said that populism was a return to the great realist traditions of the French novel. Populism was new only inasmuch as it took into account social conditions in the 20th century.

.

In his book, "Nouvel Age Littéraire", Poulaille devoted several chapters to the first real proletarian writers in France. Lemonnier discussed some of the literary ancestors of populism in his manifestos. Let us see to whom the proletarian writers of Poulaille's time turned for inspiration.

In the 19th century already there was Jules Vallès (1832 - 1885), whose trilogy "Jacques Vingtras" ("L'Enfant", "Le Bachelier", "L'Insurgé") was based on the bitter years of his childhood and youth, and on his experiences as a member of the Commune in 1871. The son of a poor teacher, grandson of peasants among whom he spent his youth, Vallès struggled at Paris to get his articles accepted by editors who were afraid of his revolutionary ardour, of his outspoken criticisms of social abuses, of his anarchism (10). In between periods of political activity, Vallès founded his own reviews, "La Rue", "Le Peuple", "Le Cri du Peuple", "Le Drapeau" (11). Here he devotes himself fervently to the cause of the people, and we find echos of Lamennais' "Le Livre du Peuple" when Vallès writes:

"Cet homme à peau de bête, coiffé comme un pendu, que la pluie glace, que la vapeur brûle, debout sur la locomotive, coupant le vent, avalant la neige, mécanicien, chauffeur, c'est le Peuple!

"L'animal qui là-bas dans les champs redresse son échine cassée et levant son cou maigre, aux muscles tendus comme des cordes, regarde d'un oeil terne le wagon qui s'enfuit, le paysan brun comme une feuille ou blanc comme une rave, c'est le Peuple!

"Ce couveur qui tombe du toit comme un oiseau mort, ce verrier dont la vie fond avec le verre dans le brasier, ce tourneur que la poussière du cuivre étouffe, ce peintre que le céruse mord, ce mitron pâle comme sa farine, c'est le Peuple! Il suffit à tout, contre l'eau, le vent, la terre, le feu, ce peuple héroïque et misérable!

"C'est de ce Peuple-là que nous allons parler." (12)

After Vallès, but probably influenced by him, came Charles-Louis Philippe, (1874 - 1909), son of a shoemaker, who in spite of a good education due to scholarships, could only find very modest employment. His books "La Mère et l'Enfant", "Bubu de Montparnasse", "Marie Donadieu", "Croquignole" and the unfinished story of the childhood of his father -- "Charles Blanchard" -- all show a deep pity and understanding for the humble and the poor to whom he belonged. We find Philippe writing to a friend: "J'aime toutes les choses, mais j'aime surtout ce qui souffre" (13), and relating the story one day of "La Mère et l'Enfant", which was based on personal experience, he concluded: "C'est ainsi que finit mon livre, parce que la peine des pauvres gens ne finit guère; et c'est le travail qui commence quand une peine s'est finie." (14)

Lucien Jean (1870 - 1908), son of working-class parents, found himself due to bad health and an insufficient education tied to poorly-paid clerical work, like his friend Ch.-L. Philippe. Practically his whole literary work, short stories, sketches, notes, is contained in one volume "Parmi les hommes" (15), but he had a great influence on his friends whom he encouraged and criticised, men such as Georges Valois, Ch.-L. Philippe, Charles-Henri Hirsch, and on later proletarian writers like Henry Poullaille (16). Clear-sighted, very human, strongly attached to the workers to whom he belonged, there is the ring of a prophet, something of a mediaeval mysticism in his work, due to its simplicity and lyricism, and to its philosophic content. He was one of the pioneers of proletarian literature, and Ch.-L. Philippe has left us two portraits of him, Louis Buisson in "Bubu de Montparnasse" and Lucien Teyssèdre in "Croquignole" (17).

Emile Guillaumin (born in 1874), a native of Bourbon like Ch.-L. Philippe, was a peasant. Even when his book "Vie d'un simple" (1904) was awarded a prize by the Académie Française, he never thought of leaving his land. Lucien Gachon in his "L'Ecrivain Paysan" tells the following anecdote. "Après le prix que l'Académie Française avait décerné à la 'Vie d'un Simple' un reporter fit le voyage d'Ygrande. Et s'adressant à un paysan occupé à sortir de son étable le fumier de ses vaches il lui demande:

- La maison d'Emile Guillaumin, s'il vous plaît? Et le paysan de répondre:

- Vous voulez voir Emile Guillaumin? C'est moi-même." (18)

Guillaumin excels in his stories and sketches about the life he knows, the country, the work on the land, the people of the village. His later work, "A tous vents sur la glèbe", follows the same tradition, and here he warns against people who come from outside to describe the life of the peasants. "Nul ... ne saurait parler équitablement des paysans s'il n'a vécu pour son compte la vie paysanne" (19).



Edouard Peisson



CHARLES-LOUIS PHILIPPE

Dessin de Robert Joffé.

Another friend of Ch.-L. Philippe, and encouraged by him was Margérite Audoux (1863 - 1937), who in her books "Marie-Claire" and "L'Atelier de Marie-Claire" tells of her youth as an orphan sent to work on farms, and of her struggles as seamstress in Paris. Very poor, half blind, she continued till the end as dress-maker, working to support the children she had adopted, writing to comfort herself when her eyes hurt too much to let her sew (20). Her books are poignant, simple, sincere and very human. "Lisez 'Marie-Claire' ... writes Octave Mirbeau. "Et quand vous l'aurez lue, sans vouloir blesser personne, vous vous demanderez quel est parmi nos écrivains -- et je parle des plus glorieux -- celui qui eût pu écrire un tel livre, avec cette mesure impeccable, cette pureté et cette grandeur rayonnantes." (21)

Perhaps best among woman authors, although not French herself, the Belgian (22) writer Neel Doff (1858 - 1943) who started writing late in life only, and who was much admired by the proletarian group (23). Her works such as "Jours de Famine et de Détresse", "Keetje", "Keetje Trottin" show all the pity and horror of poverty, based on the bitter years of her own youth. It was from experience that she could write: "Toutes les fillettes étaient un peu pâles d'être à jeun, moi cela ne me faisait rien, j'étais entraînée." (24) "Je ne suis ni une idéalogue ni une doctrinaire," she once said to Frédéric Lefèvre during an interview. "Toute mon œuvre est née de ma misère, et cette misère, qu'avec les miens j'ai endurée pendant vingt ans et qui m'a meurtrie pour le reste de ma vie, me rend sensible à toutes les misères du monde." (25)

.....

When we read the works of these early proletarian writers, gripping in their sincerity, works which have the stamp of authenticity because they are based on life itself, then we understand the urge Poulaille felt to champion the proletarian writers of his own time, in the face of the relative silence of the bourgeois press.

Poulaille's position at Bernard Grasset's, in constant touch with writers, critics and editors gave him the chance to assume the lead. His genuineness, his rough manners, his generous recognition of talent in others and his readiness to help made him many friends, mainly among the working-class. For Poulaille with his extreme political views, with his scathing remarks, his anti-bourgeois feelings, his independence and his bitter jeers, would hardly be appreciated by upper-class writers, whom he would only tolerate if they were outstanding.

Henry Poulaille hated going out or spending his time in cafés, so in those early years his friends would join him once a month in his flat in Belleville (L). Tristan Rémy gives the atmosphere of these evenings in his poem "Premier Mardi du Mois" (26); there one could meet men like the former sailor Edouard Peisson (1896 --), who had spent nine years at sea, and whose books described the life he loved; or Lucien Jacques, painter and engraver, and poet in his leisure hours; or Eugène Dabit (1898 - 1936) who had started as locksmith, liftman, waiter, and was then painting and writing. There were men with roots in the country, like Lucien Gachon, steeped in the peasant life of Auvergne, as was seen in his novel "Maria", or like Jean Giono (1895 --), son of a shoemaker in Manosque, who had already published "Colline" and "Un de Baumugnes", stories of the rustic life of Provence. Writers such as these were joined by Tristan Rémy (1897 --) who had shared Poulaille's dreams since 1920 already, and had published "Porte Clignancourt", a novel set in a lower class quarter on the outskirts of Paris. Rémy was in many ways Poulaille's counterpart; of peasant stock, he was less radical, more cautious than Poulaille, so was often a sobering influence on his anarchist friend.

After Poulaille's two books on proletarian literature in 1930, Poulaille and his friends started the review "Nouvel Age" in January 1931 (27). This appeared monthly for a year and included articles, stories or poems by working-class authors, not only of France, but of other countries too, like Russia or the United States. It also contained sections on authors, on art in general, book reviews, and illustrations. In other words, it was a review to encourage proletarian culture in general. As editor, Poulaille had Eugène Dabit, Lucien Gachon, Jean Giono, Lucien Jacques, Edouard Peisson and Tristan Rémy on the editorial staff.

The review "Nouvel Age" was the first of many, for as soon as one review failed, Poulaille and his friends started another (28). Early in 1932 the need was felt for a larger circle of adherents, and the "Groupe des Ecrivains Prolétariens" was formed. They brought out the monthly "Bulletin des Ecrivains Prolétariens" starting from March 1932. But Poulaille soon tired of the organised monthly dinners, and funds ran low, so the "Bulletin" was abandoned (L).

Then, in July 1933, "Nouvel Age", killed by the slump (29) was replaced by the monthly "Prolétariat". This time Poulaille as editor counted on his committee Lucien Gachon, Léon Gerbe, Ludovic Massé, Edouard Peisson and Tristan Rémy. Dabit's reasons for leaving the group will be explained in the following chapter.

The first number of "Prolétariat" proclaimed: "Cette revue, émanation d'un groupe libre d'écrivains non professionnels des lettres, n'ambitionne qu'à servir une cause dont la presse, ni les revues, ni les groupements constitués ne désirent s'occuper: celle de l'expression authentiquement prolétarienne. On n'entend pas, à Prolétariat, monopoliser la littérature prolétarienne, mais empêcher qu'elle soit écrasée sous ses caricatures que sont le Populisme et la littérature de mots d'ordre." (29) "La littérature de mots d'ordre" referred to the newly founded "Association des Ecrivains et Artistes Révolutionnaires" (A.E.A.R.), which at that time grouped mainly communist writers, and attacked the proletarians for not including political propaganda in their books (30). Proletarian authors thus felt that they were hemmed in between communist authors on the left and populist authors on the right.

"Prolétariat" was followed in 1935 by "A Contre-Courant, Revue mensuelle de littérature et de doctrine prolétariennes", with Gachon, Gerbe, Massé, Peisson and Romagne helping Poulaille. Tristan Rémy had temporarily left the group. He had worked hard to unite proletarian writers, but could not always agree with Poulaille. Rémy for instance preferred working in a group with others, while Poulaille liked taking the lead alone. Poulaille placed a high value on what he called "authentic works", works based on actual experience as were his own, while Tristan Rémy, a poet as well as a writer, believed that the proletarian authors should be encouraged to imagine, to create their stories. An unfortunate series of misunderstandings led to Rémy's withdrawal, and he joined the A.E.A.R. with Barbusse and Aragon (L).

When "A Contre-Courant" failed in its turn it was replaced by the review "Jean-Jacques" which lasted some years; then after the occupation, in 1945, Poulaille started an excellent art and literary review, "Maintenant", which appeared quarterly for several years.

These reviews could not pay for contributions, but were brought out at the lowest possible price to reach the largest number; sometimes they were published free by a friend (31), or were helped by donations from workers who could often ill afford it. Parallel with these reviews, collections of books by proletarian authors were published by Georges Valois, who brought out for instance Poulaille's collection: "Les Romans du Nouvel Age". Under Poulaille's direction these included not only books by French proletarians, but translated works, for Poulaille himself was widely read, and he and his group felt an affinity with proletarian writers of all countries.

Georges Valois himself (32) published works by proletarian authors in his second series of "Cahiers Bleus". Other proletarian novels appeared in conjunction with reviews like "Les Humbles", "Les Primaires" and "A Contre-Courant", in collections like "Horizons" (Editions Sociales Internationales), "L'Amitié par le Livre" and like those of Rieder at a certain period.

These varied publications show a tenacity of purpose, and a devotion to a cause which should be recognised. The reviews, for instance, contain stories, poems, and articles by proletarian writers -- peasants, miners, factory workers, clerks, carpenters, postmen -- all who by birth or circumstances belong to "la classe ouvrière"; at the same time, the readers are told about these writers, so that they are regarded as more than mere names, so that the man as well as the author is appreciated,

and the people find a pride in their own literature. With untiring energy, Poulaille alone has written scores of articles on his fellow-authors; one-sided articles perhaps, in that they tend to show the strength of these men instead of adopting a more critical approach, yet they are typical of Poulaille's generosity and of his devotion to an ideal.

Thus through him we appreciate forerunners such as Jules Vallès, Ch.-L. Philippe, Neel Doff, and in addition new writers like the miner Constant Malva, Rose Combe in charge of a country railway crossing, the employee Jules Reboul, and workers like Lucien Bourgeois and André Sévry, Jean Prugnot and René Bonnet, many of whom would otherwise go ignored by the bourgeois press.

.

In addition Poulaille in his years at Bernard Grasset's helped and encouraged writers, and discovered much new talent. Where the authors had little schooling, he worked over their books, did corrections from subject matter to style and spelling. These writers in turn told their friends to bring their manuscripts to Poulaille.

Poulaille tried constantly to bring together workers interested in literature, art and culture. Apart from the reviews, he founded his "Musée du Soir" backed by the "Groupe des Ecrivains Proletariens" and "L'Union des Syndicats" (33). The "Musée du Soir" lasted from 1935 to 1939. It was a centre for proletarian culture, with a library containing works which would mean something to the people, many of them by proletarian writers of France or of other countries. René Bonnet, an author and carpenter, gave his evenings to do the woodwork for the shelves, and welcomed the arrivals with Poulaille.

In spite of the backing of "L'Union des Syndicats" the "Musée du Soir" was non-political, and Poulaille had put up a large notice at the entrance: "On est prié de s'abstenir de toute politique de clan." The cards handed out gave an idea of the aims of the "Musée":

"Tu y trouveras:

Des milliers d'ouvrages, brochures, collections
de journaux et revues et dossiers de documents.
Ouvrages techniques et littéraires.
Ouvrages de Sociologie et de Philosophie.

"Tu y verras:

Des Expositions de peinture, photographies et documents.

"Et tu y connaîtras: Des amis." (I)

.

In the beginning, encouraged by the value Poulaille laid on actual experience, the works of proletarian authors tended to be mainly autobiographical. This was what Tristan Rémy had been afraid of. But those writers who produced more than one or two books showed that they could draw inspiration successfully from the life of their class as a whole.

Yet in spite of the achievements of the proletarian group, a certain bitterness often shows in their articles, a bitterness directed mainly against bourgeois writers like the populists. They saw that many people who had started as proletarians turned their backs on their class as soon as they acquired renown, and tended to assimilate with the bourgeois, where they were counted as populists.

Poulaille and his group argued that these people, by denying the proletarians, did nothing to encourage the recognition of proletarian writers, as they would have done, had they openly admitted belonging to the workers. Moreover it was felt that such writers tended to lose their former sincerity, and sought only their own advancement. "Voyez celui-ci" wrote Poulaille. "Il est auteur gai, il veillera à ne pas dépasser telle mesure d'ironie, car au delà, cela pourrait être considéré comme subversif, et utilisé comme tel, gêner tel ou tel de ce fait, donc lui attirer des ennuis par ricochet. Cet autre qui fait dans la sensiblerie veillera à ne pas laisser voir que tout n'est pas pour le mieux dans ce monde, car là encore, on pourrait lui en tenir rigueur." (34)

The grudge against Populism is understandable. Formerly, a writer like Ch.-L. Philippe or Margu  rite Audoux who was praised by the press, was praised as a person. Since 1929, good proletarian books discussed by the critics were often called populist, hence the natural place in society for a proletarian author who had succeeded was among the populists. We will see, when we deal with Eug  ne Dabit in the following chapter, a typical example of this confusion.

Notes

1. For members of the proletarian group see the lists of contributors to the various proletarian reviews in Appendix VI.
2. Poulaille: "Charles-Louis Philippe, le populisme et la litt  rature prol  tarienne", p. 8.
3. Ditto, p. 5.
4. See Jean-Paul Sartre: "The case for responsible literature" in Horizon, Vol. XI, No. 65, May 1945.
5. Poulaille: "Charles-Louis Philippe, etc..." p. 38.
6. Poulaille in "La Litt  rature et le Peuple", p. 3. The writers "de g  che" are probably the communist authors.
7. Ditto, p. 11.
8. Poulaille: "Nouvel Age Litt  raire", p. 32.
9. Poulaille: "Charles-Louis Philippe, etc...", p. 9. "Nouvel Age Litt  raire", p. 100.
10. See Vall  s' letters to Zola in an article by Alexandre Zevaes, "Une Correspondance entre Emile Zola et Jules Vall  s", torn out of an unknown review by Poulaille for our benefit.
11. See Poulaille: "Jules Vall  s", in "Nouvel Age, revue mensuelle de litt  rature et de culture", No. 1, Jan. 1931.
12. Vall  s in first number of his "Peuple", 1869, quoted by Poulaille, see ref. 11 above.
13. From Ch.-L. Philippe, "Lettres de Jeunesse", (Gallimard), quoted by Poulaille in his "Charles-Louis Philippe, etc...", p. 15.
14. R  gis Gignoux: "Histoire d'un d  but", Les Primaires, revue mensuelle, August 1922.
15. The stories included in "Parmi les Hommes" were later published by La Fen  tre Ouverte in 1942, under the title "L'Homme Tomb   dans un Foss  ", prefaced by Poulaille.
16. In "Nouvel Age Litt  raire", p. 244, Poulaille tells that "Parmi les Hommes" was the first book he bought with his scanty earnings as a chemist's boy. He was hardly fifteen at the time. Lucien Jean's real name was Lucien Dieudonn  . His daughter, Mlle Dieudonn  , is today Poulaille's secretary at Grasset.
17. According to Poulaille, in Preface to Lucien Jean's "L'Homme Tomb   dans un Foss  ".
18. Lucien Gachon: "L'Ecrivain Paysan", (Cahiers bleus, IIe s  rie, No. 13 1/6/1932), p. 31.
19. Emile Guillaumin: "A Tous Vents sur la Gl  be", (Valois, 1931), see chapter "Attention, l'enqu  teur".
20. See George Reyer's biography: "Margu  rite Audoux", (Grasset, 1942).
21. Octave Mirbeau in Preface to "Marie-Claire" by Margu  rite Audoux.
22. Neel Doff was born in Holland, but wrote in French and spent most of her life in Belgium.
23. There are many articles on Neel Doff in the various proletarian reviews. Tristan R  my though expresses (L) the bitter disillusionment of the proletarian writers when they found that Neel Doff was no longer living simply, as they were, but owned a "ch  teau" in Campine (Belgium), where visitors were introduced by a footman in livery.
24. Chapter "Cat  chisme et premi  re communion" in "Jours de famine et de d  tresse".
25. Interview reproduced in "Les Nouvelles Litt  raires", 21/12/1929.
26. Included in anthology of poems by proletarian writers, "Prol  tariat", (Valois, 1932).
27. "Nouvel Age, revue mensuelle de litt  rature et de culture", Librairie Valois.
28. For list of proletarian reviews see Appendix VI.

29. See article headed "Proletariat", on back cover, p. 65, of the first issue of "Prolétariat", 1/7/1933.
 30. See chapter 15.
 31. "A Contre-Courant", for instance, bears on the cover the note "Travail fait en camaraderie, R.-G. Fouquin, imprimeur".
 32. Georges Valois, a friend of Lucien Jean's before the latter's death, later became an editor and publisher; he was intelligent, active, enthusiastic, and did much to encourage proletarian literature, because he, perhaps more than any other publisher, was willing to accept the works of proletarian authors. First an anarchist, he later turned royalist, fascist, then socialist, and finally died in a German concentration camp, a victim of the resistance of the first war months. Valois was maligned by prominent writers for the role he played in "l'Action Française", but Poulaille, who later had good cause to be offended with Valois for private reasons, still states emphatically that Valois was irreproachably upright and honest, and that he was certainly not an "affairiste aimant l'argent" (L).
 33. See André Sévry's pamphlet "Henry Poulaille, son oeuvre et le Musée du Soir", (Les Humbles, revue littéraire des Primaires, March 1939). Foundation members of the "Musée du Soir", Poulaille, Peisson, Rémy, Guiraud, Romagne, Loffler, Teulé, Bonnet (L).
 34. Poulaille: "Nouvel Age Littéraire", chapter "Ecrivains bourgeois", p. 110.
-

- 11 -

EUGENE DABIT AND HIS "HOTEL DU NORD"

CHAPTER ELEVEN

EUGENE DABIT AND HIS "HOTEL DU NORD"

Let us now turn to Eugène Dabit, who played an important role in the populist movement before his tragic early death in 1936 (1). His work will be discussed in detail for several reasons: he is one of the best writers among those arbitrarily classed by critics as populists; he won the first prize given by the populists for his "Hôtel du Nord" in 1931; finally his position in relation to the proletarian and populist movements is a striking illustration of the strength and weakness of these movements.

In this chapter we will examine his peculiar literary position; later we will show, from his development, that proletarian and populist works have a tendency to be transition stages only for some authors, though certainly useful and necessary as a basis for future more mature and individualistic works.

By birth Eugène Dabit was a proletarian. His father was a waggoner, his mother at some time a concierge, and as a boy Dabit roamed through the poor quarters of the 18th district in Paris, or ran wild on his free Thursdays on the ramparts near the Porte de Clignancourt. He left school before he was fourteen to take up a trade, volunteered for service in 1917, and returned after the war to various odd jobs -- decorator, waiter -- like others of his class.

But in addition, Dabit took evening courses in painting in 1920, and soon devoted all the free time he could get to his art. He was talented, worked with determination, and gradually became known. One of his canvasses, a still-life, hangs to-day in the "Musée de l'Art Moderne" in Paris.

In view of this progress, why did Dabit switch from painting to writing? Here it is important to understand Eugène Dabit as a man, and a brief analysis will help to explain Dabit's career, and also his reactions to proletarians and populists after the success of his "Hôtel du Nord".

Dabit grew up among the working-class of Paris. He knew the way the people lived, and much of what they thought. He was awake to their drab lives, their frustration due to lack of opportunity, and their economic insecurity which often led to a very real misery. He was aware of their insufficiencies and weaknesses, but he appreciated also their qualities, their pride in their work, their sincerity, simplicity, courage. Dabit, knowing that he belonged to them, felt a desire to be loyal and serve them as best he could. "C'est bien en fonction de ma classe que je sens," he said later to Frédéric Lefèvre. "Cette foule, on se doit d'en faire connaître les efforts et les souffrances; on se doit de la servir selon ses moyens." (2)

A second factor enters here, a spirit of revolt. Dabit had served very young in the war, and had been shocked and overwhelmed by its brutality and apparent meaninglessness. He returned, not with a belief in peace, but with a foreboding and dread of another war which he feared would be forced on the workers by the capitalists, and with the idea that "les plus grandes et dangereuses bassesses ... s'abritent sous les mots: Patrie, Autorité, Vertu" (3), not because of the regime itself, but because of the men who held the power.

Hence, linked to his urge to describe, for those who do not know them, the lives and surroundings of the poor classes, came an urge to voice the despair and revolt he felt in the same circumstances; and Dabit gradually turned from painting to writing, because he saw in writing a greater possibility of expressing himself, and a better way of reaching and serving his class.

.

With a background of this kind, one could expect from Eugène Dabit books of the proletarian type, in which accuracy and an inner truth

born of direct experience tend to be valued more than style.

In this connection, Dabit's literary discoveries and inspiration are extremely revealing. Speaking of the early 1920's Dabit says: "Vallès, Huysmans, Charles-Louis Philippe étaient en somme mon pain quotidien, l'air dont j'avais besoin pour vivre durant ces jours." (2) Vallès, the revolutionary, who described the misery, struggles and strength of the common people of Paris, and who voiced something of Dabit's own revolt; the Huysmans of "Soeurs Vatarde", with his realistic and precise portrayal of mediocre lives; Ch.-L. Philippe, who had the same understanding and pity as Dabit had for humble folk; Philippe who, through his own struggles as a working-class writer, could act as a guide to Dabit. "Le but que je me proposais, d'écrire," says Dabit, "ne me sembla plus aussi inaccessible. Un homme pareil à moi (Philippe) y avait atteint et m'encourageait par son exemple." (2)

But in addition, and this is significant, Dabit felt a growing need for other guides too. He discovered Rousseau, Proust, the great English and Russian writers, Roger Martin du Gard and Gide; and when he starts writing, it is to these two last that he turns for advice.

In 1927 Dabit wrote to Gide: "Un jour j'aurai besoin de vous au sujet d'un travail entrepris sur l'hôtel de mes parents." In 1928 he said of Roger Martin du Gard: "Grâce à son dévouement, je finirai bien par faire des progrès." (4) The drafts of all Dabit's books printed during his lifetime were submitted to Martin du Gard. With a sure instinct, Dabit realised that he had much to learn about the art of writing, and that he could learn best from those who were really great. We see this when he writes in 1934: "Il y a tant de débrailé, de facilité, de fausse violence, de fausses révoltes, d'obscénités, de phrases grossières, dans nombre de livres récents, que je ne puis que plus encore aimer l'oeuvre d'André Gide, l'esthétique dont elle découle; et que je ne puis ne pas songer aussi sans cesse à l'admirable rigueur de Roger Martin du Gard, dont les premiers conseils me sont toujours présents à l'esprit." (5)

Probably however it was not only the example of great authors, but his years of experience as a painter that had taught Dabit the value of choice, construction and command over his materials. And here he differed from many proletarian writers, some who had not the time or experience to correct their works, some who openly scoffed at style and presentation. Dabit never sent a manuscript to a publisher, without writing and re-writing it three or four times.

So when we look at Dabit's first book "Hôtel du Nord", published in 1929, we can expect to find, as we do, the lives of poor people revealed with an inner truth, and presented with choice and care.

.

Eugène Dabit's "Hôtel du Nord" is interesting as a test case. It shows the possibility of confusion between populist and proletarian literature, but helps at the same time to differentiate between these two groups.

Since 1923, Dabit's parents had been running "Hôtel du Nord", Quai Jemappes, in the poor quarters near the Gare de l'Est. It was not a hotel in the English sense, but a lodging house with forty odd rooms let at a few shillings a week in those days to workmen, poor clerks, factory girls. The third floor rooms were reserved for families, who did their own cooking, and filled the corridors with odours of cabbage or fried chips. The other lodgers stopped on their way to work in the morning for a hurried cup of coffee in the little café on the ground floor, and returned there in the late afternoon and evening to chat, or to while away the time with a game of cards as Dabit or his father served them beer or wine.

Eugène Dabit, having worked there, knew the life well. His "Hôtel du Nord" gives the atmosphere of the lodging house, and lucid sketches of the existences of many people he met.

Here is the inquisitive charwoman, her character and that of the rooms given at the same time:



"L'Hôtel du Nord" - 1951

"L'oreille tendue sur les bruits de l'escalier, elle s'attarde dans les chambres des jeunes gens, lit la correspondance, ouvre les armoires, les tables de nuit, et y fait des découvertes: fioles, cartes à jouer, peignes crasseux, souvenirs de toutes sortes qui puent le tabac, la pharmacie et la punaise écrasée. De là, elle passe chez les femmes..." (6)

Here one of Latouche's waggoners, who longs to be groom, a career given in a few lines:

"Le vieux Charles venait de la campagne. Il aimait ce métier de camionneur, ces écuries, ce fumier dans la cour, qui lui rappelaient les fermes de la Beauce. Il avait son idée: faire chasser le palefrin et s'emparer de sa place. Aussi tournait-il autour du gros Latouche comme un moustique. Il le flattait et grimaçait pour lui sourire; jamais il ne buvait un verre chez Lecouvreur sans l'inviter. Idée fixe, désir de maniaque dans sa cervelle détraquée. Un beau jour, il arriva à ses fins: Latouche renvoya le palefrin.

"Alors on vit le vieux Charles triomphant, les vêtements hérissés de paille, circuler du matin au soir dans la cour, agitant des bras maigres et semant le désordre partout où il passait. Il interdisait l'entrée des écuries aux cochers qui cherchaient toujours à chiper une ration d'avoine supplémentaire pour leurs bêtes.
- Va t'occuper de ta bagnole, criait-il. Et laisse-moi soigner les chevaux à mon idée!" (7)

Here again, a page further, a sketch of typical gestures:

"Le vieux Charles sortait de sa poche un couteau à cran d'arrêt et commençait à manger. Sur le pouce, comme il disait, se servant de ses doigts plus que de la fourchette. A chaque repas, il vidait sa chopine. Lorsqu'il avait fini, il se curait les dents avec la pointe de son couteau ou bien, une vieille habitude campagnarde, il ramassait les miettes de pain éparses sur la table et les fourrait dans sa poche. Il admirait ses mains ornées de bagues ce cuivre achetées à des camelots." (7)

.....

"Hôtel du Nord" was published a few months after Lemonnier's first manifestos, and was immediately acclaimed by critics as "populist". Lemonnier, amongst others, writes to Dabit, and Dabit's reply to him, now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, is worth quoting in full, as it shows Dabit's aim in writing, his genuine modesty, his sincerity, and the need he felt for encouragement:

17/2/1930. 7 rue Paul de Kock, 19e.

Cher Monsieur,

Merci de la lettre que vous m'écrivez sur "l'Hôtel du Nord." Je pensais que vous étiez parmi ceux que pouvait intéresser un tel livre. Et pour de nombreuses raisons. Il ne s'agissait point de populisme, je n'y songeais guère lorsque j'ai écrit cet ouvrage. Comme je suis heureux que, à l'encontre de certains, vous ne m'accusiez point d'avoir usé d'une tendance pour me servir.

Nous nous rencontrons sur le même terrain, avec des soucis simplement humains. Ce monde auquel vous vous consacrez est le mien, je ne pense le quitter jamais. C'est vous dire combien je me sens proche de votre effort. Et tant mieux si mon travail peut avoir quelque utilité. Je pense faire davantage, l'attention qu'on me témoigne m'encourage. J'espère, demain, la mieux mériter. Croyez, Monsieur, à mes sentiments sympathiques. E. Dabit.

Now it is true that the label of "populist" helped to make Dabit known; but who were those who accused him of opportunism? We are not told; but to Poulaille however, who had been chafing since the first manifestos, Dabit's case came as an additional goad to action.

In his pamphlet of March 1930 on "Charles-Louis Philippe, le populisme et la littérature prolétarienne" Poulaille writes of Dabit: "On a embrigadé le jeune écrivain dans les rangs populistes. Nouvelle preuve de ce confusionnisme imbécile dont nous parlions ... L'Hôtel du Nord est un livre nettement d'inspiration peuple. Il n'y a pas que les héros qui sont peuple dans ce bouquin, l'auteur 'en est'." (8) A few months later Poulaille, discussing Dabit in his "Nouvel Age Littéraire" in

the section "La littérature prolétarienne française" (9) exclaims: "C'est parmi les auteurs prolétariens que Dabit eût dû être rangé si l'on avait su reconnaître l'accent vrai des choses vécues de celui à côté des choses imaginées, même avec adresse et probité."

In other words, "Hôtel du Nord" could belong to either group because of its subject, the less privileged class, and its unromanticised presentation. It could be classed among great proletarian works because of Dabit's origin, his inside knowledge of the subject, the responsibility to his class which inspired him, and the documentary value of his book. It could be called "populist" because there is no evident political or class bias, and because of the importance attached to style and construction.

The value of "Hôtel du Nord" lies in its combination of the distinguishing element of each of the above group, namely truth and style.

.

Dabit, acclaimed thus by populists as well as proletarians, found his position difficult, and we will see how he gradually broke away from both groups to keep his literary freedom.

In January 1931 Dabit joined Poulaille on the editorial staff of "Nouvel Age" with people like Giono, Peisson and Tristan Rémy.

In May 1931, Dabit was awarded the first populist prize of 5,000 frs. for "Hôtel du Nord", and accepted it with a certain hesitation. Poulaille said once that to remain true to his class, Dabit should have refused it (1). "C'est ici le point crucial," Poulaille wrote in 1937. "Il ne peut y avoir de véritable littérature prolétarienne que sous le signe de refus de parvenir ... C'est une gêne de tout le temps peut-être, mais quelle joie de pouvoir dire: je suis content de moi! -- et j'emmerde tout le monde!! Ça vaut tous les présidiums, les Légions d'honneurs, les prix populistes et autres -- et les articles dithyrambiques des bons confrères!" (10) But Dabit needed money, and above all encouragement.

Journal entries of January 1932 are revealing, showing different groups of writers Dabit associated with, his indecision, and his desire for freedom. "15 janvier: Dîner avec Poulaille, Rémy, Bernard, Habary, rue Montorgueil. Discussion confuse..." "16 janvier: Chez Guéhenno (11), je rencontre Guilloux, Chamson ..." "19 janvier: J'éprouve toujours les mêmes difficultés à prendre une décision. Celle-ci: me séparer de Poulaille, dont tant de choses m'éloignent. Je voudrais les satisfaire tous, être sans ennemis, impossible. Mon désir d'individualité cadre mal avec tous ces systèmes. M'engager, oui, mais sur des bases solides, avec une doctrine, et je ne la trouve point auprès de Poulaille et de ses amis. Auprès de Guéhenno, davantage. Et j'ai besoin de clarté ..." (12)

But the break did not come immediately. Dabit joined the newly-founded "Groupe des Ecrivains Prolétariens" and agreed to help with their "Bulletin" which first appeared in March 1932, writing for instance an article on Jules Vallès for the June number.

In November 1932 however, after much thought, Dabit joined the "Association des Ecrivains et Artistes Révolutionnaires". The A.E.A.R., founded by Henri Barbusse with men like Aragon and Vaillant-Couturier, was independent of either populist or proletarian group, though it had absorbed some members of the "Groupe des Ecrivains Prolétariens". It was still further left, and began as a communist organisation grouping writers and artists with the aim of arousing sympathy for Russia, and of opposing the growing fascist menace, in France as well as in Europe.

Gradually the A.E.A.R. extended their membership, and welcomed not only communists, but any left-wing members, who retained however their freedom to create as they wished. "J'ai adhéré à l'A.E.A.R. parce qu'on ne m'a pas demandé de souscrire à un programme littéraire," Tristan Rémy wrote in 1935 (13). Dabit joined through his hatred of war, and found the literary freedom he required.

Nevertheless, the books Dabit published were still called "populist" by most critics, ~~as~~ while the proletarians, disappointed by his refusal to conform, ignored him or were bitter.

Notes

1. This chapter and the following are based mainly on a study of Dabit's books, on his "Journal Intime" and on the volume "Hommage à Eugène Dabit", (Gallimard, 1939).
Note: The final "t" is pronounced in the name "Dabit".
 2. Frédéric Lefèvre: "Une heure avec Eugène Dabit", les Nouvelles Littéraires, 27/12/1930.
 3. Dabit: Journal Intime, (Gallimard, 1939), p. 203.
 4. These two extracts are from letters to Gide, quoted by Gide in his article in the volume "Hommage à Eugène Dabit", p. 66.
 5. Dabit: "Journal Intime", p. 211.
 6. Dabit: "Hôtel du Nord", (Denoël, 1929), chapter 33.
 7. Ditto, chapter 15.
 8. Page 31.
 9. Chapter on Eugène Dabit.
 10. See Poulaille's first article in "La Littérature et le Peuple", p. 9.
 11. Jean Guéhenno, son of a shoemaker, rose from the working-class to become what Clouard calls a "grand dignitaire d'université". He ran the review "Europe". He genuinely wanted to serve the people by his books, but contrary to Poulaille, thought he could best achieve this by rising above his class. His spiritual conflict over his position is evident in his "Caliban parle", (1929).
 12. These three extract are from Dabit's "Journal Intime", pp. 22 and 25.
 13. In L'Oeuvre in 1935, quoted in "La Littérature et le Peuple", p. 37.
-

- 12 -

DABIT'S SEARCH FOR FULFILMENT



Eugène Dabit

CHAPTER TWELVE

DABIT'S SEARCH FOR FULFILMENT

Let us summarise briefly the books, apart from "Hôtel du Nord", belonging to Eugène Dabit's first period, before discussing Dabit's later development.

"Petit-Louis", written between 1926 and 1930 and dedicated to Roger Martin du Gard, describes Dabit's own youth, his apprenticeship on the Paris underground railway, his experiences as a soldier, and his horror and disgust for the war.

"Villa-Oasis ou Les Faux Bourgeois", a more ambitious work based on the career of distant relatives of Dabit's, shows the possibility of spiritual bankruptcy for working-class people who try to rise in society, and who strive to amass the possessions of the bourgeois class without imbibing its culture. Dabit was aware of the danger, and although he had many friends in the upper classes he made no change in his simple way of life. "La vie, ça ne se trouve pas chez les 'faux bourgeois'," he wrote in 1935. (1)

"Faubourgs de Paris", dedicated to Guéhenno, is a series of descriptions, partly auto-biographical, of different quarters of Paris that Dabit knew well. He gives the atmosphere of the poorer regions, where people live cramped lives in drab surroundings without the possibility of evasion. "Ce Paris, je le connais trop," he writes in his journal. "Pas une rue qui ne me rappelle un souvenir, une odeur, une image. J'ai traîné en tous sens, seul, ou une femme au bras. Tout est usé; et m'écoeure, et m'écrase." (2) Happier pages in "Faubourgs de Paris" though are those on the "Grande Banlieue Sud", where Dabit had worked as a waiter in an inn, and discovered the charm of the country round Paris.

"Un Mort tout Neuf", based on observations jotted down in the days following the death of an uncle of Dabit's, consists mainly of a series of conversations between people who come for the funeral in the hope of inheriting something. Vividly reproduced, such conversations sketch the characters and much of the lives of the relatives, while their gossip throws a biased light on the past life of the defunct.

In addition to these books, published between 1930 and 1934, Dabit wrote short stories and sketches for various journals and reviews, some of which were collected and published under the title "Trains de Vie" in 1936.

The value of these books, like "Hôtel du Nord", lies in their observation from inside (except "Villa-Oasis", which suffers accordingly), in the care given to style and composition, and in their human warmth and sincerity.

The need for sincerity lay deep with Dabit. Although he was becoming better known, he did not turn from his class, and he wrote only what he had witnessed and experienced himself. "Ce que nous racontons, nous, est triste..." he said to Marc Bernard, another working-class writer and critic. "Où voulez-vous trouver de la joie en montrant des ouvriers, des banlieues parisiennes? Cela sent la misère, mais je ne puis rien faire d'autre. Je ne peux peindre qu'eux. Quelques-uns ont de la chance, ils montrent des forêts, des paysans, mais nous, nous ne pouvons pas." (3)

That conversation took place probably in 1933, but we will see that as Dabit developed as a man, his experience widened, and this was reflected in his books. Although Dabit did not lose in sincerity, his work changed in character, and became less proletarian. This will be clear when we study his second period as a writer.

.....

Dabit's development is due to the partial solutions he found as an individual to problems that faced his class and his generation. Of these problems, three were of supreme importance to Dabit.

In the first place, Dabit had spent thirty years cramped by poverty, drab surroundings, prejudice, and lack of opportunity, and he longed for freedom. "Ah! la vie n'est qu'usure. Les mille nécessités, les mille servitudes de la vie. Je les sens, je les vois. C'est bien pour ça que je ne veux être prisonnier. A aucun prix... Moi, mon vrai bonheur, ma vraie richesse, c'est de demeurer libre, disponible; perdre mon temps; 'sentir' ma vie." (4)

That is why Dabit could not adhere to literary or even political groups, that is why he sought material freedom by declining fixed employment, and living simply on the little he got through publications or prizes, realising that possessions and desires brought servitude. That is also one reason why he craved a bachelor's life, though he married a fellow artist in 1924, and why, after various friendships with women, he became deeply attached to a young Hungarian girl, whom he called Sari in his last novel. Both Dabit's wife Béatrice and Sari tried to reconcile themselves to this unusual situation, knowing that Dabit needed emotional freedom, and could not tie himself to one woman only.

In the second place, Dabit had a very real fear of an imminent war. "Oh! comme j'aurais vécu heureux sans cette pensée de la guerre!" he exclaimed. "Depuis 1920, elle me poursuit. N'y ai-je échappé, à la guerre, que pour y retomber?" And again: "Quelle monstruosité, quelle négation, quel crime. Bande de bandits! Faillite de la science. Comment croire? vivre? C'est avec cette angoisse perpétuelle d'une mort stupide que nous devons agir, aimer, créer." (5)

This fear led to a desire to escape; to leave the capital for the simpler life in the zone round Paris, to flee still further to Provence, North Africa, Spain and Menorca, as Dabit did, to forget the tension in Europe. The four summers 1932/5 were spent mainly in Menorca, together with Sari in the little fishing village of Ciudadela, which was simple, calm, sheltered from rumours of wars.

