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## Biens Symboliques / Symbolic Goods

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Positionings and Partisan Activism within the Rassemblement  
Démocratique Révolutionnaire (France, Late 1940's)

*Faire exister un intellectuel collectif dans le champ politique. Prises de position  
et mobilisation partisane au sein du Rassemblement démocratique  
révolutionnaire (France, fin des années 1940)*

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

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- 1 The Rassemblement Démocratique Révolutionnaire [Revolutionary Democratic Rally] (RDR), a political venture created in France in February 1948, seems to embody all the stigma of political failure. It did not manage to recruit more than 2000 members, its activity lasted no longer than two years and its intellectual and partisan legacy is negligible (Birchall 1999). However, because of the majority of intellectuals among its members, because of their repertoire of collective actions, because of their political positionings and the ideas they produced, we put forward the premise that this political venture enriches the analysis of the manner in which intellectuals were politically engaged at the time, especially in the context of the reconfiguration of the intellectual and political fields at the start of the Cold War in France. The study of the RDR's enlisting, mobilisation and production of an original political discourse falls within the perspective of a historical sociology of politics and rests upon two complementary approaches.

- 2 This work is in keeping with the 1980's "sociological turn" regarding the study of political parties, which consists of examining the entrepreneurial scope rather than the practical application of their political conviction (Offerlé 1987), while taking the sociology of the RDR's members into account (Pudal 1989) and inscribing them in their exact local, social and political environment (Sawicki 1997). This perspective thus keeps at a distance the ideas that implicitly explain political practice based on the supposed rationality of social actors (Gaxie 2003).
- 3 Given the specific social profile of members enlisted by the RDR, which will be discussed further below, this work also includes a historical sociological analysis of intellectual activism. Indeed, studies that examine this area have increased since research on the Dreyfus Affair, and the invention of the figure of the intellectual confronted with the political sphere (Charle 2015). These studies have made the sociological stakes of analysis of the intellectuals who were mobilised according to specific contexts more tangible, by focusing on groups who were confronted with events; from the study of anti-fascist intellectuals in the interwar period (Racine & Trebitsch 1994), to writers in May-June 1968 (Gobille 2018), through to those who were active during the Occupation (Sapiro 2014). Other studies have preferred to analyse certain intellectual groups such as the Surrealists (Bandier 1999; Reynaud-Paligot 2001) or the Situationists (Brun 2014), as they constructed a relationship with the political sphere, or political ideologies such as communism, by examining the way in which it managed its intellectual partisans (Matonti 2005a; Gouarné 2013). Furthermore, Éric Agrikoliansky's work on the Human Rights League or Philippe Gottraux's work on the "Socialism or Barbarity" group attempted to investigate political organisations in which intellectuals were involved (Gottraux 1997; Agrikolianski 1997).
- 4 Together these studies have created a heuristic frame of reference to study the manner in which symbolic borders were transgressed between political and intellectual fields. These researches have indeed greatly contributed to the study of intellectual and partisan activism, in so far as the intellectuals' reasons for being mobilised were not, as before, solely defined in terms of their convictions - whereby the belief in their rationality would be coupled with another impasse, that of the intellectual conceived as an overarching entity (Bourdieu 1977) - but rather as the result of their position in their field of origin.
- 5 The relevance of this approach is in turn illustrated by the RDR, considered here as a partisan space for intellectuals who wanted to construct a political initiative that enabled both intellectual and political action, without one taking precedence over the other. As such, the fact that Jean-Paul Sartre (an intellectual authority at the time) participated is significant, as his involvement did not solely amount to purely symbolic backing, but also consisted of activist, financial and practical support on his behalf (Amiel 2013). Analysing historical fluctuations between the political and intellectual fields allows us to understand that after the culmination of a long process of specialisation (Dulong 2010) and professionalisation (Offerlé 1999) within the French political field, the context of the Liberation period seemed to give way to a de-sectorisation of social logics (Dobry 1992), which rendered such an equilibrium conceivable for the RDR's members (Amiel, Sempé, Dirx 2015). We must also bear in mind the long-term French and European history of constructing the intellectual field (Charle & Jeanpierre 2016), along with the effects that mass schooling, amongst other

factors, had on an increasingly collective notion of intellectual practice (July 2018), to which the RDR can be seen as providing further evidence.

