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Jean-René Maillot, *Jean Luchaire et la revue Notre Temps (1927-1940)*. Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles, Frankfurt am Main, New York, Oxford, Wien: Peter Lang, 2013. xx + 503 pp. 99.80€. (cl). Notes, bibliography, and index. ISBN 978-3-0343-1342-1.

Review by Martyn Cornick, University of Birmingham.

The name of Jean Luchaire is most usually associated with the group of hardened collaborationists who, as Paris was being liberated in August 1944, sought refuge with the help of the retreating Germans at the castle of Sigmaringen, where Marshal Pétain was held. The poisonous atmosphere prevailing in this Hohenzollern redoubt was satirised by Louis-Ferdinand Céline in his novel, *D'un château l'autre*. Against the odds, Luchaire attempted to continue his coordinating role of the collaborationist French-language Press and Radio to little real effect and, if anything, this last-ditch effort helped to seal his fate. After vain attempts to gain entry to Switzerland, Luchaire and his family were detained by the Americans at Merano in Italy, and handed over to the French. After his trial in Paris on 21 and 22 January 1946, Luchaire was executed on 22 February 1946.

With this substantial work, which started life as a thesis for the University of Lorraine-Metz, Jean-René Maillot has produced an exhaustive study of the career of Jean Luchaire (1901-1946), all the while paying attention to the nuances and fluctuations of the historical and cultural context of the interwar period, and most particularly providing an in-depth study of *Notre Temps*, the review Luchaire founded in 1927. As Maillot rightly emphasises in his introduction, Luchaire's development as a political journalist is inseparable from the evolution of his publishing project, which was devoted from the late 1920s onwards to the cause of improving and maintaining peaceful Franco-German relations. In this endeavour, Luchaire befriended and then benefited from his association with Otto Abetz. They participated in the Sohlberg meeting of July and August 1930, with Luchaire reporting extensively on it, devoting a special issue of *Notre Temps* to the meeting. The emphasis was placed on providing a forum for French and German youth to meet and discuss their concerns about pacifism and ideas surrounding European unity. As a member of the young generation of writers and intellectuals born between the turn of the century and 1905, Luchaire was implicated in the diverse attempts to find a new dynamic for the Radical Party, at the same time as associating with the myriad groups of young men (the '*jeunes équipes*' of the '*génération réaliste*') struggling to formulate new approaches to politics from the early 1930s onwards. The richness of Maillot's work derives from the weaving together of these essential themes, and from its close attention paid to the discourse of Luchaire and his contributors.

The adolescent Luchaire was brought up in a family whose background was that of educated intellectuals: his father, Julien Luchaire, was a 'grammarian,' a member of the French School in Rome, then founder and director of the French Institute in Florence. His mother, Fernande Dauriac, was a publisher. This Franco-Italian intellectual formation awakened his interest in international cultural and political affairs, and he quickly gained an apprenticeship in the world of reviews. One of the many benefits of Maillot's work here is to have unearthed Luchaire's creation in 1924 of *Vita*, a review that stood in political opposition to the Bloc National. Luchaire's skills as a networker derive at least from this early venture, and would only grow with the founding of *Notre Temps*. Thanks to the support of Radical politician Emile Roche, Luchaire founded his review in 1927 as a "collective enterprise bringing

together writers, playwrights, journalists, lawyers, economists, historians, scientists and philosophers” (p. 96). Luchaire’s principal talent was to assemble a diverse network of personalities from the “young Turks” of the Radical Party, independent Catholics such as Daniel-Rops and Louis Martin-Chauffier, and friends (such as Bertrand de Jouvenel) who would jostle for position and influence in the “non-conformist” groups, as the 1930s went on (p. 97). At the beginning in 1927, *Notre Temps* was a monthly, became twice monthly in December 1929, transforming into a weekly in June 1930. Later, in 1933-1934, the paper became an evening daily, reverting to a weekly at the beginning of 1935. The major source of financing came (after Emile Roche’s contributions) from a Quai d’Orsay subsidy amounting to 15,000 and then 25,000 francs a month. By June 1930, it was printed in 10,000 copies and was subtitled “the review of new European generations.” *Notre Temps* was a Briandist enterprise, promoting the “European idea.” As time went on, however, Luchaire appeared to lose control over the membership of his editorial team. By 1934, and with the arrival of the Nazis in power in Germany, according to Maillot, Luchaire was already suspected of receiving “finance from national-socialist authorities”: he could no longer afford to keep his “contributors of quality” (p. 101). In 1938, Luchaire’s review became a pro-Munich (i.e., pro-Appasement) paper, receiving subsidies from Foreign Minister Georges Bonnet’s office.

One of the most important episodes in the history of *Notre Temps* came in early 1931. There was a general recognition in intellectual circles that a turning point had been reached in the postwar period, in particular in the domain of Franco-German relations. Genuine fears were stirred on both sides of the Rhine when, on 14 September 1930, an additional 107 Nazi members were elected to the Reichstag. This political event spurred several German and French intellectuals into action, signalling the beginning of an awareness of the dangers surrounding National Socialism. Intellectuals became involved because politicians seemed ineffectual against such a menace. Thus on 18 January 1931, *Notre Temps* published its “Manifesto against nationalist excesses, in favour of Europe, and in favour of Franco-German Understanding” (p. 227). Signed by 186 writers and artists, the manifesto carried considerable weight as the most significant names were associated with the prestigious *Nouvelle Revue française* and the pacifist monthly, *Europe*. Although André Gide’s name did not appear, even Jean Paulhan and Julien Benda had signed, alongside Emmanuel Berl, Jean-Richard Bloch, Jacques Chardonne, Drieu la Rochelle, Ramon Fernandez, Jean Guéhenno, Jean Giono, Gabriel Marcel, Louis Martin-Chauffier, Roger Martin du Gard, Paul Morand and Jean Schlumberger. The roll-call was impressive, and, as shown in detail by Maillot, a few weeks later (18 March 1931) *Notre Temps* carried the Germans’ response: “Manifesto of 188 intellectuals, artists and *savants*.” Maillot draws out well the subtle differences between the two texts, with the Germans laying most stress on the need to revise the injustices of the Versailles Treaty.

Jean-René Maillot has made a fine contribution to scholarship with this work, whose ambition has not been dimmed by the non-existence of an archival record for *Notre Temps*, or of its collaborationist successor, *Les Nouveaux Temps*. He has nevertheless used very judiciously what is available, in particular the papers of Luchaire’s long-standing friend Oscar-Paul Gilbert, conserved in Brussels. What impresses most about this book, and what makes it henceforward a standard source on Luchaire and his publishing enterprise *Notre Temps*, is the quality of the close reading and the attention paid to contextualisation. Maillot has brought alive this sector of the “realist generation.”

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