And art came too as a way of escape, and writing brought a means of expression in the face of political frustration. Visiting Spain on his way to Menorca, Dabit was gripped with a renewed surge of emotion each year by the greatness of El Greco, Goya, Velasquez. But although he still painted himself, it was to his writing that he turned for fulfilment "parce que, dans ce monde cruel et vulgaire, il n'est pas d'autre moyen d'évasion et d'enrichissement, pas d'autre moyen de retrouver l'homme réel." (6)

In the third place, arising from Dabit's dread of war, came the tormenting fear of an early death. Again and again Dabit expressed his distress over the precarious nature of his life: "Si les hommes me laissent vivre..." "Ah! la Mort, je la sens qui rôde. Partout." "Je me retrouve. Avec ma jeunesse, mes joies, et la mort que je porte en moi." (7)

As a result of this dread, came an urge to live as intensely as possible, a hunger for human warmth, for loyal friendships, an admiration for great writers and artists; there came also a desire for love, for women, for travel, for the colour and light of the south, for the wide sea where he could swim in the nude as conqueror of an element, for the hot sunshine on the rocks and beaches; and a desire also for clarity, reason, self-control to keep his spiritual unity.

And in the short time left to him he craved to express himself even more fully in his books, to describe the things he loved for others, to leave something of himself after his death. "Je ne voudrais pas mourir," he wrote in 1934, "car je sais que je n'ai pas donné le meilleur de moi-même! Que j'aime à pleine main et à pleine bouche! Que je sais m'arracher aux bassesses quotidiennes! Oui! vivre cela je le voudrais, cela en vaut la peine, puisque je sens un monde emplir mon cœur, du vrai sang couler dans mes veines. Ce sont des images et des réalités. Si je vis, je sais que, dans les livres que j'écrirai encore, je pourrai dire mes amours, quelle fraternité me lie aux hommes, quelles haines me séparent d'autres hommes!" (8)

In spite of his early death, Dabit achieved his wish to reach out a warm hand to posterity; for none who understand his work go untouched, and to them Dabit is a guide, an inspiration, and a friend.

.

Poulaille once pointed out with a clear insight that proletarian art was only a transition stage in the history of a nation (9). The same is true certainly in the history of a man. Dabit's first books could with justification be classed with proletarian literature; not so his works of his second period, which had far more in common with populism.

There are only three of these.

"L'Ile" (1934), dedicated to Sari (V.B.), grew out of the carefree summers he spent with her in Menorca, where he worked, painted, swam, or talked to the fishermen in the harbour. It is a series of three stories about the artisans and fishers at Ciutadella; a strong book, simple, calm, showing the life, the sun, the sea and the people he had learned to love.

"La Zone Verte" (1935), dedicated to Gide, was based on Dabit's experiences as waiter in the inn at Montlhéry, where he discovered, so close to Paris, a peaceful and uncomplicated rural existence that is overlooked in the bustle and stress of city life. The title Dabit originally planned for the book, "Un Paradis Perdu", shows the need he felt for calm and simplicity.

"Les Maîtres de la Peinture Espagnole", published in 1937 after Dabit's death grew from Dabit's escape into art, and reflected the strong emotions he felt before the canvasses of the great Spanish painters, both in Spain and in other capitals of Europe. "Je m'approche de ces toiles," he wrote of Velasquez. "C'est comme la vie, que je voudrais caresser, dont je voudrais me nourrir, que je ne voudrais plus jamais quitter. Je voudrais être devant ces toiles des heures et des heures, ou des années, comme devant un amour." (10)

Dabit realised himself that these books differed from his first works. "L'Ile" and "La Zone Verte" are still about working-class people, but the approach is different. Dabit now writes from the outside about existences which he did not grow up with, but which he discovered; this is the populist approach. Probably the country people and the islanders have problems which differ only in nature to those of the proletarians in the towns, but Dabit tends to overlook them or ignore their importance. This slight idealism is also a tendency in the populist attitude, as is its opposite, an unwarranted pessimism like that of Thérive. With Dabit's relative material security, class problems which first occupied him are now disappearing in his work, and personal problems and their partial solutions are taking their place.

"La Zone Verte" and above all "L'Ile" are populist in the best sense, through their subject matter, sincerity, and style; the personal note which enriches these books and distinguishes them from a more objective populism is still very discreet.

.

But this personal element rapidly grew stronger as Dabit approached a third period. In his haste to live, to write what he wanted to in the little time that he felt was left to him, Dabit condensed into a few years a normal development which took others, like Guilloux for instance, much longer.

There is only one unfinished book of Dabit's last period, unless we include his "Journal Intime", published in 1939, which is of necessity personal.

Dabit's "Journal Intime" was started seriously towards the end of 1931 under Gide's influence. The notes were irregular, sometimes daily, sometimes weekly or monthly only, but his "Journal" gave Dabit a sense of spiritual unity. It helped him to understand himself and others, and formed a record of his spiritual progress. In it he could express in turn his revolt, his hatreds, his fears, his suffering, and at the same time he could note his steps towards freedom, self-realisation and fulfilment. Dabit's "Journal" brings us to grips with problems which are just as real in Europe to-day, where the dread of a still further war hangs heavy over the heads of the people; and the "Journal", far more than his books even, reveals the real Dabit.

His only other work of the last, individualistic period was the unfinished novel "Étrangères", of which the first section, less than half **probably**, was published under the title "Le Mal de Vivre". In his notes on this book Dabit said: "J'en ai assez, après un "Mort tout Neuf", "L'Île", "La Zone Verte", de livres objectifs, dans lesquels, d'une certaine manière, je suis absent. Donc, je dirai: JE." The personal approach was thus voluntary. "Un plan? Je l'ai tout entier dans ma tête. Pas autre chose que ce qui fut ... Le récit ne vaudra que par la force et la netteté des aveux." (11) "Le Mal de Vivre" describes the summer months of 1931, his flight from Paris to Cassis in an attempt to disentangle a complicated emotional situation, his conflicts, his doubts, his loneliness, broken slowly by the lovable figure of Sari.

Dabit can now no longer be classed with a group; he is an individual in his own rights who can say: "Tout se résume à ceci: être homme, vivre, sentir, et dignement, fortement; ne point saisir du vent entre ses mains; garder un train de vie médiocre, anonyme, -- qui vous laisse libre; et alors l'oeuvre sera à l'image de vos richesses." (12)

.....

Eugène Dabit joined Gide, Guilloux and a few others in Russia in the summer of 1936, and he died on the 21st of August at Sevastopol, probably of typhus. He was not yet thirty-eight years old.

To us, his death still comes as a tragedy, a shock, but one wonders sometimes whether it was pure chance, or whether his will to live was so undermined that he could not recover.

Dabit had seen the net closing in on him. War in Abyssinia, war in Greece, war in Spain; the abrogation of the Locarno pact, the brief victory of the Front Populaire in France already turning to fascist subservience; in his private life, loneliness, the impending divorce he had with regret agreed to give his wife, his fear of losing Sari too. In February 1936 he writes: "Bruits de guerre. Impression de lassitude et d'angoisse. Besoin de me perdre, disparaître. Je ne pourrais vivre au milieu de cette agitation; encore moins travailler." (13) In between days of joy come periods of depression. "A quoi m'accrocher? que sera, demain, ma vie? la vie? Elle ne me semble parfois plus possible." Three weeks before his death: "De toutes parts, presque, dans ce monde, luttes, haines. En France, demain, c'est sûr. Alors, quoi, comment vivre? Travail, amour, toutes les joies prenant fin."

The last entry in his journal, nine days before his death, is extremely moving: "Voici que l'avenir, un proche avenir, s'annonce pareil à ce passé tragique. Moi, je ne me sens ni le goût, ni la force de vivre cet avenir. Mais n'y serai-je pas entraîné? Est-ce qu'on tiendra compte de mes désirs? Oh non! Je ne le sais que trop. Je serai emporté par le courant, et quel courant! qui nous poussera sur un rivage où règne la mort. Mes protestations et mes refus, tout cela est vain. Vain, également, cet acte d'écrire. Et c'est, pourtant, mon seul refuge, l'unique possibilité qui me reste de mettre de l'ordre dans ma pensée, de me préparer à la mort, de lutter contre le chaos, cette espèce de marée qui monte autour de nous. Je ne crois pas à cet acte d'écrire; je ne crois en rien; à peine si je crois que moi, Dabit, je suis vivant ... Tout semble aller vers sa fin." With tender words he bids farewell to his parents, Béatrice, Sari and his friends.

And when writers with such widely different views as Marc Bernard, Chamson, Gide, Giono, Guéhenno, Thérive and others joined to bring out their "Hommage à Eugène Dabit", it was not as a proletarian writer or a populist that they praised him, but as a friend and a man.

Notes

1. Dabit: "Journal Intime", (Gallimard, 1939), p. 276.
2. Ditto, p. 8.
3. See Marc Bernard's article in "Hommage à Eugène Dabit", p. 28.

4. Dabit: "Journal Intime", p. 275.
 5. Ditto, pp. 220 and 22.
 6. Ditto, p. 262.
 7. Ditto, pp. 82, 156, 266.
 8. Ditto, p. 209.
 9. Poulaille: "Nouvel Age Littéraire", pp. 47, 437.
 10. Dabit: "Journal Intime", p. 319.
 11. Dabit: "Le Mal de Vivre", (Gallimard, 1939), pp. 8 and 10.
 12. Dabit: "Journal Intime", p. 223.
 13. The following quotations are from Dabit's "Journal Intime", pp. 306, 335, 348 and 349.
-

- 13 -

LOUIS GUILLOUX'S PROLETARIAN NOVELS



Louis Guilloux

Photo: Thérèse le Prat

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

LOUIS GUILLOUX'S PROLETARIAN NOVELS

Different in character to Eugène Dabit, but similar in literary development was Louis Guilloux, the son of a shoemaker in Brittany. There is good cause to be made for discussing Louis Guilloux's work in detail. In the first place Guilloux was one of the best writers commonly associated with the populists, and was awarded a populist prize in 1942. Secondly, Guilloux's works, like those of Eugène Dabit, help us to differentiate between populist and proletarian literature. Finally, Guilloux's literary development shows, more clearly than in Dabit's case, a well-defined evolution from proletarian to personal works, with populist books as an intermediate stage.

These three stages in Guilloux's development can be summarised as follows:

The first period is that of "La Maison du Peuple" (1927), "Compagnons" (1931), "Souvenirs sur Georges Palante" (1931) and "Angéline" (1934). Guilloux sees in these books the human interest in a small circle only, his own friends and family, his own town of Saint-Brieuc. His horizon is limited by that of his class, the working-class. "Dossier Confidentiel" and "Hyménée" of the same period are based more on imagination, but the first is linked to proletarian problems, the second to Saint-Brieuc. Guilloux also joins with Daniel Halévy to edit a selection of letters of the early socialist P.-J. Proudhon, which shows where Guilloux's political interests lie.

The second period is that of "Le Sang Noir" (1935) and "Le Pain des Rêves" (1942). Here we have a broader vision, and a conscious attempt to link reality with style and construction. There is a greater wealth of detail, and secondary figures come out vividly. "Histoires de Briegands" (1936), though not as important a work as the other two, shows Guilloux's observation, and his increasing interest in people met casually.

In the third period all that is good in Guilloux culminates in the masterpiece "Le Jeu de Patience" (1949), a huge volume, the chronicle of people and events in Saint-Brieuc through the first half of the twentieth century. Most of the people we have known and loved in Guilloux's previous books move through these pages, but our interest is equally gripped by the figure of the narrator, Guilloux himself, and by what he reveals to us of his life and philosophy.

These periods will now be discussed in more detail.

.

Louis Guilloux, like Dabit, belonged by virtue of his birth and childhood to the working classes. He was born under the grey skies of Saint-Brieuc in Brittany in 1899, and the cathedral bells rang out over his childhood. His father plied his trade in a poor quarter of the town, and when friends dropped in to pass the time of day, young Louis, watchful, wideawake, caught references to the growing socialist movement, and sensed the resentment against "ils", the bourgeois of the town. Louis had two sisters also, and their parents often found it difficult to make ends meet. Thanks to a local scholarship, Louis could stay at school till 1917; even so, towards the end, he had to work as well as study to help his family.

If Louis Guilloux's first books, like those of Eugène Dabit, were based on experience and not on imagination, then we might expect to find books of the proletarian type, written about people of the working-class from inside knowledge, with perhaps a certain class bias. The style and construction would probably still be unsure, due to lack of training and experience.

And that is precisely what we do find.

"La Maison du Peuple", Guilloux's first book, describes events in the life of Guilloux's father, here called the shoemaker Quéré. The story

is almost bare, told in a simple rapid style, with a minimum of detail. A decade is summarised in the first two lines: "Après les malheurs du début, mes parents vinrent loger dans trois petites mansardes," and a paragraph reflects Quéré's existence: (1)

"Dans nos mansardes, nous vivions de peu. Le métier de mon père ne rapportait pas grand argent. Il fallait qu'il travaille longtemps pour gagner une petite journée. Dans les moments de presse, il retournait à son échoppe, le soir après dîner. Il passait quelquefois la nuit entière au travail. Au petit jour, ma mère allait lui porter son café."

"La Maison du Peuple" deals with the struggles of socialists and syndicalists at Saint-Brieux before the 1914 war. A certain Dr. Rébal founds a socialist group which Quéré and his friends join. This group finds their triumph at winning the municipal elections turning to bitterness when they realise that Dr. Rébal, who now claims the seat of mayor, had only been using them to increase his own power. The socialist group disintegrates after pro- and anti-Rébal riots, and Quéré exclaims: "Tout est à refaire." Inspired by articles of Jaurès, Quéré and two dozen friends start again, and plan to build a "Maison du Peuple", where they can group their syndicats and hold meetings, independent of bourgeois help. They are gradually joined by others, but their work is interrupted by the first World War with which the book closes.

"La Maison du Peuple", written quite openly from the people's point of view, shows the distrust of the workers for the bourgeois, who, according to them, make use of the working-class, try to win their confidence with useless 'Universités Populaires', and persecute them for their political ideas. Here for instance we have the reactions of Le Braz:

- " - Comment veux-tu?... Les bourgeois essayent de nous endormir. Il n'y a rien à faire avec eux...
 - Pourtant, lui dit Pêlo un jour, tu vois bien qu'ils ont monté une Université Populaire, dans le haut de la rue des Lormes.
 Le Braz éclata de rire.
 - Oui. J'y suis allé, dit-il...
 Il y avait dans sa parole et dans son rire quelque chose d'amer, comme le souvenir d'une offense ou d'une sottise.
 - Qu'est-ce que tu veux que les ouvriers aillent s'intéresser à des conférences sur le costume des femmes, sur l'éducation anglaise ou sur l'Indo-Chine? C'est ça qu'ils appellent éduquer le peuple...
 Pêlo ne répondit pas.
 - Ils ne nous connaissent pas, reprit Le Braz... Et puis, ils veulent nous flatter et se servir de nous..." (2)

The merits of "La Maison du Peuple" are its simplicity, its sincerity, its clear though one-sided statement of the problems confronting early socialists, and its documentary value, for as far as can be ascertained, the main facts are true. In addition, there are small indications of the later Guilloux; here and there short descriptions of Saint-Brieux, where "tout le jour, des cloches sonnaient dans le ciel" (3), and occasionally the introduction of characters for their own sake, not for the sake of the story.

.....

Let us glance briefly at Guilloux's other books of this period.

"Dossier Confidentiel" (1930) according to Guilloux (1), is pure fiction, the story of a young anarchist who becomes a thief, accidentally kills a man and loses his mind. The "Choix de Lettres de P.-J. Proudhon" which came next is significant as a subject, for Proudhon's revolutionary ideas were inspired by a desire for justice in all spheres, political, economical and social, a justice based on a firm belief in the dignity of every human life. We find this cry for justice and for the recognition of each individual running through all Guilloux's works, and culminating in his "Jeu de Patience".

This same appreciation and love of humanity is shown in Guilloux's short book "Compagnons". Like "La Maison du Peuple" this sketch is drawn from life, for the companions, Kernevel, Le Brix and Dagorne, a group of plasterers, were friends of Guilloux's father (1). The story is simple; Kernevel falls ill, the other two take turns to look after him till

his death; the few secondary characters are only briefly sketched. There is little social criticism here; the only attacks are directed against those who, according to Le Brix, forced the first World War on the people:

(Le Brix) "Oui, on a marché comme des cons, je le répèterai, tant pis pour ceux que ça dérange. Et si Jean Kernevel est en train de crever... à c't'heure, tu peux bien dire que c'est leur faute. V'là un homme qu' était sain de corps autant que moi avant la guerre. Il faisait tranquillement son boulot sans rien demander à personne. Je ne te dis pas qu'il était heureux, heureux, mais ça pouvait aller. On est venu le chercher, pourquoi? Je te dis, moi, que c'est de leur faute, bande de criminels. Quand je pense à ce qu'il était, et regarde-le à présent!" (4)

This antagonism is significant. Born out of Guilloux's Jauresian socialism, it will be developed further in "Le Sang Noir". Apart from this, "Compagnons" is just the story of the devotion of two men to their friend.

"Souvenirs sur Georges Palante" (5) was started in 1926 already, and partially published in that year in "La Ligne de Coeur" at Nantes. Georges Palante was a philosopher, had written books, and had run for many years the philosophy columns in the "Mercure de France". But he had buried himself in the little town of Saint-Brieuc, where he taught philosophy at the lycée, harrassed and tormented by his pupils, who scoffed at his large feet and his extreme short-sightedness. Guilloux was first a student, then a friend of Palante's, sharing with him a hatred and contempt for the complacent bourgeoisie of their town. In this monograph Louis Guilloux describes with a rare sensitivity and a self-imposed reticence the growth of his friendship with Palante, and something of Palante's unhappy life, which culminated in his suicide in 1925.

"Hyménée" (1932), Guilloux says, is pure fiction, but the scene is the Saint-Brieuc he knew so well. It is rather a bitter and cynical study of the scheming inherent in women in search of a husband, and of the crippling sense of responsibility of most men, which binds them to the women dependant on them no matter what they must suffer or forgo. Here Maurice marries Berthe against his own preferences, persuaded that she is pregnant. Realising her deception some months later, he can no longer leave her, as he is tied to her by inertia and force of habit. This book is striking through its unity, its unusual angle on a universal question, and its maturity. But "Hyménée" does not ring as true as "Camarades" or "La Maison du Peuple". Berthe and Maurice are carved out with classic simplicity to illustrate a conception, a principle, an idea. They are not living people.

"Angéline", Guilloux's last book in his first style, is the chronicle of the life of his mother, the daughter of a poor loom-maker. As a book, "Angéline" suffers, because being drawn neither from life nor from pure imagination, it is rather sketchy. One has the impression that Guilloux said: "My mother's life should make a good story, and should have some documentary value; I must jot down all I have heard or can find out about her, and turn it into a novel." As a result there are too many events which are given as facts, but are never well explained or motivated, like the whole affair of the robbers, and the strange change of character of Anne-Marie, Guilloux's maternal grandmother, towards the end of the book. The only really life-like person is the striking figure of the socialist Camille Fourras, who had such a strong influence over Angéline's brother Henri. He must have been based on someone Guilloux knew.

Guilloux himself said of "Angéline" that it was an attempt at writing in the local style (I). Part of Brittany talks Breton, but the peasants often talk a "patois gallo" dating back to the 16th century. Charpentier, commenting in the "Mercure de France" (6), calls "Angéline" "un peu bizarre dans l'expression", but the style is more interesting than disturbing.

.....

Looking back on Guilloux's literary production from 1927 to 1934, we can understand why Guilloux writes, speaking of his student time in 1917; "Mes lectures avaient alors pour centre le "Jean-Christophe" de

Romain Rolland, le "Jacques Vingtras" de Jules Vallès, et le "Combat pour l'Individu" de Georges Palante. Dans ces trois oeuvres, si disséminables, je trouvais l'écho nécessaire à mes impatiences et à mes révoltes d'adolescent." (7)

What appealed to him in these books? The pacifism and the wide humanism of Romain Rolland? Palante's strong belief in the value of each individual? The revolutionary ideas of Vallès, steeled by his fight for the Commune in 1871?

But Vallès was to mean more to young Guilloux in later years. The story goes that starving, disillusioned, Louis Guilloux once wandered along the bank of the Seine in Paris, planning to end his life in the river like so many other desperate men before him. Passing the book-sellers on the pavement he caught sight of a volume of Vallès and began to read. As he turned the pages he realised that Vallès too had seen through the smugness and hypocrisy of the bourgeoisie; he read on, with a strong feeling of fraternity for this working-class writer who had had to struggle too, and when Guilloux left, he turned away from the river with a new courage. (8)

Coming back to Guilloux's own works, his first books, however much he may dislike the idea of groups or schools, are written very much in the proletarian style. It is perhaps interesting that all discussed so far, except the monograph on Georges Palante, were published by Grasset where Poulaille was active. Further proof of Guilloux's interest in proletarian literature in general is given by his collaboration with Dabit and others for the "Bulletin des Écrivains Proletariens" in 1932. Guilloux certainly knew Poulaille, who praised him as a proletarian writer in "Nouvel Age Littéraire" (9), and helped him when he was not yet well-known (1). But it is difficult to say whether at all Guilloux was influenced by Poulaille, as Guilloux is reticent on that point.

One could show that Louis Guilloux's first books belong to proletarian literature for several reasons. They are relatively simple in conception. They are for the most part documents of actual events, mainly of things that happened to Guilloux himself, or to his family and near friends. They are told about working-class people, occasionally lower middle-class people, by a writer who still takes mainly the workers' point of view. They tend to show only the good qualities of the lower classes, and on the other hand stress the pettiness, smugness and conceit of the bourgeoisie. They preach a Jauresian socialism, and their value lies more in their truth than in their style.

None of these points by itself would be enough to class Guilloux in 1934 as a proletarian writer. Taking them together, there is a strong justification for doing so.

Notes

1. Guilloux: "La Maison du Peuple", (Grasset, 1927), p. 36.
 2. Ditto, p. 26. This extract has not been cut. The dotted lines are in the original text.
 3. Ditto, p. 15.
 4. Guilloux: "Compagnons", (Grasset, 1931), p. 96.
 5. Published by O.-L. Aubert, Ed. Saint-Brieuc, in 1931. Very rare, probably only one edition of 535 copies.
 6. Mercure de France, 15/4/1934.
 7. Guilloux: "Souvenirs sur Georges Palante", p. 13.
 8. According to Kees Greshoff of the University of Cape Town, who knew Guilloux personally (1).
 9. Poulaille: "Nouvel Age Littéraire", chapter on "Louis Guilloux".
-

- 14 -

GUILLOUX

THE CHRONICLER OF SAINT-BRIEUC

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

GUILLOUX, THE CHRONICLER OF SAINT-BRIEUC

Guilloux's first books were written in the proletarian style, but in the next years something must have happened to Guilloux. Till 1934 Louis Guilloux as a writer belongs to a class; after this his work belongs to the broad stream of French literature as a whole. How can this change be explained?

Circumstances had forced Guilloux, like many of his class, to leave school before he could take the final examination. Guilloux once remarked: "J'ai mis quinze ans à surmonter le fait que je n'avais pas mon bachot." (I) This remark is repeated with hesitation, but it is probably significant. Guilloux was still at school in 1917. Another fifteen years, taken loosely, would bring us to the early thirties. It is plausible that a feeling of inferiority and social insecurity during those fifteen years might lead to the biased literature Guilloux produced at first, if he felt that he had to vindicate the working-class in the face of a more privileged group. But after 1933 or 1934 he must have discovered himself as a man, because his later works are written not from the point of view of a class, but of humanity.

.

"Le Sang Noir", the first book of Guilloux's second period, is a masterpiece. M. Merlin, a teacher at the lycée in a little town, is a man of deep sensitivity; he is respected for his learning, but his excessive timidity coupled with a physical deformity make him a butt for the jeers of his scholars and the contempt of his colleagues. Because he teaches philosophy he is called "Cripure", short for Kant's "Critique de la Raison Pure".

Few people perhaps realise that Cripure is Guilloux's unhappy philosopher friend Georges Palante (1), and Guilloux has condensed here into the classical unity of twenty-four hours the duality in the life of Palante, alias Cripure, as he struggles to live according to his ideals, though he is forced into positions contrary to these ideals.

Guilloux also shows Cripure's feeling of inferiority and of being persecuted; the woman Cripure loved left him, his "wife" is a coarse servant, he is socially ostracised, his students jeer at him. Cripure's unhappiness turns to despair because he can find no reason for human suffering, which means that he is a failure even as a philosopher, and as adviser to the young soldiers who question him with so much anguish. Cripure feels that life itself mocks him; he is nearly run over; his dogs destroy a manuscript he had been working on for years; and when he has a chance of fighting a duel for his ideals against Nabucet, the personification of all Cripure most hated, well-meaning friends, realising that Cripure would be killed, prevent the duel and so rob Cripure of the martyr's death he desired. Cripure's suicide is the logical outcome of his despair.

But Guilloux shows more in this book than the tragedy of an individual. From 9 a.m. one day till 9 a.m. the next Guilloux draws with masterly skill the life and people at Saint-Brieuc, the outcasts of society, the various teachers at the school, the proprietress of a boarding-house and her lodgers, youngsters going to war and the wounded returning half-way through the first World War, captains, generals, deputies, the people Guilloux knew when he left school to join up himself.

All these people are brilliantly revealed with their gestures, their pronunciation, their habits, their aspirations. There is something reminiscent of the great Russian authors Guilloux had learnt to love in this portrayal of a wide background of different types, linked in a common destiny. The licentious lodger Kaminsky must voice Guilloux's own impressions when he says: "Dans la ligne générale, dans le fond social, dans le psychologique, eh bien, nous sommes ici en pleine Russie impériale, mes chers amis. Votre petite bourgeoisie chrétienne, c'est la bourgeoisie de Tolstoï. Et vos paysans sont de vrais moujiks. Mais oui. Croyez-moi, les plus beaux personnages disons par exemple de Tchekov, je les



Georges Palante
alias "Cripure"

ai retrouvés ici trait pour trait à un samovar près." (2)

Is it the influence of Russian authors too, or just his newly discovered imagination and sense for the dramatic that leads Guilloux to turn his people into types, slightly caricatured to bring out their dominant features; the librarian Babinot, with his nasalised pronunciation and his chauvinism; the ineffectual and half-mad Moka, who cannot decide whether or not he believes in God; the rakish Captain Plaire, the crippled Cloporte, who ventures out at night only, the ruthless and ambitious Simone; and most striking of all, Cripure's antithesis, the aggressive and sadistic society man Nabucet, with his smug hypocrisy and his arm-chair patriotism.

One can see that "Le Sang Noir" differs widely from Guilloux's books of the first period. The story is no longer told from the point of view of a class; through the maze of characters, as in Tolstoy, runs the strong theme of the warmth of humanity. War-mongers are bitterly criticised, but not, as in "Camarades", because they deceived the workers, but because of their crime towards mankind in general. The scope of the story is wider; there are many secondary characters who stand out clearly, but to achieve this Guilloux has to distort them slightly.

Here is the bohemian teacher Montfort:

"De l'autre bout de la place, accourut Francis Montfort, les cheveux plus que jamais au vent sous le chapeau melon enfoncé sur les yeux, ses livres toujours serrés sous le coude. Les basques de sa veste battaient et le lacet dénoué d'un de ses souliers traînait dangereusement." (3)

And here the social climber Nabucet greets a distinguished guest:

"La jolie courbette que fit Nabucet en abordant le Général! Il n'en eût pas inventé de plus fine, de plus gracieuse, de plus dévote même si, au lieu d'un général un peu fatigué, c'eût été une jeune et pétillante actrice qui fût descendue de la limousine. A la façon dont il lui tendait la main pour l'aider à mettre pied à terre, on eût pu croire qu'il lui offrait le bras. Mon Général par-ci, mon Général par-là ... Quelle émotion! Quel bonheur! Place! Reculez ... " (4)

This intervention of the artist has its drawbacks. Where Guilloux gains in strength he loses in veracity. In "La Maison du Peuple" and "Camarades" of Guilloux's first period we feel that the people are real; in "Le Sang Noir" we feel they could be real, and that is by no means the same thing. We are back again at one of the fundamental differences between proletarian and populist literature.

Consciousness of writing as an art and not just as the reflection of life is shown also in Guilloux's carefully balanced construction; unity of time, twenty-four hours; unity of place, Saint-Brieuc; unity of action round the central figure of Cripure. "Le Sang Noir" is populist because of its characters and setting, as well as the interest and understanding shown for the underprivileged, but this book is populist in a very wide sense only because of its intense psychological analysis, its occasional surrealistic style, and its strong criticism of bourgeois society.

.....

The following year, Guilloux published a series of sketches called "Histoires de Brigands" (1936), conversations, scenes he witnessed, remarks overheard, like the housewife chatting to a friend at the market: "Oh, ma bonne dame, on était que huit à l'enterrement. J'en étais honteuse. Si j'avais su je serais point allée..." Or like the husband: "Depuis que je suis marié, j'ai toujours le sentiment que je suis en faute." (5) Then came "Le Pain des Rêves", another chronicle of Saint-Brieuc.

"Le Pain des Rêves" which won a populist prize in 1942 is the story of the Nédélec family, told from the point of view of the boy Loïc; their poverty, their brief joys, the people around them. Compared with "Le Sang Noir" it is narrative, rather than dramatic, and it is weaker, partly because there is no strong central figure like Cripure, partly because it is based more on reminiscences of his youth than on imagination. This has its compensation, for we know as we read the book that the people are real.

"Le Pain des Rêves" is populist in the best sense, in that the chief characters are from the lower classes, and that the story is related in a direct realistic way, without political bias. It combines an inner truth born of personal experience of poverty with a certain regard for style and form. But the place of "Le Pain des Rêves" in Guilloux's work is more that of a sketch for sections of the wider and more ambitious "Jeu de Patience", which won the Prix Théophraste-Renaudot in 1949.

.

"Le Jeu de Patience" of Guilloux's third period can be classed as populist; but only in the widest interpretation of the word. Although it is strongly influenced by both proletarian and populist trends, it is above all such distinctions, and should have universal appeal.

How could "Le Jeu de Patience" be described? It is the story of the Nédelec family enlarged and continued, it is the record of the Spanish fugitives (6) at Saint-Brieuc and of the German occupation, it is the journal of Guilloux's own life, it is the description of the growth of the "Maison du Peuple", it is the analysis of social and political changes in Europe over the past decades. Perhaps in the widest sense, it is the Chronicle of Saint-Brieuc in the first half of the 20th century, for all the figures we have met in other books, Quéré, the three "Compagnons", Dr. Rébal, the Comtesse de Lancieux, la Cousine Zabelle, Cripure, Kaminsky, Loïc, Blaise and Pêlo Nédelec, Babinot, Nabucet, the deputy Faurel, Tonin Bagot the street-sweeper, all these people and scores of others move through the eight hundred pages of "Le Jeu de Patience". As a background the squares and narrow streets of the town, the tower of the cathedral, and the bells which ring through the book like a perpetual leitmotif.

Guilloux spent years planning this book, and as future chronicler had since the early thirties already been watching with close interest all that happened at Saint-Brieuc. Eugène Dabit knew Guilloux already before the publication of "Hôtel du Nord". Over New Year 1936 Guilloux invited him to spend a week in Brittany, and Dabit noted in his journal the way Guilloux entertained him, and his own reactions:

"Avec Guilloux, j'ai traîné dans les rues sombres et boueuses de Saint-Brieuc. Rues bordées de maisons de pierres, tristes, silencieuses, dont Guilloux m'apprenait les pauvres secrets. Quelle vie! J'étouffais, j'avais envie de partir, comme pour échapper à quelque catastrophe. Je me prenais à songer à mon existence, à mes séjours en Espagne, au bord de la mer; à Paris. Et j'aimais ma vie, qui reste libre et ouverte." (7)

How typical of these ~~the~~ men!

"Le Jeu de Patience" was certainly started well before 1940, but Guilloux burnt many sheets of manuscript during the occupation. He tells us himself how he wrote this book, and many pages are nothing more than a "Journal du Jeu de Patience". He apparently jotted down, as he remembered them, all his recollections of people, places, events, or anecdotes or information given to him by others. But they are told without order or sequence; the unity of time, so strictly kept in "Le Sang Noir", does not exist here.

Sometimes Guilloux's notes get mixed, and are wrongly sequenced; more often he follows the normal process of memory, which jumps from one period to another. He can turn on one page, nay in one sentence even, to four different periods in the past. The book starts in 1943, touches on 1940, swings to 1947, plunges back to 1912, and returns to the late forties. Sometimes one thing recorded about a particular day reminds him of something else happening the same day; sometimes a person seen or talked to reminds him of another; sometimes an incident in the present recalls a similar incident in the past; sometimes stray notes found by chance open up a whole train of reminiscences; sometimes again Guilloux relates present events which came to interrupt his work for a few hours or a few days.

This book, which Guilloux sometimes calls his "Chronique du Temps Passé", could with justification be compared to the volumes of Proust, but the creative process is different. Guilloux, being more of an

extrovert than Proust, relies more on immediate memory than on an involuntary, intuitive memory; he can therefore more easily communicate his own reminiscences to us, and one could suggest that Guilloux's people seem far more real than those from Proust's universe.

One might think that there is little unity in "Jeu de Patience". That is not so. There is unity in the subject, Saint-Brieuc and its people, in whom we become passionately interested, and whom we meet over and over again in different situations in these pages, as we meet our friends in our daily existence. Although our life may seem formless, there is certainly a fundamental unity in our life, so here too in the life of Saint-Brieuc.

Stronger still is the unity of ideas, the unity of the man himself, of Guilloux, who after his first two periods now reveals himself openly and directly, with his wide interest in humanity, his hatred of injustice, and with his sense of responsibility for the crimes he sees in our society and civilisation, with their drive for war and their oppression of the underprivileged; Guilloux with his firm generous friendships, his strong belief in the greatness of every individual. This is the man who can say: "Il est dur, quand on a le cœur bien placé, de se savoir privilégié", who could insist: "Il s'agit de la vie d'un homme, monsieur le Procureur", who could write: "C'était peu de chose qu'une vie d'homme, mais ce peu était sans prix"; and Guilloux's friend Meunier echoes Guilloux's thoughts when he says, talking of the events leading to the second world war: "On voudrait pouvoir dire que cela ne nous concerne pas. Malheureusement, c'est impossible: nous sommes tous solidaires ... ou, si tu aimes mieux, compromis ..., responsables ..." (8)

And there is half a promise that Guilloux will write another book, to be called "Les Mémoires d'un Responsable".

.....

Guilloux's work illustrates, like Dabit's, something of the value of proletarian and populist training in literature.

From his first period, Guilloux retained an inside appreciation, not only of the common people's language and activities, but of their point of view; and as we have tried to stress, no interest or observation can replace what a writer has lived through himself.

Then comes a second period where the less privileged people are used as a subject matter for art, with a regard for form as well as for subject matter; this is the populist approach; Guilloux adds to it an interest in humanity, and in social and political problems which affect the individual. All learnt in his proletarian period is woven in too, for Guilloux understands as few bourgeois can things like the reverence of a worker for his daily bread, and his love and respect for his tools.

The Guilloux of "Le Pain des Rêves" can still write: "Un lien fraternel unit l'homme à ses objets et, entre tous, à ses outils. Ce qu'il y a de si humain, dans le travail, confère à ses instruments quelque chose du caractère de la personne, comme si le marteau ou le rabot recevait à la longue de la main qui les violente, un peu de la mystérieuse chaleur qui fait le secret de nos vies." (9)

Finally there is a third period, which is inevitable for a great writer, when he reaches beyond the doctrines of schools, when he steps above the bickerings of classes, when he draws from all that was best in his previous works, and lets his own maturely developed personality and his wide understanding of humanity become his chief guides (10).

Guilloux to-day scoffs at the idea of either a proletarian or populist group. "L'idée d'école est absurde", he says (11). And, let us be clear, he was probably not conscious either at any point in his career of belonging to such a school. But we have tried to show that Guilloux's

development was logical and inevitable, being a development likely to occur with individual modifications for all great writers who have their origins in the working-class. Dabit's early death cut his work short at the beginning of the third stage; with Guilloux the evolution is clear.

Notes

1. According to Kees Greshoff of the University of Cape Town, who knew Guilloux personally (I).
 2. Guilloux: "Le Sang Noir", (Gallimard, 1935), p. 297.
 3. Ditto, p. 116.
 4. Ditto, p. 203.
 5. Guilloux: "Histoires de Brigands", (Editions Sociales Internationales, 1936), pp. 20 and 132.
 6. After the Spanish Civil War Guilloux was the regional secretary of the relief association "Secours Populaires", which cared for many Spanish refugees in France. Thus Guilloux was in constant touch with individuals or groups of fugitives in his region.
 7. Dabit: "Journal Intime", p. 299.
 8. Guilloux: "Le Jeu de Patience", (Gallimard, 1949), pp. 708, 663, 692, and 650.
 9. Guilloux: "Le Pain des Rêves", (Gallimard, 1942), p. 51.
 10. Guilloux's most recent book, "Absent de Paris" (Gallimard) due to appear in September 1952, seems also to be an individualistic book, as it will contain, according to the N.R.F. Bulletin, "Notes, souvenirs, réflexions, lettres imaginaires".
-

- 15 -

THE FAILURE OF THE
"FRONT LITTERAIRE COMMUN"

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE FAILURE OF THE "FRONT LITTÉRAIRE COMMUN"

If Dabit, Guillaux and others (1) could turn from proletarian to populist works, if some of their books were classed in either of these two sections, was it not possible for Poulaille, Lemonnier and Thérive to become reconciled and co-operate?

Lemonnier certainly held out an open hand to proletarian writers in 1935, when in several articles he put forward a strong plea for a "Front Littéraire Commun". But we will show that the populist and proletarian literary groups were related to quite distinct political groups, and we will suggest that this was one of the chief reasons why Lemonnier's efforts towards an official reconciliation and unity met with small success.

Let us discuss the political situation in France briefly.

If we recall the development of political parties in France from World War I till about 1930, we will remember that since 1920 the socialists had steadily been increasing in numbers at the expense of the communists and the more moderate left-wing adherents. A glance at the number of deputies representing each group after elections will give a rough idea of the proportional changes.

After the elections of 1924, which brought a radical government majority, there were 26 communist deputies, 104 socialist deputies, and just over 200 "républicains socialistes", radicals and other left wing members out of a total of 615 deputies. This, very roughly, gives us a proportion of 1:4:8/24, which means that for every 24 deputies there was one communist, four socialist, and eight other left centre representatives.

But after the elections of 1932 where the victory went to the right wing, the proportion was 1:13:16/61, and the socialists had gained adherents from the parties to left and right of them (2).

.

The position in literature corresponded roughly to the position in politics; in 1930 therefore there were three groups of writers who would be interested in the people and in the working-class.

a) First, on the extreme left, there was a small group of communist or revolutionary writers, who had inherited Jaurès "L'Humanité", now a communist newspaper. These writers were usually not working-class men themselves, but tended to be intellectuals attached to the communist movement.

b) Next came a larger socialist group, and Poulaille and the proletarian writers held a position in literature corresponding to this political group, or more specifically to the "parti d'unité prolétarienne" formed in 1929 by the fusion of two socialist sections which had split off from the communists.

The socialists had official newspapers such as Léon Blum's "Le Populaire", but these papers gave up little space to proletarian literature, at the most a few columns on a Sunday page, so Poulaille, Rémy, and similar writers had to find expression elsewhere. Poulaille ran the weekly literary columns of "Le Peuple" (3) from 1928 till before the war, and could bring proletarian authors to the notice of the syndicalist readers. There was also the weekly "Monde", a review of left-wing intellectuals run by Henri Barbusse with Augustin Habaru as chief editor. "Monde", which later became more of a communist review, at first invited articles and contributions by proletarian authors, and people like Rémy, Poulaille, and Marc Bernard, Dabit's young working-class friend were regular contributors (4). Around 1930 "Monde" was looked upon, by the populists at least (4), as the official proletarian review.

c) To the right of this second group there was a still larger third group of writers, corresponding to parties like the "républicains socialistes", the radicals, or other parties of the centre left. The

populists belonged chiefly to this group, although they overlapped to left and right. They were represented in a minor way in the left centre daily "l'Œuvre", since its literary editor Léon Deffoux had published two manifestos and half a dozen other articles on populism. Although André Thérive was literary critic of "Le Temps", "Le Temps" was a conservative daily, supported by capitalist and industrialist circles, and was hardly typical of the populist point of view.

.

Let us see how these three groups, after an initial attempt at co-operation, gradually drew apart between 1930 and 1935.