- 6 Moreover, in this article we shall try to identify to what extent intellectuals attempting to create a partisan initiative can affect the political implementation of ideas (Skoricki & Tournadre 2015: 93). This work echoes recent studies which explain the mechanisms of partisan appropriation of political ideas (Rioufreyt 2019), or consider the circulation of ideas in partisan contexts regarding economic interests in the PCF [French Communist Party] (Azam 2019) and the SFIO [Section française de l'internationale ouvrière - the socialist party in France from 1905 to 1969] (Fulla 2019), the conditions for the “Great Replacement” theory to succeed within *Alternativ für Deutschland* (Alternative for Germany) (Leconte 2019), security issues within the *Parti socialiste* (Socialist Party) in France (Cos 2019), or the redefinition of conservatism within the *United Russia party* (Fauconnier 2019). In some respects, these works are a part of the effort to reformulate how ideas originate and circulate within the partisan context, within a national (Pudal 2006; Matonti 2012; Skornicki & Gaboriaux 2017) and international (Skinner 1978) movement to renew historical and sociological studies of political ideas as historically and socially situated discourses.
- 7 Therefore, this work examines the specificity of the RDR’s ideological production and its forms of activism by combining the analysis of members’ political practice with that of their discourse production. It aspires to a sociological history of political ideas which purports to consider the production of symbolic goods according to social constraints (Belorgey, Chateigner, Hauchecorne & Pénissat 2011). The specific social profiles of its enlisted members and especially leaders, predominantly intellectuals, reveal the production of political ideas by members whose non-partisan professional practices also consisted of producing, disseminating and dealing with symbolic goods. However, we shall see that such an overrepresentation not only induces the production and dissemination of symbolic goods, but also leads to constant uncertainty regarding the definition of the RDR by its members, varying from a political party to a gathering of intellectuals. The RDR thus appears as the result of unstable dynamics of political mobilisation, in part explained by a repertoire of collective action, oscillating between the traditional logics of the involvement of intellectuals, associated with the nominative legitimacy of its members, and the logics of partisan involvement which refer to the number of members (Gobille 2008: 62).
- 8 We shall approach the RDR members’ political positioning and activism methods through an analysis of some of their various archives. The “RDR archives” do not exist as such, which hints at its low degree of institutionalisation (Perrot 1993: 18), but we can nevertheless bring to light pieces of partisan material which have been conserved in various - notably activist - places, which give us access to the ideas produced by the group. We shall approach the RDR’s ideas by combining both internal and external sources. The former gives us information about internal debates and the competitive construction of the group’s ideology thanks to two publications, *Les cahiers du propagandiste* (one issue in September 1948) and *Bulletin interieur* (three issues in January, February and May 1949).<sup>1</sup> External sources grant access to the various forms of political discourse held publicly by the group or in its name. This includes the RDR’s bi-monthly collection *La Gauche*, whose fourteen issues, available at *la Contemporaine*,<sup>2</sup> were published between May 1948 and March 1949 and grant access to an outline of the RDR’s political “programme”. It also includes the “Call for a Revolutionary Democratic

Rally” which initiated the political venture on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1948, as well as a political statement of Charles Marché, an RDR candidate in the cantonal elections between 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> March 1949.<sup>3</sup> We shall also study the book *Entretiens sur la politique*, which is intended to reveal the political positioning of three of the RDR’s most famous leaders. Other archives such as those of the Seine’s General Intelligence services [Renseignements généraux] or media publications of the time, namely the periodical *Franc-Tireur* to which some RDR members belonged, will provide the context within which this discourse was produced.

- 9 We shall begin by describing the social composition of the RDR and the political and intellectual stakes that ensued from an attempt to establish a new, neutralist position within the French political field (Milza 1987). Subsequently, the Cold War context will bring us to question the RDR members’ political positionings, along with the specific forms of their twofold mobilisation: on the one hand, intellectuals who reproduced conventional symbolic goods production practices, usually outside the collective (Ansart 1974), and on the other, members with higher activist capital (Matonti & Poupeau 2004: 8) who attempted to call attention to largely disembodied political ideas via more traditional forms of partisan mobilisation.

