

André Gide's Politics: Rebellion and Ambivalence

Edited by Tom Conner

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ANDRÉ GIDE'S POLITICS

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This collection of essays is the result of a project that dates back at least five years in time, to a 1995 sabbatical leave in Paris and Berlin. The focus of my research then, as now, was European intellectual life in the 1930s. I was fascinated by the impact of politics on cultural life, in particular the commitment [*engagement*] of a number of progressive intellectuals and writers such as Malraux and Gide. I remember spending one dreary February afternoon in the Bibliothèque Jacques Doucet in Paris poring over some old issues of the leftist monthly *Commune*. It suddenly occurred to me that Gide's oeuvre as a whole could be construed in terms of an *engagement* and that a collection of essays like this one exploring the various ramifications of Gide's politics was long overdue.

This project finally began to take shape after I had enlisted the support of thirteen colleagues and Gide specialists. I am thankful to each of the contributors not only for their knowledge but also for their patience in seeing this project through to completion. While I would have liked this volume to appear sooner, it has been no easy task to edit a work of its magnitude. Fortunately I have been able to rely on a number of people for their expertise in the editing process. My greatest debt is to my colleague and friend Stephen Westergan, who has been an invaluable resource and collaborator. Not only has he read and reread the manuscript countless times, saving us contributors from many errors, but he has also provided wise counsel regarding style. Stephen's meticulous attention to detail and his dedication have helped make this an authoritative yet attractive volume. Indeed, it is fair to say that this book would not have been possible without his generous collaboration. I can never thank him enough.

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Nockeby, Sweden, January 2000

P R E F A T O R Y N O T E

Most of the French terms used in these essays are followed by an English version in square brackets; those widely known or clear from the context, however, are left untranslated. An essay's use of published translations is duly credited; all renderings into English not followed by a parenthetical citation are the author's. And unless indicated otherwise, ellipsis dots within quotations have been inserted by the author, whereas italicized words belong to the source.