When Léon Lemonnier's first manifesto appeared in August 1929, the socialist or proletarian writers were naturally interested. At first the review "Monde" was open-minded, and encouraged by Poulaille, even suggested collaborating with the populists; the editor, Habaru, at one time considered publishing a series of populist contributions in "Monde" (4). But soon the difference in attitude became apparent.

Thérive's and Lemonnier's catholic traditions, for instance, were foreign to the socialists, and the publication of "Le Charbon Ardent" gave rise to a rather hostile article by Marc Bernard, "Monde's" literary critic. In an interview published by "La Volonté" on the 15th of October, 1929, Henri Barbusse already showed some mistrust towards populism, and when Georges Ragueot opened an enquiry in "Monde" on the 19th of October on "La jeune génération et Zola" (5) the proletarians' attitude towards populism, although not hostile, was reserved (4).

Slowly the differences became clearer. After a public address by the leaders of populism at the "Studio 28" in Montmartre (6), Habaru, who was present, drew in his report a sharp distinction between populist and proletarian literature, arguing that they were the expression of two distinct social classes. "Partez donc à la découverte de votre classe", he said to the populists. "Donnez-nous le roman de la petite bourgeoisie française d'après-guerre, comme nous avons le roman de la grande bourgeoisie, comme nous avons le roman de la paysannerie. Mais gardez-vous de confondre sous un même vocable d'humilité le prolétariat et la petite bourgeoisie, sous prétexte que les frontières entre ces deux classes ne se peuvent tracer au cordeau." (7)

The gap between the two groups was widened still further in 1930 when Henry Poulaille published his "Charles-Louis Philippe, le populisme et la littérature prolétarienne" and his "Nouvel Age Littéraire", which were openly antagonistic to populism.

.

In the meantime Poulaille and his friends were themselves in a difficult position. The proletarian writers, who had taken up a stand between the communists and the populists, were criticised by the groups on either side. The populists reproved them for the small importance they attached to style and construction, for their lack of training as authors, and for a certain class bias evident in some of their books. The communists on the contrary overlooked their style, but condemned them because proletarian literature was not militant or revolutionary enough.

Poulaille himself, who was trying to defend proletarian literature from the indifference of the upper classes or from absorption by the populists, found himself attacked in 1930 by "l'Humanité" and by writers affiliated to the communist party. When "Monde" organised a conference "Sur la Littérature" to which proletarian authors were invited, Henri Barbusse found difficulty in quelling the anti-proletarian agitation led by the communists in the audience (8).

Communist opposition to the proletarians was not confined to France. In communist headquarters in Moscow the review "Monde" was violently criticised by "l'Union Internationale des Écrivains Révolutionnaires" in their French review "Littérature de la Révolution Mondiale", although Barbusse himself was on the editorial staff of the latter review. Then, in 1931, at the second international conference of "l'Union Internationale des Écrivains Révolutionnaires" in Kharkov (U.S.S.R.), Aragon told Russia



Tristan Rémy-

1930

that for lack of a well-organised union of Soviet writers in France "les prolétaires de la plume ne cesseront de s'y 'déprolétarianiser'". (9)

At the same congress at Kharkov, in a "Résolution sur les questions de la littérature prolétarienne et révolutionnaire en France" the statement was made that lower class writers were slowly turning from communism towards the counter-revolutionary camp. "Le groupe même de "Monde", hétérogène, a glissé dans le 'confusionisme' le plus vil. Le groupe de Valois (10) est considéré comme un magma de tendances" (9).

(A)
Tristan Rémy sums up the difficult position of proletarian literature when he writes: "La littérature prolétarienne 'pour les Kharkovistes' est l'avant-garde culturelle du social-fascisme!!! Les littérateurs prolétariens n'y peuvent rien. Pour les écrivains bien pensants, les écrivains prolétariens chantent mal et pour les écrivains kharkovistes, ils ne chantent pas juste. Pour chanter juste (les écrivains kharkovistes leur pardonneraient d'écrire mal), il leur faudrait écrire en vers que Monatte est un contre-révolutionnaire, Staline un grand écrivain, Trotsky un anti-marxiste léniniste, Semard un grand chef, Paul Boncour un fasciste, Briand une vieille baderne et Poulaille un confusionniste." (8)

Soon the union of Soviet writers that Aragon hoped to see in France came into being. Henri Barbusse became the leader of the "Association des Ecrivains et Artistes Révolutionnaires" which was founded towards the end of 1932 (11). The A.E.A.R., anti-fascist, pro-Russian, apart from Barbusse and Aragon themselves, grouped writers like Malraux, Vaillant-Couturier, Nizan, Tristan Rémy, Dabit, and many others. "Monde" ceased to appear through lack of funds and support and was replaced by "Commune", run by Aragon, which became the official mouthpiece of the A.E.A.R..

.

Meanwhile the political position in France had been changing, and we will see how the literary groups echoed the political desire for a "Front Populaire"

In 1932 when the A.E.A.R. was founded, the proportion of communist, socialist and other left centre deputies in the Assembly as a whole was 1:13:16/61. The socialists had grown in numbers since 1924 due partly to their vaguer, less extreme doctrine, while the communists enforced a stricter obedience to party laws, and dismissed doubtful members.

After 1932 though, with the rise of the anti-fascist movement in France, the communists found their ranks strengthened as they were the strongest opponents of fascism and of war. But at the same time they gradually relaxed their strict membership qualifications to get more adherents. The general swing left between 1932 and 1936 showed up most in the communist ranks, and the elections of 1936 gave a proportion of 7:15:18/61 for communist, socialist and left centre deputies.

But the way had been paved for the victory of the left in 1936, not only by anti-fascist public opinion and by a less extreme attitude on the part of the communists, but by a general urge among left-wing parties to co-operate in the face of a common danger.

In July 1934, communist and socialist delegates signed a pact "d'unité d'action". In July 1935 the "Front Populaire" was proclaimed, grouping communist, socialist, and other left-wing parties. In 1921 the old syndicalist group, the "Confédération Générale du Travail", had split into the socialist C.G.T. and the communist C.G.T.U. ("Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire"), but in March 1936 these two sections united again.

The same desire for co-operation was shown among left-wing literary groups. Tristan Rémy wrote towards the end of 1935: "L'A.E.A.R. a mis beaucoup d'eau dans son vin. Aragon lui-même, discipliné, respectant l'unité d'action et le front populaire, ne parle plus de fusiller les socialistes et invite tous les écrivains de gauche, quelle que soit leur école littéraire, à s'unir fraternellement dans cette organisation contre le fascisme." (12)

Henry Poulaille still maintained a strict and uncompromising middle

path, although individual proletarian writers like R  my joined the A.E.A.R. through a desire for unity. To the right though L  on Lemonnier, caught up in the general enthusiasm for co-operation, started a campaign on behalf of the populists for a "Front Litt  raire Commun", which would unite communist, proletarian and populist writers in a group which, excluding all politics, would have the same literary and social ideas.

Thus throughout the summer of 1935, in "l'Oeuvre" (13), in "Le Mercure de France" (14), in "La Grande Revue" (15), Lemonnier put forward his proposition for a "Front Litt  raire Commun". In these articles Lemonnier discussed the political differences that separated the three groups, but urged that they should be forgotten:

"La m  fiance des manuels    l'  gard des intellectuels se justifiait au d  but du mouvement prol  tarien et les Soviets eux-m  mes en donnaient l'exemple; mais    mesure que la Russie, avec une doctrine nouvelle, s'organisait dans le cadre europ  en, elle perdait l  gitimement sa force agressive. S  re de durer, elle assimilait ceux qu'elle n'avait pu vaincre. Elle a cess   d'  tre une force de destruction r  volutionnaire pour devenir une force d'organisation sociale.

"La position des prol  tariens fran  ais, group  s autour de Poulaille, est devenue difficile    cet   gard. Ils ont rejet   l'orthodoxie marxiste et ont   t   ainsi attaqu  s par les   crivains qui l'acceptent. Mais il importe d'oublier ces dissensions qui rel  vent de la politique la plus   troite, pour ne consid  rer que les t  ndances sociales profondes." (13)

Lemonnier set out to show that populist and proletarian literature were closely linked in the history of realism. According to Lemonnier, there were two tendencies in Art: to examine life, and to escape from life. The trend of escape from everyday life, he said, led from the romantics, through symbolism to surrealism; the trend to examine life, however, ran step by step from the comic realism of the mediaeval "fabliaux", where fun was made of misery that could not be escaped, through the realism of the picaresque stories, with the wanderings of franchised serfs, through the "r  alisme grave" of the 18th century, to the social realism of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Lemonnier suggested that this "social realism" started with Balzac and his bourgeois and peasants, and led to Zola with his workers, to the proletarians with their politically conscious workers' literature, and finally to the populists with their workers' literature imposed by intellectual consciousness. The populists, Lemonnier argued, were grandsons of workers, and thus only a literary generation ahead of the proletarian writers, who were sons of workers. (14)

Therefore, as the "Front Populaire" had been formed to oppose fascism, Lemonnier called for a united front to oppose "la litt  rature d'avant-garde". "Regardons plut  t les grandes id  es qui nous sont communes. Nous croyons les uns les autres    l'observation sinc  re, nous croyons que l'artiste n'a pas le droit de se d  sint  resser de la soci  t   dans laquelle il vit. A une   poque o   l'esth  tisme et le dilettantisme restent encore si puissantes, malgr   les apparences, c'est une raison de nous unir," he argued (15); and he concluded "Il faut fonder le 'Front Litt  raire Commun'".

.

But Lemonnier's suggestion, though discussed, met with no success. The members of the A.E.A.R. felt that they had been the first to open their doors to all left wing writers, irrespective of their literary groups. Those seeking unity should therefore join the A.E.A.R., which was not content with vague suggestions, and was not opposed to politics in literature as were the populists. Moreover the A.E.A.R. was an organised movement, with a well-defined constitution and clear principles which differed from those of the populists.

Poulaille would not co-operate in Lemonnier's attempt at a "Front Litt  raire Commun", feeling that it would only encourage the tendency for proletarian writers to be assimilated by the middle class. Besides, the proletarian authors were in full activity themselves. They had started their new review "A Contre-Courant" and were busy organising their "Mus  e du Soir" which was soon to have hundreds of members. These members

could choose on the library shelves books written by their own people about things of interest to the working classes; or they could discuss literature or hold art exhibitions of their own work, while members interested in writing themselves would come for help and advice. (16)

The articles in answer to those of Lemonnier were thus negative, but although no official rapprochement came from the populists' invitation, the populists continued to encourage authors from the groups to the left of them. Thus in 1936, helped by Lefèvre, Deffoux, and even Poulaille (L), it is Tristan Rémy who gets the populist prize for his "Faubourg Saint-Antoine".

Notes

1. See chapter 17 for other proletarian writers who won populist prizes.
 2. Different works do not always agree on the number of socialist or other left centre deputies, as the position of smaller groups is assessed in different ways. The figures quoted here are taken mainly from Marcel Prélot: "L'Évolution Politique du Socialisme Français, 1789 - 1934", (Spes, 1939).
 3. "Le Peuple" was the daily newspaper of the C.G.T. with a circulation of 50,000. It was less well-known than "l'Humanité" or "Le Populaire" and was always short of funds(L).
 4. See Lemonnier's article "Les Débuts du Populisme", Revue des Vivants, Sept. 1932.
 5. See Appendix III.
 6. On the 30th of November, 1929, see above p. 29.
 7. Quoted by Lemonnier in "Les Débuts du Populisme", see ref. 4 above.
 8. See Tristan Rémy's article "Qu'est-ce un Ecrivain prolétarien?" from L'Université Républicaine, 1931, reprinted in "La Littérature et le Peuple", (Les Humbles, revue littéraire des Primaires, Dec, 1937).
 9. See Thérive: "Chantiers d'Europe", (Ed. Excelsior, 1933), chapter "La Culture Révolutionnaire".
 10. The editor and publisher Georges Valois and the authors, many of them proletarians, whose works he published. See above p. 70, and ref. 32 on p. 73.
 11. The A.E.A.R. was dissolved at the outbreak of the war in 1939.
 12. Tristan Rémy: "Front littéraire commun? Front littéraire unique?" in L'Oeuvre, 1935, reprinted in "La Littérature et le Peuple".
 13. L'Oeuvre, 23/7/1935.
 14. Mercure de France, 15/7/1935.
 15. La Grande Revue, August 1935.
 16. See above p. 71.
-

- 16 -

FURTHER ACTIVITIES
OF THE POPULIST GROUP

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

FURTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE POPULIST GROUP

In a previous chapter we discussed early attempts at populist theatre and painting, the foundation of an annual prize for populist novels, and the first reunions in the café "Le Mahieu" in the Latin quarter.

How did the populist movement develop from the early thirties to the present time? and what part did it play in the cultural and social life of Paris? In this chapter we will review briefly populist activities in the theatre and in art, we will see the attempt at a populist review and a populist academy, and the official commencement of populism in poetry, and mention will be made of the many populist dinners, and of the salon run by Mme Sophie Stambat and Henri Van Rugghe to-day.

Let it be said from the outset that populism was never successful in the theatre. There is a one-act play by Léon Lemonnier, "Un Brave Homme", which was presented in 1945, and recently Mme Antonine Couillet-Tessier wrote two plays which were to have been produced, but no details have been available of any of these works, and there is no mention of other populist plays. Populism possibly failed in the theatre because the populists had not even a small theatre at their disposal, for which they could write, and where they could stage their own plays.

In the cinema though, there have been many films which one could call populist, like "Les Frères Bouquinquant", "Hôtel du Nord" and "Tabusse", based on novels by Jean Prévost, Eugène Dabit and André Chamson. Towards the end of 1952 a "Prix du Cinéma Populiste" will be offered for the first time. It will have a value of about ten to fifteen thousand francs only, so is looked upon mainly as an honour which will give publicity to the film chosen (1).

Where art is concerned, there were exhibitions almost every year from 1933 to 1942, and these exhibitions were resumed again in 1949 (2). As adherents increased the standard was gradually raised, because the selection committees had a greater choice. Painters who were outstanding in their own rights began to submit works that could be classed as populist. Thus in 1937 the painters Truchet and Nakache who organised the fourth Salon got the support of men like Utrillo, Vlaminck, Waroquier, Rouault and Zingg (3).

In 1949 a step forward was made. The exhibition was to be held at the café "La Coupole" in Montparnasse, and the proprietors generously offered the sum of thirty thousand francs for the best populist painting on exhibition. This first prize was shared between the painters Durand-Roë and Pierre Peltier, and since then there has been a "prix de Peinture Populiste" every year (4). In 1950 each member of the jury contributed a thousand francs towards the prize, and the position is probably the same to-day.

In 1951 and 1952 the "Salon Populiste" was held in the "Musée de l'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris". This was an honour, and conferred a sort of official status on populist art, as it had been sheltered by the city of Paris. A large number of painters contributed to these annual exhibitions, and in 1952 there was a total of 97 painters and over 250 paintings (5). Titles like "la loge du concierge", "les pêcheurs", "fête forain", "le casseur de cailloux", "chantier sur les quais", "pompe à essence" or "le bocal de haricots" give us an idea of the type of subject, and at the same time of the variety of subjects possible.

We must not imagine though that there are a hundred painters who accept populist principles for all their paintings. It only means that, instinctively or deliberately, these artists have painted some works in the populist tradition which could be included in the salon. By "populist tradition" the painters do not refer to any technique of painting, nor, generally speaking, to the treatment of the subject, but more specifically to the subject itself. In this sense certain paintings by people like Van Gogh or Braque could also be called populist. As Henri Van Rugghe (A) wrote, speaking of the salon of 1952:



Henri Van Rugghe



Serge Groussard

"Il est peut-être absurde de concevoir qu'un mouvement littéraire puisse influencer des peintres, mais cette influence extrêmement discrète tient seulement à rappeler au peintre qu'il y a dans le peuple et dans les choses les plus simples, matière merveilleuse et riche d'inspiration. Que ce peintre ensuite traite ces sujets avec son tempérament, il est libre.

"Le populisme ne veut en rien influencer l'art du peintre, mais reconnaître en lui ses sources d'inspiration, et grouper ainsi ceux qui par cette voie peuvent être réunis, rassemblés, fussent-ils de tendances les plus diverses.

"Ce dernier salon populiste a réuni du plus classique au plus avant-garde, ceux qu'a inspiré le vaste thème populiste." (L)

The populist writers and painters and their friends began by meeting regularly at "le Mahieu", but after a year or two these weekly meetings were replaced by monthly dinners, presided over by a populist or one of their sympathisers, who was welcomed by a speech. Distinguished people thus honoured before the war included writers like Léon Frapié, Thérive, Lemonnier, Mme Couillet-Tessier, Roger Dévigne, Luc Durtain, André Chamson, Marcel Berger, Gabriel Reuillard, Louis Chaffurin, Mattei Roussou, Robert Randau, Romain Roussel, François de Roux, John Charpentier, and Jean des Vignes Rouges (3).

With an eye to a populist background these dinners were first held in a little "bistrot" near the Place de la République, probably in rue de Bretagne, but this restaurant soon proved too small, and the populists moved to the left bank, to the Café Voltaire, Place de l'Odéon. Here the atmosphere was judged too cold and official, and towards the end of 1938 they moved again to the Restaurant Alexandre, 18 rue des Canettes, near Saint-Sulpice. The proprietor owned a large hall in the building opposite the restaurant itself, and here they met every second Saturday of the month, except in summer. Sometimes there were as many as sixty people present, many of them critics. (L)

The need had long been felt for a populist review, and Yves Picart, a former pupil of Lemonniers, stepped into the picture. In 1933 Yves Picart had founded the "Cahiers de Paris", an art and literary review. One day he received an invitation to a populist dinner at the Café Voltaire, and after dinner Lemonnier, interested in his review, asked whether Picart could not find place in it for the activities of the populist group (L). Yves Picart agreed and soon afterwards, in the 21st issue of April 1938, a third of the space was devoted to articles of populist interest. For the following issue, while retaining Louis Pimienta and Jean Colombat as editor and secretary, Yves Picart had an editorial staff consisting of populists, namely Pierre Bathille, Marcel Berger, Antonine Couillet-Tessier, Léon Lemonnier, Raoul Stephan, and André Thérive.

In November 1938 the 24th issue of the "Cahiers de Paris" had a new sub-title: "Revue Populiste", and the whole space was devoted to the populists.

Yves Picart's "Cahiers de Paris" is important to us because it is the only populist review that existed, and forms in fact an anthology of the populist group. The numbers devoted to Thérive's and Lemonnier's movement include stories, sketches and poems by Romain Roussel, Saint-Georges de Bouhélier, Maxence Van der Meersch, René Ménéard, Mme Laurance Algan, Pierre Bathille, Léon Lemonnier, André Thérive, Mme Antonine Couillet-Tessier, Philippe Dumaine, Louis Chaffurin, Jules Romains, and posthumous works by Eugène Dabit.

Some of the above authors contributed articles too, and there were also articles by Raoul Stéphan, Léon Deffoux, Frédéric Lefèvre, Yves Picart, Louis le Sidaner, Charles Braibant, Charles Chassé, Pierre Hamp and others, while the "Cahiers de Paris" included reproductions of populist paintings by Geneviève Schorbon, Mandler, Mela Muter, Victorin Truchet, Germaine Estival, Peterelle, Nakache, Wenbaum, and woodcuts by Jean Lebedeff; special numbers were devoted to Eugène Dabit, Jules Romains, the "Roman Américain Populiste", and to Charles-Louis Philippe.

The Goncourts, forerunners of the populists, had organised an "Académie Goncourt". In 1939 the "Académie Populiste" was founded, with thirteen members: Marcel Berger, Saint-Georges de Bouhélier, Charles Braibant, Louis Chaffurin, Antonine Coulliet-Tessier, Luc Durtain, Léon Frapié, Léon Lemonnier, Louis Le Sidaner, René Ménard, Yves Picart, André Thérive and Maxence Van der Meersch (L). The following year Lemonnier can sign under one of his poems "Léon Lemonnier de l'Académie Populiste". (6) But the Academy, though probably never officially disbanded, played little part in the general movement, and vacant seats, like those after the death of Chaffurin, Léon Deffoux and Van der Meersch, were not filled. Lemonnier says that the Academy was dropped after 1940, as its members feared that the idea would merely be considered amusing (L).

In the meantime the "Cahiers de Paris", besides forming an anthology of populist works and ideas, played another important role, that of stimulating populist poetry. Lemonnier wanted to annex poets to the movement, although André Thérive rather scoffed at the idea, feeling that "populist poetry" was rather a contradiction in terms (I). The "Cahiers de Paris" gave the poets a chance of publishing a manifesto, and of printing individual poems which came in response to it.

The manifesto "Pour une Poésie Populiste" was drafted by Pierre Bathille and René Ménard, and appeared in the 27th issue of March, 1939 (7). We can imagine its contents: one should draw inspiration from the common people, and turn for themes to modern civilisation, with its factories, its streets and its docks, because poetry to be alive must deal with everyday life, without losing its transcendental powers. Genuine emotions must take the place of artificial sentimentality, and poets must show the beauty of daily scenes and objects. The language used can be popular or technical as well as classical.

The same year, 1939, saw the foundation of a prize to encourage populist poetry, and the first prize went to Philippe Dumaine (A) for manuscript verses which were printed in the "Cahiers de Paris" of March 1940. Further poetry prizes have been given almost every year to date. (8)

After the 33rd issue of March 1940, the "Cahiers de Paris" were discontinued till after the liberation of Paris. In the meantime the populists had to a certain extent lost touch with each other during the vicissitudes of the occupation, and in 1944 when publication had started again Yves Picart felt that populism as a movement had ceased to exist. "Les lettres françaises, après cette période d'étouffement," Picart wrote, "s'orientaient vers d'autres idéaux, et les 'Cahiers de Paris' ne pouvaient plus rester attachés à un mouvement qui ne signifiait plus rien et ne représentait plus personne. La revue a donc repris sa liberté" (L). But Yves Picart had been unduly pessimistic.

.

Although the review ceased to exist, Yves Picart published about a dozen volumes of poetry by populists like Chaffurin, Arnaud-Durand, René Ménard and Roger-Louis Pillet. Two of these volumes were anthologies, for the poets, who no longer had the review at their disposal, joined to bring out a representative collection of their works.

The first volume, "Poèmes Populistes" by twenty-two poets, appeared in 1941. In the preface Lemonnier says that the populist poets try to avoid lyrical poems about nature or love, and that they disapprove of an affected obscurity, as poetry should be understood. Their themes are drawn from the daily life of working men and women, or their works can be inspired by folklore. Although the use of the everyday spoken language or even "argot" is permissible, Lemonnier warns them that slang may not be understood in years to come. Lemonnier also wrote a preface (9) to the second anthology, "Poèmes Populistes du Deux", which appeared in 1943.

It can readily be understood that many types of populist poetry are possible, and the following extracts from these anthologies show a wide range in subject and treatment (10).

Here is an appreciation of the human value of poor people:



Charles Braibant



Louis Le Sidaner

Le charretier vient de passer avec toute sa charge
 Il m'a souri et j'ai eu chaud de ma chaleur humaine
 Plus tard lorsqu'il repassera sur son tombereau vide
 J'oserai lui tendre la main.

Mais sera-t-elle assez digne et daignera-t-il la prendre? --
 J. Arnaud-Durand : from "Le Charretier", I, 9.

And here a reaction to the squalour and ugliness of poor quarters:

C'était un dimanche pourri
 Sur les fortifs l'après-midi.
 Le boulevard Ornano vomissait des êtres mal bâtis
 Des juifs, des indigènes syphilitiques.
 Le marché s'étendait jusqu'au chemin de fer du Nord
 Pavé de culs de bouteilles.
 Sur la terre étaient nés, fleurs nouvelles,
 Des objets qui suaient la tuberculose.

Eugène Dabit : from "Marché aux Puces", I, 31.

A modern bank can suggest poetry to an office worker:

C'est un immense banque avec des guichets lourds,
 D'étroits guichets ouverts sur la rancœur humaine.
 Mais les miroirs d'oiseaux de ses portes-tambours
 Ont pris mon âme pour des prêts à la semaine ...

Christian Dedeyan : from "La Banque", II, 28.

While the love of a peasant for his horse touches Lebesgue, who had been a peasant himself:

Bijou, nous n'irens pas au labour, ce matin;
 Déjà le temps, depuis deux jours, est incertain;
 Vois! Ton râtelier neuf est plein de bon fourrage;
 Mais, s'il te plaît de t'ébrouer au pâturage,
 Je puis te mettre, une heure ou deux, en liberté ...

Phileas Lebesgue : from "Cheval de Labour", II, 51.

Some poets return to the tradition of François Villon:

Le vent de guerre a balayé
 Les amis comme feuille morte;
 Rires joyeux, flacon vidé,
 Diseurs de vers, fibre cohorte
 Autant que la bourrasque emporte...
 Tournoyant comme oiseau perdu
 Dans le Paris tout morfondu
 Se couchant tôt et sans lanterne
 J'appelle qui n'a répondu:
 Ils ne sont plus à la Taverne.

Pierre Bathille : from "Ballade des Amis Perdus", I, 11.

And some apply the rhythm of old rounds to the bustle of Paris:

Et roule le métro sur le pont de Barbès --

Voici la croix des boulevards
 Et les arches de la Chapelle
 Les cinés de Rochechouart
 Et la fille qu'une autre appelle ...

Que tout ce ciel a l'âme rouge!
 -- Sous la voûte un accordéon --
 Si tout s'agite, rien ne bouge
 Sous les saccades du néon ...

Et roule le métro sur le pont de Barbès --

René Ménéard : from "Le Pont de Barbès", I, 52.

Rich rhymes are not proscribed, if the subject is topical:

Dans un parfum d'azaléas,
Le mangeur songe à sa combine;
On peut lire sur sa trombine,
Qu'il en connaît les aléas.

Il ordonne: "Dis à Léa
Qu'elle apporte un verre de fine."
Sa femme dit, voyant sa mine:
"Est-ce que tu es allé à ... ?"

Léon Lemonnier : from "Marché Noir", II, 55.

And a cubist approach to city scenes is possible:

Parallèles et symétriques,
Des cités longues, identiques,
Et maussades comme leurs briques;
Mêmes fenêtres et rideaux
Mêmes cours, jardinets égaux.

Longs toits de tuile des fabriques
Dont la suie encrasse les briques;
La vapeur fuse, et les métaux
Grincent aux mors froids des étaux
Et des cisailles électriques.

Jean Rogissart (A) : from "Cités", I, 72.

The popular slang of a street-seller is certainly populist:

"Qui qu'en veut des rutabagas?
Des beaux, des frais et des matas?
Y a pas mieux pour remplumer
Les gonnesses les plus débinées..."

(Y n'en veulent pas... qu'ek ça veut dire?
Bien sûr, ça vaut pas un pernod,
Mais c'est moins cher pour la tir'lire
Et y les mangent bien, les veaux!)

Yves Picart : from "Aux Quat'Saisons", II, 79.

And populist too is the humorous complaint of a barmaid:

Au Bouquet de Charenton,
Comme leurs pièces sont rares!
Au zinc ils ont du pognon,
mais jamais pour le poirboire.

L'un dit qu'il m'aimerait mieux
Dans son lit que le tonnerre,
l'autre dit que mes deux yeux
font sauter les boutonsnières.

L'un griffe mon tablier,
et délace ma ceinture,
l'autre a chipé mon soulier
pour comparer nos pointures ...

André Thérive : from "Complainte", I, 77.

As in the case of the painters who sent works to the populist salons, the poets who contributed to these two anthologies did not necessarily write only populist poetry; in fact quite a few poems in the above two collections have no particular claim to be called populist at all.

.

For a few years after the liberation official populism slowed down. This was due partly to the general dispersal of friends during the occupation, and to the material difficulties following the war. The "Cahiers de Paris" were no longer populist, and there was at first no centre for reunions. Then in 1945 ill-health forced Léon Lemonnier to give up his work and retire from public life; this was a blow to populism, as Lemonnier had till then been the driving force behind the official activities



Sophie Stambat- by Jean Maillaud

In 1947/8 there were no prizes given for novels, none for poetry in 1946/8, and there were no "salon de peinture populiste" between 1943 and 1948. André Thérive accused of collaborating as a writer was in temporary disgrace, and friends, hoping for Lemonnier's return, hesitated to take over his position. Those years were to test the value of populism. If populism did not correspond to a living current in literature, or if that current had dried up, then there would be no revival of populism.

But there was, -- and that is a story in itself.

.

In 1938 a book appeared which was in the best populist tradition. This was the novel "Sève" by Sophie and Marc Stambat. In it Mme Sophie Stambat, helped by her husband, related much that she had seen during her unhappy childhood in the mining region of Artois. As a result of her book Sophie Stambat (A) was invited to the populist dinners in the rue des Canettes.

During the war, coffee was unobtainable, but Sophie Stambat had received a supply from a cousin in Saint-Domingue. It became the custom for a group of populists to migrate after the monthly dinners to the Quai de la Mégisserie just across the Seine; there Mme Stambat served them real coffee in the study of her beautiful apartment overlooking L'Ile de la Cité (L).

From a handful of guests the numbers rose to twenty, fifty, a hundred, soon populists were not the only people invited.

"Pendant la guerre", writes Sophie Stambat, "j'ai cru opportun de grouper les membres épars, non seulement du populisme, mais aussi d'autres tendances. C'est ainsi que je pris l'habitude de recevoir en général une fois par mois: écrivains, poètes, journalistes, acteurs, peintres, éditeurs, critiques, bref, ceux qui représentaient ou défendaient l'art français en général. C'était pour moi et pour tous un réconfort, sous un occupant qui déformait ou enlisait les valeurs françaises, de se retrouver, de s'apprécier, de s'entr'aider.

"Beaucoup sachant que ce salon était accueillant, firent signe à ceux qui l'ignoraient, et peu à peu le quai de la Mégisserie devint une sorte de lieu sympathique (dit-on) où beaucoup d'amis se retrouvaient après s'être perdus de vue. Les jeunes écrivains apprenaient à mieux connaître leurs maîtres, voire les académiciens. Depuis la libération des étrangers furent invités. Les journalistes firent quelques papiers, dans l'ensemble assez élogieux. Tout ceci permit évidemment aux "Populistes" disséminés dans cette foule de se faire mieux connaître, et d'intéresser leurs confrères à notre mouvement" (L).

Some time after the death of Marc Stambat, Sophie Stambat married the scientist and painter Henri Van Rugghe (A). To-day the most prominent writers, poets, artists, critics, actors and journalists flock to the third floor of No. 20 Quai de la Mégisserie one Saturday afternoon a month. Sophie Stambat herself, tall, with flaming red hair, strikingly dressed, accepts their homage.

"Diamant noir, belle Sophie
Que je revois en péplum blanc
Près d'Henri Van Rugghe, aussi grands
De talent, peinture et graphie,"

exclaims a populist poet (11). The folding doors separating the three large salons are wide open, the long white curtains are looped back from the windows, showing the view over the Seine. The well-dressed guests move past tables set with glasses, past satin-covered period furniture and bowls of flowers, or drift to the study and the adjoining room where Van Rugghe's paintings line the walls above the long low bookshelves. The only paintings in the larger rooms are five or six striking portraits of Sophie Stambat herself. (12)

It is difficult at first in this sophisticated gathering to realise why Mme Sophie Stambat should be interested in the populists, or how she could help them, but we understand better when we look at her background.

"Avant d'être Parisienne et femme de lettres," she once wrote, "je naquis près de Lens, dans une humble famille de mineurs; ceci vous expliquera mieux que tout pourquoi j'aime le Populisme" (L).

At present, with her social position and her wide circle of admirers, Mme Sophie Stambat can encourage anything she is interested in. Since 1943 she and Henri Van Rugghe have been on the juries which award prizes for populist novels, poetry and painting; her salon is more important now than the rare populist dinners, and the celebrations in honour of populist prize-winners are often in the Quai de la Mégisserie. Due to her generous hospitality populists can meet and win the support of other authors, artists and critics.

Since its foundation more than twenty-three years ago, populism has had its manifestos, its prizes, its literary quarrels with other groups, its reunions in cafés, its exhibitions of paintings, its review, its academy, its official dinners. Now the populists have their social protector and their "grand salon mondain". Populism has taken its place in the cultural life of 20th century France.

Notes

1. See Appendix IV for the present jury of the "Prix du Cinéma Populiste".
 2. See Appendix V for list of Populist Salons.
 3. Racul Stephan: "Le Populisme et le Roman Populiste", La Grande Revue, July 1938.
 4. See Appendix IV for list of prize-winners, and for the present jury.
 5. See Appendix V for list of contributors in 1952.
 6. Cahiers de Paris, No. 33, March 1940.
 7. See Appendix II for full text of this manifesto.
 8. See Appendix IV for prize-winners and for members of the jury.
 9. Which repeats the analysis of the position of populism which Lemonnier made in his article "Front Littéraire Commun" in the Mercure de France, 15/7/35; see above p. 101.
 10. The sections quoted below are all extracts from longer poems. The roman numerals I, II, refer to the first or second anthology; the page numbers are given in Arabic.
 11. Jean-Louis Vallas (A) in his poem "Réponse à Léon Lemonnier" (L).
 12. According to Miss Gillian Jewell (L) who was present on one occasion. See also Jean Duché: "Une Heure dans le salon littéraire de Mme Sophie Stambat", Le Figaro Littéraire, 7/6/1947.
-

- 17 -

POPULISM

ILLUSTRATED BY PRIZE-WINNING NOVELS

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

POPULISM ILLUSTRATED BY PRIZE-WINNING NOVELS

Although many individual books were considered populist, and several writers were directly or indirectly associated with the movement because of their work as a whole, official populism can best be illustrated by the books which won the "Prix Populiste" (1).

Here there is plenty of material for study. In the 23 years the movement has existed so far, from 1929 to 1952, prizes have been awarded to eighteen novelists and twelve poets. Their prize-winning works will be examined here for the following reasons:

In the first place, the prize-winning books are important historically. They show which authors were considered populist, at least during a certain section of their career.

Secondly, an analysis of these works should indicate what subjects, treatment and language were generally accepted as populist.

Thirdly the prize books form an important indication of the development of populism. Their number is sufficient, and they are spread over a wide enough period to show whether populism was static, or whether it was organic and could adapt itself to a changing environment.

How exactly are these prizes awarded? The "Prix du Roman Populiste", initiated by Mme Antonine Couillet-Tessier in 1931, is usually given in May each year. Books are submitted by their authors to a Jury consisting of twelve to sixteen members (2). In the beginning the prize was valued at 5,000 francs, which in 1931 was worth about £40. In spite of the great fall in the franc, the prize money has not been increased to any great extent. It was worth about 8,000 francs in 1950, as the sixteen members of the jury each contributed 500 francs. The "Prix de Poésie Populiste" was first given in 1939. In 1950 it was worth 6,500 francs, as the thirteen jury members gave 500 francs each. Thus in both cases now, the prize is mainly an honour, which should however increase the sale of the author's work.

Only those books are considered for prizes which are submitted to the jury by the authors or their publishers. This is important to remember, for although prize-winning authors sometimes hesitate about accepting the title "populist", as in the case of Dabit, Jules Romains, Pollès and Sartre, yet at least they should not be completely opposed to populist aims, and one cannot argue that people like Dabit or Remy were given prizes against their will.

.

One aim of populism was to reflect the society of our times, especially the life of the lower classes, hitherto neglected. The following summary of the prize-winning books will show that the majority deal with the lives and conditions of lower middle class or working-class people in the first half of the 20th century.

Eugène Dabit's "Hôtel du Nord" (A)(3) has been discussed in a previous chapter. He tells the stories, as far as he knew them, of different people he met in his father's lodging-house in a poor quarter of Paris. Jules Romain's "Le 6 Octobre" and "Crime de Quinette" (A), the first two volumes of "Les Hommes de Bonne Volonté", tell of a day in the life of many different types of people in Paris in 1908, from the poor housewife Mme Maillecottin and the sign-painter's apprentice, young Wazenmes, to the actresse Germaine Baader and her lover, the radical deputy Gurau. The "Crime de Quinette" deals in addition with the lust for adventure of the bookbinder Quinette and his strange relations with a murderer which turn him into a murderer himself.

Jean Pallu's "Port d'Escale" (A) tells of humble office workers in a business concern, and their daily life, in contrast to one of their number who was rich and able to travel. "Ce n'est pas un livre populiste, à proprement parler," writes Pallu (L). "C'est un essai romancé sur



Jean Merrien
at the helm of his yacht



Jean Rogissart

l'exotisme et l'évasion." But the problem of the dull existence of the working classes is a populist one. Henri Pollès (A) in his "Sophie de Tréguier" treats a somewhat similar theme. Sophie Kerguénou, the daughter of a poor shop-keeper in the narrow-minded and gossiping town of Tréguier in Brittany, is sensitive and romantically inclined due to her ill-health and her mother's excessive affection. Gossip and conventions prevent her marrying the man she loves, and stifled by her surroundings, her health gradually fails and she dies. The scandal and the atmosphere of a small town are excellently rendered, and much of the book is written in the regional style. "Le ciel est beau, Maguitec!" "Beau effrayant, vat! Besoin il y a pour la terre. Mais de l'orage il y a dans le temps."

Marie Gevers' (A) "Madame Orpha ou la sérénade de mai", set in the Belgian countryside, tells of the love of a young gardener Louis on Marie Gevers' parents' estate for Mme Orpha, the wife of a tax-collector. Young Marie, on the brink of womanhood, follows their romance with wonder, enlightened by careless words spoken in her presence, or by furtive meetings of Louis and Orpha amid the changing countryside as the seasons follow each other. Finally Orpha and Louis run away, and the tax-collector drowns himself. The book is striking in its purity, its excellent style, and outstanding descriptions of the country. Henri Troyat (A) in his "Faux Jour" tells the story of an enthusiastic and impoverished business man who impresses his son Jean with wild schemes for getting rich quickly, until Jean realises that his father is incompetent and is only putting on a brave show to hide the fact that he is ruined.

Tristan Rémy's "Faubourg Saint-Antoine" (A) shows the life in a cabinet-maker's workshop in the South-east of Paris, where the apprentices have a difficult time when a new foreman arrives; the second part of the book deals with other poor people in the neighbourhood; an elderly "concierge" la mère Milou, who longs for a child; a working-girl Armande with an unwanted baby; and Fabert, a book-keeper in the workshop, who finds more warmth from a prostitute "la grosse Fernande" than from Armande, the mother of his child.

Jean-Paul Sartre's "La Nausée" (A) was his first work, and the basis in the form of a novel of his doctrine of existentialism which he was to develop subsequently. The chief character, Antoine Roquentin, is engaged in historical research at Bouville. There are few other characters; "l'Autodidacte", who is reading through volumes in the library from A to Z, and pesters Antoine Roquentin with his admiration; some people in cafés whom Antoine finds sickening, and an English woman Anny to whom Antoine explains his newly-discovered conception of existence. Jean Rogissart's "Le Fer et la Forêt" (A), with its strong sympathy for the socialist cause, is a romanticised biography of an early socialist Jean Mamert, set among the metal workshops in the Ardennes at the time of Napoléon III. Mamert invents a new manufacturing process and dreams of starting a factory where the profits will be shared by the workers, but the time is not yet ripe and his efforts fail.

Louis Guilloux's "Le Pain des Rêves" (A) was related in a previous chapter. It describes the life of children in a working-class family in Brittany. Marius Richard's "La Naissance de Phèdre" (A), a collection of stories, is now unobtainable. Jean Merrien's "Bord à Bord" (A) is the story of two men who were students together, the Breton Gwenolé and his friend Marcel. Marcel's family is ruined, and Marcel is in constant financial difficulties while Gwenolé rises in society through a rich marriage, but both are forced to relinquish the poetry and music they loved. Poverty undermines Marcel's health and he dies of tuberculosis, while the slump and a simpler existence brings Gwenolé the happiness he had lost.

Emmanuel Roblès' "Travail d'Homme" (A) is set in the mountains in Spain, where construction work is in progress on a huge dam to stem the force of the Rio Negro which floods the valleys in spring. Rafaël escapes from the drab daily life in a narrow-minded Spanish community, and finds fierce hatreds and strong friendships amongst the heroes who are building the giant wall at the risk of their lives. Rafaël's death in

an effort to free the overflow in a flood is the fulfilment of his existence as a man. This is a strong book, classical in its simple theme and in its vivid, clear-cut descriptions. Armand Lanoux's "La Nef des Fous" (A) tells of a demobilised soldier Luc, who is a painter, and lives with the family of his dead comrade in Lagny on the outskirts of Paris. Haunted by the memory of his friend, troubled by the strange behaviour of members of the household overshadowed by a lunatic asylum in the neighbourhood, Luc tries to help a young girl out of this sinister atmosphere which terrifies her, and which Luc sees as a living version of Hieronymus Bosch's late mediaeval "Ship of Fools". The surrealistic style enhances the weird beauty of this sombre book.