## 1. Young Activist Intellectuals Tempted by the Party Form

- 10 We shall first take a look at the members that constituted the RDR, examining the various dispositions they were likely to invest in the group, along with the reasons behind their commitment. Then we shall consider the RDR members’ different positionings and the specific shape that their activism took. Following this, we shall examine how the RDR tried to situate itself in the Radical Left’s subfield (Gottraux 1997), in relation to the Section française de l’internationale ouvrière (SFIO) [French Section of the Workers’ International] and the Parti Communiste Français (PCF) [French Communist Party], but also against the Gaullist partisan movement, the Rassemblement du Peuple Français (RPF).

### 1.1. The RDR’s Members: Young Parisian Intellectuals

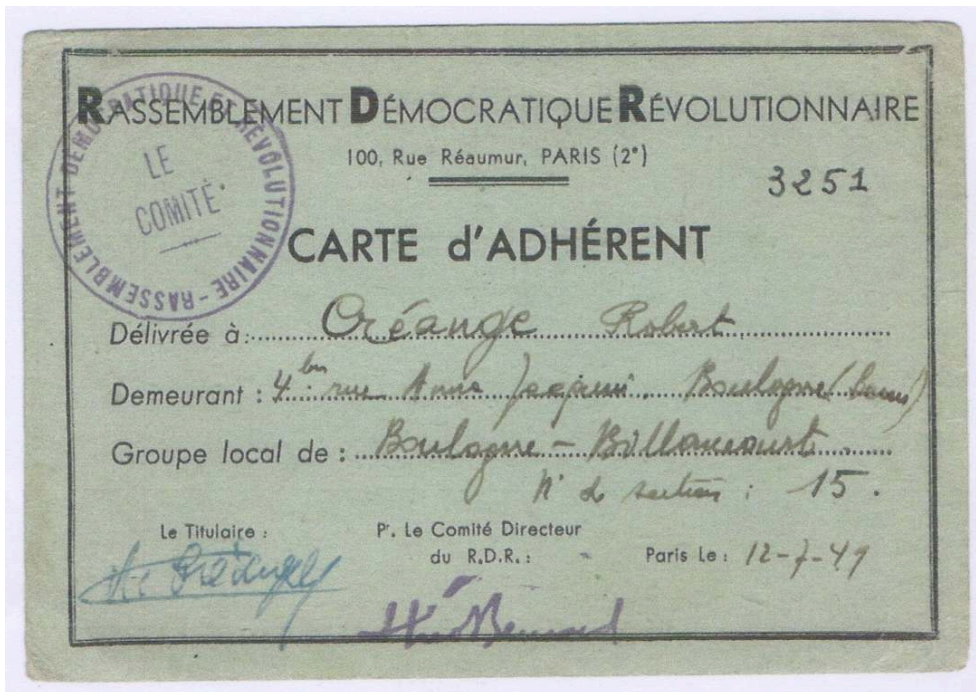
- 11 Before analysing the RDR’s ideas, we would like to present an outline of the group’s sociology. This is based on a collection of biographical data on 1025 of its members. As is often the case, this undertaking was limited by the modest content of the activist file that we were able to reconstitute (Subileau 1981: 1039). This study is nevertheless supplemented by results from a collective socio-biography (Pudal & Pennetier 2014: 11) on ninety-nine RDR activists, amongst which were the members of its Comité Directeur (CD) [Steering Committee]. This data is sufficient to situate the RDR’s members socially and allows us to state that they were mainly male (78.7%), young (the median age is 33-years-old), and that they lived in large, urban centres (at least 60%).<sup>4</sup> These tendencies do not stand out compared to other political organisations at the time, although we can note that the RDR’s members were significantly younger and more urban than the SFIO’s (Rimbert 1955: 195), the MRP’s (Pépy 1955: 209) or the PCF’s (Collectif 1955: 181).
- 12 The RDR mainly distinguished itself by its members’ professional occupations, since more than 40% of the group were intellectuals by profession. Liberal professions and