Serge Groussard's "Des Gens sans Importance" (A) is forceful and direct, with a well-constructed plot. A long-distance van-driver, Viard, is accused of the murder of his wife, who fell from a window of their cramped fifth floor flat. Viard's mistress, the servant of a country inn whom he brought to Paris is also implicated. Through this story we get the atmosphere of highroads of southern France and their inns, and of garages, workers' flats, street-walkers' hotels and government prisons in Paris. René Fallet's work (A), which consisted of "Banlieue Sud-Est", "La Fleur et la Souris", and "Pigalle" tells of the adolescence of a wide-awake youth in poor quarters, of his chance encounters with women, of his work, his friends, his revolts, and the poetry he finds in his surroundings in spite of their sordidness. Fallet was strongly influenced by Rimbaud, and somewhat resembles him through his youth, and his mixture of lyricism and brutal realism, while Fallet's colourful and sometimes incomprehensible jargon must pain André Thérive, that champion of pure French.

Emile Danoën's "Une Maison Soufflée aux Vents" (A) relates the lives and dramas of working-class families in the old quarter of Saint-François in Le Havre, Danoën himself had grown up in this district before it was destroyed by bombs in 1940, so was well qualified to resurrect the past of a quarter he loved. Herbert Le Porrier's "Juliette au Passage" (A) has as heroine a young working-class girl Juliette. The book deals with her sordid surroundings in an over-populated district of Paris. Her hope and courage and periodic despair make her very human. Her husband is typical of all those young men after the occupation who thought it sensible to make money fast rather than honourably, and dreamt of a luxurious life though they found themselves for periods in prison. Le Porrier's love for his characters brings them very near to us.

.

If these books alone were to remain as a record for future generations, they would give, through the people and surroundings they describe, a fairly representative cross-section of the poorer classes of our society, which is what the populists hoped to achieve.

What type of people do we find? Workers of various kinds in Paris (Dabit, Rémy, Groussard, Le Porrier); working-class people in the "Grande Banlieue" around Paris (Lanoux, Fallet); impoverished middle-class in Paris (Troyat, Merrien); lower class homes in Brittany and Normandy (Pollès Guilloux, Danoën); metal workers in the Ardennes (Rogissart); peasants in Belgium (Gevers), and masons in Spain (Roblès). With Gevers and Merrien there are chief characters from both middle and lower classes, while Sartre writes about a poor intellectual, and Romain shows both rich and poor classes in Paris. In general there are more prize books dealing with factory and city workers than with farmers and peasants in the country, perhaps because authors tend to settle in towns, and this influences their books, perhaps because books have been written in past centuries about peasants, while the city proletariat is a relatively recent development, perhaps also because the town worker has more chance to educate himself than the peasant, and is beginning to write about his own experiences.

If all authors, except perhaps Sartre and Romain, show typically populist characters, what about the surroundings? There is a poor lodging house (Dabit), a village shop (Pollès), the country (Gevers), and family life where money is scarce (Guilloux); there is a timber yard (Lanoux), a metal workshop (Rogissart), a cabinet maker's workshop (Rémy), an office in Lyons (Pallu), and a dam in construction in Spain (Roblès); there are

garages and inns on the highroads (Groussard), old quarters in a town (Danoën), and cramped lodgings and prisons in Paris (Groussard, Le Porrier). In all these cases the "milieu" is also populist. Again Romain and Sartre are exceptions. Could one call their streets and cafés populist? Perhaps, but then what author is not populist? Romain deals with a sign-painter's shop, a book-binder's shop, a school class-room; but he is ill at ease in these surroundings, and soon sends Clanricard, Wazemmes and Quinette to play their parts elsewhere.

In summing up we may say that in spite of the many different characters and surroundings they describe, the populist prize books are almost without exception about the poorer classes integrated into their surroundings. The story goes that when Thérive once mentioned to Mauriac how interesting he found the streets and the people near the Place de la Bastille, Mauriac looked surprised and answered: "Je ne connais pas ces quartiers-là." (4) If this anecdote be true, then Mauriac and his class would know few of the people and settings described in these books, which is another way of saying that they are genuinely populist.

.

How did the populist jury judge i) the treatment of the subject, ii) the authors' attitude to the poorer classes they described, and iii) the language used? These are questions one would like answered to judge what other characteristics are expected or accepted officially in populist novels. These points will be discussed briefly.

i) In the case of half the prize-winning novels the treatment of the subject is realistic, that is, there is no distortion in the presentation of reality. This refers to the works by Dabit, Polles, Rémy, Rogissart, Guilloux, Merrien, Groussard, Danoën and Le Porrier. Of the others, Gevers romanticises reality, Roblès idealises the workers' life, Troyat exaggerates slightly to bring out a type, Lanoux and Fallet are surrealist at times, and Sartre is metaphysical. Where Romain is concerned, in spite of very detailed descriptions, the characters tend not to be real people but puppets, ruled by Romain's imagination. So although a realistic treatment of the subject is strongly encouraged, it is not considered essential.

ii) What is the attitude of the authors in these prize-winning books to the lower classes they deal with. Several attitudes are shown. a) the love for the people as individuals or as a social group; b) an interest, often intellectual, in poor people as social types; c) a psycho-analytical interest in chosen individuals; d) there might be a revulsion felt for the superficially coarser and rougher social groups; e) or the author's interest could be centered on a plot the characters provide, and less on the characters themselves. Other attitudes are possible, but are not evident in these books.

What do we find? Some authors show love for people who have actually existed. This is the case with Dabit, Rémy, Rogissart, Guilloux, Fallet and Danoën. These all came from the proletarian class, and with them the love is real and direct. With Roblès and Le Porrier we find a strong love for the people too, but in Roblès' case for idealised workmen, and in Le Porrier's case for a young couple that he created himself. Romain and Troyat remain unemotional; they are interested in their characters mainly as social types. With Gevers, Merrien and Groussard the people are necessary for the story; the love, though present, is less direct. Lanoux's interest in people is more that of a psychiatrist, while Sartre tends to show disgust for the man in the street.

iii) To arrive at any conclusion where language is concerned, we must differentiate between classical French which can be called C, popular French (P), regional French (R), and "argot" or slang which we will term A.

Although classical French and regional French are easy to distinguish, it is difficult nowadays to draw a dividing line between "argot" or the "langage populaire" in France, and equally difficult to define either (5), yet for our present purpose we will make the



Camille François



Marius Richard

following distinctions:

Classical French will be of the type encouraged in essays in the best lycées.

Popular French corresponds to the normal spoken language of the middle classes, where coarser words and generally accepted ungrammatical phrases are used.

Regional French does not mean dialect; it means the spoken French in a particular region which differs from popular French by the introduction of a few words from the current dialect, or by a few turns of phrase peculiar to that region.

In "argot", the slang mainly of the working-class, new words are introduced which would not be found in the smaller editions of Larousse, or ordinary words are used with a new meaning.

These differences are well illustrated in the following extract from Guilloux's "Le Pain des Rêves", where the uncle from Paris comes to Brittany to tell his father that he is marrying Béa in spite of her doubtful family (S)(6).

" - Oh ben, dit l'oncle, la mère c'est quelque chose comme une chiffonnière, bonhomme. Et une drôle de chiffonnière d'après ce que raconte Béa. (P)

Mais il n'y avait pas de sots métiers. Une chiffonnière, et puis après? (P)

- Oh ben, y a les frères ... C'est des frappes. C'est à cause des frangins surtout qu'elle s'est cavallée. Paraît qu'y en a un qu'aurait fait de la boîte ... (A)

- Prends garde ousque tu mets tes pieds, fiston! (R)

- Mais bonhomme, puisqu'elle a rompu ... (P)

C'était là son grand argument, son grand espoir. Puisque Béa avait quitté les siens, elle n'approuvait pas leurs manières." (C)

As indicated in this short extract by the letters in brackets, we have three sections in popular French, and one section each in "argot, regional French and classical French.

We must also distinguish between text or descriptive passages (T) and dialogue (D), which are usually not in the same French. We must remember too that when saying for instance that a writer's text is in popular French (P) we refer to the general trend and not to every sentence. In Guilloux's case, where a rough survey of the language gives us TC.DP. (text in classical French, dialogue in popular French), we can see from the above extract that other elements are present too.

The language in the prize-winning books is distributed as follows:
Dabit TP.DA. Romaine TC.DP. Pollès TC.R. DR. Gevers TC.DC. Troyat TC.DP.
Rémy TP.DA. Sartre TC.DC. Rogissart TP.DP.R. Guilloux TC.DP.
Merrien TP.DP. Roblès TC.DP. Lanoux TP.DA. Groussard TP.DA. Fallet
TA.DA. Danoën TP.DA. Le Porrier TC.DP.

It is interesting to compare the language in these books with that of the first five novels of Lemonnier and of Thérive, written before or soon after the manifestos of 1929. In each case in those ten books, a rough survey gives us TC.DC. On the other hand Poulaille's "Le Pain Quotidien" and "Les Damnés de la Terre" both give us TP.DA.

It will be noticed that the text tends to be as formal or one degree more formal than the spoken dialogue. It will also be seen that a hierarchy of five steps can be established, going from formal to very informal French, namely i) TC.DC. ii) TC.DP. (or TC.DR). iii) TP.DP. (or TP.DR.; TR.DR.) iv) TP.DA (TR.DA. is highly unlikely) and lastly v) TA.DA. Cases of TC.DA. are hardly likely.

.

From the foregoing brief analysis of treatment, attitude, and language, certain general observations can be made.

a) In the first ten years after the manifestos, only two books out

of the seven have a language classification TP.DA. These are by Dabit and Rémy, the most proletarian of the authors; so it would seem that the less formal French tends to go together with a lower social origin.

b) Of the nine books where the treatment is realistic, four (Dabit, Rémy, Groussard and Danoën) have dialogue in "argot"; the others have their dialogue either in regional or popular French. Of the books where the treatment is not realistic however, two (Gevers, Sartre) have their dialogue in classical French, three in popular French, (Romains, Troyat, Guilloux), and two (Lanoux, Fallet) in "argot". It would appear that there is some correlation between realistic treatment and a more informal language.

c) Of the nine books where the treatment is realistic, the first five are by authors of proletarian origin (Dabit, Pollès, Rémy, Rogissart, Guilloux). This seems to indicate a tendency, in the first twelve years at least, for writers coming from the working-class to adopt a direct and straightforward attitude to their subject. Danoën, who won the prize in 1951, is the sixth proletarian author to write in a realistic way.

d) The deepest love and understanding for the poorer classes come from representatives of the proletarian class (Dabit, Rémy, Rogissart, Guilloux, Danoën).

e) The only writers among the first ten prize-winners to deal solely with working-class people are the four proletarian authors, Dabit, Rémy, Rogissart and Guilloux, indicating again that writers from a higher social class had less understanding, knowledge or interest for those below them.

f) Later prize-winning books, from the occupation of 1940 onwards, show, taken as a whole, different tendencies where subject matter, treatment and language is concerned. These differences will be discussed when we deal with the development of populism in the following chapter.

g) In general, one might say that official populism lays more stress on subject matter than on treatment, as the characters and surroundings portrayed in the prize books were almost exclusively populist, while the treatment, attitude and language showed a fair variation.

Lemonnier once spoke sarcastically of critics who maintained that one could tell from an author's origins whether he was capable of writing about the people or not. "Avant d'examiner votre livre, on vous demandera sans doute un récit de votre vie, un aperçu des métiers que vous avez pu exercer, et la feuille d'impôts de vos parents", and Lemonnier declared emphatically: "Nous ne devons compte à personne ni de notre vie ni de nos origines." (7)

It is true that the populist jury, upholding this attitude rigorously, make neither national nor class distinctions when awarding prizes. Marie Gevers for instance is Belgian, while Roblès is from Algeria, and of the eighteen prize-winners, nine are without doubt from the lower classes originally (Dabit, Pallu, Pollès, Rémy, Rogissart, Guilloux, Lanoux, Fallet and Danoën). But in reply to Lemonnier one might say that given a populist author's life, his trade, and the tax sheets of his parents, one might estimate with reasonable accuracy what type of book that author might write. Its quality however would depend mainly on his literary talent or genius.

Notes

1. For list of prize-winning books see Appendix IV. Note: The two works "Port d'Escale" by Jean Pallu, and "La Naissance de Phèdre" by Marius Richard were out of print and unobtainable, and the information gained about them was limited. This should be born in mind when considering the various conclusions suggested in chapters 17, 18.
2. See Appendix IV for list of members of first and most recent jury.

3. The bracketed capital (A) refers the reader to Appendix VII for Authors' Lives.
 4. Quoted by Armand Lancoux in "Le Populisme", Le Dossier Littéraire, July 1950, and by Thérive in "Naissance du Populisme", L'Acropole, Feb, 1950.
 5. See Thérive: "Le Français, langue morte?", chapter "La langue populaire et l'argot".
 6. Louis Guilloux, "Le Pain des Rêves", p. 151.
 7. Lemonnier: "Populisme", Les Nouvelles Littéraires, 18/1/1930.
-

- 18 -

CONTEMPORARY TRENDS
IN POPULIST NOVELS AND POETRY

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN POPULIST NOVELS AND POETRY

Now the populist prize books are important historically, because they point to the authors' association with the populist movement. They are important also as examples of various literary tendencies considered populist. But they have another function. Spread over twenty-three years they form the official record of populism in practice; they give certain statistical evidence to show whether populism was static, or whether it changed throughout those years; and if so, how it changed.

Our conclusion will be the following: Populism, from the beginning, has been an organic movement, and has struggled to adapt itself to changing social and literary conditions, often against the wishes of its more conservative founders.

Some examples from the first few years will show that populism, then already, had a life of its own. Lemonnier wrote early in 1930: "Sans doute parce qu'il était simple, le mot populiste a fait fortune. Il appartient maintenant au langage de la critique ... et ainsi son sens s'enrichit et se précise à mesure que les oeuvres viennent renforcer le mouvement. Le mot est même en train de s'étendre aux autres arts, et on commence à parler de peinture populiste. Mieux encore, il est presque d'usage courant et s'applique à la vie même; j'ai entendu parler de 'scène populiste'. Dès lors, il serait bien présomptueux de vouloir le définir; toute rigueur géométrique doit être oubliée quand il s'agit d'un terme vivant." (1)

Did Antonine Couillet-Tessier foresee that the first prize would go to someone like Dabit? Probably not. Jules Romains who was awarded the prize in 1932 was a writer the early populists honoured and accepted. But when, grateful for the honour, he refused the money, what happened? The prize went to Jean Pallu who had first started writing when, employed in a factory, he discovered a little-used lavatory where he could retire to draft his manuscript a page or two at a time (L).

But populism was not only alive, it developed, and two definite periods can be distinguished as regards the language used, the type of authors writing populist novels, and the interpretation of the word "populist" itself. The first period starts with the first manifesto, and ends when the "Cahiers de Paris" ceased publication after March 1940. The opening of the second period coincides with the invasion of France, and is marked by the awarding of a populist prize to Jean-Paul Sartre for his "La Nausée".

.

1. Where language is concerned for instance, we notice, looking at the eighteen prize-winning books, a certain shift over the years towards a less formal French. Before 1940 "argot" was only used by Dabit and Remy in their dialogue sections. After 1940 it is more frequent (Lanoux, Groussard, Fallet, Dancën). Before the occupation Gevers and Sartre wrote their dialogue mainly in classical French; after Sartre, there are no prize books with conversation passages in classical French. In the case of Fallet in 1950, we even have the text as well as the dialogue in "argot".

This trend towards popular language and slang may have two causes: the influence of pre-war books written wholly or partly in "argot", books like Céline's much talked about "Voyage au Bout de la Nuit" (1932); also perhaps the war and the occupation where, as in the 1914/1918 war, the bourgeois were forced into closer contact with working-class people, and became more used to their slang. One considers the use of "argot", apparently, as fashionable in populism nowadays, because it is realistic, popular, and picturesque at the same time. Here the medical doctor Le Porrier was faced by a dilemma when writing his "Juliette au Passage". Juliette should by rights have spoken "argot", but Le Porrier was perhaps not fluent enough in it, so he explains that Juliette had always taken a pride in speaking correct French, and had influenced her husband and the people around her.



Pierre Moussarie



René Fallet

2. Where the writers themselves are concerned, there is a difference between the pre-war and post-war periods. Before 1940 there are sharp distinctions between populists like Jules Romains, Marie Gevers, and Henri Troyat, and proletarian authors who got prizes, like Dabit, Jean Pallu, Henri Pollès and Tristan Rémy. After 1940 the distinctions become blunter. Roblès' father was a mason, but Roblès had a university education; Guilloux's existence in 1942 was as comfortable as that of any bourgeois. Then there is Serge Groussard, the son of an Infantry Officer. He was widely travelled, held a degree, and had specialised in Latin, Greek and History; how is it that his dialogue is in "argot", and that the common people he describes are so alive that he must have known them well? (2)

And how can one class Armand Lanoux and René Fallet? Lanoux who left school after his "brevet élémentaire" was mainly self-taught; when he started work he designed chocolate box covers, then taught and painted. Fallet was only at school till the age of fourteen, and then did odd jobs running errands, packing parcels, or working as clerk before taking up journalism. If one counts these authors as proletarians, why are they not treating their subjects in a realist manner like the proletarians of the first period? If Lanoux and Fallet belong to the middle class, why are their dialogues in slang?

Perhaps Poulaille provided the clue when he wrote in his "Nouvel Age Littéraire" -- "En fait, si intéressante qu'elle (la littérature prolétarienne) puisse être -- je donne ici mon opinion personnelle -- elle ne saurait se substituer à la véritable littérature vers laquelle d'ailleurs l'artiste prolétarien tend, même s'il l'ignore. Elle est une manifestation artistique de transition." (3)

Thus, just as proletarian novels tend to be transition stages only in the work of certain individual writers, as we have seen with Dabit and Guilloux, so proletarian literature itself tends to be a transition stage in the development of contemporary literature as a whole.

Since the birth of the third republic, since the advent of free and compulsory education, since the rapid spread of socialism and communism, since the two world wars which threw different social groups together, with the bourgeois writer's growing interest in the people, and the working man's gradual appreciation of literature, every decade has seen a narrowing of the gap between lower and middle classes, and every new generation of proletarian children has more chance of absorbing the culture which was formerly the privilege of the upper classes.

.

3. Pre-war and post-war populism differ not only in the language used, and in the background of the authors, but in the very conception of the word "populist".

Up to 1940, René Lalou's definition of populism was certainly applicable. Analysing Lemonnier's "La Maîtresse au Cœur Simple", Lalou said that the populist author should apparently "peindre des êtres qui n'ont rien d'exceptionnel et qui ne songent point à s'analyser; exclure tout romantisme comme toute sensiblerie; se garder pourtant des noirceurs à la Zola; bref, obtenir une sorte de réalisme stylisé" (4). And Eugène Dabit, whose "Hôtel du Nord" fits this description, is generally considered the most typical of the pre-war populists (1)(5).

In 1940 came the staggering offer of a populist prize to Jean-Paul Sartre for his "La Nausée", which is metaphysical, riddled with self-analysis, and shows scorn for people in general and for populists in particular (6). Lemonnier writes: "Jean-Paul Sartre ... obtint le Prix du roman populiste en 1940 alors qu'il avait été dédaigné par tous les jurys littéraires. Il faut avouer que ce jour-là les populistes ont eu du flair, quoiqu'ils sentissent bien que ce candidat avait un odeur étrange." (5) So Lemonnier was uneasy about Sartre, and Sartre himself accepted the title of "populist" with very strong reservations.

But after Sartre comes Rogissart, who, though realist in detail, has a definite political bias; then Roblès who is idealistic; then Lanoux,

who is influenced by surrealism and psychoanalysis; then Fallet, with his strong tendency to surrealism. So the prize-winners, while retaining populist characters and surroundings, are breaking away from realism in their treatment of the story. Lanoux and Fallet for instance completely reject Lalou's definition of populism quoted above (5), although it is still held by more conservative populists like Lemonnier.

No agreement seems possible between those who believe that populist novels, following in the naturalist tradition, should be realist, and those on the other hand who consider that the word "populist" should refer to the subject matter and not to the treatment of a work. This split gives rise to what Armand Lanoux calls a "malaise populiste", which becomes particularly strong, he says, in the months when the prizes are awarded each year (5).

There seems a definite tendency among the younger writers and even among some of the older ones, like Tristan Rémy, towards what René Fallet and others call a poetic realism, which will allow an imaginative treatment of the subject. Lanoux explains this further: "Qu'un Proust des pauvres parle des pauvres avec la splendeur qu'utilisa le Proust des beaux quartiers, il sera populiste. Le peuple a droit aux flamboiements de la palette, aux majestés de la fresque, aux subtilités de l'analyse psychologique ou du monologue intérieur. Rien n'est trop coruscant, trop sonore, trop éclatant pour lui. Il y a des employés du gaz qui ont des rêves beaux comme des Breughel! Le peuple a droit à l'arc-en-ciel." And Lanoux suggests the following new definition of populism, because it is wide enough to fit all modern populist writers: "Le populisme s'identifie à l'accession des gens du peuple à la dignité de personnages de roman." (5)

Although Léon Lemonnier is still the President of the populist movement, ill-health has kept him away from meetings and social gatherings of populists since 1945. The love and respect of the older populists for Lemonnier to some extent retarded the organic development of Populism, but could not stop it. At a populist dinner in the spring of 1952 it was decided that a new pamphlet or booklet should be brought out "pour refaire le point du populisme dans une sorte de manifeste". (L) It is highly significant that the person entrusted to draw up this revised and up-to-date manifesto of populism should be Armand Lanoux (7).

.....

The first prize for populist poetry was given to Philippe Dumaine (A) early in 1940 for manuscript verses. From 1940 onwards there has been a populist prize for poetry almost every year, usually in November. It seems striking that the first prize for poetry should coincide with the beginning of the second period of populism where the authors break away from realism, and that this prize should have been given to Dumaine, whose aim, "un réalisme lyrique" (L), seems to differ in words only from the younger populists' "réalisme poétique".

So far, there have been twelve prize-winners for populist poetry, but it must be stressed that by the very nature of their work, the poets have not the same importance for us as the novelists, for the following reasons:

In the first place, populist prizes have been given for manuscript verses (Dumaine) or for printed works where the edition has been limited to a few dozen copies only (Vallas). These works were therefore known and appreciated in a very narrow circle only.

Secondly, most prize-winning volumes of poetry were published at the poets' own expense, so they cannot tell us as much about the current public taste as can novels published by editors with an eye to sales.

In the third place a prize-winning novel has a certain unity, but a volume of poetry can contain poems of many different types and styles. Thus, since the jury crown the work as a whole and not individual poems in the volume, it is less easy to draw conclusions as to the type of poem considered populist.

Lastly, the prize for poetry has only been given since 1939, and the



Philippe Dumaine



François Piazza

shorter the period under discussion, the less accurate become any deductions that can be made.

One result of the limited interest of the public in poetry and the small editions printed is that the majority of the prize-winning works are unobtainable. The poets, realising this difficulty, have been helpful and have included copies of poems in answering questions on their work. But even so, individual poems tell us little of a poet's work as a whole, and often poems were included which were not from prize-winning collections, and which might have been written in a completely different style.

.

We can however advance certain conclusions.

1) The subjects of populist poems can be very varied; we have Philippe Dumaine's sketches of the war; Arnaud-Durand's populist scenes and people; Camille François (A) who describes life in all its aspects, both humorous and pathetic; Lil Boël's poor (A); Roger-Louis Pillet's revolt against bourgeois virtues and hypocrisy; Pierre Moussarie's glimpses of country life (A); Malicet's songs for the workers (A); Vallas' scenes of Paris-bridges (A); and Maurice Carême's descriptions of simple home joys and sorrows (A).

2) The treatment of the subject in a populist poem can also vary greatly. There is Dumaine's "réalisme lyrique", Pillet's symbolism, and Moussarie, who produces Parnassian, symbolist and surrealist works. Piazza was a composer in his free time before taking up poetry, and his lines are very musical. There is a veiled symbolism in Maurice Carême's clear and intimate poetry; Camille François' verses in popular French show the imprint of ballads and cabaret songs; Malicet was influenced by Verlaine, Richepin and Rictus, while Vallas is fond of humour and fantasy. As with recent populist novels, it is apparently the subject matter and not so much the treatment that classes a work as populist.

3) The majority of the poets have a middle class background. Théophile Malicet is an exception, as he worked from the age of twelve as a metal worker like his father in a factory in the Ardennes, and struggled hard in his spare time to build up a general knowledge. One reason why there are few poets from the lower classes is because the proletarians had not the money to publish volumes of poetry. When compiling the two anthologies of populist poetry, for instance, Lemonnier says: "J'ai taché de trouver des poètes populistes qui avaient de l'argent pour publier leurs œuvres. Les deux recueils ont été publiés à frais communs." (L)

4) The majority of the poets write in classical French. Malicet has some poems in popular French, and may even have written in "argot" as he is said to be partly influenced by Jehan Rictus, who used "argot" to describe the life of the poor among whom he lived. Camille François also writes in popular French, while two poets use "argot" in their poems; one is François Piazza, the other Lil Boël.

5) It is significant of the recent spread in the use of "argot" in literature that both François Piazza and Lil Boël are from the middle class. Special mention must be made of these two poets, because they continue the tradition of Jehan Rictus, whose full worth has probably not yet been appreciated. Lil Boël and Piazza's work comes nearer to the spoken language by the elision of many vowels usually sounded in poetry, while the "argot" used by these two populist poets brings a breath of fresh air into the overcrowded atmosphere of classical verse. Recently Camille François seems to continue in this tradition, for how can a clear boundary be drawn between "argot" and popular French?

.

If populism can thus encourage the use of popular language, it will do much to bring new life into French poetry. Lemonnier, while suggesting the use of "argot", had warned poets that some of their words might not be understood in years to come (8). But Verlaine, Mallarmé and Eluard would hardly consider this a disadvantage, while François Villon's slang

if anything endears him to us.

How did Piazza and Lil Boël who grew up in the middle class come to write verse in popular slang? François Piazza (A) at one time traded in wood, and had friends among the cabinet makers in Tristan Rémy's Faubourg Saint-Antoine. It was from these men that Piazza learnt the "argot" which he uses in poetry, because of "le pittoresque et la puissance expressive." Piazza tells also that one of the strongest emotions of his life was the discovery, thanks to a woman, of Jehan Rictus. "Les 'Soliloques du Pauvre' et le 'Coeur populaire' (de Rictus) ont été longtemps mes livres de chevet; c'est pour ainsi dire à leur ombre, que j'ai été amené à tenter d'utiliser à mon tour la langue populaire pour exprimer des sentiments personnels avec naturel." (L)

Lil Boël's case is interesting. She has often been called "fille spirituelle" of Jehan Rictus, and by a strange coincidence her first poem was written two days after Rictus' death. She tells us herself how she started. "C'est le 9 novembre 1933 que j'ai écrit mon premier poème 'Prière à Ste-Marie'. J'aurais aimé être un Vigny, un Baudelaire... Pourquoi pas? Quand j'ai pris la plume pour me libérer de ce morceau que j'incubais depuis cinq ans et demi les quatres premiers vers étaient de ronflants alexandrins. Puis, impossible de continuer à ce rythme. La suite m'est venue en octos, avec des élisions, j'étais navrée. D'autres poèmes ont suivi dans la quinzaine. Longtemps j'ai caché ces manifestations auxquelles je ne pouvais pas, pourtant, ne pas obéir." (L)

Thus from the beginning, in spite of her middle class upbringing, Lil Boël could only write in popular language, or in slang which she had learnt from the poor she loved, from the beggars in the street and under the bridges, from the sick in hospitals. Lil Boël had always been attracted to those who suffered, partly ashamed of her happier lot, partly because she too had suffered much. After the death of her husband, ruined, she recited her works at cabarets like the Lapin à Gill and the Moulin de la Galette, thus her poems became known to the general public. Her book "Fosse Commune des Misères" was the first work in slang to be crowned by the populists. "Le cas de Lil Boël était bien embarrassant," wrote Léon Lemonnier, "parce qu'elle écrivait tout en argot. Est-ce que le populisme allait s'identifier avec la tradition de Jehan Rictus?" (9)

.....

In a previous chapter we gave some examples of populist poetry, showing a few of the variations possible in subject matter and style. The following are brief illustrations of some of the more original trends in the prize-winning works.

Here we have tragedy among the poor, an example of Dumaine's "réalisme lyrique":

NOYADE

La barque grise sous la lune
Vient d'aborder. Personne à bord.
Un litre, une casquette brune.
Le silence. Qui donc est mort?

Ce n'est pas Louis II de Bavière,
Prince romantique allemand,
Mais simplement un pauvre hère
Qui s'est noyé dans les étangs.

Ecoutez! sa veuve qui pleure
Sans se lasser l'attend au port.
Combien de jours et combien d'heures
Pour que les eaux rendent le corps?

Philippe Dumaine: from manuscript verses subsequently printed in
"Cahiers de Paris", March 1940.

Here Piazza uses slang to express his disgust and his melancholia:



Lil Boël



Maurice Carême

T'en as ta claqu' de n' voir durer
 dans c't'existenc' que les chieries.
 Tu peux les mettr', va, t'es paré!
 t'as assez r'sassé d'loufoqu'ries.

Laisse' tomber cett' sal' pantomine!
 Ailleurs, tu r'verras, p't'êtr' tes vieux.
 Ton coeur n'aura p't'êtr' plus d'famine
 et si tout s'éteint, ben! tant mieux!

La vie, c'est qu'un hôtel de passe.
 J'rends ma clef, et j'm'en vas dans l'noir,
 et j'r'fil' aux autr's ma p'tit' place
 pour rancarder cett' garc' d'espoir.

François Piazza : from "Impasse", in "Vertigo".

and Lil Boël explains her interest in the poor:

J'ai ramassé tout's les vieilles plaintes
 qui train'nè sur les pavés d'Paris.
 J'en ai fait des sortes d'complaintes.
 C'est par des chansons qu'tout finit.
 Qui qu'en veut? ... Ça sent pas la rose,
 mes typ's, à moi, c'est des loqu'teux,
 c'est des clodos, des pas-grand'chose
 et des tout-meutris ... Qui qu'en veut?
 Qui qu'en veut! J'dis ça pour de rire,
 y a trop d'larm's dans ces chansons-là

.....
 pasque j'les comprends, moi, les gueux.
 Ça m'soulag' que dans mes poèmes
 j'ais écrit tout c'qui gronde en eux,
 mêm' leurs jurons et leurs blasphèmes:
 c'est leur façon d'croire au Bon Dieu.

Lil Boël : from "Préface" in "Fosse Commune des
 Misères".

while Maurice Carême's love for his mother is the theme of his two prize-winning works:

Mon Dieu, je T'en supplie, aie pitié de ma mère!
 Si Tu es le vrai Dieu, Tu la reconnaitras
 parmi les pauvres gens, les plus seuls, les plus las
 d'avoir traîné leurs pieds douloureux sur la terre.

Elle n'eut pas le temps d'aller dans Ton Eglise.
 Sa prière, ce fut de partager le pain,
 de cirer, de blanchir et de coudre sans fin,
 de terminer avec amour des tâches grises.

Mon Dieu, ne brise pas le vieux coeur de ma mère!
 Si Tu es le vrai Dieu, Tu la reconnaitras.
 Son visage est si las et elle a tant souffert.

Maurice Carême : from "Prière" in "La Voix du
 Silence". Original in capitals throughout.

"Maintenant, après que les faits ont prouvé qu'il existait une poésie populiste," Lemonnier writes in 1949, "il reste à en donner une définition. Elle est en argot ou en français classique, elle se compose de vers réguliers ou irréguliers. Mais il est une condition à laquelle nous n'avons jamais failli. Il faut que les vers soient intelligibles et présentent immédiatement un sens à l'esprit. Et tout à coup, j'y pense, est poésie populiste tout ce qui n'est pas surréaliste." (9)

Notes

1. Lemonnier: "Populisme", Les Nouvelles Littéraires, 18/1/1930.
2. In a recent letter in answer to this question Serge Groussard writes:

- "Mon Dieu, j'ai certes une formation intellectuelle solide, mais les bouleversements et les malheurs de ma vie m'ont permis, je vous l'assure, et plus que je ne l'aurais voulu, de me frotter à toutes les classes de la société et à tous les caractères que l'humanité peut proposer à ceux qui l'étudient." (L)

3. Poulaille: "Nouvel Age Littéraire", p. 47.
 4. René Lalou: "Histoire de la Littérature Française Contemporaine", section "Populistes et Prolétaires".
 5. According to Armand Lanoux in "Le Populisme", Le Dossier Littéraire, July 1950.
 6. See Sartre's attitude to Populists in "La Nausée", (Gallimard, 1938), p. 204.
 7. To our knowledge this booklet has not yet appeared.
 8. See Lemonnier's Preface to the populist anthology "Poèmes Populistes", (Ed. des Cahiers de Paris, 1941).
 9. Lemonnier: "Le Populisme en Poésie", L'Acropole, February, 1950.
-

- 19 -

THE WIDER RANGE
OF POPULIST WRITING

CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE WIDER RANGE OF POPULIST WRITING

Apart from those authors whose works were crowned by the populist jury, there were many writers whose books illustrate populism in practice. Some of these writers openly associated themselves with the populists. Others however cherished their independence, but the story of populism would not be complete without mentioning them.

Among authors who wrote populist novels before the first manifestos we have Charles-Henri Hirsch, Pierre Hamp, J.-H. Louwyck, Louis Chaffurin, Louis-Jean Finot, Duhamel, Martin du Gard, Romain and André Chamson.

Looking back now, it seems fitting that Lemonnier's "La Femme sans Pêché" which inspired Thérive in 1927 should have been dedicated to Charles-Henri Hirsch, who, born in 1870, continued the naturalist tradition in our own century. Several of his books are populist in inspiration, books ~~like~~ about the poor in Paris or the peasants in the country, like "Une belle garce", "Petit Louis, boxeur", "Le Sang de Paris", "Un vieux bougre", "Le Tigre et Coquelicot", or "La Passion de Bouteclou". Looking over the Bois de Boulogne from the windows of his flat, Charles-Henri Hirsch talks of the Paris he loves; but he talks also of South Africa which he visited, and of his admiration for the Boers, for Smuts and for Kruger, whom he knew personally. With the pride of an elderly writer in years well-spent, he shows visitors round his library, where seven bookshelves are lined with copies of the "Mercure de France" for which he wrote, and where another bookcase is filled with his own works(I).

Another early populist was Pierre Hamp, born in 1876, who undertook many different manual jobs before publishing the first volume of "La Peine des Hommes". In this long series he shows the men at work to bring us goods like fish ("Marée Fraîche", 1913), wine ("Vin de Champagne" 1913), perfumes ("Le Cantique des Cantiques", 1922) or wool ("La Laine", 1931). Most interesting to us perhaps are the books "Mes Métiers" (1930) and "Il faut que vous naissiez de nouveau" (1935), where Hamp relates his own experiences in different trades. It was Pierre Hamp who shocked and scandalised an audience of University men by declaring that Racine and the French classical authors in general were lacking in veracity, and by suggesting that it was a pity Andromaque had not the household washing to do, to take her mind off her own troubles (1).

J.-H. Louwyck(A) born in 1886, is on three populist juries now, but it is perhaps his first book "Un homme tendre" (1921) which gives him most claim to be included here. "C'est le roman 'Un homme tendre'" Louwyck writes, "qui, traitant un sujet et des milieux très populaires, non en langue ordinaire mais en style littéraire, fit jaillir dans André Thérive l'idée du populisme: il comprit, par réaction contre les romans mondains de la génération précédente (Paul Bourget, Anatole France, Marcel Prévost) dont les personnages étaient des nobles, des riches ou des oisifs, qu'il convenait d'étudier des gens du peuple obligés de travailler pour gagner leur vie. Cette idée lui fut confirmée par une oeuvre de Léon Lemonnier(I).

Louis Chaffurin (1881/1943) took an active interest in the populist movement. Like Lemonnier, he was an English scholar and teacher, adored by his pupils. But Chaffurin's father had been a tailor, and Louis himself had been a tailor's apprentice at the age of thirteen (L). This gave him the inside knowledge behind his book "Pique-Puce" (1928), hailed by Lemonnier, which shows the daily life of a family of tailors in Chaffurin's home town Lyons.

Louis-Jean Finot probably did more as a critic to help the cause of populism, but his "L'Allumeuse" (1929) is a good example of a populist novel. Like Jean Guirec's "Lucette chez les Chinois" (1925) and Edouard Peisson's "Une Femme" (1931), "L'Allumeuse" shows how a woman through little fault of her own can become a prostitute, and Finot suggests in his preface that Loulou is more human than most society women.

In 1933 John Charpentier exclaimed over Duhamel's "Le Notaire du Havre" "Voilà du bon populisme! Du populisme exaltant, et qui est d'un maître." (2) And it is true that from the outset Duhamel(A) with his contemporaries



Scene from film of "Histoires de Tabusse"
Photo: Henry Thibault



André Chamson in the Cévennes

(A)
 Roger Martin du Gard and Jules Romains were looked upon by the populists as their masters. Yet the works of these three writers are not so much populist as universal, and as such they escape the bounds of these chapters, which deal with populism in its narrower sense only.

One of the best writers of populist books before the first manifesto was Guilloux's friend André Chamson,^(A) who tells in his book "Les Quatres Eléments" of his youth among the rugged peasant folk of the Cevennes, who were to inspire his first works. Chamson never associated officially with the populists, though he presided at a dinner they gave in his honour, but four of his early works are certainly populist. These are "Roux le Bandit" (1925), "Les Hommes de la Route" (1927), "Le crime des Justes" (1928) and "Histoires de Tabusse" (1930).

"Roux le Bandit" is the tale of a young peasant of the hamlet of Sauveplane, high up in the Cevennes. Here Chamson broaches for the first time the question of man's approach to war, which plays so large a part in his works. When the men are conscripted in 1914, Roux takes refuge in the mountains, risking death of exposure or starvation in the winter months to escape the police. The other Cevenol mountaineers, outraged at first, gradually, through chance encounters with Roux in the mountains, realise that "Roux le bandit" saw ~~in~~ flight not as an escape, but as the only effective means of upholding the stern law of his peasant forefathers: "Thou shalt not kill". After that the peasants leave provisions out at night in case Roux comes down from the mountain in search of food. When he is caught in the end his story becomes a legend.

Half legendary too is the tale of Tabusse the peasant, with his wild strength. His cabin still stands in the forests on the slopes of the Aigoual, the peak which Chamson loved. Events which happened to four or five different people were forged by the villagers into the story of one man, and we see Tabusse against a background of mountain forests, farms and hamlets.

The strong Calvinist tradition of the Cevenol peasants and their austerity are best shown in Chamson's "Le Crime des Justes". This forceful book deals with the Arnals of Maubert, who were renowned for their righteousness and their justice. The head of the Arnal family bore the name of "Conseiller" and kept by his word alone law and order in the land. Conseiller discovers though, on his mountain farm, that his deaf and dumb granddaughter Clémence has a child by her brother. To save the reputation of the family Conseiller kills the child, but oppressed by a sense of guilt he can no longer face his responsibilities with the same assurance. When the crime is discovered though and Conseiller is led away, people still come to ask his last advice.

"Les Hommes de la Route" is set in Le Vigan, the mountain village of Chamson's youth, here called Saint-André. The peasants come to the village from their farms to help in building the high-road over the mountains, while their wives work in the spinning-mill in the village; but we see how their sons gradually leave Saint-André by the new road for the towns.

The continuation of the story of Saint-André, "Héritages" (1932), is told ~~now~~ from the point of view of the new owner of the spinning-mill, and is hardly populist any longer. "Héritages" must be mentioned though, because like so many of Chamson's books it falls into three sections, here "Saint-André", "Paris", "Le Monde", and these titles are typical of Chamson's own development. Starting with stories of the Cevennes and their peasants, Chamson's view widens to France and her problems, and through France to the world, and to those great questions of peace and war, civilisation, culture and humanity which affect men everywhere. "Je ne cherche pas à fuir le monde" Chamson wrote in 1930 already, "mais à retrouver sans cesse les puissances qui peuvent nous accorder à lui ... Dans ce qui échappe au temps, aux événements, à l'histoire, ou bien, au contraire, dans ce qui n'a d'existence que par le temps, l'événement, l'histoire, je ne veux, pour ma part, que chercher sans cesse la même chose: un accord plus réel de l'esprit et du monde." (3)

After the first manifesto of 1929, many new books were called "populist" by critics or by the populists themselves. In some cases the authors remained aloof, but other authors took an active interest in populism; and of the five women most often classed as populist -- Céline Lhotte, Antonine Couillet-Tessier, Huguette Garnier, Laurence Algan and Sophie Stambat -- two were to play a vital role in the populist movement.