senior executives, as well as middle managers, were overrepresented, respectively 5.5 and 4.2 times more than amongst the general French population.<sup>5</sup> They included journalists and teachers (16% of activists), high school and university professors, literary and scientific professions (9%) and lawyers and doctors (2.6%). Furthermore, students represented 7% of the group. In so far as the composition of the CD [Steering Committee] - 82% of whom were intellectuals (twelve journalists, seven teachers, three lawyers, two artists)<sup>6</sup> - can be considered as resulting from a partisan promotion (Pudal 1989: 18) and a collective group image definition process (Offerlé 1987: 107), it also participated in the construction of the RDR's image as a "party of intellectuals".

- 13 It is important, however, not to yield to this restrictive qualification too quickly, since first of all, the intellectual positions were sometimes very diverse. The "total intellectual" (Bourdieu 1980) that was Jean-Paul Sartre rubbed shoulders with mathematician Laurent Schwartz, lawyer Jean Rous, journalist Georges Altman, teacher Albert Demazière or Professor Henriette Morel,<sup>7</sup> to name but a few. Furthermore, the characteristics that they shared and tried to emphasise while building the group did not solely allude to this one feature.
- 14 Most of them had access to an advanced level of education for the time (13% had a school certificate or an equivalent, and more than half were graduates). In a few rare cases, this academic capital allowed them to ascend to a petty bourgeoisie status, or, as in most cases, to move within the class from the economic fractions to those that value cultural capital.<sup>8</sup> A large number of them were committed to left-wing political organisations early on, such as the SFIO or the Trotskyists, and by 1948 most of them had a vast activist capital, as well as a certain tendency towards political heterodoxy. Many were indeed excluded from or had left political groups during their activist trajectory, which accorded them a certain know-how in minority activism and often in partisan organisation and activism. It is important to note that at least half of them are known to have been active in the Resistance. In the context of the late 1940's, such a practice played a pivotal role both in the political (Dogan 1967: 487) and in the intellectual field (Boschetti 2009). Without over-evaluating the belief in a common destiny for resistance fighters (Mariot 2017: 10), this shared experience did contribute to the definition of a symbolic capital that activists were all the more tempted to highlight, given that it was being progressively discredited at the time (Laborie 2011).



Fig. 1. RDR Membership Card



Membership Card #3251, delivered on the 12 July 1949 to Robert Créange

Source: Private collection

- 15 While the construction of a political rally in 1948 may seem like an attempt to draw attention to resistant activism in the face of the devaluating dynamics it was confronted with at the time, it was also trying to defend the paradigm of the intellectual as activist. Sartre indeed imparted a “crushing” responsibility upon intellectuals (Sapiro 2014), defining the intellectual as someone who systematically took sides (Sartre 2012 [1949]: 210) on contemporary issues. In a sense, this idea of intellectual practice as activist *by nature* was taken up by the RDR’s members. Their organisation’s form was thus a way to preserve the image of the intellectual as activist, notably facing competition from the PCF, seeing how constraining this period was for communist intellectuals, who were encouraged to use their production for the benefit of the party and integrate it in dedicated activist spaces, thus obliterating all production autonomy (Sapiro 2018: 178).

## 1.2. A Partisan Venture “Between Socialist Decline and Communist Retreat”<sup>9</sup>

- 16 Above all, the members of the R.D.R. were aiming to build a left-wing political organisation. In 1948 that entailed bringing a new position into existence, between the SFIO which at the time made up the “third force” government and the PCF, which had come back to a kind of opposition since May 1947. The title of its publication, *La Gauche* [the Left], which came out twice monthly from mid-May 1948, is quite explicit. Referring to a largely shared experience amongst members of the RDR, its heading claimed to form part of a “new international resistance”. *La Gauche* aimed for a nation distribution, beyond mere RDR supporters, and a large part of its fabrication and printing was done by the *Franc Tireur*’s staff. The journal team’s commitment was not