Céline Lhotte's importance for populism was indicated when Lemonnier once asked her permission to call her: "L'écrivain populiste numéro I" (4) There is a story behind that. Céline Lhotte was a social worker at Le Havre, and her first books relate something of the misery she discovered when visiting poor homes. In "La Petite Fille aux Mains Sales" (1928) we have a little girl growing up in abject poverty. "Sur les Fortifs du Paradis" (1929) tells of Léonie who lives in a shack on the outskirts of the town, and tries to cope with a drunken husband and children who run wild. "Choeur Triste chez les Sans Repos" (1930), prefaced by Lemonnier, gives sketches of poor people Céline Lhotte met through her social work, as do her later books "Coins de Rues" (1933) and "Des Pauvres parmi nous" (1934). "La Petite Bismuth" (1932) is another story of a little girl, who from the age of eight tries to look after the three younger children, as their mother neglects them and the father is a drunkard.

Hunting for adherents before the publication of the first manifesto, Lemonnier, by chance at Le Havre, went to see Céline Lhotte (4) "Nous ne nous connaissions pas, Mademoiselle," he said later. "Je n'étais qu'un auteur obscur qui allait peut-être publier un manifeste, et ce manifeste avait toutes les chances de tomber à l'eau... J'ai dit le nom de l'école que nous voulions fonder peut-être. Je n'étais pas encore fixé. Je vous citai différents noms en isme, vous demandant votre avis. Vous m'avez dit simplement: 'Je suis de coeur avec vous.' Et encore, vous m'avez répété, avec votre visage éternellement grave: 'Je n'ai écrit que ce que j'ai vu.' Je suis reparti, un peu honteux de moi-même, comparant mentalement ce que je faisais, qui était vain, avec tout le bien que vous aviez résolu de faire sous le beau nom d'assistance sociale." (4) But from then on Lemonnier felt that Céline Lhotte was the first adherent to the populist group.

.

The next woman to play a role in populism was Antonine Couillet-Tessier, who founded the first prize, and who is still active in populist circles to-day (4) Her novels all form a sound contribution to populist literature.

In a previous chapter we pointed out that Antonine Couillet-Tessier's first book, "Marthe, Femme Seule" (1930) is set in surroundings she knew well, the hospitals and the poor quarters of Paris. "Toche parmi les Femmes", her next work, tells of a hairdresser's apprentice, Toche, who has the misfortune of looking like a woman, and of his mediocre and irresponsible wife Lucienne. "Chambre à Louer" (1931) is the story of Reine, whose husband works on night shift in a hotel, and who takes in a young mechanic as lodger to make ends meet. Antonine Couillet-Tessier excels here in her descriptions of the outskirts of Paris, and of the daily life of Reine and her neighbours. The story ends when Reine has a miscarriage and the mechanic leaves to take up his quarters in another town.

"Rue Barrée" (1934) and "Défense de Vivre" (1936) show the difficult life of working-class women. Jeanne Marchal in "Rue Barrée" who is left an orphan is seduced by an Italian, and finally marries a commercial traveller to give her child a father. In "Défense de Vivre" Anne Bornet, a factory girl, lives in one room with her father and mother and four other children, and marries to escape these cramped quarters. Among the many working-class people who come into the book let us mention -- Anne's aunt Mathile, a charwoman; Anne's good-for-nothing brother Louis, and the concierge Cécile, who has a series of abortions because there is no space to bring up a family in her small office. Anne herself gets tuberculosis, and we realise that she has no chance of recovering.

"Tempête sur la Province" (1945) is set in a country town, where Marie-Thérèse the wife of the school-teacher Thioulin is unjustly accused of having a lover. We see the reactions of gossiping acquaintances, and Marie-Thérèse's own reactions as she adapts herself with a certain

pleasure to her new role, which enables her to escape from the drudgery of everyday life. Even so, Antonine Couillet-Tessier describes with an inside knowledge the atmosphere of small homes, the problems of servants, children's illnesses and dinner menus.

Lemonnier, answering critics who said that only workers could write about workers, asked in reply whether only women could write about women (5). Perhaps not necessarily, but Mme Couillet-Tessier's books show, better than those of most men, the daily round of a woman's existence. Critics have accused her of pessimism in this respect, but Antonine Couillet-Tessier replies that she describes only what she sees, and that she has tried to show in her books why working-class women so often appear victims, and why, though happy when they are young, they are unhappy once they are married (1).

.

Huguette Garnier and Laurence Algan also have a place in populism. Huguette Garnier's "Lily Bouquet" (1933) is the story of a milliner, from the time she is paid for her affections, till she is rich enough to pay for those of others. More populist is "Et de Mère Inconnue" (1935) in which Mme Arminguet adopts an illegitimate child, suspecting her to be the daughter of her husband and her maid. Laurence Algan's "Clarisse Aubert" has a poor typist as heroine, while "Le Livre de Sylvie" (1928) is a mother's story of the first years of her daughter Sylvie, and shows the link between working-class mothers everywhere. "Les mères, les vraies, celles qui élèvent leurs enfants de leurs bras maigres s'abordent dans la rue: 'Et votre petit?'" And at once contact is established through the children. (6) Laurence Algan's third book, "Rue de la Roquette" (1938) which was praised by the populists (6) tells of the poor people around her in the street where she grew up.

Sophie Stambat, like Antonine Couillet-Tessier, has played a large part in the populist movement (A) Her books have two themes; the life of the miners and peasants in Artois, which is populist, realistic and objective; and various aspects of comradeship, love and passion, which are subjective. She started with a populist novel "Noires Gueules" (1932), about the miners in the North of France. Then came other populist books, "La Rose sous l'Orage", "Love" and "Sève". It was this last book that brought Sophie Stambat into contact with the populists (L).

"Sève" (1938) is the story of an orphan, "la Jeannette", who is sent to work on a farm at Chasseneulles near Lille. She discovers the healthy life of the farm, and at the same time, through Anna who works in the village shop, she learns to overlook the rough manners of the miners in the region. From Anna too Jeanne hears about the poor people around her, people whom Sophie Stambat probably knew herself. In spring after the winter's rest, passions rise as the new sap rises in the trees, and Jeanne, forced to choose between two men, her master Bigotte and his son Hippolyte, finds that her choice brings tragedy.

"Sève" is the first volume of a trilogy. In the next volume, "Le Compagnon sans Visage" (1948), Anna has risen in society through marrying an engineer on the mines. In this book there are still populist scenes of the village market or of mine accidents, but the interest centres round Anna's development, which is continued in "Douce Amère" (1949).

Is it unjust to Marc Stambat and Henri Van Rugghe to suggest that their part in these works must have been small? But there is so much of Sophie Stambat's own knowledge of the mining regions in these pages, and so much of her own experience as a woman that the role of others could only have been a secondary one.

.

Among the men Marcel Aymé was one of the first authors to be classed as populist, when the critics praised "La Table-aux-Crevés" in 1929 (A) In this book a peasant, Urbain Coindret, returns from the fair to find that his wife has hung herself, and we have the reactions of the country people, for Marcel Aymé who grew up in Bourgogne excels in realistic descriptions of a peasant or village community. "La Rue sans Nom" (1930) describes how a stranger who settles in a poor quarter disturbs the usual existence of the people in his street. "Maison Basse" (1935) sketches

the lives and dramas of lower middle class people in the same block of flats. "La Jument Verte" (1933) and "La Vouivre" (1943) are set in the country among the poor folk Marcel Aymé knew well, while "Le Chemin des Ecoliers" (1946) tells of boys engaged in black market operations in Paris during the occupation. Aymé's various collections of short stories, like "Le Puits aux Images" (1932) and "Le Vin de Paris" (1947), show realist and populist scenes, from peasants in the country to school classrooms and beggars under the bridges.

Some of Marcel Aymé's books can certainly be called populist, but only if this statement is qualified. The works mentioned above abound in well-observed realistic details, but the whole tenor of these books is one of humour and or fantasy. The humour arises through the presentation of reality itself, like the shop-keeper who "précéda sa cliente au fond de la boutique pour lui faire tâter des camemberts. Les uns étaient moelleux, mais au renifler, d'autres semblaient mieux à point." (7) The fantasy arises through the introduction of something improbable or completely impossible, like the birth of a green mare ("La Jument Verte") or a snake who turns into a woman to seduce the peasants ("La Vouivre"). In these books, only the settings and the characters are populist, not the story itself. "J'écris ce que je connais," Marcel Aymé says, "et je ne connais pas le milieu de Proust." (I) But into what he knows, Marcel Aymé, tall, lean, quiet and sensitive, who mixes little with the world, has woven stories that are purely imaginary.

An excellent book appeared in 1930 which was certainly populist. This was Jean Prévost's "Les Frères Bouquiquant",^(A) the story of two brothers, who are bargemen, and of their love for the same woman which ends in tragedy. These working-class people are seen in their daily surroundings, and Prévost proves that their emotional problems are as complicated as those of the rich. Jean Prévost's other books though are more introspective and analytical, though one might class as populist "Le Sel sur la Plaine", which shows the ambitious young Crouzon in his daily work as struggling then successful editor in the small town of Chateauroux.

^(A)
Henri Troyat has served on several populist juries; but though his characters, which are chosen among the middle or lower middle class, might appear populist, Troyat's real interest, perhaps encouraged by his knowledge of Russian authors, centres on the psychological development of his characters; we see them the prey to fears or fixations which often end in their death. "Judith Madrier" (1940) is perhaps Troyat's only book besides "Faux-Jour" which could be called populist, as it is the story, treated realistically, of a young woman who tires of her prosaic husband and seeks romance. Troyat's recent series "Tant que la Terre durera" seems to link him with Balzac, through its mixture of realism, imagination and drama. Is it to stress the similarity that Troyat, dark-haired, broad-shouldered, wears slippers and a camel-hair dressing-gown when working? Continually pressed for time as Balzac was, Troyat eats his lunch at his desk in the large room lined with bookshelves and old tapestries which serves him as a study (I).

^(A)
Louis Le Sidaner has taken an active interest in populism, and published a booklet on Eugène Dabit. Of Le Sidaner's own books the first two, "Amour Couleur de Paris" (1931) and "Le Pharmacien de Bornières" (1932) could be called populist. "Amour Couleur de Paris" has as heroine a young milliner's apprentice Julianne, who leaves home and her work to drift from one protector to another in a romantic desire for pleasure. "Le Pharmacien de Bornières" tells the story of an apothecary in a small town whose wife leaves him. But his hallucinations and subsequent madness are hardly populist. Nor is the story of "Monsieur Marcel", a poor bank clerk who gets rich through organised blackmail.

Frédéric Lefèvre (1889/1949) who supported the populist movement objected to being called a populist himself, although he qualified by his "Samson, fils de Samson" and by subsequent works, like "Le Sol" (1931), showing a young man tied to his father's land in Savoy, and "Ce Vagabond" (1936), the story of a wandering violinist. Lefèvre himself came from peasant stock, and thus writes about the country from inside knowledge.



Maxence Vander Meersch

Another peasant writer honoured by the populists (8) was Romain Roussel. His "Le Chemin des Cercles" and "La maison sous la cendre" are placed in the Cevennes, and "La Vallée sans Printemps" in the Jura. "Je crois que le véritable art du roman, et que le véritable populisme, consiste à décrire l'homme du peuple tel qu'il est, sans parti pris de noirceur, sans vouloir non plus le représenter avec les couleurs trop belles de l'idylle" says Romain Roussel, speaking of his aim as "populiste rustique". (9)

Jean-Paul Coutisson was praised by Lemonnier (L) for two populist books, "Rien que des Hommes" and "Le Mendiant aux Mains Pures", both published after the liberation. Among other writers attached to the populists one might mention Pierre Bathille, Gabriel d'Aubarède, Marcel Berger, René Ménard and Raoul Stephan, while Simenon who took an interest in populism has certainly, in some of his numerous novels, shown populist characters and settings.

.

One of the greatest writers associated with populism was Maxence Van der Meersch (A), who like André Chamson and others started by writing books about the common people. Slowly though his interest shifted to wider human and spiritual problems, and his books become less the reflection of exterior things than the radiation of his own spirit and personality. Among his populist works however one can certainly class "La Maison dans la Dune" (1932), "Quand les sirènes se taisent" (1933), "Le Péché du Monde" (1934) and to a certain extent "Maria, fille de Flandre" (1935). Other books, like "Invasion 14" and "L'Empreinte du Dieu" may show populist scenes of the countryside and villages in Flanders, but their importance lies elsewhere.

"La Maison dans la Dune" is the story of two smugglers, Sylvain and César, who run tobacco across the border from Belgium to France, and we hear of Sylvain's love for Pascaline who lives in a lonely house in the barren wind-swept countryside. "Le Péché du Monde" relates with realism and pity the unhappy youth of a poor girl, while "Maria, fille de Flandre" is set among the cranes and coal barges on the misty canals of Bruges. From the populist point of view though, Maxence Van der Meersch's "Quand les sirènes se taisent" is his masterpiece. At Roubaix, where Van der Meersch was born, there is a five months weavers' strike. With impartiality tempered only by a deep pity for all who suffer, Van der Meersch describes the meetings, the riots, the queues for food, the privations and hardships, and the dramas of individuals affected by the strike. He shows both the workers' and the employers' point of view, and the impossibility of settlement. Few other books, to our knowledge, are so successful in adapting the best in Zola to 20th century conditions.

Maxence Van der Meersch's attitude to populism is made clear in 1945 when he writes to Lemonnier: "Me voilà baptisé chef d'école! et sans même connaître le programme du Populisme! Mais si vous entendez par là une école qui veut qu'un œuvre littéraire, où qu'elle se passe, et quel que soit son sujet, tienne compte de l'existence, de la psychologie et des problèmes de la masse, alors, j'en suis, certes! Et il me semble que nous sommes dans le vrai, à une heure où aucune conscience humaine n'a la possibilité ni le pouvoir de s'isoler du drame social dans lequel nous baignons (10)." And these lines apply not only to his early books but to his work as a whole.

Notes

1. Quoted by René Ménard in his article on Pierre Hamp in "Cahiers de Paris", No. 30, June/July 1939.
2. Mercure de France, 1/5/1933.
3. From Chamson's preface to his "Tyrol", (Grasset, 1930).
4. From Lemonnier's speech in honour of Céline Lhotte read at a banquet offered to her by the populist writers and painters in 1950.
5. See above, page 19.
6. Charles Chassé: "Laurence Algan, écrivain populiste", "Cahiers de Paris", No. 27, March 1939.
7. Marcel Aymé: "Maison Basse", (Gallimard, 1935).
8. A dinner was given in his honour at the Café Voltaire, 9th March, 1938.
9. Romain Roussel: "Le Populisme Rustique", "Cahiers de Paris", No. 21, April 1938.
10. Letter: Maxence Van der Meersch to Lemonnier. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

- 20 -

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER TWENTY

CONCLUSION

- Let us now summarise briefly,

- a) the spread of populism in literature,
- b) the importance of the proletarian literary movement for populism,
- c) and the present position of the populist movement.

- We will then suggest possible lines for further study, and in conclusion three proposals will be made arising from this thesis.

.

a) The spread of populism in literature.

The populist movement has lasted for over twenty-three years, thus by its length of duration alone, it can claim our attention.

Populism was the outcome of the preceding social and industrial development, the spread of humanitarian and socialist ideals, and the higher cultural standard of the people.

The essence of populism is the inspiration drawn from social conditions of our time, especially from the lives and surroundings of the lower classes, but this was at first linked to a desire for a realistic treatment of the subject, partly as a continuation of the naturalist tradition, partly as a reaction to certain literary trends of the time.

It was natural that the first books to be populist in inspiration were realist in treatment, since the first writers to react to the social reality would probably treat their subject in a realist way as well.

The current of realism had by no means dried up since Zola's time, but it grew stronger in the 1920's due to the interest of the new generation in naturalism. Interest in the people had gradually been increasing in literature since the 20th century, especially since 1920, and was evident in works by both upper and working-class authors.

Léon Lemonnier's manifestos claimed to do no more than point out and name this new trend. "Il y a une tendance qui existait avant nous", Lemonnier wrote in 1931. "Si nous l'avons baptisée, c'est qu'elle était tenue en mépris et que nous voulions appeler l'attention sur elle pour la mettre en honneur." (1)

The subsequent success of populism shows that the manifestos corresponded to a definite literary necessity, but the spread of populism was certainly due also to the founding of the populist movement, coupled with Thérive's prestige, Lemonnier's enthusiasm and determination, and Antonine Couillet-Tessier's foundation of a populist prize.

Any general cultural movement is likely to be reflected in several arts at the same time, and here Lemonnier showed wisdom in trying to annex painters, playwrights and poets to the populist movement, as well as critics in sympathy with populist ideas.

The various meetings and dinners, and recently Sophie Stambat's salon have helped to encourage populism, as have the various prizes offered for populist novels, poetry and painting, and nowadays even for populist films.

.

b) The importance of the proletarian literary movement for populism.

The debt of populism to the proletarian authors and to their leader Henry Poulaille is great.

In the first place proletarian forerunners like Charles-Louis Philippe helped to stimulate an interest in the people. In the second place, from the early 1920's to the present day we have the great work of Poulaille and his friends in encouraging proletarian writers, whose books have a realism, a vividness and a documentary interest seldom found in other works about the people.

In the beginning populism got undeserved glory when the critics praised proletarian novels as populist, but gradually many proletarian authors were accepted as populist. Their books about working-class people in surroundings like factories, timber-yards and poor quarters came to complement and complete populism, for the true populists at first confined their subjects mainly to the lower middle class.

We have seen how Dabit was inspired by Ch.-L. Philippe. After the liberation, two decades later, more and more people from the lower classes start writing themselves, encouraged by the success of forerunners of Dabit's generation, like Poulaille, Rémy, Peisson, Guilloux and others.

Nowadays, according to Tristan Rémy, both the bourgeois and the communist writers call proletarian literature "populist" (L). So do many of the young proletarian writers themselves. Emile Dancën, for instance, who had been car-cleaner, clerk, fisherman and strolling musician won a populist prize in 1951, and illustrates the present tendency to unity when he writes: "Le Populisme a été créé par des gens comme Poulaille, qui ont une génération d'avance sur moi" (L).

Poulaille had realised from the beginning that proletarian literature was only a transition stage in the history of literature, a stage that arose when the workers became conscious that they too could write, but were still unable to produce well-written books on subjects of general interest.

Poulaille felt though that the proletarian movement was not getting the credit for its pioneer work, and he was continually disappointed when successful proletarian authors joined the ranks of upper class writers like the populists, instead of remaining with the proletarian group to encourage writers of their own class.

After close on thirty years of effort, a certain bitterness is shown to-day. "Quand on parlera plus tard de la littérature française du XXe siècle, on fera une place à la littérature prolétarienne", Poulaille writes. "On la classera comme un mouvement littéraire parmi d'autres. On ne lui fera pas une grande place, mais au fond c'est parce que les auteurs qui eussent pu s'en revendiquer, n'ont cru à cette littérature prolétarienne qu'au départ de leurs premiers essais littéraires. Dès qu'un petit succès leur arrivait, ils rougissaient d'en être. Cela pouvait gêner leur essor!... Combien d'auteurs, sortis du peuple, croient être malins d'avoir lâché et de dénigrer 'l'école des sans écoles' où un instant, ils avaient égaré leurs pas, leur talents et leurs chances. Je ne cite personne, à quoi bon; ceux qui se reconnaîtront ne feront que sourire." (2)

So although Poulaille and his friends still help young proletarian authors to-day, they feel defeated and disillusioned, perhaps because they were working mainly for their own class. This is a great pity, for the proletarian leaders could with justification be proud that they discovered or encouraged writers who were subsequently accepted by the nation as a whole.

.

c) The present position of the populist movement.

The recent development of populism shows a certain adaptation to changes in the political and cultural life of France.

In the political sphere for instance, there has been a tendency since the liberation for socialists to join forces with moderate centre groups to oppose both the Gaullists on the right and the communists on the left. This is reflected in literature where proletarian and populist writers, who represent roughly the socialist and liberal groups, link to counteract the propaganda literature of the communists and the intellectual literature of the other upper class writers.

In spite of Lemonnier and Thérive's plea for classical French, the language used recently in novels and poetry has become less formal, which reflects the general shift in speech and literature towards a more popular French. Although the jury hesitated at awarding a prize to



Armand Lanoux

"Photomontage de l'auteur - assez significative de mon 'déviatinnisme' surréaliste et freudien" he writes.

Lil Boël in 1942, once the populists had crowned her poetry in "argot", they had created a precedent, and had to accept people like Piazza, Camille François and René Fallet as well.

In general the new generation of populist authors is swinging away from a realistic treatment, partly as a reaction after the war, partly because many realist books have been written about the people since 1930, and authors are eager to try a new approach.

In painting and poetry certainly, and more and more in novels, the subject treated forms the main criterion as to whether a work is populist or not. Lemonnier had prepared for this when he mentioned in 1930 that the term "populist" could be applied to "toute oeuvre traitant du peuple, dans quelque esprit que ce soit" (3), although at the time most populist books were realist.

The dominant tendency among the new generation of populists seems to be a "réalisme poétique", a subject based on reality, but interpreted with imagination according to the individual style of the author.

This too was foreseen by the early populists. The broadcast discussion between Lemonnier, Matéi Roussou and André Hofer in 1930 ended as follows:

Hofer: Notre souhait serait de rejoindre le réalisme poétique, qui est l'essence même de l'art français.

Lemonnier: Naturellement, il faut réserver la part de la transposition et de la poésie. L'art ne doit pas simplement calquer le réel.

Hofer: Voilà une parole qui peut nous mettre tous d'accord. (4)

Now that the populists have ceased to insist on a realistic treatment of the subject, a large percentage of recent publications can be called "populist". Where the theatre is concerned, one might possibly consider classing as populist plays such as Giraudoux's "La Folle de Chaillot"; and populist films could include not only the sober "Frères Bouquinquant", "Farrebique" and "Tabusse", but the farcical "Clochemerle".

Recently there has been an increased interest in the common people, encouraged by the war and the difficult post-war years. "La guerre et ses suites ont considérablement affaibli le mauvais 'esprit bourgeois,'" Mme Sophie Stambat writes. "La souffrance diminue l'égoïsme et bien des gens ont appris à connaître le peuple et à s'intéresser à lui." (L)

The influence of populism has been cumulative over past decades. We now find that many writers from the working-class are acclaimed by the general public, and we find also that the lives of all classes, even the lowest, are accepted as worthy material for art. This means that France at last has a literature that reflects the republican way of life.

.

Further research suggested.

Following on the present study of the populist movement, further lines of research can be suggested. The following might prove the most profitable.

- i) A history of the proletarian movement in French literature, starting with forerunners like Jules Vallès and Charles-Louis Philippe, and continuing to the present time.
- ii) A biography of Henry Poulaille as leader of the proletarian movement, and an analysis of his novels whose value and originality have probably not been fully recognised.
- iii) A study of the populist trend in painting. Catalogues of the exhibitions and many of the paintings themselves should still be available, and the exhibitions were reviewed in the press at the time.
- iv) A survey of populist elements in poetry; this could include proletarian poetry of which there are a few volumes, like Tristan Rémy's "Proletariat" (Valois, 1932) and the anthology "Douze Poètes" published by the Editions Sociales in 1931.
- v) A parallel could be drawn between populism in France and populist literature in other countries, which could include books like

Alfred Döblin's "Berlin Alexanderplatz" (1930) and Hans Fallada's "Kleiner Mann -- was nun?" (1932) in Germany, Neel Doff in Belgium, possibly Ramuz in Switzerland, and so on.

- vi) The relationship of populist and regionalist literature could be studied. Some regionalist authors like Giono and Ramuz were criticised by populists for a tendency to rustic simplicity and sentimentality, but Henri Polles' "Sophie de Tréguier" and André Chamson's early works are regionalist.
- vii) Other works by prize-winning authors could be studied, as many would show populist elements.
- viii) The further development of populism should be watched to see whether some conclusions drawn here are correct, namely that proletarian writers are assimilating with the populists, that the use of popular French and "argot" is spreading, and that the present trend of populism is towards a "poetic realism".

.

Arising out of this thesis, we would like to make three suggestions.

- (A) In the first place we tentatively suggest that the period from 1930 onwards in French literature be termed the "populist period", with the term "populist" used in a wide sense.

This suggestion is made on the following grounds:

- i) The populist movement has lasted almost as long, or longer than the romantic, naturalist and symbolist movements of the 19th century, which have given their names to a period.
- ii) Populism is evident in various forms in a fair percentage of books published since 1930.
- iii) The populist movement has been represented by writers of sufficient merit to warrant consideration.
- iv) Populism reflects, to a greater extent than other contemporary movements, the social realities of our time.
- v) Populism is evident to a certain extent in other arts besides literature.
- vi) Populism has made an original and valuable contribution to French literature as a whole.

Other trends are certainly also important in the period considered. There are for instance the Christian novels by men like François Mauriac, Georges Bernanos and others, and recently there has been the strong influence of the existentialist movement led by Jean-Paul Sartre.

There is no reason though why a novel could not be Christian and populist, or existentialist and populist at the same time; and it seems that in the period from 1930 onwards no other movements have been as wide-spread in literature as populism, or represent as well as populism does our society as a whole.

Logically and for the sake of convenience proletarian literature should be grouped together with populist literature, although full recognition should be given to the work of Poulaille and the proletarian writers (5).

One might also include under populism various chronicles of contemporary society as a whole, like Martin du Gard's "Les Thibault" (1922 - 1940), Duhamel's "La Chronique des Pasquier" (1933 - 1945), and Jules Romains' "Les Hommes de Bonne Volonté" which he started in 1932.

These three great authors were linked to the populists, not only as masters which the populists honoured and admired above other writers, but as supporters of the movement. Eugène Dabit owed much to Martin du Gard's encouragement; Romains was crowned by the populists for the first volumes of his chronicle, and points to the populist elements in his own work to prove his interest in populism (6); finally Duhamel served on the populist jury from 1931 to 1940.

In general it matters little for the "populist period" as a whole that people like Thérive, Duhamel, Guilloux or Poulaille draw inspiration from similar subjects in different ways. The four great romantic poets, Lamartine, Vigny, Hugo and Musset show strong individual differences, and the members of the "Groupe de Médan" were by no means homogeneous.

Some Populists in 1952



Vincent Auriol
Président de la
République

Sophie Stambat
admiratrice de Herbert Le Porrier et Odile Versini.
Concours du plus Populiste 1952 - pour
Juliette au passage.

Henri van Rugghe
passagère
Paris-Rouen

Photo prise à la vente des Écrivains Anciens Combattants et parus dans
la grande revue NACHT.

Scene showing Mme Sophie Stambat, Henri van Rugghe
and Herbert Le Porrier

If the idea of a "période populiste" be considered, one might possibly make the following divisions:

a) 1920 - 1929. Introductory period.

Renewed interest in naturalism.

Certain books published are already populist in inspiration.

The lower classes become conscious of the need to write about their own lives.

The populist manifestos appear.

b) 1930 - 1940. First populist period.

Strong populist activity led by Lemonnier, with Thérive, Mme Couillet-Tessier and others.

Strong proletarian activity, led by Poulaille, with Rémy and others.

Novels by middle class writers, mainly about the lower middle class.

Novels by proletarian writers, mainly about the working class.

Chronicles of our society as a whole.

A tendency to realism in treatment.

c) The occupation and post-war years. Second populist period.

Official populist activity extends its sphere where other arts are concerned.

Separate proletarian activities slacken gradually, and the proletarians tend to assimilate with the populists.

The lead in populism now centres round Mme Sophie Stambac and younger populist writers like Armand Lanoux.

Populism where novels are concerned now fits in with Lanoux's definition: "Le populisme s'identifie à l'accession des gens du peuple à la dignité de personnages de roman", and the treatment need no longer be realist.

In general populism in literature and other arts tends towards a poetic realism.

.....

- (B) We next suggest that the terms "populism" and "populist" be adopted in English, especially in the sphere of literature and art.

The noun populism could be defined as "the tendency to draw inspiration in art and literature from the lives and surroundings of the common people".

The adjective populist could mean "pertaining to, or inspired by the lives and surroundings of the common people".

.....

- (C) Thirdly, we strongly believe that populist literature and art should be encouraged in our own country, South Africa.

Certain sections of our European population belong to the lower middle class or to the working-class; in addition over three quarters of our population are non-Europeans of various races and tribes, the majority very poor, with backgrounds and cultures that differ widely and are little known. These people should be represented to a greater extent in our literature and our art.

Some populist elements are already present in art and literature in South Africa.

In novels, for instance, we have van Bruggen's "Ampie" series about a poor white boy, books by Mikro, like his "Toifings", the story of a coloured farm worker, and recently Alan Paton's "Cry, the Beloved Country", dealing with the problems of rural and urbanised Natives.

These books have been widely read, not only because they are well-written, but because they are new in subject-matter. Alan Paton's book which is in English has been able to claim world-wide interest.

Populism is also evident in painting. We have studies and sketches of the life in Cape Town's poorer districts sympathetically observed by John Dronsfield. There are many paintings of our old Malay quarters, and street scenes like those by the young artist William Papas. Maggie Laubscher's work includes paintings of Native labourers on the farms,

and the Native artist Gerard Sekoto showed scenes from the lives of the poor people he knew before he left for Paris.

To turn to allied arts, two recent films "Cry, the Beloved Country" and "The Magic Garden" with Natives as actors are certainly populist, and have even been acclaimed overseas, while the Institute of Race Relation's exhibition "African Dilemma" with its scenes of Native slums in urban areas is a striking example of populist photography.

All this is the beginning of a populist literature and art in South Africa, but much more is needed.

Afrikaans writers are building up a literature in their new language on general subjects, but South Africans writing in English often feel that all has already been said by English writers overseas. That is by no means true. We have a rich human material here among our own proletarian classes, hardly touched yet. The success of books like that of Alan Paton proves that what we have to tell, if well told, can interest the world.

.

From the growth of the populist movement in France, we can learn what should be encouraged in South Africa.

a) The upper classes, in our case mainly Europeans, might write about the lower classes they know through personal contact. This approach seems the most likely to bring immediate success.

b) On the other hand the lower classes should be encouraged to write themselves. The various working-class groups which are mainly non-European, comprising Natives, Coloureds, Malays and Indians, differ widely in education; but since as a whole they have not reached the general cultural level of proletarian writers in France in 1920, one must expect proletarian literature in South Africa to develop slowly.

One method of encouraging this development would be to urge those non-Europeans with a fair education to write about their own lives in their language, and prizes could be offered periodically for the best works, perhaps by enterprising editors. This would not only benefit the lower classes themselves, for the Natives for instance have little literature in their own language, but suitable works could be translated into English or Afrikaans, edited, and published in newspapers or magazines, or even in book form.

The novelty or vividness of the subjects treated by South African proletarian authors should help to compensate for their lack of experience in writing.

.

The growth of a populist literature in South Africa would take time, but it would not only serve as a valuable contribution to our own literature and to literature in general, but would help towards a better understanding between peoples and classes in our country. Such understanding, whatever the social or political programmes current in years to come, could only be beneficial.

Notes

1. Lemonnier : "Populisme", p. 108. /in Faubourgs '50.
2. Poulaille: "Lucien Bourgeois et la Littérature Proletarienne", May 1950
3. Lemonnier: "Populisme", Les Nouvelles Littéraires, 18/1/30.
4. Complete discussion included in Lemonnier's "Populisme".
5. Few articles or books on populism mention the position of Poulaille and the proletarian group. Charles Beuchat for instance devotes thirty pages to populism in his "Histoire du Naturalisme Français", but he classes Poulaille without qualification as a populist, and his only

mention of the proletarian group is the misleading statement: "Comme ces messieurs (the populists) refusaient de faire de la politique, ils ont été attaqués par les écrivains prolétariens, qui leur déniaient le droit de s'occuper du peuple." (page 406).^{Vol. II}

6. In an interview with Yves Picart, reproduced in the "Cahiers de Paris" No 25, January 1939, Jules Romains says: "Il va sans dire que j'ai beaucoup de sympathie pour le programme du populisme et pour les oeuvres dans lesquelles il s'est jusqu'ici exprimé. D'ailleurs si vous avez lu les "Hommes de Bonne Volonté", vous avez dû voir que j'y donne une place importante au peuple et à la vie populaire."
-

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

LETTERS FROM THERIVE TO LEMONNIER

July to September 1929

The following letters are filed in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris under "Populisme". They are inserted here because they shed a light on the origins of the populist movement, and give some indication of the relationship between Thérive and Lemonnier at the time.

Monsieur Léon Lemonnier,
11 Impasse Ste Monique,
Paris 18e

110 rue Denfert-Rochereau,
Paris XIVe

14 juillet 29

Cher Monsieur,

Votre lettre et le projet qui nous est cher, me rappellent au devoir de vous écrire. N'oubliez pas le nom de Céline Lhotte qui a publié (Renaissance du Livre) Les Fortifs du Paradis et la Petite fille aux mains sales, où il y a la matière ... de romans admirables.

C'est en octobre que paraîtra mon roman et aussi le livre de Deffoux sur le Naturalisme. Double actualité. Je n'aime pas trop Humilisme qui sent son Ch. L. Philippe -- Je me demande si on pourrait lancer dans un nouveau sens populisme ou démotisme (démotique etc...)

Vous devez être en vacances, mais si vous venez me voir à la rentrée, je vous montrerai quelques articles que j'ai écrits dans l'esprit qui nous séduit tout deux. Pour une fois, je pense en effet qu'il ne faut pas du tout craindre le ridicule. Ce sont les manifestes qui s'imposent à l'histoire et aux manuels, non les oeuvres, hélas!

N'oublions pas comme maîtres C.H. Hirsch, et Chéreau, pour ses oeuvres d'autrefois. Et dites-moi qui vous pensez annexer à notre école.

Bonnes vacances, puisque vous êtes Universitaire, et que ce mot n'est pas vain pour vous. Et au revoir, j'espère, au plus tôt.

A. Thérive.

Que pensez-vous de Bove? je ne trouve pas cela réaliste pour un sou...

A Léon Lemonnier

110 rue Denfert-Rochereau
Paris XIV

5 VIII 29

Cher Monsieur,

Je ne sais pas trop ce que signifie populiste. (Völkisch se traduit par raciste) Toujours est-il que le mot, réservé à un parti étranger est comme vierge en français.

Puisque vous êtes à Paris voulez-vous que j'aïlle vous voir jeudi 8, soit à 17 heures, soit (ce que je préférerais) à 21 heures? Rien ne vaut un entretien.

Mon avis est qu'il faut se réclamer d'ainés plutôt que présenter une équipe formellement constituée dont on nous dirait: "Peuh! nce n'est que ça?" Cela n'empêcherait pas de citer le plus de noms possible. Je vous parlerai de la meilleure façon de récolter des appuis et patronages, et de s'accrocher à l'actualité.

Mille cordiaux sentiments

A. Thérive.

Tout considéré, je vous prête ces deux articulets où il y a une phrase de Laoretelle et une de Montherlant utiles à noter pour vous. Et aussi un rappel de Duhamel, que vous trouveriez aussi dans une brochure sur ce romancier -- Ne perdez pas ces textes, je vous prie.

A. Th.

A Léon Lemonnier

110 rue Denfert-Rochereau
Paris XIV

10. VIII. 29

Cher Monsieur et Ami,

Comme je pars sans doute vendredi, nous nous verrons à la rentrée, vers le 15 septembre. Le jeune Chastain est prévenu, et dès qu'on lui trouvera un débouché, commencera son enquête (1). Je crois qu'il faut prévoir dans la liste des critiques mes amis Le Cardonnell et G. Truc et Martin-Chauffier! -- et parmi les auteurs le vieux Rosny, Auguste Bailly et Roger Martin du Gard, qui est notre maître à tous. J'espère que vous avez suivi les Thibault ...? Qu'en pensez-vous?

Votre article est très bien sauf en ce qui ~~le~~^{la} concerne. Si vous pouvez y rajouter quelques lignes, mettez donc ce dernier nom. Et Hennique!

Excellente idée que celle de Finot. Il pourrait très bien publier l'enquête, et on lit sa feuille. L'inconvénient est que son enquêteur attitré est Gaston Picard. Mais on pourrait arranger cela, et je pense aussi à la jeune revue Notre Temps pour faire écho. D'ailleurs pour la propagande, je m'en charge ... Le mot de populisme chaque fois que je le révèle, a beaucoup de succès. Une fois entendue la marche des opérations, je promets que l'on parlera de l'affaire.

Bien cordialement vôtre.

A. Thérive.

Ronjoux
La Motte-Servolex
Savoie

28/8/29

Cher Monsieur et Ami,

Je lis dans l'Oeuvre votre article. Il est très au point, suffisamment précis et vague pour passer par les méninges des plus rebelles. Mais pourquoi diantre l'ont-ils publié si tôt? Nul ne le mentionnera si nous ne nous en occupons. Or je n'ai pas ici mon carnet d'adresse. Le mieux serait d'en garder plusieurs exemplaires et de les répandre dès la rentrée.

Mais vous pourriez toujours en aviser L. Treich, René Groos (Intran) André Lamandé (Européen) Rebouw (Chantecler) en attendant mieux. J'ai eu le temps d'aller corriger ma "prière d'insérer" et d'y glisser le mot de populisme ... Je ne puis mieux faire en attendant mon retour. Alors nous nous concerterons. Je reste ici jusqu'à lundi. Ensuite, "poste restante à Nice (avenue Georges Clémenceau)", c'est plus sûr, car je vagabonde jusqu'en Italie et en Corse.

Croyez-moi fidèlement vôtre. Puisque vous n'êtes pas mal avec les N. Littéraires, qui vous ont publié un article, tâchez de signaler votre manifeste au sieur Lefèvre, qui doit être de retour.

A. Thérive.

110 rue Denfert-Rochereau
Paris XIV

A Léon Lemonnier
24/9/29

Cher Monsieur et Ami

Je rentre et trouve un gros dossier de coupures sur le populisme. Je le tiens à votre disposition. Venez donc me voir une après-midi, et nous nous concerterons sur l'enquête à ouvrir. Le jeune Chastain est prévenu et si la R. Mondiale veut l'accueillir, tout ira bien (1).

N'omettez pas d'apporter la liste que nous avons dressée, de gens à questionner. Le populisme a déjà des ennemis. Et la Prensa de Buenos-Aires lui consacre un article. Jugez si le poisson mord!

Cordialement à vous.

A. Thérive.

1. Chastain did not undertake an enquiry, and the "enquête" in the Revue Mondiale was run by Gaston Picard.

APPENDIX II

THE FIRST POPULIST MANIFESTOSfor novels (1929) and poetry (1939)Un Manifeste Littéraire. Le roman populiste.

La mode des manifestes littéraires va-t-elle revenir? Elle connut son époque heureuse voici bientôt un demi-siècle; il surgissait alors une école tous les deux ou trois ans; quelques auteurs rédigeaient une profession de foi en trois points qu'enregistrait pieusement quelque revue; c'était l'annonce officielle de la naissance. Quand l'école mourait, il y avait également une lettre de faire-part: cinq ou six auteurs reniaient hautement les principes qu'ils avaient défendus.

Il me semble que ces proclamations entretenaient les contemporains de nouvelles fort divertissantes. Quand on vous annonce qu'un nouvel avion vient d'être essayé, vous frissonnez en songeant à la catastrophe prochaine. Quand quelques auteurs plus ou moins jeunes vous apprennent qu'ils viennent de fonder une nouvelle école, vous souriez d'aise en songeant à la fin probable de leurs espoirs. Dirai-je, en outre, que de telles déclarations entretiennent une atmosphère intellectuelle et que l'art ne saurait vivre sans, quelquefois, des discussions théoriques et même des batailles à coups de style.

C'est de cette manière que les naturalistes ont réussi à s'imposer à l'histoire littéraire. Car nous sommes obligés de retenir les dates qu'ils avaient eux-mêmes choisies. L'école est née officiellement avec la publication des Soirées de Médan (1880) et elle est morte un peu après le manifeste des Cinq (1887). Léon Deffoux le constate dans son livre sur le Naturalisme. Il montre d'ailleurs, reprenant un mot fameux, que le "naturalisme n'est pas mort". Et il précise dans quel sens son influence se prolonge: "Grâce au ralenti des descriptions naturalistes, les écrivains qui cherchent à faire vivant et vrai furent conduits à un examen plus attentif des réalités et à un choix plus rigoureux dans leur utilisation."

Telle est bien la tendance dominante d'une école littéraire actuelle qui vient de se baptiser: le populisme. Elle a pour chef André Thérive, le romancier que Les souffrances perdues et Sans âme ont placé au premier rang de la génération montante.

Or Thérive n'a jamais caché ses sympathies pour le naturalisme et sa confiance en l'avenir de l'école, si elle voulait abandonner quelques principes périmés. Bref, le 3 mai 1927, il a publié un manifeste. Mais il l'a timidement appelé: Plaidoyer pour le naturalisme et il a modestement omis de parler de lui-même. Il a craint le ridicule; c'est une erreur et même une faute grave pour un chef d'école ...

Faut-il, après lui, indiquer les principes du populisme? Le mot doit naturellement être pris dans un sens large. Nous en avons assez des personnages chics et de la littérature snob; nous voulons peindre le peuple. Mais avant tout, ce que nous prétendons faire, c'est étudier attentivement la réalité.

Nous nous opposons, en un certain sens, aux naturalistes. Leur langue est démodée et il convient de n'imiter ni les néologismes bizarres de certains d'entre eux, ni leur façon d'utiliser le vocabulaire et l'argot de tous les métiers. Nous ne voulons point non plus nous embarrasser de ces doctrines sociales qui tendent à déformer les œuvres littéraires.

Il reste deux choses. D'abord, de la hardiesse dans le choix des sujets: ne pas fuir un certain cynisme sans apprêt et une certaine trivialité -- j'ose le mot -- de bon goût. Et, surtout, en finir avec les personnages du beau monde, les pécores qui n'ont d'autre occupation que de se mettre du rouge, les oisifs qui cherchent à pratiquer les vices soi-disant élégants. Nous voulons aller aux petites gens, aux gens médiocres qui sont la masse de la société et dont la vie, elle aussi, compte des drames. Nous sommes donc quelques-uns bien décidés à nous

grouper autour d'André ~~Thérive~~ Thérive, sous le nom de "romanciers populistes".

Le mot, nous l'avons dit, doit être pris dans un sens large. Nous voulons peindre le peuple, mais nous avons surtout l'ambition d'étudier attentivement la réalité. Et nous sommes sûrs de prolonger ainsi la grande tradition du roman français, celle qui dédaigna toujours les acrobaties prétentieuses, pour faire simple et vrai.

Léon Lemonnier.

L'Oeuvre. 27/8/1929.

Pour une Poésie Populiste.

Des romanciers, des peintres, des sculpteurs ont cherché, et souvent avec le plus grand bonheur, leur inspiration dans l'expression et la description des idées, des sentiments, des décors de la vie des gens du peuple. Pour quoi des poètes ne rejoindraient-ils pas leur groupe et, adoptant leur drapeau, ne se proclameraient-ils pas populistes? N'est-il pas étonnant en effet qu'un mouvement si riche en inspirations originales, si proche par son essence même de la vérité et de la vie, n'ait pas attiré précisément ceux d'entre les écrivains qui ont le plus besoin de mots vivants et de sentiments vrais?

Pour nous, nous croyons que tout art s'étiole, dépérit et meurt lorsqu'il s'écarte par trop de la société humaine. Or à notre époque, l'immense majorité des hommes, par contrainte matérielle ou par obligation morale, consacre le principal de son temps de vie à des travaux qui ont pour instrument et pour décor les éléments d'une civilisation moderne que justement la plupart des poètes contemporains affecte d'oublier ou même de mépriser. Comment alors ne pas craindre pour la poésie elle-même, si elle exprime de moins en moins les conditions réelles de la présence humaine? Certes nous ne lui demandons pas de se détourner de l'extraordinaire, ou d'affaiblir sa vocation magique. Nous la prions seulement de toucher terre plus souvent, de ne pas se limiter, de sauver tout ce qui peut être sauvé de beauté dans ce monde des travaux, de machines, de villes, de champs, de bureaux, d'usines, où nous vivons. Nous croyons autant à sa mission séculière qu'à ses obligations envers le surnaturel et le divin. Et, par amour pour elle, nous voudrions lui offrir tout ce que nous sommes.

Mais comment l'imaginer, cette muse bien vivante, cette muse populiste? Une gaillarde vigoureuse, certes, mais tendre aussi, et moqueuse quelquefois. Seulement, nous la voulons bien en chair, musclée, et de charpente solide. Elle refuserait les pâles nourritures de ces inconsciences qui n'osent dire leur nom. Elle rechignerait sur les cuisines mijotées des spécialistes en délectations suaves. Les mots ne lui feraient pas peur. Tous les mots. Ceux du rêve et de l'esprit, mais aussi ceux de la vie, du travail, de la matière. Elle chercherait des sonorités nouvelles dans un vocabulaire jusqu'à présent méprisé du Parnasse. Les mots, les expressions du langage familier, du langage technique, seraient pour elle le support d'images neuves. Car elle se proposerait, cette libre fille, de montrer que le beau est partout. S'il lui arrivait de courir plus souvent les ateliers, les boutiques, les bureaux, les rues, les docks, que de hanter les alcôves ou les musées, c'est parce que se sont là espaces quasi vierges, et que son appétit de découverte est immense. Et même si tel était son goût profond? Si elle aimait le rire instinctif, les larmes des réelles misères? Si elle préférerait la nuque écrasée, du portefaix à l'effort figé des Hermès de marbre, le brouillard et le grondement des halles d'usines aux petits paysages de porcelaine? Si elle refusait les faciles lamentations, les tristesses provoquées, tout l'arsenal cher aux sentimentalités masochistes, et qu'elle ne s'enivrât qu'aux chants de la force et aux cris de la joie? Si elle ne pleurait que sur des détresses sans fard et de pudiques et véritables douleurs, si elle refusait une fois pour toutes de prostituer son âme et son cœur dans des paradis et des enfers de carton peint, ne croyez-vous pas qu'elle ferait vraiment œuvre, cette muse, de vérité et de liberté?

En l'invoquant, nous ne faisons d'ailleurs que ranimer un vieux débat. Un grand nombre de poètes, dont quelques-uns parmi les plus authentiques,

surent accepter et transfigurer tous les aspects, même les plus modestes et les plus coutumiers, de l'aventure humaine. Tout, dans cette aventure qu'ils aimaient, leur semblait digne de participer à leur aspirations les plus hautes. Leur exemple nous est sacré, nous voudrions seulement qu'il fût suivi davantage.

Aux poètes, maintenant, à tous les poètes, de nous répondre ...
Et de transfigurer le réel avec des mots d'aujourd'hui.

"Cahiers de Paris"
No 27, March 1939.

Pierre Bathille et
René Ménéard .

APPENDIX III

INQUIRIES ON POPULISM

This appendix is based on the ~~the~~ list of inquiries on populism given in Léon Lemonnier's "Populisme", (La Renaissance du Livre), 1931.

Monde

19/10 / 1929

"La jeune génération et Zola", inquiry by Georges Rageot.

26 /10 / 1929

Replies by André Malraux, André Chamson, Louis Guilloux, Joseph Jolinon, Bertrand de Jouvenel.

2 / 11 / 1929

Replies from Léon Lemonnier, Marcel Martinet, Henry Poulaille, Jean Tousseul, Jean Cassou, Edouard Peisson, Louis de Gonzague-Frick.

9 / 11 / 1929

Replies from Panaït Istrati, Pierre Dominique, Emmanuel Berl, Tristan Rémy, Maurice Constantin-Weyer, Jean Héritier.

16 / 11 / 1929

Replies from Georges Dupeyron, Elian J. Finbert, Marcel Arland.

23 / 11 / 1929

Replies from Henry Hisquin, Albert Marchon, René Jouglet.

.

La Revue Mondiale

15 / 11 / 1929

"Faut-il revenir aux écoles littéraires? "

"Grande enquête littéraire" directed by Gaston Picard.

Replies from Alexandre Arnoux, Henri Bachelin, Pierre Billotey, Paul Brulat, Jane Catulle-Mendès, Roland Charmy, John Charpentier, Maurice Constantin-Weyer, Luc Durtain, Henri Duvernois, Marc Elder, Léon Frapié, Maurice Gênevoix, José Germain, Marion Gilbert, Georges Goyau, Paul Gsell, Jehan-Rictus, Céline Lhotte, Pierre Loewel, Jean Martet, Camille Maclair, Jean Mistler, Léo Poldès, Henri Pourrat, Paul Reboux, Emile Ripert, Romain Rolland, Saint-Georges de Bouhélier, Hector Talvart, Pierre Véry.

1 / 12 / 1929

Replies from André Berge, G. Charensol, /X/ Tristan Derème, Fernand Divoire, J. Ernest-Charles, Louis de Gonzague-Frick, Jean Gaumont et Camille Cé, Joseph Jolinon, Marcel Millet, Henry de Montherlant, Ernest Prévost, Gabriel Reuillard, Elie Richard, Carlo Rim, Noël Sabord, William Speth. Summary and conclusions by Gaston Picard. /Isabelle Sandy, Marcel Sauvage.

.

Savoir et Beauté (Brussels)

March 1930

"Que pensez-vous du populisme? Notre littérature possède-t-elle des oeuvres populistes?" Enquiry by Constant Burniaux.

April 1930

Replies by Léon Lemonnier, André Baillon.

May 1930

Replies by Roger Avermaete, Léon Chenoy, Charles Conrardy, Camille Fabry, Maurice Gauchez, Franz Hellens, Hubert Krains, Maurice Quoilin, Jean Tousseul, José Vial.

.

Les Nouvelles Littéraires

26 / 7 / 1930

"Littérature paysanne et littérature prolétarienne". Inquiry by Ali Héritier. Letter from Francis Jammes to Henri Pourrat.

2 / 8 / 1930

Replies from Jean Ajalbert, Marcel Boulenger, Jean-Richard Bloch.

9 / 8 / 1930

Replies from Gaston Chérau, Marcel Aymé, Léon Frapié, Fagus.

16 / 8 / 1930

Replies from Claude Farrère, René Lalou, Jean Variot.

23 / 8 / 1930

Luc Durtain, Léon Pierre-Quint, Emile Guillaumin.

30 / 8 / 1930

Replies from Marcelle Vioux, Jean Rameau, Emile Zavis, Jean Cassou.

6 / 9 / 1930

Replies from Paul Morand, André Lamandé, Jean Gaumont and Camille Cé, Léon Bocquet.

13 / 9 / 1930

Replies from Henri Pourrat, Jehan-Rictus, Charles-~~Rena~~-Brun, C. Gandilhon Gens-d'Armes, Jean Desthieux, Emile Ripert.

.

La Grande Revue

October 1930

"Enquête internationale sur le populisme" organised by Jacques Cossin.

England

Replies from David Garnett, Robert Hichens, Arthur Morrisson, Miss Rose Macaulay, Compton Mackenzie, Eden Phillpotts, Miss Dorothy Richardson, Bernard Shaw, Frank Swinnerton, Felix Boillot, translated by Georges Roth.

Germany

Replies from Heinrich Mann, Arthur Holitscher, Franz Blei, Paul Fechter, Fred A. Angermayer, translated by René König.

November 1930

Belgium

Replies from José Bruyr, Edmond Glesener, Maurice Wilmotte, Neel Doff, Louis Dumont-Wilden, Hubert Krains, Franz Hellens, Maurice des Ombiaux, A. t'Serstevens, Jean Tousseul, André Baillon, Pierre Daye, Paul Fierens, Marcelle Mauriac (Marcel Hauriac?), Paul Prist, R. Mottart.

Portugal

Replies from José Regio, João Gaspar Simoes, translated by Pierre Hourcade.

December 1930Rumania

Replies from Nicolas Jorga, Bratescu-Voïnesti, C. Petresco, V. Demetrius (V. Demelrius?), I. Agarbiceanu.

Poland

Replies from Ferdinand Goetel, Julien Ejsmond, Thadée Kudlinski, translated by Franck-L. Schoell.

Russia

Replies from Marc Aldanov, Ivan Bounine, Mme N. Gorodetzky, A. Ladinsky, V. Nabokoff-Sirine, M. Ossorguine, Ilia Sourgoutchev, M. Struw, Boris Zaitsev, Wsevolod de Vogt, translated by Mme H. Neymarck.

January 1931French Switzerland

Replies from Gonzague de Reynold, Emmanuel Buenzod, Henri de Ziegler, Frank Grandjean, Virgile Rosel.

German Switzerland

Replies from Edouard Korrodi, Jacob Schaffner, Félix Moeschlin, Max Rychner, translated by Charles Fournet.

Spain

Replies from A. Palacio Valdes, Antonio Zozaya, translated by Lucien Dumas.

United States

Replies from Upton Sinclair, William Carlos Williams, Joseph Hergesheimer, Waldo Frank, Sinclair Lewis, translated by Georges Roth.

February 1931Norway

Replies from Ronald Fangen, Olay Dunn, Gabriel Scott, Barbra Ring, Nini Roll Anker, translated by Jens Vindenaes.

Italy

Replies from Margherita G. Sarfatti, Alessandro de Stefani, Guido Stacchiniⁿⁱ

Greece

Replies from Tellos Agras, Thrassos Castanakis, C.-P. Cavafy, Mme Galatée Kazantzaki, N. Kazantzakis, Mme Mariette Minotou, Stratis Myrivilis, Dolis Nikvas, Costis Palamas, Cléon Paraschos, K. Paroritis, Mme Alkis Thrylos, Elie Voutierides, Grégoire Xenopoulos, translated by André Mirambel.

APPENDIX IVPOPULIST PRIZE-WINNERS AND JURIESPrize-winners of the "Prix du Roman Populiste"

1931 - Eugène Dabit, HOTEL DU NORD, Denoël.

1932 - Jules Romains, LES HOMMES DE BONNE VOLONTE (Vols. I and II)
Flammarion.

Jules Romains accepted the honour, but refused the money.
Eight days later the prize was given to:-

Jean Pallu, PORT D'ESCALE, Rieder.

1933 - Henri Pollès, SOPHIE DE TREGUIER, Gallimard.

1934 - Marie Gevers, MADAME ORPHA OU LA SERENADE DE MAI, Plon.

1935 - Henri Troyat, FAUX JOUR, Plon.

1936 - Tristan Rémy, FAUBOURG SAINT-ANTOINE, Gallimard.

1937 - 1938 - 1939 - No prize given.

- 1940 - Jean-Paul Sartre, LA NAUSEE, Gallimard.
 1941 - Jean Rogissart, LE FER ET LA FORET, Dencël.
 1942 - Louis Guilloux, LE PAIN DES REVES, Gallimard.
 1943 - Marius Richard, LA NAISSANCE DE PHEDRE, Colbert.
 1944 - Jean Merrien, BORD A BORD, Gallimard.
 1945 - Emmanuel Roblès, TRAVAIL D'HOMME, Charlot.
 1946 - Armand Lanoux, LA NEF DES FOUS, Deux-Sirènes.
 1947 - 1948 - No prize given.
 1949 - Serge Groussard, DES GENS SANS IMPORTANCE, Ferenczi.
 1950 - René Fallet, for his first three books, published by Domat.

BANLIEUE SUD-EST, LA FLEUR ET LA SOURIS, PIGALLE.

- 1951 - Emile Danoën, UNE MAISON SOUFFLEE AUX DES VENTS, Julliard.
 1952 - Herbert Le Porriès, JULIETTE AU PASSAGE, Ed. du Seuil.

.

Prize-winners of the "Prix de Poésie Populiste"

- 1939 - Philippe Dumaine, manuscript verses, prize awarded early 1940 only.
 1940 - Pierre Moussarie, LE CHEMIN VICINAL, La bouteille à la mer.
 1941 - J. Arnaud-Durand, LES CHANTS DU TRIMARD, Les cahiers de Paris.
 1942 - Lil Boël, FOSSE COMMUNE DES MISERES, Guj le Prat.
 1943 - Roger-Louis Pillet, SUR LES BERGES DE LA VIE, Le courrier littéraire.
 1944 - Marcel Millet, for the whole of his poetic work.
 1945 - François Piazza, VERTIGO, René Saler.
 1946 - 1947 - No prize given.
 1948 - Théophile Malicet, LA GALÈRE A CHANTÉ, Groupe Rimbaud.
 1949 - Jean-Louis Vallas, PONTS DE PARIS, La Butte, 2nd Ed. Albin-Michel.
 1950 - Gilles, for the whole of his poetic work.
 1951 - { Camille François, for the whole of his poetic work.
 { Maurice Carême, LERE and LA VOIX DU SILENCE, own publication

.

Prize-winners of the "Prix de Peinture Populiste"

- 1949 - Peltier and Durand-Rosé.
 1950 - Henry Ramey.
 1951 - Jansem.
 1952 - Auguste Clergé.

.

Prize-winners of the "Prix du Cinéma Populiste"

First prize to be given towards the end of 1952.

.

First Jury of the "Prix du Roman Populiste" - 1931

Robert Bourget-Pailleron, John Charpentier, Antonine Couillet-Tessier, Léon Deffoux, Georges Duhamel, Daniel Halévy, Edmond Jaloux, Robert Kemp, Frédéric Lefèvre, Léon Lemonnier, Gabriel Marcel, Pierre Mille, André Thérive.

First Jury of the "Prix de Poésie Populiste" - 1939

Pierre Bathille, André Billy, Louis Chaffurin, Jean Colombat, Léon Deffoux, Yves Gandon, A.-M. Gossez, Julien Guillemard, Philéas Lebesgue, Léon Lemonnier, René Ménard, François Millepierres, Yves Picart, Raoul Stephan, André Thérive.

Present Jury of the "Prix du Roman Populiste" - 1951

Charles Braibant, Antonine Couillet-Tessier, Jean-Paul Coutisson, André Guisenier, Gilbert Dupé, Serge Groussard, Armand Lanoux, Léon Lemonnier, Louis Le Sidaner, J.-H. Louwyck, Claire Sainte-Soline, Sophie Stambat, Henri Troyat, Paul Vialar, Henri Van Rugghe.

Present Jury of the "Prix de Poésie Populiste" - 1951

Lil Boël, Gabriel d'Aubarède, Gilbert Dupé, Pierre Labracherie, Armand Lanoux, Léon Lemonnier, Louis Le Sidaner, J.-H. Louwyck, Pierre (?) Millet, Roger-Louis Pillet, Sophie Stambat, Maxence Van der Meersch, Henri Van Rugghe. (Maxence Van der Meersch died recently, and Serge Groussard is now on the Jury).

Present Jury of the "Prix de Peinture Populiste" - 1951

Antonine Couillet-Tessier, Serge Groussard, Léon Lemonnier, Louis Le Sidaner, J.-H. Louwyck, François Millepierres, Roger-Louis Pillet, Claire Sainte-Soline, Henri Van Rugghe.

Present Jury of the "Prix du Cinéma Populiste" - 1952

Antonine Couillet-Tessier, Gilbert Dupé, Serge Groussard, Armand Lanoux, Léon Lemonnier, Herbert Le Porrier, Claire Sainte-Soline, Sophie Stambat, Henri Troyat, Henri Van Rugghe, Paul Vialar, (Jury subject to modification)

APPENDIX VEXHIBITIONS OF POPULIST ARTa) Populist salons

- 1st - Galerie Bareiro, 30 rue de Seine, 14th Oct. to 4th Nov. 1933.
- 2nd - Galerie Bareiro, 30 rue de Seine, 16th to 31st October, 1934.
- 3rd - Galerie de Paris, 17 av. Victor-Emmanuel III, 14th to 28th Dec. 1935.
- 4th - Galerie de Paris, 214 Faubourg Saint-Honoré, 20/10 to 10/Nov. 1937.
- "Cinq Peintres populistes", Quartier Saint-Georges, Oct. 1938.
- 5th - Galerie O. Petrides, 6 av. Delcassé, 8e., 23rd Mch. to 6th Apr. 1939.
- 6th - Galerie La Boétie, 83 rue La Boétie, 5th to 31st July, 1940.
- "Salon populiste", Académie Raymond Duncan, 31 rue de Seine, ca. May '41.
- "Vingt Populistes", Galerie La Boétie, 13th June to 11th July, 1942.
- 7th - La Coupole, Boulevard du Montparnasse, 27th May to 8th June, 1949.
- "Section Populiste", Salon d'Automne, Musée de New-York, 1949.
- 8th - La Coupole, Boulevard du Montparnasse, 20th to 31st May, 1950.
- 9th - Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 6th to 28th June, 1951.
- 10th - Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 6th to 27th June, 1952.

b) Painters exhibiting in the 10th Populist SalonMusée d'Art Moderne - 1952

Adlen, Albarat (Jacques), Amée (Lily d'), Ayer-André, Arcambot (Jean-Pierre), Ballerat, Béchillon (Marc de), Bierge, Bizet (Andrée), Bouquillon, Bournet (Josette), Banguy (Anna de), Coulot (Jean), Chapront (Geneviève), Chappe, Chauvel, Clergé (Auguste), Chasseigneaux (Colette), Cadiou (Henri), Colomer, Canon, Capy, Carre, Chevalier (Maurice), Creixams, Dollet (Georges-Etienne), Domergue-Lagarde, Dautin (Luce), Depannemaker (Bernard), Durand-Rosé, Eberl (François), Ferro, Fiévet (Roger), Fruitier (Maurice), Feuillatte (Raymond), François (Raymond), Giry-Gouret (Suzanne), Guillaumin (Marcel), Gracies (André), Grunsweigh, Garcia, Henry (Robert), Hezarifend (Léo), Jansem, Janin (Jean), Jouclard (Adrienne), Jacquemet (Paul), Laglenne (Jean-François), Lansiaux (Marie-Anne), Le Dall, Le Doux, Le Gall (Roger), Loth (Marcel), Miracle (Anne), Maggy Monier, Montangerand, Montet (Maurice), Menot (François), Marre (Sébastien), Marre (Henri), Martinez (Antoine), Meyra (Claude), Margantin (Louis), Melamuter, Magnard-Vlach (Ondine), Nardy (Christiane), Neubert, Nordmann (Germaine), Nessler, Nordau (Maxa), Nocher, Oguiss, Peltier, Plas (Maurice), Préveraud (Yvonne), Pineau (Alexandre), Paris (Luce), Provot (André), Ramey (Henri), Rendu, Rageade (André), Rumeau (Jean), Rossi (Pierre), Roche (Marcel), Rucki (Mara), Santi-Suros, Salmon (Françoise), Szabo, Truchet (Victorin), Tessier, Teicher, Therme (Henri), Tudeau (Emile), Valeanu, Villette (Ernest), Yvel (Claude), Zondervan (Geneviève).

APPENDIX VI

PROLETARIAN REVIEWS

The following list of reviews and contributors should give some indication of the literary activities of Henry Poulaille and the proletarian writers. The reviews themselves form an anthology of articles, stories, documents, poems and illustrations, composed or collected by proletarian writers and their friends, while the names of contributors show which authors, at some period, were connected with the proletarian group.

In the case of the reviews "Nouvel Age", "Prolétariat" and "A Contre-Courant", according to Tristan Rémy, "seuls les noms soulignés peuvent être considérés comme ayant représenté la littérature prolétarienne." (L) But it is always difficult to draw rigorous dividing lines, and opinions among the proletarian writers themselves may differ as to their most typical representatives.

.

- (1) NOUVEL AGE, Revue Mensuelle de Littérature et de Culture.
January to December 1931, 12 numbers.

Editorial Staff: H. Poulaille, E. Dabit, L. Gachon, J. Giono, L. Jacques, E. Peisson, T. Rémy.

Contributors: Emil Laurent Robert, G. Pillement, C.F. Ramuz, G. Chennetière, A. Latzko, E. Guillaumin, A. Savanier, L. Guilloux, W. Pozner, Neel Doff, Ch. Vildrac, R. Denux, M. Arnac, J.P. Dubray, H. Rohrer, H. Guilbeaux, A. Maury, M. Lapierre, Judith Cladel, Blaise Cendrars, R. Leclercq, E. Finbert, M. Fombeure, A. Soullillou, J. Voisin, L. Bourgeois, V. Serge, Ayguesparse, A. Habaru, Ch. Léger, L. Gerbe, F. Jouan, P.A. Loffler, F. André, L. Massé, J. Reboul, D.G. Guignard, Ch. Wolff, L. Bocquet, J. Baucomont, P. Hubermont, R.N. Raimbault, L. Brunel, C. Burniaux, M. Bernard, Rose Combe, J. Romagne, E. Vandercammen.

- (2) BULLETIN DES ECRIVAINS PROLETARIENS
Organe du Groupe des Ecrivains Prolétariens de Langue Française
March to June 1932, 4 numbers.

Contributors: Georges Altman, Francis André, Henri Barbusse, Marc Bernard, Lucien Bourgeois, Victor Crastre, Eugène Dabit, Georges David, Neel Doff, Lucien Gachon, Léon Gerbe, I. Gyomai, Louis Guilloux, A. Habaru, Marcel Lapierre, Rudolf Leonhard, Jean Loubes, Constant Malva, Ludovic Massé, A. Maury, Marcel Martinet, Louis Paul, Edouard Peisson, Henri Philippon, V. Pozner, Jules Reboul, Albert Soullillou, Henri Rohrer, Tristan Rémy, Joseph Voisin.

The Editorial Staff is not given in the Bulletin, but as Poulaille who wrote important articles is not mentioned among the contributors, he must have been on the staff. The above list of contributors was given in the March number, but as the Bulletin only lasted four months, they may not all have contributed.

- (3) PAGES ET DOCUMENTS DE LA VIE POPULAIRE
publiés par le Groupe des Ecrivains Prolétariens
A double sheet included in Barbusse's review "Monde", probably mainly in 1932

Editorial Staff: Henry Poulaille, Tristan Rémy, Marc Bernard, Lucien Gachon, Edouard Peisson, Charles Plisnier, A. Habaru. (Habaru was the editor of Monde, so was probably automatically on the editorial staff).
Contributors: probably drawn from the contributors to the "Bulletin des Ecrivains Proletariens".

- (4) PROLETARIAT, Revue Mensuelle.
July 1933 to July 1934, 12 numbers.

Editorial Staff: H. Poulaille, L. Gachon, L. Gerbe, L. Massé, E. Peisson, T. Rémy.

Contributors: M. Martinet, Fr. André, C. Malva, L. Gérin, J. Corrie, S. Peters, A. Sculillou, R. Arquier, Ch. Boussinot, M. Fautrad, S. Massé, Ch. Bontoux-Morel, Henriette Valet, A. Savanier, L. Brunel, V. Serge, A.C. Ayguesparse, L. Bourgeois, N. Katz, Rose Combe, S. Streuvels, R. Bonnet, P. Paul Raynal, E. Guillaumin, J. Voisin, H. Hisquin, G. Pillement, J. Romagne, H. Rolland-Holst, P.A. Loffler, Neel Doff, Jean Aubin, P. Autry.

- (5) LE PETIT BARA, proletarian review.
About 1934, 4 or 5 numbers.

Editor: Henry Poulaille.

- (6) A CONTRE-COURANT, Revue Mensuelle de ^{littérature et de} doctrine prolétariennes.
1935 to 1936, probably July to June, 12 numbers.

Editorial Staff: H. Poulaille, Lucien Gachon, Léon Gerbe, Ludovic Massé, Edouard Peisson, J. Romagne.

Contributors: The same as for "Prolétariat", see first paragraph on this page.

- (7) CAHIERS DE LA LITTÉRATURE PROLÉTARIENNE
Supplement to "Esprit" in 1936, 3 Cahiers only, run by Poulaille.

- (8) JEAN-JACQUES, Revue des Lettres et des Arts.
Started 1936, lasted at least four years.

Georges Aurousse, Director. Henry Poulaille, Editor. (In 1939).
Although this fortnightly review published articles by or on proletarian writers, we have not seen enough numbers to confirm that it was a specifically proletarian review. Poulaille says that he was only editor for a short period (L).

- (9) PAGES in Libertaire and La Flèche.
Run by Poulaille, about 1937.

- (10) L'EQUIPE, Revue Mensuelle des Arts et des Lettres dans la Vie.

A short article appears in Jean-Jaques of the 1/6/1939, signed by the painter J. Lacasse and by H. Poulaille, advertising a new review "L'Equipe" based on Lacasse's cultural group of that name.

"La Revue L'Equipe traitera en toute sincérité des diverses manifestations des Arts et des Lettres et de Culture ... Une partie littéraire réunira aînés connus et jeunes débutants, reprenant ainsi le programme que s'était donné la Revue Nouvel Age il y a une huitaine d'années", they say. Four numbers of "L'Equipe" were published.

- (11) MAINTENANT

Outstanding quarterly Cahiers (1945/1948) published by Grasset under the direction of Henry Poulaille. The double issue Nos 9 and 10 (1948, over 500 pages), a commemorative number "1848, Le Climat, les Faits, les Hommes" contains much valuable material and should be in all libraries.

- (12) CAHIERS DU PEUPLE
Three numbers, 1947 or 1948, run by Michel Rayon and René Bonnet.

- (13) NOUVELLE REVUE DES TRADITIONS POPULAIRES
Arnold van Gennep and Henry Poulaille, a dozen numbers, 1949, 1950, 1951.

- (14) FAUBOURGS 49, FAUBOURGS 50 etc.
"Publication encyclopédique pour la culture individuelle et l'expression littéraire et artistique du peuple, éditée par la 'Société des Ecrivains et Artistes du Peuple'."
Director: Fernand Henry, assisted by H. Poulaille, René Bonnet, Ph. Lebesgue, etc..

APPENDIX VII

AUTHORS' LIVES

These notes are of necessity brief, hence incomplete. Their function is only to throw some light on authors mentioned in this thesis, and to show their connection with the populist movement. The information given below has been derived mainly through interviews or correspondence with the authors themselves, except in the case of Duhamel, Romain and Sartre. Information on Dabit, Prévost and Van der Meersch was furnished by their publishers. The omission of birth dates in the case of women is intentional

.

Marcel Aymé was born in the province of Burgundy in 1902. His father was a blacksmith, and Aymé spent his youth in the country. He took up mathematical studies in Besançon, but fell ill and had to give them up. Later he was a bank clerk, then a journalist. Now he lives a retired life in Paris, in 9ter rue Paul Féval, and goes out little, except to visit Montmartre painters in the neighbourhood. Is fond of children, for whom he has written several books. He has published many novels, which combine realism with fantasy.

Lil Boël (Vivian Brécoteaux, then Mme Bourgetel) was born in Lisieux (Calvados) where her father was a building contractor. She was not strong as a child, and has been profoundly influenced by a Christian mysticism since her extreme youth. The death of her husband, several successive bereavements, and her subsequent poverty and loneliness gave her a pity for all unfortunate people. She started writing poetry in 1933, in popular language and "argot". Her works, similar in style to those of Jehan Rictus, are profoundly influenced by her love for the poor people she had learnt to understand in spite of a middle class background. To make ends meet she became an artist at various cabarets like the "Lapin à Gill" and the "Moulin de la Galette", with a large repertoire of her own poems. Her first collection of poetry, "Fosse Commune des Misères", was crowned by the populists. Since then more poems, novels and plays. On the populist jury. Lives at Montmartre, 3 rue Cortot, Paris 18e.

Maurice Carême was born in Belgium in 1899, and lives in Brussels, at 14 Avenue Nellie Melba. His father was an interior decorator; Carême himself taught for twenty-five years, but now confines himself to writing. He is fond of botany, astronomy, folk-lore and music, and is interested in the literary efforts of children. Favorite poets: Villon, Verlaine and Aldo Capasso. Since his first book of poetry in 1925 he has published ten volumes of poems, a novel, short stories, and several books for children. Populist prize. Feels linked to the populists through his love of simplicity, sincerity, and his mistrust of highbrow and high-flown literary works.

André Chamson was born in Nîmes in 1900, and spent his boyhood in the Cévennes where he still returns for holidays. His early works show something of the life in the Cévennes, but since his first book, "Roux le Bandit" (1925), Chamson has identified himself with problems which affect mankind in general. Perhaps this explains his world-wide popularity, and the translation of his books into at least a dozen languages, including Japanese. Chamson feels it the duty of writers to raise the spiritual level of the people as high as possible in the little time left between wars and political disturbances, so that the spiritual set-backs due to the invasion of "History" into the life of individuals and nations will not be so great. Chamson's treatise "L'Homme contre l'Histoire" is thus the keystone of his whole work. André Chamson himself is curator of the "Petit Palais" in Paris, where he organises important exhibitions of art. Apart from fighting in the Maquis during the occupation, he did valuable work in saving art treasures from the invaders. Address: "Petit Palais", Champs Elysées, Paris.

Antonine Couillet-Tessier came from Vendée to Paris when she was eleven. Her father whom she admired taught French, was a classical scholar, and gave her a love for literature. She took up science, got a diploma as chemist, and worked in hospitals where she came into contact with the people and won their confidence. She married a chemist, and they went to live in a poor quarter of Paris where she learnt to know the lives of those around her. Her first novel "Marthe, Femme Seule" was praised by

Thérive in 1930, and since then Mme Couillet-Tessier has shown a constant interest in populism. She founded the first prize for populist works, and has served on various juries. Her first poems were printed without her knowledge when she was ten. Since then she has published several volumes of poetry, and six populist novels, which show a pity for the hard lives of women of the lower classes. Lives at 13 rue Gabriel Péri, Colombes, S/Oise.

Eugène Dabit was the son of a wagoner, and his mother was at some time a concierge. He was born in Paris in 1898, and was at school in the rue Championnet till he was thirteen, then he was apprenticed to a locksmith, was liftman in the Paris underground, and telephone operator in the war. Odd jobs after the war, decorator, and waiter in the lodging house his father had acquired, the "Hôtel du Nord". Dabit took art in evening classes, painted for some years, then turned from painting to writing. He was influenced by Vallès and Charles-Louis Philippe, and encouraged by Gide, and Roger Martin du Gard and Guéhenno. His first published work, "Hôtel du Nord" won the populist prize in 1931. His books show a love for working-class people, for personal freedom and a hatred of war. Dabit spent his time partly in Paris, partly on the shores of the Mediterranean and at Menorca. Died in Russia in 1936.

Emile Danoën (Emile Orvoen) was born in 1920 at Moëlan sur Mer, where he lives to-day (Kersauze, Moëlan s/mer, Finistère). His father was a fisherman and a sailor, and Danoën spent his youth at Le Havre, playing near the port or in the old quarter of Saint-François. Primary education, later self-taught. Danoën was in turn fisherman, supervisor in a boarding-school, car washer, clerk, wandering violinist, librarian, journalist, and so on. In his spare time he enjoys sport, motorcycling, sailing, fishing. His first book "Cerfs Volants" appeared in 1942. "Rue des Enfants Abandonnés" was inspired by his experiences as street musician. Several other novels, all populist, (or proletarian!) On populist jury. Thinks populism should show a greater interest than it does in the political and trade union struggles of the working-class.

Georges Duhamel, born in Paris in 1884, studied medicine like his father, but a poet at the same time, he became a member of "L'Abbaye" in 1906. He was a surgeon at the front in the first World War. His membership of "l'Académie Française", "l'Académie de Médecine", "l'Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques" and "l'Académie de chirurgie" show his wide interests. Among his most important works are the "Vie et Aventures de Salavin" (1920/1932) and the "Chronique des Pasquier" (1933/1945). He was a member of the populist jury from 1931 to 1940, but as for his own position he writes: "Je ne me suis jamais considéré comme un écrivain populiste, n'ayant jamais bien compris ce que représentait le populisme en tant que mouvement littéraire" (L). Address when at Paris: 31 rue de Liège, Paris, 8e.

Philippe Dumaine (Philippe Thenon) won the first populist prize for poetry with manuscript verses in 1940. He was born in 1901 in Paris where he still lives to-day (42 rue Bonaparte, Paris 6e). His father was in the civil service, and Dumaine himself, after technical studies, became a senior official in the "Gaz de France". During the war he was wounded, then taken prisoner, and his poetry since then tends towards what he calls a "réalisme lyrique". "Si, par ma culture littéraire et scientifique, je crois que le poète doit être profondément enraciné dans la réalité, je veux qu'il élève ses feuillages dans l'azur", he writes (L). "C'est dire que je n'exprime jamais qu'un réalisme dans lequel je cherche une autre signification, un sens mystérieux, une transposition." Nine volumes of poetry, one novel. Influences: Nietzsche, Bergson, Apollinaire, Kafka, Baudelaire, Aldo Capasso. Likes reading, dreaming, gardening.

René Fallet is the son of a railway worker and was born on the outskirts of Paris at Villeneuve St-Georges in 1927. He left school during the occupation at the age of fourteen, worked as office boy for an editor, errand boy for a chemist, and joined up at the age of sixteen. Returned to find work as journalist. The success of his first book "Banlieue Sud-Est" in 1947 made him one of the coming authors, and he has been writing steadily since then, mainly about his own experiences as wide-awake youth in the Paris suburbs. Influenced by Cendrars, Rimbaud, Montherlant, also Prévert. Love of instinctive living, sentimentality, and a poetic realism in literature. Crowned by the populists in 1950 for his work as a whole.

A friend of Armand Lanoux, also of Serge Groussard. Meets other populists in Mme Stambatz's salon. Address: 130 Boulevard Richard Lenoir, Paris 11e

Camille François was born in 1901 in Paris, where his father was in commerce. After primary school, he did odd jobs and led a bohemian life; now writes songs and edits music. Has published three volumes of poetry, one novel, four plays and one thousand five hundred songs. His poetry, for which he got a populist prize is written in popular French, much of it about simple people, and he tries to show that they too can appreciate the beauty in life. His hobbies are flying and fishing. He meets other populists regularly, and believes that populism plays the chief role in French literature to-day, as it is the direct expression of life. Address: 22 rue de l'Echiquier, Paris, 10e.

Marie Gevers (Mme Franz Willems) was born in Missembourg in Belgium where she still lives, and grew up in the lovely country house of her parents. She was educated, like Rousseau's *Emile*, by private lessons, extensive reading, and the nature around her. Her youth in the countryside and her love for nature and for the country people have influenced her works. Her first book, a collection of poems, was brought out ten years after her marriage. Since then she has written over two dozen works, including five volumes of poetry, and eight novels, of which half are populist in inspiration. Populist prize for "*Madame Orpha ou la Sérénade de Mai*". Friendship with Georges Duhamel and Mme Couillet-Tessier. Since 1938 a member of "L'Académie Royale de langue et de littérature françaises" in Belgium.

Serge Groussard, born in 1920, was the son of an officer in the French Colonial Infantry and passed his youth in Indochina, Madagascar, Djibouti Morocco and France. University education, specialising in history. A resistor during the war; caught by the Gestapo he spent two years in captivity. Taught, but soon confined himself to literature. His war experiences play a large part in his works, also the martyrdom of the Jews as his mother was a Russian Jewess. His first book, "*Crépuscule des Vivants*" appeared in 1946; since then he has written half a dozen other works, several of them populist. Four prizes, including a populist prize. On juries of populist novel, poetry, painting and cinema prizes. Present address, 7 bis rue Paul-Valéry, Paris 16e.

Louis Guilloux was born in 1899 in the town of Saint-Brieuc in Brittany, where his father was a shoemaker. A scholarship kept him at school in Saint-Brieuc till 1917. There he learnt to appreciate the philosopher Georges Palante who taught at the lycée, and he discovered Rousseau, Vallès, Tolstoy and Gorki. Undertook several poorly paid jobs after the war, ending as secretary to an anarchist translator. Guilloux himself was politically left, although he did not join any party. He first helped Poulaille and the proletarian group. Great interest in the lives of the people around him at Saint-Brieuc, with whom most of his books deal. Jauresian pacifism, strong humanitarian ideals. Populist prize for "*Le Pain des Rêves*", but Guilloux dislikes literary groups and has never associated himself with the populists. Address: 13 rue Lavoisier, Saint-Brieuc, Côtes du Nord.

Armand Lanoux (13 Avenue André Chénier, Chelles, S et M.) was born in Paris in 1913. Left school early, after his "brevet élémentaire", then self-taught, designed covers for chocolate boxes, and did other odd jobs. Took up painting and journalism and published some detective stories. Then three novels, "*La Nef des Fous*" (populist prize), "*La Classe du Matin*" and "*Cet âge trop tendre*". Works for broadcasting and television and writes for many reviews, like "*Oeuvres libres*", "*Mercure de France*", etc.. Interests: psychoanalysis, hypnotism, painting. Fond of MacOrlan, Cendrars, Romain Rolland; influenced by his life in the outer suburbs of Paris and his period as prisoner of war. Aim: a poetic realism. On the populist jury, and one of the younger leaders of the populist movement.

Léon Lemonnier was born in Rouen in 1890 and spent his youth there; his father, a bank clerk, died three years later, and Lemonnier's paternal grandmother helped to look after him. He studied English, spent some time in England before the war, and taught after the war at the schools Louis-le-Grand, Henri IV and Condorcet, and lectured at the Sorbonne. He

became known in literary circles as novelist and critic, and founded with André Thérive the populist movement, of which he is still the president. In 1945 ill-health forced him to retire from public life. Has written so far twelve volumes of novels and short stories, twelve works on literary history, six historical works, and eleven biographies. Address: 8 rue François Millet, Paris 16e.