only visible in its main contributors, but also in the topics covered and its political orientation. While it was definitely a political journal, considered as part of the RDR, *la Gauche* also covered national and international news and formed part of the market of nationally distributed general political journals. It thus belonged to many distinct kinds of publications: it was simultaneously the voice of the RDR and its activist life but was also a news magazine which allowed the RDR to express its opinion on a number of topics, as well as a symbolic space of expression for member intellectuals or those who were close to the group (as was the case for Claude Bourdet or Albert Camus, members of the *Combat's* editorial staff). Nevertheless, according to the Renseignements Généraux [General Intelligence]<sup>10</sup>, *La Gauche* only distributed 20 000 copies in November 1948. The number of copies actually sold could not be evaluated. However, it featured at least two iterations evoking the RDR's "political agenda" as well as editorials published by relatively famous members of the RDR, such as writer and journalist David Rousset, *Franc-Tireur* journalists Georges Altman and Charles Rosac, and Jean-Paul Sartre.<sup>11</sup>

- 17 First of all, David Rousset mentioned the existence of a political agenda which boiled down to "returning a living social base to democracy". This entailed putting the conditions for an efficient inspection of the State's economic management by intellectual workers into place. Although Raymond Aron categorised it as "Trotskyist" in *Le Figaro*, and *l'Humanité* called it the "left wing of the SFIO", David Rousset dismissed these disqualifications while condemning the fact that they were characterised as "Marxist" and claimed to form part of the legacy of the struggle under the Occupation. These initiators' dispositions can also help us to understand the forms of the ideas produced. These were notably acquired during the Resistance struggle, which situated them in action rather than as defining a thorough agenda, as suggested by Claude Bourdet: "clandestinity and prison accentuated this feeling of the collapse of a whole society for most of us [...] but that did not lead us to think in terms of plans and schemes; the Resistance members had learned to count on voluntary action coupled with empiricism; not particularly French methods, but they have worked elsewhere" (Bourdet 1952).
- 18 The "Projet et plan de travail pour un programme du Rassemblement Démocratique Révolutionnaire" [Project and work plan for the RDR's political agenda] (see below) was presented in *La Gauche's* third issue, published in June 1948. It enables us to grasp the RDR's positionings based on what appears to be a draft political agenda (RDR 1948). Such a text allowed the RDR's members to comply with the political field's expectations, which they hoped to incorporate by producing an "electoral transaction norm" (Bué, Fertikh, Hauchecorne 2016: 10). Karim Fertikh indeed showed the extent to which writing such a text would benefit from being reinscribed in the history of a constructive political practice, which is as much a synchronous political positioning as it is a "transaction with an organisation and its past" (Fertikh 2014: 907). Henceforth, the RDR complied with or anticipated the political field's expectations, aiming to legitimise the construction of a new space. The collective could thus claim a unified position which was the result of compromises within its various political orientations (Andrieu 1984). Introduced by a preface emphasising the supposed "betrayal of the Resistance", this manifesto begins with an attempt to clarify the RDR's position within the political field at the time. Thus, the authors denied all forms of anti-communism and indicated that they stood beside the PCF, in the "working class clan", while

lamenting the fact that the “watchwords, methods and aims” intended to serve its interests were in fact dictated to the Party by the needs of “Soviet foreign policy”. Finally, they described the “third Force” as a “coalition for political conservatism” resulting in the withdrawal of several revolutionary activists. The text thus legitimises the need to establish the RDR in order to halt this decline, seen in the fragmented state of the trade unions.

Fig. 2. Jean-Paul Sartre



Thierry Ehrmann, « Jean-Paul Sartre », La Demeure du Chaos, musée d'art contemporain, Saint-Romain-au-Mont-d'Or

Source: Licence CC BY 2.0. Flickr, 26 June 2008).

- 19 The “Project and work plan for the RDR’s political agenda” is organised according to five points, which correspond to five political levels of intervention (the workplace, the place of consumption, “the countryside”, the youth and the “French Union<sup>12</sup>”).