Herbert Le Porrier, a medical doctor living at 18 rue des Saints-Pères, Paris 7e, was born in 1913 in Paris. His father was a high-school teacher. Le Porrier's first novel was published in 1946, since then he has written two more novels and two plays. His works, apart from their romantic interest, show something of the struggle for existence of ordinary people, and their efforts towards better material conditions. Le Porrier is fond of peace, country life and freedom, and cherishes the desire to travel, especially in the east. Won the populist prize in 1952, is much thought of by the populists, and has himself a firm belief in the future of populism.

Louis Le Sidaner is the son of the painter Le Sidaner who was born in L'Île Maurice. Louis Le Sidaner himself was born in 1898 in the Pas-de-Calais, and spent his youth at Versailles. Now he lives in Paris, at 60 Avenue de New-York, 16e, but escapes when he can to St-Jean-Cap-Ferrat in the south. A business man by profession, his writing is his chief hobby, and apart from novels and literary criticism, he writes for many newspapers and reviews. He takes part in most populist activities, wrote for the "Cahiers de Paris" and is on several populist juries.

Céline Lhotte was a social worker, mainly in Le Havre, and her early books reflect the misery of the poor she knew through personal experience. She was one of the first writers to approve of the idea of a populist movement. Her later works, however, she no longer classes as populist. She founded "l'Oeuvre des Prisonniers" in France and was awarded the Légion d'Honneur by the French Government in 1950. At present she lives near Paris: 12 Avenue du Parc, Vanves, Seine.

Joseph-Henri Louwyck was a teacher before going into business, and has written books about Flanders where he was born in 1886 (La Dame au Beffroi about Brittany (La Race qui refléurit) and about the celtic question which interests him (La légende du Gui, Vercingétorix, Danse pour ton Ombre); other works show industry (Un Homme tendre, 1921), the north of France devastated by the first World War (La Nouvelle Epopée), home life (Retour de Flamme, 1930) and religious questions (Mademoiselle Cornélie, 1946). In his spare time enjoys hiking. He is on several populist juries to-day. Home: 1 Avenue Victor-Hugo, Meudon, S/Oise.

Théophile Malicet lives at 32 rue Pasteur in the village of Nouzonville in the Ardennes, where he was born in 1897. His father was a blacksmith, and Malicet left school at the age of eleven, to start work with his father. He is now a designer in metal-works. He discovered Baudelaire, Rilke, Kirkegaard, and was helped by Jean Rogissart, another writer from the Ardennes who is also connected with populism. Strongly influenced by Christianity after the age of 40, Malicet points to a certain Christian existentialism in his works. Five volumes of poetry since 1936, which show a desire to help the working-class to an understanding of beauty and culture. Populist prize. Believes that populist works will help the people to appreciate good literature.

Jean Merrien, born in Brittany in 1905, won a populist prize in 1944. "En ce qui me concerne, le populisme tient plutôt de la plaisanterie," he says (L), admitting that he belongs to an old aristocratic family, little disposed to an interest in the people. His pseudonym Merrien is probably derived from his passion for the sea and for yachting, which was evident in "Bord à Bord" and has coloured all his later works. He has sworn secrecy about his real name, his life, his profession and that of his father, and to most questions asked can hence give no answer. Whether he lives incognito at his home address too, 11 rue Henri IV, Nantes, is not known.

Pierre Moussarie lives at 20 Avenue de la République, Aurillac, Cantal, where he was born in 1910. His father who worked on the railways died

when Moussarie was five years old. Moussarie himself entered the post office where ~~his~~ he is now chief inspector, but he is a poet in his spare time, fond of Milosz, Apollinaire and Fargue; he has published three collections of poems since 1931, and now writes for "La Bouteille à la Mer". Some of his poems have been translated into Italian by Aldo Capasso. Won a populist prize, but has never associated with the populists, and maintains that his poems are very varied in inspiration.

Jean Pallu (Pétrus Passeneau) was an instrument maker in metallurgic works in 1929 when he wrote his first book "L'Usine" about the life and people around him. Later he was a commercial traveller in South America, a garage owner at Marseilles, and is now at Lyons, (20 rue Vauban). Has written several novels, but always as a hobby. In literature, he calls himself a systematic individualist, "ce qui signifie, en langage clair" he adds "que je déteste les écoles littéraires, les chapelles littéraires, les snobismes littéraires." Thinks little of populism. "Entre nous, quelle idée d'entreprendre une thèse sur le populisme." In private life, renowned for his irony and ready wit.

François Piazza was born in Orléans in 1903, where his father was bursar at the high school, then went to Paris in 1918. He left his literary studies at the Sorbonne to go in for commerce, where he came into contact with the working-class and picked up their language. Some years later he decided to study law, and was subsequently employed by the "Ministère de l'Intérieur". Interests: piano, composition, swimming. Favorite authors include Céline, Rictus, Carco, Aragon and Breton. Piazza's poetry, mostly in popular language and "argot", is filled with melancholy over the course of affairs of the heart and of humanity. Has published little, but was crowned by the populists in 1945. Knows many populists, and sees in populism a certain link with Jules Romain's "unanimism". Address: 28 rue Lauriston, Paris 16e.

Henri Pollès, born about 1910, states that he can hardly be called a populist, so with an honesty which does him credit he refuses all further information. His address however is 211 rue de la Convention, Paris 16e, and he must have spent his youth in Brittany. Populist prize for his first work, "Sophie de Tréguier".

Henry Poulaille, son of a carpenter, now living at 13 rue de Châtillon, Vanves, Seine, was born in December 1896 and spent his youth in the working-class quarter of Paris near the Quai de Javel. His father died early in 1910, and Poulaille left school to become errand boy to a chemist. Soon afterwards his mother died too, and Poulaille, not yet fourteen, had to fend for himself. In his spare time he read all the books he could get, and gradually acquired an extensive general knowledge. War years, odd jobs afterwards, very poor till he was taken on by the publishing firm of Bernard Grasset in the early twenties, where he still works to-day. Strong urge to help working-class writers. Chief leader of the proletarian literary movement from 1930 onwards. Founded many proletarian literary reviews, starting with "Nouvel Age" in 1931. Founded a "Musée du Soir" (1935/9), as a cultural centre for workers. His works include half a dozen volumes of literary criticism, hundreds of articles, and eight novels, over half written about the vivid experiences of his childhood and youth.

Jean Prévost (1901/1944), a disciple of Alain, was a true humanist, combining wide intellectual interests with a love for sport and action. He produced work that is very varied in character, including novels, mémoires, essays, short stories, and critical works on literature, architecture and art. Prévost worked mainly as journalist and critic for publications like "Europe" and "l'Intransigeant", but in 1930 and 1931 he was a reader at Cambridge University. During the occupation he was one of the leaders in the resistance in the Vercors; surrounded in the end, he tried to escape to join the Maquis in Isère. Caught, he was shot with four others. Chamson, Prévost's friend, says that Prévost joined the resistance, knowing that his best work was yet to be written, and might never appear (I).

Tristan Rémy (Raymond Marcel Arthur Desprez) was born in Blérancourt, (Aisne), but spent his youth in Paris in the working-class quarter of La Chapelle. He left school early to work on the railways, then became

a clerk. Started plans with Poulaille for encouraging proletarian literature in 1920 already. These discussions took place at 66 Boulevard Ornano, Paris 18e, where Rémy still stays. Rémy was influenced by the naturalist writers, the Goncourts, Zola, Alexis, Cladel, but his work grew out of his intimate knowledge of the Paris working-class among whom he lived. Helped Poulaille with many proletarian reviews and with the "Musée du Soir". Poet and novelist, crowned by the populists for his "Faubourg Saint-Antoine". Joined the populist jury in 1948, but resigned three years later. Belief in a poetic realism in literature.

Marius Richard, born in Vienna in 1900, passed his youth in Paris and in the north of France. He is a journalist like his father, writes for "Parisien Libéré", "Point de Vue", "Images du Monde" and other reviews; is fond of painting and music. Spends part of his time in the village of Puiseaux (Loiret), and was recently two years in Morocco as editor of the weekly "Paris". Has published about a dozen works of different types, including several populist novels, which show pity for the less fortunate. In touch with many populist writers, especially André Thérive. Address: 36 Avenue des Gobelins, Paris 13e.

Emmanuel Roblès was born in Oran in 1914, and now lives at 17 rue Arago, La Redoute, Algiers. His father was a mason, and Roblès himself worked as apprentice in a factory, then studied literature, taught, worked as journalist and began writing on his own. Chief literary influences: Dostoevski, Steinbeck, Balzac, French classic theatre and the golden age in Spain. Other interests: pelota as played by the Basques, and travelling. Has been in China, Russia, South America, Spain, etc., and served as war correspondent. Now literary critic for the Algerian Broadcasting Station, and contributor to "La Revue de Paris" and "Soleil" (Algiers). So far five novels, some of them populist, two volumes of stories, and a play "Montserrat" (1949) which has already been translated into twelve languages. In contact with the populists at Paris during the years 1944/1947.

Jean Rogissart was born in 1894 in the Ardennes, and spent his youth in the Meuse valley where his father was a factory worker. Rogissart, after studying, worked in the Ardennes archives, then became a primary teacher. His main work is a series of four books on the early socialist Jean Mamert and his son. The first of the series, "Le Fer et la Forêt" was crowned by the populists. Rogissart belongs to the Société des Ecrivains Ardennais, and to l'Académie de Province, which according to Rogissart is regionalist and realist, hence populist as well. The dominant tendency of his own works is a humanitarian socialism. He still lives in the Ardennes now, in Nouzonville, 137 rue J. Tuzelliv.

Jules Romains, whose real name is Louis Farigoule, was born in 1885. He was the founder of the unanimist movement, and taught philosophy for ten years, but since the first World War confined himself to literature. From poetry, Romains turned to plays, then to novels. In his 27 volume epic "Les Hommes de Bonne Volonté" (1932/1947) he tried to give a large fresco of the life in France in the first third of our century. "J'ai beaucoup de sympathie pour le programme du populisme" he admitted (see p. 140 above). Jules Romains is a member of "L'Académie Française", and lives at 6 rue de Solférino, Paris 7e.

Jean-Paul Sartre was born in 1905 and studied in Paris. He taught, then travelled in Egypt, Greece and Italy between 1929 and 1934, returning to teach philosophy at the Lycée Condorcet. Populist prize for "La Nausée" in 1940. First prisoner of war, then active in the resistance movement. He resigned from teaching to devote himself to writing, and to his review "Les Temps Modernes". His works include books on philosophy, then novels, short stories and plays. He has risen to fame as the exponent of the philosophy of existentialism. Address: 60 rue de Seine, Paris.

Sophie Stambat was born in a mining village in the Pas de Calais, where her father had been a miner. Her unhappy youth and her contact with the rough people in the north of France are reflected in her works. Her first books were written in collaboration with her husband Marc Stambat. Some time after his death she married Henri Van Rugghe, and together with him holds a monthly salon in their apartment at 20 Quai de la Mégisserie. This well-known salon is frequented by writers and artists, and the

populists are always especially welcome. Since her first novel "Noires. Gueules" (1932) about the miners she knew, she has published six novels and a collection of short stories. Her later works were written with the collaboration of Henri Van Rugghe. She is on the populist juries for novels, poetry and painting, and plays a large part in populist activities to-day. She is fond of Zola, C. Mansfield, Mary Webb, Ramuz and Giono, likes gardening, and sees to the upkeep of George Sand's old house at Palaiseau, S/Oise.

André Thérive (Roger Puthoste) was born in 1891 in Limoges, but soon came to Paris. He studied at Louis-le-Grand and at the Sorbonne, and came under the influence of Schopenhauer and Huysmans. After the war he taught at the Collège Stanislas, but soon became known as a writer, poet, critic, and champion of pure French. Starting as literary critic of the weekly "Opinion", he later replaced Paul Souday as literary critic of "Le Temps". Founder with Lemonnier of the populist movement in 1929. Has written so far a dozen novels, five books on French language, a dozen volumes of literary criticism, and three volumes of short stories. Address: 110 rue Denfert-Rochereau, Paris, 14e.

Henri Troyat was born in 1911 in Moskow. His father, an industrialist, fled to France with his family during the Russian revolution. Troyat studied law, but was more interested in painting and literature. Was influenced by Russian authors like Gogol, Dostoevski and Tolstoy, also by Flaubert. Worked in the Préfecture de la Seine, now film critic and writer. His first book "Faux Jour" won a populist prize. His subsequent novels and stories are mainly psychological developments of various characters. His recent huge volumes of "Tant que la Terre durera" contain many personal experiences, being the chronicle of a Russian family which settles in France. Troyat likes sport, swimming, boxing. On populist juries. Prix Goncourt for "L'Araigne" in 1938. 11 Avenue Gourgaud, Paris 17e.

Jean-Louis Vallas, born in 1901, lives in Montmartre (63 rue Lepic, Paris 18e), but passed his youth in the south as his father was dean of the law faculty at Lille. Vallas studied law at Lille and at Paris and is now inspector in the Treasury. Fond of Latin and Greek classical authors, but also of Villon, Rabelais, La Fontaine, and Mistral. Few volumes of poetry published so far. "J'ai peut-être plus vécu poésie qu'écrit poésie, entre humour et fantaisie et entre rêve et réalité" he writes (L). Populist prize, member of the jury, knows many populists, and amuses himself by sending them humorous verses.

Maxence Van der Meersch (1907/1951) grew up in the north of France and studied law, but stopped after two years' practice as he was more interested in literature. He is one of the best contemporary writers describing the atmosphere of the peasant and industrial north. Brought up in an atmosphere of materialism, he found himself drawn to spiritual problems; his conversion to catholicism is told in "L'Elu" (1937), and since that date his books are inspired by his faith. His courageous "Corps et Ames" (1943) which he worked on for seven years is a plea, like so many of his works, for pity, love and justice.

Henri Van Rugghe was born in 1906 in Paris. Scientific studies, specialising in surgical instruments and surgical technique like his father. On the populist juries for novels, poetry and painting. Presides over the populist salon in his home at 20 Quai de la Mégisserie with Mme Sophie Stambat, and helps her with her novels, doing many illustrations for them as well. Paints in his spare time, and considers his present works populist in inspiration, since according to him the theme of a painting more than its treatment classes a work of art as populist.

APPENDIX VIII

AUTHORS' WORKS (NOVELS AND POETRY)

Of the works listed below, those available for this thesis are marked x ; those which are populist (or proletarian), including a few doubtful cases, are marked p . Where the book itself could not be consulted, the information was furnished by the author, but here there is an element of uncertainty, for some authors replying to questionnaires may not have been sure of the meaning of the term "populist". Duhamel, for instance, although serving ten years on the populist jury writes: "Je n'ai jamais su très bien ce que représente le populisme en tant que mouvement littéraire (L).

The dates are given where possible. In some cases the dates are those noted in the first editions under vague terms like "Achévé d'Imprimer", "Dépot Légal" or "Copyright" which usually refer to the same year. In other cases the author has supplied the date, which may be -- if his memory served him correctly -- not the year of the "Dépot Légal", but the year when the book was first on sale. Thérive's "Les Souffrances Perdues", for instance, shows "Achévé d'Imprimer 6/12/1926", "Copyright 1927" and was criticised in the press from two to four months later. Dates given in general reference books are not always reliable. In the sections on populism in Henri Clouard's "Histoire de la Littérature Française" for instance, there are several wide inaccuracies in the dates of publication; this is understandable, for authors themselves when furnishing information have not always the precision of the historian.

It has not been considered necessary to add the works of proletarian authors besides Henry Poulaille and Tristan Rémy, as they fall outside the scope of this thesis.

.

Marcel Aymé

Novels

- Aller Retour (1927)
- Les Jumeaux du Diable (1928)
- px La Table aux crevés (1929)
- p La Rue sans nom (1930)
- Brulebois (1930)
- Le Vaurien (1931)
- px Le puits aux images, nouvelles (1932)
- px La jument verte (1933)
- Le Nain, nouvelles, (1934)
- px Maison basse, (1935)
- Le moulin de la sourdine (1936)
- Gustalin (1937)
- Derrière chez Martin, nouvelles (1938)
- x Le boeuf clandestin (1939)
- x La belle image (1941)
- x Travelingue (1942)
- x Le Passe-Muraille, nouvelles (1943)
- px La Vouivre (1943)
- px Le Chemin des écoliers (1946)
- x Le vin de Paris, nouvelles (1947)
- etc. etc..
- All above published by Gallimard.
- Also many children's books, and a play.

Lil Boël

Poetry

- px Fosse commune des Misères (Guy le Prat, 1941)
- px La Mangeoire Humaine (Declylepêtre?? 1952)
- And a novel "Cligne d'un", (1947), also populist.

Maurice Carême

Poetry

- Various volumes of poetry between 1925 and 1935, not populist.
- px Mère (Private edition, first printed 1935, 6th edition 1952)
- p Petite Flore (Private edition, 1937)

- p Femme (Les éditions du croquis, Bruxelles, 1946)
 px La Lanterne Magique, poems for children (Stock, 1947)
 p La Maison Blanche (Private edition, 1949)
 px La Voix du Silence (Private edition, 1951)
 In addition two volumes of stories, "Orladour" and "Contes pour Caprine" (both 1948) and a travel diary "La Passagère Invisible" (1950). Maurice Carême considers all three populist.

André Chamson

Novels

- px Roux le Bandit (Grasset, 1925)
 px Les hommes de la route (Grasset, 1927)
 px Le crime des justes (Grasset, 1928)
 px Histoires de Tabusse (Horizons de France, 1930)
 x Héritages (Grasset, 1932)
 x L'Auberge de l'abîme (Grasset, 1933)
 x L'année des vaincus (Grasset, 1934)
 x Les quatre éléments (Grasset, 1935)
 x La Galère (Gallimard, 1939)
 x Quatre mois (Flammarion, 1940)
 x Ecrit en 40 (Gallimard, 1945)
 x Le puits des miracles (Gallimard, 1945)
 x Le dernier village (Mercure de France, 1946)
 L'Homme qui marchait devant moi (Gallimard, 1948) etc..
 Several essays, most important being "L'Homme contre l'Histoire" (Grasset, 1927). Chamson has recently written for the theatre.

Antonine Couillet-Tessier

Novels

- px Marthe, Femme Seule (Renaissance du Livre, 1929)
 px Toche parmi les Femmes (Renaissance du Livre, 1930)
 px Chambre à Louer (Grasset, 1931)
 p Rue Barrée (Ed. Cosmopolites, 1934)
 px Défense de Vivre (Ed. Montaigne, 1936)
 px Tempête sur la Province (Ed. Janicot, 1945)
 Also several volumes of poetry, and plays.

Eugène Dabit

Novels

- px L'Hôtel du Nord (Denoël, 1929)
 px Petit-Louis (Gallimard, 1930)
 px Villa Oasis, ou les faux bourgeois (Gallimard, 1932)
 px Faubourgs de Paris (Gallimard, 1933)
 px Un Mort tout neuf (Gallimard, 1934)
 px L'Île (Gallimard, 1935)
 p Train de vies, nouvelles (Gallimard, 1936)
 x Journal Intime (Gallimard, 1939)
 px Le Mal de Vivre, novel and short stories (Gallimard, 1939)

Emile Dancôen

Novels

- p Ceffs Volants (Jean Vigneau, 1942)
 p Rue des Enfants Abandonnés (Jean Vigneau, 1945)
 p L'Aventure de Noël (Jean Vigneau, 1946)
 p Lignes Blanches (La Bibliothèque Française, 1947)
 p La Queue à la Pègre (Julliard, 1949)
 p L'Heureuse Aventure (Julliard, 1950)
 px Une Maison soufflée aux Vents (Julliard, 1951)

Philippe Dumaine

Poetry

- Oblations (Ed. du Trident, 1936)
 Lumières (Ed. du Trident, 1937)
 Périples (Ed. du Divan, 1939)
 p Imaginaires (Pierre Séghers, 1941)
 p Les Francs-Tireurs du Temps (Pierre Séghers, 1943)
 Cortèges (Pierre Séghers, 1945)
 Agression de l'Inconnu (A l'Enseigne de l'Homme Méditant, 1948)
 L'Hôtel de l'Age Mur (Ed. Michel Lombard, 1950)
 x Ame, Terre Brulée (Pierre Séghers, 1951)
 In addition two novels.

René FalletNovels

- px Banlieue Sud-Est (Domat, 1947)
- px La Fleur et la Souris (Domat, 1948)
- p Pigalle (Domat, 1949)
- Le Triporteur (Denoël, 1951)
- And a volume of poetry.

Camille FrançoisPoetry

- px Le Cœur de Paris (A.B.C., Paris)
- px A Cœur Ouvert (A.B.C., Paris)
- px A Cœur Perdu (A.B.C., Paris)
- These three volumes probably published in 1951, or shortly before.
- Also a populist novel, "Mlle de la Faille" (Nouvelles Editions Latines)

Marie GeversNovels

- px Mme Orpha ou la sérénade de mai (Attinger, 1933)
- p La Ligne de vie (Plon, 1937)
- p Paix sur les champs (Plon, 1941)
- p Le Chemin du Paradis, conte (Desclée de Brouwer, 1950)
- Five volumes of poetry, and many other novels and stories, which Marie Gevers does not consider populist.

Serge GroussardNovels

- p Crépuscule des Vivants (Ferenczi, 1946)
- p Solitude Espagnole, enquête (Plon, 1948)
- p Pogrom (Ferenczi, 1948)
- px Des gens sans importance (Ferenczi, 1949)
- p La Femme sans passé (Gallimard, 1950)
- p Talya, récit, (Gallimard, 1951)
- p La Ville de Joie (Gallimard, 1952)

Louis GuillouxNovels

- px La Maison du Peuple (Grasset, 1927)
- px Dossier Confidentiel (Grasset, 1930)
- px Compagnons (Grasset, 1931)
- px Hyménée (Grasset, 1932)
- px Souvenirs sur G. Palante (O.L. Aubert, 1931)
- px Angéline (Grasset, 1934)
- px Le Sang Noir (Gallimard, 1935)
- px Histoires de Brigands, sketches (Ed. Sociales Internationales, 1936)
- px Le Pain des Rêves (Gallimard, 1942)
- px Le Jeu de Patience (Gallimard, 1949)
- His new work, "Absent de Paris" (Gallimard, end 1952) is a collection of notes, ideas, imaginary letters, recollections, etc..

Armand LanouxNovels

- Several detective stories, then
- px La Nef des Fous (Les Deux Sirènes, 1947)
- px La Classe du Matin (Fayard, 1950)
- px Cet Âge trop tendre (Club Français du Livre, 1951)
- Also a few long essays.

Léon LemonnierNovels

- Entente Cordiale (Flammarion, 192?)
- px La Maîtresse au Cœur Simple (Flammarion, 1925)
- px L'Amour Interdit (Flammarion, 1925)
- px Le Passé des Autres (Flammarion, 1926)
- px La Femme sans Pêché (Flammarion, 1927)
- p L'amour et les soupçons (Flammarion, 1928)
- p Le sang qu'elle n'avait pas versé (Flammarion, 1929)
- p Le Baiser de Satan (Flammarion, 1930)

- px Les destins sont solidaires (Flammarion, 1931)
- p Coeur Imbécile (Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1935)
- p La nouvelle vie de M. Pinjon, nouvelle (Les Oeuvres Libres)
- La Ceinture Iroquoise (Self)
- Par ici, l'Amérique, nouvelles (Ariane)
- Also many works on literary criticism, biography and history.

Herbert Le Porrier

Novels

- La Mue (Ariane, 1946)
- Entrages (Ariane, 1947)
- px Juliette au passage (Le Seuil, 1951)
- And a play, "Et pourtant elle tourne", published in 1947.

Louis Le Sidaner

Novels

- px Amour couleur de Paris (Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1931)
- px Le Pharmacien de Bornières (Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1932)
- x Hydrogène et Cosmétique (Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1935)
- x Monsieur Marcel (Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1936)
- x Le Coeur humain (Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1938)
- Le Commencement de la fin (Ariane)
- Some critical works, including one on Eugène Dabit.

Céline Lhotte

Novels

- p Ma mère Ricput (Valois, 1929)
- px Sur les fortifs du Paradis (Renaissance du Livre, 1929)
- p La Petite fille aux mains sales (Renaissance du Livre, 1929)
- p Choeur triste chez les sans repos (Renaissance du Livre, 1930)
- p La petite Bismuth (Albin Michel, 1932)
- p Coins de rues (Blond et Gay, 1933)
- p Des pauvres parmi nous (Blond et Gay, 1934)
- Since then, sixteen other volumes, which Céline Lhotte no longer classes as populist.

Théophile Malicet

Poetry

- px Sur le Flanc du Cratère (Own publication, 1936)
- Ascension (Anciaux, Charleville, 1938)
- Les Fils de la Vierge (Anciaux, Charleville, 1939)
- px La Galère a chanté (Groupe Rimbaud, 1946)
- p En Chair et en Esprit (Groupe Rimbaud, 1950)

Jean Merrien

Novels

- La Mort Jeune (Gallimard, 1938)
- Abandons de Portes (Gallimard, 1939)
- px Bord à Bord (Gallimard, 1944)
- Marines, nouvelles (Peladeau, Montreal, 1944)
- Rien que la Mer (S.E.L.F., 1945)
- Le Refus (Presses de la Cité, 1945)
- L'Homme de la Mer (Portes du Large, 1947)

Pierre Moussarie

Poetry

- Au Vent (La Bouteille à la Mer, 1931)
- Boules de Naphtaline (La Bouteille à la Mer, 1934)
- px Chemin vicinal (La Bouteille à la Mer, 1939)
- Considers none of his works populist.

Jean Fallu

Novels

- p L'Usine (Rieder, 1931)
- p Port d'Escale (Rieder, 1931)
- La Créole du Central' Garage (1935)
- J'ai failli boucler la boucle (1935)
- Les Novices (1936)
- Then other novels, which Fallu says are not populist. Possibly all the above books though might be classed as populist.

François PiazzaPoetry

px Vertigo (Solar, Monte Carlo, 1945)

Henri PollèsNovels

px Sophie de Tréguier (Gallimard, 1932)

L'Ange de Chair (Gallimard, 1934)

Les Gueux de l'Elite (Gallimard, 1935)

L'Opéra Politique (Gallimard, 1937)

Toute Guerre se fait la Nuit (Gallimard, 1945)

There may be other novels too. Pollès says his works are not populist.

Henry PoulailleNovels

px Ils étaient quatre (Grasset, 1925)

px Ames neuves (Grasset, 1925)

px L'Enfantement de la Paix (Grasset, 1926)

px Le Pain Quotidien (Valois, 1931)

px Les Damnés de la Terre (Grasset, 1935)

px Pain de Soldat (Grasset, 1937)

px Les Rescapés (Grasset, 1938)

Also works on literary criticism, etc..

Jean PrévostNovels

x Merlin (1927)

px Les Frères Bouquiquant (1930)

x Nous marchons sur la mer (1931)

x Rachel (1932)

px Le Sel sur la Plaie (1934)

x Lucie-Paulette, nouvelles, (1935)

x La Chasse du Matin (1937)

All above published by Gallimard. Also essays and memoirs.

Tristan RémyNovels

p Porte Clignancourt (Rieder, 1928)

px A l'Ancien Tonnelier (Valois, 1931)

p Sainte Marie des Flots (Valois, 1932)

p Tildy, nouvelle (Fayard, 1932)

px Faubourg Saint-Antoine (Gallimard, 1936)

p La Grande Lutte (Editions Sociales, 1937)

p Marguil, serial in "Regards", (1938)

p La Maréchalerie du 19, serial in "Humanité" (193?)

p Milly, serial in "Libération" (1946)

p L'Homme du Canal (Vignaud, 1947)

p Le Cirque Bonaventure (Ed. de la Paix, 1952)

Also a volume of poetry, "Prolétariat" (Valois, 1932)

Marius RichardNovels

p La Femme à tout faire (Montaigne, 1937)

Jeanne qui s'en alla (Corrèa, 1938)

La Naissance de Phèdre, nouvelles (Colbert, 1943)

p La Rapée (Le Pavois, 1944)

p Aline du Moulin Rouge (Le Pavois, 1947)

In addition poetry, essays, and a dramatic comedy "Les Monstres".

Marius Richard only considers the works marked p as populist.

Emmanuel RoblèsNovels

p L'Action (Charlot, 1938)

p La Vallée du Paradis (Charlot, 1941)

px Travail d'Homme (Charlot, 1943)

Nuits sur le Monde, nouvelles (Charlot, 1944)

Les Hauteurs de la Ville (Charlot, 1948)

La Mort en Face, nouvelles, (Editions du Seuil, 1951)

Cela s'appelle l'aurore (Editions du Seuil, 1952)

Emmanuel Roblès also considers the second story in "La Mort en Face" as populist. He has written two plays, "Montserrat" and "La Vérité est morte".

Jean Rogissart

Novels

Mervale (Denoël, 1937)

px Le Fer et la Forêt (Denoël, 1940)

p Le Temps des Cérises (Denoël, 1942)

p Les Semailles (Denoël, 1943)

p Moissons (Denoël, 1949)

These last four works Jean Rogissart suggests are perhaps more "progressistes" than populist. He published a collection of stories in 1943, "Les Hauts de Rièzes, etc.", and a novel "La Cerise aux Rougnès" (1948)

Jean-Paul Sartre

Novels

x La Nausée (Gallimard, 1938)

x Le Mur, nouvelles (Gallimard, 1939)

x Les Chemins de la Liberté (Gallimard)
several volumes, from 1945 onwards.

Also philosophical works and plays.

Sophie Stambat

Novels

p Noires Gueules (Baudinière, 1932)

p La Rose sous l'Orage (Baudinière, 1933)

Atmosphère Sensuelle (Baudinière, 1934)

Ste Volupté (Baudinière, 1935)

p Love, nouvelles (Baudinière, 1935)

px Seve (Ed. des Presses du Temps Présent, 1938)

x Le Compagnon sans Visage (Ed. des Presses du Temps Présent, 1948)

x Douce-Amère (Baudinière, 1949)

The last two novels in collaboration with Henri Van Rugghe, her first works in collaboration with Marc Stambat

André Thérive

Novels

x L'Expatrié (1921)

x Le Voyage de M. Renan (1922)

x Le plus grand Pêché (1924)

x La Revanche (1925)

x Les Souffrances Perdues (1926)

px Sans Ame (1927)

px Le Charbon Ardent (1929)

px Noir et Or, nouvelles (1930)

px Anna (1932)

px Le Troupeau Galeux (1934)

px Fils du Jour (1936) These eleven works published by Grasset.

px Coeurs d'Occasion, nouvelles (Gallimard, 1937)

px La Fin des Haricots (1938, Grasset)

p Tendre Paris, nouvelles (Ed. du Pavois, 194?)

px Comme un voleur (Les Ed. du Cheval Ailé, Genève, 1947) etc.

Also many works on language and literary criticism.

Henri Troyat

Novels

px Faux Jour (1935)

x Le Vivier (1935)

x Grandeur Nature (1936)

x L'Araigne (1938)

px Judith Madrier (1940)

x Le Mort saisit le Vif (1942)

x Le Signe du Taureau (1945)

x La Clef de Voûte (1937) nouvelles.

La Fosse Commune, nouvelles (1939)

x Le Jugement de Dieu, nouvelles (1941)

These ten works published by Plon.

- x Du Philanthrope à la Rouquine, nouvelles (~~Flamm~~ Flammarion, 1945)
 x Tant que la Terre Durera, Vols I / III, (Ed. de la Table Ronde, 1947etc)
 Critical works on Russian authors, and a play, "Les Vivants".

Jean-Louis Vallas

Poetry

- p Noces et Banquets (La Butte, 1950)
 Visages de Paris (La Butte, 1950)
 px Ponts de Paris, (Albin-Michel, 1951)
 A few dozen copies of his "Ponts de Paris" and of another volume "Poèmes et Promenades" were published privately, the first probably in 1949.

Maxence Van der Meersch

Novels

- px La Maison dans la Dune (1932)
 px Quand les sirènes se taisent (1933)
 Car ils ne savent pas ce qu'ils font (1933)
 px Le péché du monde (1934)
 px Maria, fille de Flandre (1935)
 Invasion 14 (1935)
 x L'Empreinte du Dieu (1936)
 x L'Elu (1937)
 x Pêcheurs d'hommes (1940)
 Corps et âmes (1943)
 Le coeur pur (1948) etc..
 All above published by Albin Michel.

Henri Van Rugghe

Novels

See Sophie Stambat, page 165.

APPENDIX IX

SOME EARLY ARTICLES ON POPULISM

This list, which gives some indication of the widespread interest in populism, is based partly on the bibliography in Lemonnier's "Populisme" (La Renaissance du Livre, 1931) which gives references up to September 1930, and partly on bibliographies forwarded to the writer by Lemonnier.

.....

- Marius Boisson: "Populisme, nouvelle école", Comeodia, 6/9/29.
 Marcel Boulenger: "Le populisme et le cas d'Eugène Sue", Figaro, 8/9/29.
 G.B.: "Le Populisme", Journal de l'Est, Strasbourg, 11/9/29.
 Georges Vavasseur: "Une nouvelle école littéraire. Le Populisme", Samé-di, Lyon, 14/9/29.
 André Billy: "Populisme", Les Annales, 15/9/29.
 E.R.: "L'école populiste", Paris et le Monde, 1/10/29.
 Louis Le Sidaner: "Une nouvelle école littéraire, le Populisme", La Grièfe, 3/10/29.
 Frédéric Lefèvre: "Le populisme et le Charbon ardent", La Voix, 20/10/29.
 Daniel Rops: "Le Populisme", La République, 22/10/29.
 Jean de Pierrefeu: "A propos du populisme", Le Dépêche de Toulouse, 23/10/29.
 Marguërite Prévost: "La littérature et les femmes", Dernières nouvelles, de Strasbourg, 27/10/29.
 Jean Fangeat: "Le populisme", Le Petit Dauphinois, 4/11/29.
 Valère: "Populisme", Le Petit Provençal, 4/11/29.
 J. Ernest-Charles: "Chez les Populistes", Le Quotidien, 5/11/29.
 René de Planhol: "L'Erreur du populisme", La Nouvelle Lanterne, 11/11/29.
 François Lebon: "Silhouettes de Populistes", L'Oeuvre, 12/11/29.
 Raoul Narcy: "L'Ecole populiste", Journal des Débats, 13/11/29.
 Pierre Dominique: "Les oeuvres du populisme", Paris-Soir, 13/11/29.
 Henry-Spont: "Le roman populiste", La Volonté, 14/11/29.
 Yves Gandon: "André Thérive et le roman populiste", Vient de Paraître, November 1929.
 Antonin Seuhl: "Populisme", La France Active, 15/11/29.

- Maurice Levaillant: "Défense et illustration du roman", Figaro, 16/11/29.
 Edouard Marye: "Romans", Les Nouvelles Littéraires, 16/11/29.
 Ernest Gaubert: "Un manifeste", Le Quotidien, 19/11/29.
 André Négis: "Libres opinions", La France de Nice, 21/11/29.
 Roger Giron: "Du roman populiste", L'Ami du Peuple, 24/11/29.
 Frédéric Lefèvre: "Marcel Aymé, romancier populiste", La Voix, 24/11/29.
 Anonyme: "Un manifeste littéraire", La Wallonie, Liège, 25/11/29.
 Jean de Pierrefeu: "Encore le populisme", Le Dépêche de Toulouse, 29/11/29.
 A.-M. Gossez: "Chronique littéraire", Revue Méditerranéenne, Tunis, November, 1929.
 Raymond Lécuyer: "Les littérateurs d'aujourd'hui et la littérature de demain", L'Ami du Peuple, 30/11/29.
 Gonzague Truc: "Du roman ~~de~~ et de l'erreur du populisme", Comoedia, 10/12/29.
 Maurice Levaillant: "Ecoles d'hier et de demain", Figaro, 14/12/29.
 Raymond d'Etiveaud: "Le populisme", La Revue Limousine, 15/12/29.
 U.-V. Chatelain: "Ce que pensent les autres", L'Esprit français, 20/12/29.
 Charensol: "Ecoles et populisme", Les Nouvelles Littéraires, 28/12/29.
 Léon Treich: "Les écoles littéraires", Le Soir, 30/12/29.
 Valère: "Les Livres", La France de Bordeaux, 30/12/29.
 Maurice Bardon: "Le Populisme", Nord-Sud, 1/1/30.
 Anonyme: "Sur une nouvelle école", Afrique du Nord illustrée, Alger, 4/1/30.
 René Trintzius: "Populisme?" Les Nouvelles Littéraires, 4/1/30.
 Maurice Letellier: "Les lettres normandes", Le Petit Parisien, Ed. de Normandie, 6/1/30.
 Valère: "Populisme", Le Petit Provençal, 7/1/30.
 Gérard Hem: "Serons-nous populistes?" Le Petit Méridional, 11/1/30.
 Albert Thibaudet: "La Critique des livres", Candide, 16/1/30.
 Louis Périé: "Quelques livres", Le Courrier du Centre, 23/1/30.
 Gabriel d'Aubarède: "Pour le populisme", Vasco, 28/1/30.
 Emmanuel-A. Marin: "Quinzaine littéraire", L'Avenir, 28/1/30.
 Maurice Bardon: "Romancier populiste", Nouvelle Revue Critique, Feb. 1930.
 Victor Margueritte: "Au fil de l'heure", La Volonté, 2/2/30.
 Louis Le Sidaner: "Le populisme au cinéma", Le Nord Artistique, 15/2/30.
 R.-G. Nobécourt: "Chronique des livres", Journal de Rouen, 18/2/30.
 Guy Hanhor: "Les Livres", Centre-Eclair, Châteauroux, 24/2/30.
 Anonyme: "Le Programme de l'école populiste", La France de l'Est, Mulhouse, 27/2/30.
 Raoul Roche: "Une école littéraire fort limousine", Courrier du Centre, 3/3/30.
 Pierre Legrand: "Num digni sunt intrare?" Chantecler, 15/3/30.
 A.-M. Gossez: "L'école dans la littérature et dans l'art", L'Ecole et la Vie, 15/3/30.
 A. Habaru: "Littérature populiste", Monde, 22/3/30.
 Daniel Rops: "Pour la chronique du populisme", L'Européen, 2/4/30.
 Raymond Las Vergnas: "Le Populisme", Le Républicain d'Orléans, 3rd and 4th April, 1930.
 R.-G. Nobécourt: "Le Populisme à la tribune libre", Journal de Rouen, ~~XX~~ 18/4/30.
 Henry Poulaille: "Une littérature neuve", Paris et le Monde, 3/5/30.
 P.N. "Une matinée sur le populisme", Paris-Presse, 7/5/30.
 J.R. "Populisme et la littérature prolétarienne", L'Eclaireur de l'Est, 28/5/30.
 Frédéric Lefèvre: "La littérature et le peuple", La Voix, 15/6/30.
 André Bourlet: "Populisme", Le Grand Echo de Saint-Quentin, 21/6/30.
 René Lalou: "Manifeste du Roman Populiste", La Quinzaine Critique, 25/6/30.
 Maurice Cauchez: "Enquête sur le populisme", Le Soir, Bruxelles, 7/7/30.
 Frédéric Lefèvre: "Une culture pour le peuple?" La République, 16/9/30.
 Alphonse de Parvillea: "Populisme", Etudes, 20/9/30.
 Anonyme: "Pour ou contre le populisme", L'Oeuvre, 14/10/30.
 Bernard Lecache: "Histoire édifiante du populisme", La Gauche, 20/10/30.
 A.-M. Gossez: "Léon Lemonnier et le roman populiste", L'Ecole et la Vie, 25/10/30.
 André Billy: "La Semaine Littéraire", La Femme de France, 16/11/30.
 André Delacour: "Populisme et Naturalisme", L'Européen, 19/11/30.
 Louis Le Sidaner: "La réaction populiste", Le Figaro, 19/11/30.
 Frédéric Lefèvre: "De vous à moi", La République, 28/11/30.
 E.R.: "Du populisme et des moyens de s'en servir", Paris-Soir, 2/12/30.
 Fernand Demeure: "Messages. Mort dy style", La Volonté, 12/12/30.
 Charles Dornier: "Victor Hugo populiste", Revue de Franche-Comté, in 1930.