#### “Project and Work Plan for the RDR’s Political Agenda”

I. “In the workplace”: the creation of “company RDRs” bringing workers together, regardless of their party, union, or faith, for the respect of the law within companies and specifically for the right to strike, the constitution of a sliding scale for salaries, of employee representative committees which would allow workers to prevent prices from inflating artificially, especially in companies that produce mass consumption goods, the transformation of “wartime production to peacetime production” and “worker promotion” through activists’ professional and cultural training, which would prepare workers to manage their companies directly. Moreover, the RDR encourages its members to fight for trade union unity.<sup>13</sup>

II. “In the place of consumption”: The “neighbourhood and communal RDRs” aim to organise the Rally’s members as consumers and users in the struggle against the black market and rising prices on a local level. The establishment and promotion

of direct consumption circuits are requested, specifically with the aid of farming and labour production cooperatives, as well as the search for a housing solution for workers in need of housing. Activists are also urged to keep a track of their needs in writing, which could lead to ongoing inspections of local representatives, particularly in city councils.

III. “In the countryside”: The RDR declares its support for farmer cooperatives and unions and “a tight alliance between city and country revolutionary democratic organisations within interprofessional organisms and within rural RDRs”. The Rally notably emphasises the demand for land consolidation, the development of an industry for the production of agricultural tools and fertilisers for small scale farms, the generalisation of cooperatives for the use of agricultural equipment as well as the “development of direct circuits between countryside and cities through the removal of parasitic intermediaries”.

IV. “For the youth”: The RDR’s youth are encouraged to get involved with youth centres, youth hostels, cultural circles and learning centres where they can, for instance, fight against the increased length of obligatory military service. Furthermore, the RDR makes various claims regarding education, such as the defence of secular state education, hiring “decently paid” teachers, implementing educational reform put forward by the Langevin project, developing free education through pre-employment grants, creating an increased number of professional training centres and cultural and leisure centres in which teachers would participate, and “university access for the children of the people”.

V. “For a French revolutionary democratic Union”: The RDR’s political agenda highlights group members’ opposition to “disguised forms of past colonialism, even when hidden behind the new status of the ‘Union française’.” The authors of the text demand the end of the war in Indochina and of repression in Madagascar, and advocate freedom of speech, as well as the freedom of association and self-determination rights in all the French colonial territories.

(Source: RDR 1948)

- 20 Thus, the members of the RDR positioned themselves on the left of the French political field through their economic and social programme, as well as through their attempts to justify their legitimacy to debate with rival organisations. Double affiliation was allowed within the RDR, which thus attempted to create a space likely to welcome those who had been disappointed by the SFIO’s governmental practices or by the PCF’s positionings, seen as restrictive. The fact that a rally is a rather uninstitutionalised form can be viewed in relation to the positions of the RDR’s members in other social spaces. Whether in the SFIO and the Parti Communiste Internationaliste (PCI) [Trotskyist party], or in the editorial boards of the periodicals *Franc-Tireur* and *Les Temps Modernes*, they can assert their participation in the RDR for internal issues without renouncing a certain independence with regard to their new political enterprise.
- 21 The text “Appel au Rassemblement démocratique révolutionnaire” [Call for a Revolutionary Democratic Rally]<sup>14</sup>, published on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1948 in the *Franc-Tireur*, was in the same vein. The members of this initiative committee described themselves

as “survivors from hell, survivors of the Resistance, activists, supporters or fellow travellers for great movements advocating social emancipation [...]” and beckoned activists from other organisations as well as those “who will not resign to being nowhere and do not want to choose” to join the “Rally for international and revolutionary democracy”. The new organisation was mainly devised in opposition to earlier and contemporary political organisations by its instigators. The creation of the RDR in the political field was, first and foremost, synonymous with its position against the SFIO, whose participation in government coalitions betrayed “the decay of capitalist democracy and the flaws of a certain kind of social-democracy”. The text’s authors also criticised colonial oppression and “the artificial aggravation of nationalism.” The PCF was equally condemned, seen as representing “the reduction of communism to its Stalinist form”. The initiative committee considered that “the socialist aim does not tolerate the use of any kinds of means [...] we cannot accept this double-edged game which consists of accepting measures that we currently know to be unworthy, with the aim of guaranteeing a noble future goal.” This echoes a recurrent position in Trotskyist organisations against the Stalinist model (Bensaïd 2002: 60).