- G. Strem: "Courrier de Hongrie. Réponse d'un écrivain aux populistes", L'Européen, 7/1/31.
- Frédéric Lefèvre: "Une heure avec M. André Thérive", Nouvelles Littéraires, 17/1/31.
- Charles Vildrac: "Populisme et littérature", L'Ecole libératrice, 17/1/31.
- Charles Delp: "Un nouveau prix", La Dépêche algérienne, 23/1/31.
- Anonyme: "Petit historique du populisme", 10/2/31.
- Francis Ambrière: "Excroissances du Naturalisme", L'Esprit Français, 10/2/31.
- "Conclusions de l'enquête internationale sur le populisme", L'Oeuvre, 17/3/31.
- "Le Prix du Roman Populiste", Les Nouvelles Littéraires, 21/3/31.
- Charles Vildrac: "Populisme et littérature prolétarienne", Ça ira, 28/3/31.
- Jean Glineur: "Le Populisme", Nouvelle Epoque, Bruxelles, March 1931.
- A. Habaru: "Eugène Dabit, prix du roman populiste?", Monde, 23/5/31.
- "Populisme ou la théorie après la pratique", La Meuse, 24/5/31.
- "Populisme", L'Oeuvre, 26/5/31.
- Noel Sabord: "Le Populisme", Paris Midi, 26/5/31.
- "Radical dans la terminaison", L'Oeil de Paris, 30/5/31.
- "Populisme", Je Suis Partout, 30/5/31.
- René Dumesnil: "Du Naturalisme au Populisme", L'Européen, 3/6/31.
- "Populisme", L'Intermédiaire des Editeurs, 15/6/31.
- R.J.: "Populisme et cinéma", La Liberté, 11/7/31.
- Marcel Matin: "Populisme et Compagnie", 2/8/31.
- R. d'Etiveaud: "Populisme", Revue Limousine, 15/8/31.
- Louis Le Sidaner: "Populisme", Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1/9/31.
- Ch. Becker: "Réflexions sur la crise du roman", La Lumière, 12/9/31.
- Emile Seillière: "La Doctrine sociale de M. André Thérive", La Revue Bleue, 19/9/31.
- Hubert Fabureau: "Populisme", La Quinzaine Critique, 25/10/31.
- Gérard d'Orgeville: "Réflexions sur le populisme", Le Mercure Universel, Nov. 1931.
- A.-M. Goussiez: "Pour la culture intellectuelle", L'Ecole et la Vie, 12/12/31.

This list is not necessarily complete. It was not considered essential to continue this list after 1931, as many subsequent references have been lost, and the complete list would be too unwieldy.

In addition to the articles mentioned above, articles were published during the same period in Holland, Poland, Spain, Germany, Italy, the Honduras, Cuba and Argentina.

APPENDIX X

GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Note: See also Appendices III, VI, VIII, and IX.

A. Anthologies

"Cahiers de Paris" - Revue Populiste - Nos 21 (April 1938) to 33 (March '40)

Stories, sketches, poems, articles, illustrations by Léon Lemonnier, André Thérive, Antonine Couillet-Tessier, Eugène Dabit (posth.), Louis Chaffurin, Jules Romains, Romain Roussel, Saint-Georges de Bouhélier, Maxence Van der Meersch, Laurance Algan, René Ménéard, Pierre Bathille, Philippe Dumaine, Raoul Stephan, Léon Deffoux, Frédéric Lefèvre, Yves Picart, Louis Le Sidaner, Charles Braibant, Charles Chassé, Pierre Hamp, Geneviève Schorbon, Mandler, Mela Muter, Victorin Truchet, Germaine Estival, Peterelle, Nakache, Wenbaum, Jean Lebedeff, etc..

"Poèmes Populistes" - (Ed. des Cahiers de Paris, 1941)

Poems by J. Arnaud-Durand, Pierre Bathille, Pierre Béarn, Camille Cé, Pierre Chartier, Jean Colombat, Eugène Dabit, Léon Frapié, Julien Guillemard, Philéas Lebesgue, Léon Lemonnier, Georges Magnane, Maurice Madelle, René Ménéard, François Millepierres, Marcel Mompezat, Pierre Moussarie, Yves Picart, Jean Rogissart, René Rougerie, André Thérive, Alice Verlay-Frapié.

"Poèmes Populistes du Deux" - (Ed. des Cahiers de Paris, 1943)

Poems by Auguste Bergot, Pierre Chartier, Marc Chesneau, Lucien Coguyec, Marguerite Combes, George Day, Christian Dédéyan, Philippe Du...maine, Auguste Dupouy, Luc Durtain, Marion Gilbert, Julien Guillemard, A. Alexiou-Hallez, René Hener, Philéas Lebesque, Pierre Legoux, Léon Lemonnier, J.-P. Madesclaire, Rose Malhamé, Geneviève Mandon, René Marca, François Millepierres, Yves Picart, Roger-Louis Pillet, Ghislaine Pinard, Louis Robert, Jean Rogissart, Norbert Romans, Claire de Saint-Rémy, Rose Salvat, R. Sarraud, Claude Symil, S. Turck de La-versay, Alice Verlay-Frapié, Marie-Louise Vert.

B. Books wholly or partially devoted to populism.

- Léon Lemonnier: "Manifeste du Roman Populiste", (La Centaine, 1930, 84 pp).
A Unique copy of this work, with cuttings of manifestos and articles on populism, is in the Sorbonne library, Paris.
- Léon Lemonnier: "Populisme", (La Renaissance du Livre, 1931, 212 pp).
- Pierre Bathille and René Ménard: "Manifeste de la Poésie Populiste", (re-printed in pamphlet form by the Cahiers de Paris in 1942)
- "Larousse du XXe siècle" in six vols., 1935. Article on Populism.
- "Encyclopédie Française," 21 vols., 1936. See article, vol. 17.
- "Dictionnaire Encyclopédique Quillet", 9 vols., 1946. Vol IX, p.2690.
- Henry Poulaille: "Charles-Louis Philippe, le populisme et la littérature prolétarienne", (Cahiers bleus, No. 55, 29/3/1930, Valois)
- Henry Poulaille: "Nouvel Age Littéraire", (Valois, 1930).
- "La Littérature et le Peuple", (Pamphlet in the series 'Les Humbles, revue littéraire des Primaires', Dec. 1937), containing articles and speeches by Poulaille, Rémy, etc..
- "Considérations Révolutionnaires sur la Littérature dite Prolétarienne", collection of articles (in 64 p. pamphlet of July/Aug. 1932 in the series 'Les Humbles, revue littéraire des Primaires).
- René Lalou: "Histoire de la Littérature Française Contemporaine", (Presses Universitaires de France, 3e Ed., 1946).
- Charles Beuchat: "Histoire du Naturalisme Française", Vols I, II, (Ed. Corrêa, 1949).
- Henri Clouard: "Histoire de la Littérature Française du Symbolisme à nos jours", I, II, (Albin Michel, 1950 Edition).
- Michel Ragon: "Les Ecrivains du Peuple", (Jean Vigneau, 1947).
- Guide des Prix Littéraires, (Bibliographie de la France, 1951).

C. General reference books.

- Frédéric Lefèvre: "Une Heure avec..." Several Vols., (Gallimard, 1924 etc.)
- Léon Deffoux: "Le Naturalisme", (Les Oeuvres Représentatives, 1929).
- Léon Deffoux: "Chronique de l'Académie Goncourt", (Firmen-Didot, 1929).
- Jean-E. Ehrhard: "Le Roman Français depuis Marcel Proust", (Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1932).
- René Groos et Gonzague Truc: "Tableau du XXe siècle de 1900 à 1933," (Denoël et Steele, 1934).
- Christian Sénéchal: "Les grands courants de la littérature française contemporaine", (E. Malfère, 1934)
- René Dumesnil: "Le Réalisme", (J. de Gégord, Ed., 1936)
- Henry Peyre: "Hommes et Oeuvres du 20e Siècle", (Corrêa, 1938).
- Fernand Baldensperger: "La Littérature Française entre les deux Guerres", 1919/1939, (Lymanhouse, Los Angeles, 1941).
- André Rousseaux: "La Littérature du 20e Siècle", (Corrêa, Vols. I, II, III, (Albin Michel, 1939/1949)
- René Lalou: "Le Roman Français depuis 1900", (Presses Universitaires de France, 1941).
- Georges Lemaître: "From Cubism to Surrealism in French Literature", (Harvard University Press, 1941).
- René Dumesnil: "L'Epoque Réaliste et Naturaliste", (Tallandier, 1945)
- Philippe Van Tieghem: "Doctrines Littéraires / Petite Histoire des Grandes / en France", (Presses Universitaires de France, 1946)
- André Thérive: "Le Retour d'Amazan, ou une histoire de la littérature française", (Le Livre, 1926).
- André Thérive: "Galerie de ce Temps", (Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1931).
- André Thérive: "Chantiers d'Europe", (Ed. Excelsior, 1933).

- André Thérive: "Le Parnasse", (Les Oeuvres Représentatives, 1929).
 André Thérive: "J.-K. Huysmans et son Oeuvre", (Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1924).
 André Thérive: "Le Français, Langue Morte?" (Flon, 1923).
 André Thérive: "Querelles de Langage", Vols., I, II, III, (Stock, 1929, 1933, 1940).
 "Hommage à Eugène Dabit", with articles by Marcel Arland, Claude Aveline, Marc Bernard, Jean Blanzat, André Chamson, Léopold Chauveau, Georges Friedmann, André Gide, Jean Giono, Jean Guéhenno, Max Jacob, Marcel Jouhandeau, Frans Masereel, André Maurois, Brice Parain, André Thérive, Maurice Vlamincq, (Gallimard, 1939).
 Louis Le Sidaner: "Eugène Dabit", (Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1938).
 Bernardin Léliaert: "Maxence Van der Meersch", (Ed. Edé, Lille, 1946?).
 Adrien Jans: "A la Rencontre de Maxence Van der Meersch", (La Sixaine, 1946).
 R. Tavernier: "Marcel Aymé", (Fr. Chambriand, 1951).
 N. Joncker: "A la rencontre d'André Chamson, romancier contemporain", thesis for Licence en Philologie Romane, Université de Liège, 1947.
 Lucien Gachon: "L'Ecrivain Paysan", (Cahiers bleus, IIe série, No 13, 1/6/1932).
 George Reyer: "Marguerite Audoux", (Grasset, 1942).
 Andries de Rosa: "St-Georges de Bouhélier et le Naturisme", (Messein, 1910).
 "Almanach des Lettres", 1951, présenté par André Billy, (P. Horay, Ed. de Flore et Gazette des Lettres, 1950).
 Henry Peyre: "Les Générations Littéraires", (Boivin 1948).
 Kunitz and Haycraft: "20th century authors", (H.W. Wilson Co. New York, 1942).
 A. Zevaes: "Histoire de la Troisième République, 1870-1926", (Ed. G. Anquetil, 1926).
 Raymond Recouly: "The third republic", translated from the French by E. F. Buckley. Heinemann, London 1928).
 D. W. Brogan: "The Development of Modern France", (Hamish Hamilton, 1940).
 Larousse (Editors), under Maxime Petit: "La Troisième République", (1936).
 Marcel Prélot: "L'Evolution Politique du Socialisme Français 1789 - 1934", (Spes, 1939).
 Gordon Wright: "The Reshaping of French Democracy", (Methuen, 1950).
 Henri Bauche: "Le Langage Populaire", (Payot, Paris, 1946).
 Olivier Leroy: "A Dictionary of French Slang", (Harrap, 1935).
 Jean de la Rue: "Dictionnaire d'argot", (Nouvelle Ed., Flammarion, 1948).

D. Articles, prefaces, etc..

- Edmond et Jules de Goncourt: Preface to "Germinie Lacerteux", 1865.
 Maupassant: Preface to "Pierre et Jean", 1888.
 St.-Georges de Bouhélier: "Le Manifeste sur le Naturisme", Figaro, 10/6/1897.
 Paul Crouzet: "Le Génie du Populisme", in "Littérature et Conférences populaires", (A. Colin Ed., about 1897).
 André Thérive: "Les véritables romans", Opinion, 20/7/1923.
 André Thérive: "Les Romans et le Peuple", Opinion, 24/10/1925.
 André Thérive: "La Prose de Georges Duhamel", section in "Georges Duhamel", (Ed. de la Revue le Capitole).
 Nicolas Jorga: "La Littérature Populaire, source de haute littérature", Mercure de France, 15/4/1925.
 André Thérive: "Un roman sur le peuple", Le Nouveau Siècle, 10/4/1927.
 André Thérive: "Plaidoyer pour le naturalisme", Comoedia, 3/5/1927.
 Léon Lemonnier: "Un Manifeste Littéraire. Le Roman Populiste", L'Oeuvre, 27/8/1929.
 Léon Lemonnier: "Du Naturalisme au Populisme", Revue Mondiale, 1/10/29.
 Léon Lemonnier: "Populistes d'hier et de demain", L'Oeuvre, 15/10/1929.
 André Thérive: "Une Nouvelle école littéraire: Le Populisme", L'Europe Centrale, 9/11/1929.
 Léon Lemonnier: "Le Roman Populiste", Mercure de France, 15/11/1929.
 Léon Lemonnier: "Le Populisme au Théâtre", La Grande Revue, Nov. 1929.
 Léon Lemonnier: "Populisme", Les Nouvelles Littéraires, 18/1/1930.
 Léon Lemonnier: "Populism", This Quarter, Jan/March, 1930.
 Fernand Demeure: "Les Ecoles Littéraires depuis 50 ans", La Revue Mondiale, 1/3/1930.
 Frédéric Lefèvre: "Une heure avec M. André Thérive", Nouvelles Littéraires, 17/1/1931.
 "A Propos du Populisme et du Prix Populiste", Mercure de France, 1/2/1931.
 John Charpentier: "André Thérive", Mercure de France, 15/3/1931.

- W.L. Schwartz: "The Populist School in the French Novel", French Review, May 1931.
- Edmond Jaloux: "'Populisme', par Léon Lemonnier", Les Nouvelles Littéraires, 20/6/1931.
- Frank Hanighen: "A New Literary Movement in France", The American Bookman, (Sept. 1931).
- Adolphe de Falgairolle: "Préface du Catalogue de la 18e exposition de la Compagnie de Peintres et Sculpteurs Professionnels, 1931/2."
- Second International Conference of Revolutionary Writers at Kharkov., U.S.S.R., 1931. Speeches on the literary position in France, subsequently printed in the French review: "Littérature de la Révolution Mondiale", published by the "Union Internationale des Ecrivains Révolutionnaires" in Moscow.
- W.L. Schwartz: "A Literary Portrait of M. André Thérive", French Review, March 1932.
- Front page by the "Groupe des Ecrivains Prolétariens" in Monde, June 1932.
- Léon Lemonnier: "Les Débuts du Populisme", Revue des Vivants, Sept. 1932.
- Felix Walter: "Populism", P.M.L.A. (Publication of the Mod. Language Ass. of America), March 1934.
- "Le Salon Populiste", Mercure de France, 15/11/1934.
- Léon Lemonnier: "Front Littéraire Commun", Mercure de France, 15/7/1935.
- Léon Lemonnier: "Front Littéraire Commun"(?) L'Oeuvre, 23/7/1935.
- Léon Lemonnier: "Front Littéraire Commun"(?) La Grande Revue, August, 1935.
- André Thérive: "Populistes et Prolétariens", Marianne, 22/5/1935.
- "Le Salon Populiste", Mercure de France, 15/2/1936.
- "IVE Salon Populiste", Mercure de France, 15/11/1937.
- Raoul Stéphan: "Le Populisme et le Roman Populiste", La Grande Revue, July 1938.
- Shortliffe: "Populism in the novel before Naturalism", P.M.L.A. June 1939.
- Henri Poulain: "A la recherche de Jean Rogissart, lauréat du prix populiste", Je Suis Partout, 4/4/1941.
- Anonyme: "Jean Rogissart lauréat du prix populiste", La Semaine, 10/4/41.
- Léon Lemonnier: Preface to "Poèmes Populistes", (Ed. des Cahiers de Paris, 1941).
- Henri Pollès: "Le prix populiste au Breton Louis Guilloux", La Bretagne, 12/6/1942.
- Serge Ivanoff: "Le Nouveau Parnasse", Image de France, Dec. 1942.
- Robert Gaillard: "André Thérive", Révolution Nationale, 6/3/1943.
- Pierre Masteau: "Marius Richard et le prix populiste", Notre Combat, 28/5/43.
- Michèle Nicolaï: "Lil Boël", Actu, 31/5/1943.
- René Pernoud: "Marius Richard, prince-évêque des Gobelins", Paris-Midi, 3/6/1943.
- Léon Lemonnier: "Quatorze années de populisme", L'Opinion, 11/6/43.
- Léon Lemonnier: Preface to "Poèmes Populistes du Deux", (Ed. des Cahiers de Paris, 1943).
- F. Le Roman: "Le Prix populiste à Jean Merrien", Rennes, 6/5/1944.
- Tony Guedel: "Merrien libraire et lauréat populiste", Je suis partout, 12/5/1944.
- Léon Lemonnier: "Populisme 44", L'Opinion, 10/6/1944.
- Auguste Gallois: "Tristan Rémy", Le Peuple, 16/12/1944.
- Jean-Paul Sartre: "The case for responsible literature", Horizon, Vol.XI, No. 65, May 1945.
- Léon Lemonnier: "Populisme 45", Gavroche, 14/6/1945.
- Louis Fournier: "Le prix populiste à M. François Piazza", Le Courrier de Paris, 9/11/1945.
- Claude Rohan: "Marcel Millet et le Jeu du Retour", L'Essor Littéraire, Dec. 45.
- Paul Sénac: "Le Travail d'Homme d'Emmanuel Roblès", Force Ouvrière, 17/1/46.
- Anonyme: "Lil Boël, la Madone des Clochards", Inter, 7/5/1947.
- Jean Duché: "Une heure dans le salon littéraire de Mme Sophie Stambat", Le Figaro Littéraire, 7/6/47.
- Georges Sadoul: "Du populisme au réalisme", Les Lettres Françaises, 4/3/48.
- Henry Thimonier: "Un bohème des faubourgs, Tristan Rémy", Les Lettres Françaises, 1/4/48.
- Le Magot Solitaire: "Un Homme et sa Revue" (Poulaille), Vrai Bruxelles, 18/4/1948.
- J.F.: "Le prix populiste à Armand Lanoux", Libération, 13/5/1948.
- R.M.: "Armand Lanoux, prix populiste 1948", Le Populaire, 13/5/1948.
- Gérard Tilly: "Armand Lanoux", L'Europe, 15/5/1948.
- Richard Cayez: "La Nef des Fous", La Voix du Nord, Lille, 19/5/1948.
- R. Monier: "Armand Lanoux", Nouvelles Littéraires, 20/5/1948.
- Anonyme: "Rencontre d'Armand Lanoux", La Gazette des Lettres, 29/5/1948.

- Armand Lanoux: "Les Embarras d'un lauréat en quête d'une doctrine", Opéra, 9/6/1948.
- André Bourin: "Tristan Rémy", Les Nouvelles Littéraires, 17/6/1948.
- Constant Burniaux: "A propos d'un genre littéraire: Le Populisme", Le Soir de Bruxelles, 3/7/1948.
- R.M.: "Théophile Malicet poète et mathématicien", Le Populaire, 4/11/48.
- G. Esperet: "Théophile Malicet reçoit le prix populiste", Syndicalisme, 11/11/1948.
- Anonyme: "Un ouvrier en locomotive, Théophile Malicet, remporte le prix de poésie populiste", Point de vue, 11/11/1948.
- Roger Ninck: "Prix populiste 1948. Théophile Malicet", Le Monde Ouvrier, 15/1/1949.
- André de Pomerault: "Un salon sur la Seine", Paroles Françaises, 18/3/49.
- Louis Piéchaud: "Serge Groussard reçoit le prix du roman populiste", l'Epoque, 17/5/1949.
- P.M.: "Le prix populiste à Serge Groussard", Le Populaire, 17/5/1949.
- Gabriel d'Aubarède: "Serge Groussard", Nouvelles Littéraires, 28/5/1949.
- Anonyme: "Populisme pas mort", La Bataille, 9/6/1949.
- Henry Ramey: "Populisme et régionalisme", La Dépêche du Midi, 16/9/1949.
- Léon Lemonnier: "Le jury populiste", Faubourgs, Oct. 1949.
- André Thérive: "La naissance du populisme", L'Acropole, Jan. 1950.
- Maurice Clavière: "Le Manifeste du roman populiste", L'Acropole, Jan. 1950.
- Léon Lemonnier: "La poésie populiste", L'Acropole, Jan. 1950.
- Anonyme: "René Fallet", Point de Vue, 8/6/1950.
- A.J.: "De la Coupole au Quai de la Mégisserie", Le Soir, Bruxelles, 10/6/1950.
- Armand Lanoux: "Populisme", Le Dossier Littéraire, July 1950.
- Henry Ramey: "Populisme et réalités permanentes", La Dépêche, 22/6/1951.
- Léon Lemonnier: "Le populisme officiel", Masques et Visages, Feb. 1952.
- Correspondance on Populism, in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, which includes letters from Thérive, Duhamel, Dabit, Maxence Van der Meersch etc. to Lemonnier.

The above list is far from being exhaustive, but includes the more important articles which have some bearing on populism. Articles on authors connected with populism published from January 1932 to December 1939 have not been listed, as the references were not available.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my indebtedness to the late Mr. Alexander Croll of Port Elizabeth, whose Croll Memorial Scholarship founded under his will in 1914 made this work possible. I would also like to thank Professor D. P. Inskip and Mr. K. Greshoff of the French Department, University of Cape Town, for much valuable advice.

My gratitude goes to the following authors for their comprehensive answers to the letters and questionnaires I sent them: Lil Boël, Charles Braibant, Maurice Carême, Antonine Couillet-Tessier, Emile Danoën, Philippe Dumaine, René Fallet, Camille François, Mario Gevers, Serge Groussard, Armand Lanoux, Herbert Le Porrier, Louis Le Sidaner, Céline Lhotte, J.-H. Louwyck, Théophile Malicet, Jean Merrien, Pierre Moussarie, Jean-Pallu, François Piazza, Yves Picart, Henri Pollès, Tristan Rémy, Marius Richard, Emmanuel Roblès, Jean Rogissart, Sophie Stambat, Jean-Louis Vallas, Henri Van Rugghe.

I would like to thank the following authors for their kindness in giving me books, documents or photos: Marcel Aymé, Lil Boël, René Bonnet, Charles Braibant, Maurice Carême, André Chamson, Antonine Couillet-Tessier, Philippe Dumaine, René Fallet, Camille François, Marie Gevers, Serge Groussard, Ch.-H. Hirsch, Armand Lanoux, Louis Le Sidaner, Herbert Le Porrier, Céline Lhotte, Théophile Malicet, Constant Malva, Jean Merrien, Pierre Moussarie, François Piazza, Jean Prugnot, Tristan Rémy, Marius Richard, Emmanuel Roblès, Jean Rogissart, Sophie Stambat, André Thérive, Henri Troyat, Jean-Louis Vallas, Henri Van Rugghe.

I am also grateful to the publishing firms Albin Michel, Bernard Grasset, and Gallimard, as well as to the review "Match" and to Miss Gillian Jewel, Mme L. Lemonnier, Mme J. Chaffurin and Thérèse Le Prat for information, books or photographs.

I am especially indebted to Léon Lemonnier for documents, bibliographies, books which were out of print, and much valuable information on the history of the populist movement, and finally to Henry Poulaille for his detailed replies, and for proletarian reviews and numerous articles and books by proletarian authors.

INDEX OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Authors

Marcel Aymé	page 28a
Lil Boël	124a
Charles Braibant	106a
Maurice Carême	124a
Louis Chaffurin	12a, 17a
André Chamson	128a
Antonine Couillet-Tessier	12a, 31a
Eugène Dabit	80a
Léon Deffoux	12a
Georges Duhamel	12a
Philippe Dumaine	122a
René Fallet	120a
Camille François	125a
Marie Gevers	23a
Serge Groussard	104a
Louis Guilloux	86a
Armand Lanoux	135a
Léon Lemonnier	12a, 39a
Herbert Le Porrier	137a
Louis Le Sidaner	106a
Céline Lhotte	17a
Théophile Malicet	52a
Jean Merrien	112a
Pierre Moussarie	120a
Georges Palante	92a
Edouard Peisson	68a
Charles-Louis Philippe	68a
François Piazza	122a
Henry Poulaille	61a
Jean Prévost	28a
Tristan Rémy	99a
Marius Richard	115a
Emmanuel Roblès	23a
Jean Rogissart	112a
Jules Romain	12a
Sophie Stambat	108a, 137a
Racul Stephan	12a
André Thérive	12a, 46a
Henri Troyat	52a
Maxence Van der Meersch	132a
Henri Van Rugghe	104a, 137a

Scenes

"Histoires de Tabusse"	128a
"L'Hôtel du Nord"	76a
Janssen : "Les Buveurs"	36a
"Le Mahieu"	31a
Henry Ramey : "La Soupe des Paysans"	36a

INDEX OF AUTHORS ETC.(1)

- Achard (Marcel) 28.
 A.E.A.R. 70, 78, 100, 101.
 Alain, 158.
 Alexis, 159.
 Algan (Laurance), 105, 130, 131.
 Amiel (Denys) 28.
 Apollinaire, 155.
 Aragon, 70, 78, 99, 100, 158.
 Arnaud-Durand, 106, 107, 123, 149.
 Aubarède (Gabriel d'), 132a, 150.
 Audoux (Marguerite), 58, 69, 72.
 Aymé (Marcel), 7, 28, 131, 132, 154, 160.

 Balzac, 36, 67, 101, 132, 159.
 Baillon (André), 24.
 Bailly (Auguste), 143.
 Barbusse (Henri), 25, 70, 78, 98, 99, 100.
 Barrès, 36.
 Bathille (Pierre), 105, 106, 107, 132a, 146, 150.
 Baudelaire, 52, 155, 157.
 Berger (Marcel), 105, 106, 132a.
 Bergson, 155.
 Bernanos (Georges), 137.
 Bernard (Jean-Jacques), 28.
 Bernard (Marc), 78, 81, 84, 98, 99.
 Billy (André), 150.
 Blum (Léon), 98.
 Boël (Lil), 123, 124, 125, 136, 149, 150, 154, 160.
 Bojer (Johann), 23, 67.
 Bonnet (René), 71.
 Boulenger (Jacques), 35.
 Boulenger (Marcel), 17.
 Bounine (Ivan), 24.
 Bourcier (Charles), 10.
 Bourgeois (Lucien), 61, 62, 71.
 Bourget (Paul), 18, 34, 128.
 Bourget-Pailleron (Robert), 31, 150.
 Braibant (Charles), 105, 106, ~~122~~ 150.
 Braque, 104.
 Breton (André), 158.
 Briand, 100.
 Brulat (Paul), 27.
 Brunot (Ferdinand), 28.
 Burniaux (Constant) 23.

 Capasso (Aldo), 154, 155.
 Carco, 158.
 Carême (Maurice), 123, 125, 149, 154, 160.
 Cé (Camille), 22, 23.
 Céline, 120, 158.
 Cendrars, 155, 156.

 Chaffurin (Louis), 17, 31, 32, 105, 106, 128, 150.
 Chamson (André), 7, 78, 84, 104, 105, 128, 129, 132a, 137, 154, 158, 161.
 Charensol, 22.
 Charmy (Roland), 22.
 Charpentier (John), 30, 89, 105, 128, 150.
 Chassé (Charles), 105.
 Chastain, 143.
 Chateaubriand, 53.
 Chéreau (Gaston), 142.
 Cladel (Léon), 159.
 Clemenceau, 60.
 Clergé (Auguste), 149.
 Clouard (Henri), 160.
 Colombat (Jean), 105, 150.
 Combe (Rose), 71.
 Constant (Benjamin), 53.
 Cossin (Jacques), 23, 25.
 Couillet-Tessier (Antonine), 7, 30, 31, 32, 37, 104, 105, 106, 112, 120, 130, 131, 134, 138, 150, 154, 155, 156, 161.
 Coutisson (Jean-Paul), 132a, 150.
 Cresson (Georges), 29, 32 (note).
 Crouzet (Paul), 38.
 Cuisenier (André), 150.

 Dabit (Eugène), 28, 31, 45, 61, 69, 70, 72, 75/78, 81/84, 87, 90, 94, 95, 96, 98, 100, 104, 105, 107, 112, 114, 115, 116, 117, 120, 121, 132, 135, 137, 148, 155, 161, 163.
 Danoën (Emile), 114, 115, 116, 117, 120, 135, 149, 155, 161.
 Dedeyan (Christian), 107.
 Deffoux (Léon), 13, 30, 31, 32, 58, 99, 102, 105, 142, 144, 150.
 Delatre (Louis), 24.
 Demelrius, 25.
 Descaves (Lucien), 17, 25, 28, 59.
 Dévigne (Roger), 105.
 Diderot, 36.
 Divoire (Fernand), 22.
 Döblin (Alfred), 137.
 Doff (Neel), 23, 62, 69, 71, 137.
 Dostoevski, 159, 159a.
 Dreyfus, 10.
 Dronsfield (John), 138.
 Duhamel (Georges), 17, 31, 32, 35, 37, 128, 137, 142, 150, 155, 156.
 Dumaine (Philippe), 105, 106, 122, 123, 124, 149, 155, 161.
 Dupé (Gilbert), 150.
 Durand-Rosé, 104, 149.
 Durtain (Luc), 105, 106.

 Eekhoud, 23, 24.
 Marc Elder, 22, 23.
 El Greco, 82.
 Eluard (Paul), 123.
 Estival (Germaine), 29, 30, 105.

 Fallada (Hans), 137.
 Fallet (René), 114, 115, 116, 117, 120, 121, 122, 136, 149, 155, 162.

(1) Note: Containing references to the text of the thesis, and to Appendices I, II, IV, VII, VIII.

- Fierens (Paul), 24.
 Finot (Louis-Jean), 17, 22, 28, 31, 38, 128, 143.
 Flaubert, 11, 36, 37, 52, 55, 159a.
 France (Anatole), 128.
 François (Camille), 123, 136, 149, 156, 162.
 Frapié (Léon), 22, 23, 105, 106.
 Freud, 22.
 Furetière, 11, 17, 36, 37.

 Gachon (Lucien), 68, 69, 70.
 Gandon (Yves), 150.
 Gantillon, 29.
 Garnier (Huguette), 130, 131.
 Gaumont (Jean), 22, 23.
 Gerbe (Léon), 70.
 Gevers (Marie), 23, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 120, 121, 148, 156, 162.
 Gide (André), 34, 35, 36, 76, 83, 84, 155.
 Gilbert (Marion), 22.
 Gilles, 149.
 Giono (Jean), 24, 69, 78, 84, 137, 159a.
 Giraudoux, 36, 136.
 Gladkov (Féodor), 67.
 Gogol, 159a.
 Goncourts, 35, 37, 52, 53, 67, 106, 159.
 Gossez (A.M.), 150.
 Gorky, 67, 156.
 Goya, 82.
 Grasset (Bernard), 60, 69, 71, 158.
 Groos (René), 143.
 Groussard (Serge), 114, 115, 116, 117, 120, 121, 125 (note), 149, 150, 156, 162.
 Guirec (Jean), 12, 128.
 Guesde, 60.
 Guillaumin (Emile), 58, 68.
 Guillemard (Julien), 150.
 Guilloux (Louis), 7, 17, 45, 61, 78, 83, 84, 87/96, 98, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 129, 135, 137, 149, 156, 162.
 Guirec (Jean), 12, 128.

 Habaru (Augustin), 78, 98, 99.
 Halévy (Daniel), 30, 87, 150.
 Hamp (Pierre), 105, 128.
 Hamsun, 67.
 Hardy (Thomas), 67.
 Hegel, 50.
 Hennique, 143.
 Hergesheimer, 24.
 Hire, (Jean de la), 6.
 Hirsch (Charles-Henri), 17, 68, 128, 142.
 Hofer (André), 29, 30, 31, 136.
 Hugo (Victor), 67, 137.
 Huysmans (J.-K.), 11, 35, 37, 42, 47, 49, 52, 53, 54, 67, 76, 159a.

 Jacques (Lucien), 69.
 Jaloux (Edmond), 30, 150.

 Janssen, 149.
 Jaurès, 10, 60, 88, 90, 98.
 Jean (Lucien), 68.
 Jélinon (Joseph), 22.
 Jorga (Nicolas), 25.

 Kafka, 155.
 Kahn (Gustave), 34.
 Kazantzakis, 24.
 Keats, 35.
 Kemp (Robert), 30, 150.
 Kirkegaard, 157.
 Kruger (Paul), 128.

 Labracherie (Pierre), 150.
 Lacretelle, 142.
 Ladinsky, 24.
 La Fontaine, 36, 159a.
 Lalou (René), 121, 122.
 Lemandé (André), 143.
 Lamartine, 137.
 Lamennais, 10.
 Lanoux (Armand), 114, 115, 116, 117, 120, 121, 122, 138, 149, 150, 156, 162.
 Laubscher (Maggie), 138.
 Lebedeff (Jean), 30, 105.
 Lebesque (Philéas), 107, 150.
 Le Cardonnell, 143.
 Leconte de Lisle, 6, 52.
 Lefèvre (Frédéric), 13, 19, 29, 31, 41, 42, 60, 69, 75, 102, 105, 132, 143, 150.
 Lemonnier (Camille), 23.
 Lemonnier (Léon), 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 40/45, 47, 50, 53, 58, 59, 62, 66, 67, 77, 98, 99, 101, 102, 104, 105, 106, 108, 109, 116, 117, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 128, 130, 131, 132a, 134, 135, 136, 138, 142, 143, 145, 150, 156, 159a, 162.
 Lenormand, 28.
 Le Porrier (Herbert), 114, 115, 116, 120, 149, 150, 157, 163.
 Lesage, 37.
 Le Scouëzec, 31, 32.
 (Louis) Le Sidaner, 31, 105, 106, 132, 150, 157, 163.
 Lewis (Sinclair), 24.
 Lhotte (Céline), 17, 28, 130, 142, 157, 163.
 Louwyck (J.H.), 128, 150, 157.

 MacOrlan, 156.
 Malicet (Théophile), 123, 149, 157, 163.
 Mallarmé, 34, 123.
 Malraux (André), 100.
 Malva (Constant), 61, 71.
 Mandler, 32, 105.
 Mansfield (C.), 159a.
 Marcel (Gabriel), 31, 150.
 Marivaux, 36, 122.
 Martin-Chauffier, 143.
 Martin du Gard (Roger), 31, 37, 76, 81, 128, 129, 137, 143, 155.
 Massé (Ludovic), 70.

- Maupassant, 11, 12, 37, 38, 47, 52, 55.
 Mauriac (François), 115, 137.
 Mela-Muter, 105.
 Ménard (René), 105, 106, 107, 132a, 146, 150.
 Mendoza, 17.
 Merrien (Jean), 113, 114, 115, 116, 149, 157, 163.
 Michelet, 10, 59.
 Mikro, 138.
 Mille (Pierre), 30, 150.
 Millepierres (François), 150.
 Millet (Marcel), 22, 149.
 Millet (Pierre), 150.
 Mirbeau (Octave), 69.
 Mistral, 159a.
 Molière, 37, 50.
 Montherlant, 142, 155.
 Moreau (Serge-Henri), 30.
 Mottart, 24.
 Moussarie (Pierre), 123, 149, 157, 163.
 Musset, 137.

 Nabokoff'-Sirine, 24.
 Nakache, 104, 105.
 Nietzsche, 155.
 Nizan, 100.
 Nerval (Gerard de), 18.

 Obey (André), 28.

 Palante (Georges), 87, 89, 90, 92, 156.
 Pallu (Jean), 8, 28, 112, 114, 117, 120, 121, 148, 158, 163.
 Papas (William), 138.
 Paton (Alain), 138, 139.
 Péguy (Charles), 30.
 Peisson (Edouard), 58, 61, 69, 70, 78, 128, 135.
 Peltier (Pierre), 104, 149.
 Peterelle, 105.
 Philippe (Charles-Louis), 12, 58, 62, 68, 69, 71, 72, 76, 77, 99, 105, 134, 135, 136, 142, 155.
 Piazza (François), 123, 124, 125, 136, 149, 158, 164.
 Picard (Gaston), 22, 23, 143.
 Picart (Yves), 105, 106, 108, 150.
 Pillet (Roger-Louis), 106, 123, 149, 150.
 Pimienta (Louis), 105.
 Pollès (Henri), 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 121, 137, 148, 158, 164.
 Poulaille (Henri), 7, 45, 58/63, 66/71, 77, 78, 83, 90, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 116, 121, 134, 135, 136, 137, 139 (note) 156, 158, 159, 164.
 Prévert, 155.
 Prévost (Jean), 28, 104, 132, 158, 164.
 Prévost (Marcel), 128.
 Prist (Paul), 24.

 Proudhon (P.J.), 87, 88.
 Proust, 22, 36, 76, 94, 95, 132.
 Prugnot (Jean), 71.

 Rabelais, 159a.
 Racine, 36, 128.
 Rageot (Georges), 23, 99.
 Ramey (Henry), 149.
 Ramuz (C.F.), 24, 34, 67, 137, 159a.
 Randau (Robert), 105.
 Reboul (Jules), 71.
 Rebouw, 143.
 Rémy (Tristan), 59, 63, 69, 70, 71, 78, 98, 100, 102, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 120, 121, 122, 124, 135, 136, 138, 148, 158, 160, 164.
 Renan, 47.
 Reuillard (Gabriel), 22, 23, 105.
 Richard (Elie), 22.
 Richard (Marius), 113, 149, 159, 164.
 Richepin, 123.
 Rictus (Jehan), 22, 23, 59, 123, 124, 158.
 Rilke, 157.
 Rimbaud, 34, 155.
 Roblès (Emmanuel), 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 121, 149, 159, 164.
 Rogissart (Jean), 108, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 121, 149, 159, 165.
 Rolland (Romain), 10, 25, 90.
 Romagne, 70.
 Romains (Jules), 6, 10, 31, 32, 37, 105, 112, 114, 115, 116, 117, 120, 121, 128, 129, 137, 140 (note) 148, 156, 158, 159.
 Rosny (J.-H. aîné), 143.
 Rouault, 104.
 Rousseau (Jean-Jacques), 36, 76, 156.
 Roussel (Romain), 105, 132a.
 Roussou (Matéi), 29, 105, 136.
 Roux (François de), 105.
 Roux (Paul), 6.

 Sabord (Noël), 22, 101.
 Sartre (Jean-Paul), 66, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 120, 121, 137, 149, 159, 165.
 Sainte-Soline (Claire), 150.
 Saint-Georges de Bouhélier, 22, 23, 38, 105, 106.
 Sand (George), 23, 36, 159a.
 Sandy (Isabelle), 22, 23.
 Scarron, 17, 36, 37.
 Schorbon (Geneviève), 105.
 Schopenhauer, 11, 47, 49, 50, 52, 53, 55, 159a.
 Sekoto (Gerard), 139.
 Sévry (André), 71.
 Shaw (George Bernard), 25.
 Simenon, 132a.
 Smuts (General), 128.
 Sorel (Charles), 11, 17, 36.
 Stalin, 100.
 Souday (Paul), 28, 52, 159a.
 Stambat (Marc), 109, 131.
 Stambat (Sophie), 104, 109, 110, 130, 131, 136, 138, 150, 156, 159, 159a.

- Steinbeck, 159.
Stephan (Raoul), 31, 32, 105,
132a, 150.
Sue (Eugène), 17, 67.
- Tchekov, 92.
Thérive (André), 6, 7, 11, 12,
13, 16, 17, 19, 20, 22, 28,
24, 25, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32,
35, 37, 38, 42, 47/56, 59,
61, 62, 63, 66, 83, 84, 98,
99, 105, 106, 108, 109, 115,
116, 128, 134, 135, 138,
142, 143, 144, 145, 150, 155,
157, 159a, 165.
Tolstoy, 92, 93, 156, 159a.
Treich (Léon), 143.
Trotzky, 100.
Troyat (Henri), 7, 113, 114, 115,
116, 117, 121, 132, 148,
150, 159a, 165.
Truc (Gonzague), 143.
Truchet, 104, 105.
Tzara (Tristan), 6.
- Urfé (Honoré d'), 36.
- Vaillant-Couturier, 78, 100.
Vallas (Jean-Louis), 40, 122,
123, 149, 159a.
Vallès (Jules), 58, 68, 71, 76,
78, 90, 136, 155, 156, 159a,
166.
- Valois (Georges), 68, 70, 73 (note),
100.
Van Bruggen, 138.
Van der Meersch (Maxence), 105, 106,
132a, 159a, 166.
Van Gogh, 104.
Van Rugghe (Henri), 104, 109, 110,
131, 150, 159, 159a, 166.
Velasquez, 82, 83.
Verlaine, 34, 36, 123, 154.
Vialar (Paul), 150.
Vlaminck, 104.
Vignes Rouges (Jean des), 105.
Vigny (Alfred de), 137.
Vildrac (Charles), 62.
Villon (François), 107, 123, 154,
159a.
Virrès (Georges), 24.
Voltaire, 36.
- Warquier, 104.
Webb (Mary), 159a.
Wenbaum, 105.
Wilde (Oscar), 35.
- Zanafoff, 30.
Zingg, 31, 104.
Zola (Emile), 16, 17, 19, 20, 23, 34,
36, 42, 43, 59, 61, 67, 99, 101,
121, 132a, 134, 159, 159a.