- 22 Lastly, the case of Charles Marché’s political declaration during the cantonal elections on 20<sup>th</sup> March 1949 is also relevant.<sup>15</sup> Charles Marché was a former socialist activist, a candidate for the Niort 2 canton, who produced and shared one of the RDR’s rare statement available in the market of electoral goods. In it, he evoked his commitment to the SFIO and inscribed his candidacy in its continuity. According to him, the Socialist party had indeed betrayed the working class and the Left by building an alliance with the Mouvement Républicain Populaire (MRP - centrist party), in order to stay in government and by supporting private schools. The text emphasised the defence of peace and secularism and blamed the exploitation of workers as well as the bureaucracy, in the vein of organisations that claimed to represent the working class.
- 23 While the RDR claimed to mainly construct its position vis-a-vis the SFIO and the PCF, the electoral context at the time meant that they could not neglect the Right, which was partly gathered within the Rassemblement du Peuple Français (RPF - French People’s Rally, founded by General de Gaulle).

### 1.3. The Collective Intellectual Versus the Prince’s Advisor: Sartre’s Rassemblement Against Malraux’s

- 24 The RDR’s shape indeed resembled that of another pole that structured the political field at the time, namely the right wing, which was reconfiguring around the RPF. This new Rally, created in April 1947, partly signified the return of conservative political positions within the reconstituted political field. This was after a post-Liberation phase during which left-wing partisan organisations were practically hegemonic. The aforementioned RDR’s agenda moreover insisted on its opposition with the RPF above all else, condemning “the end of democratic freedom” and the “single party regime” which would ensue if the Gaullists came to power.
- 25 Juxtaposing these two *Rassemblements* does not only involve a typological comparison. Both ventures often took opposite directions, despite adopting similar approaches. Indeed, they were both created within a context that devalued traditional political parties (see for instance the Gaullist critique of notable radicals’ “inertia” - Fogacci 2015) and both groups wanted to distance themselves from former party practices by

allowing double allegiance and claiming that their institutionalisation was less restrictive for their members. The pursuit of a certain autonomy vis-à-vis international and national ideals of grouping political positionings according to the either-or dichotomy between the two blocs is a further point that the RPF and the RDR had in common. However, the groups differed in the alternative they intended to propose. Indeed, while the RDR advocated for an anti-imperialist neutralism, the RPF made a claim for France's autonomy with a virulent form of anti-communism. The struggle against communists, presumed "separatists", was indeed at the centre of its reasons for mobilisation. Lastly, the intellectual activist methods they relied upon differed greatly, crystallised in the opposing militant figures of Jean-Paul Sartre and André Malraux.

- 26 Malraux's confrontation with the political field during France's Liberation was strongly marked by the "prince's advisor" status that he acquired as early as August 1945, when he became advisor to Charles de Gaulle, the president of the *Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Française* (GPRF) [Provisional government] at the time, and then Minister for Information in November (Todd 2005). He had previously participated in the swiftly aborted discussions to construct a unified political organisation stemming from the Resistance. It was also on the basis of this engagement that he began his collaboration with Charles de Gaulle (Lachaise 2009). Distinguishing himself from the Sartrean idea of political engagement at the time (Boschetti 1988), Malraux's participation in the foundation of the RPF and its political activity was systematically linked to his personal proximity to General de Gaulle. While before the war he had managed to convert his non-partisan political capital into literary capital (Sapiro 2018: 343), this was reversed in 1947, as his literary (and resistant) fame came to serve his partisan practice.
- 27 Without dwelling on Malraux's atypical position at the time, we can note that he was very isolated on the Left, between the PCF, which he intended to oppose politically, and the partisan figures from activist literary circles to which he opposed a more concrete but individual political practice. The fact that he was expected to maintain the recognition he gained from his (mostly rewritten) participation in the Resistance and the (more truthful) Liberation fights with his Alsace-Lorraine Brigade (Todd 2005) had, of course, a part in his pursuit for symbolic endorsement. As for Sartre, he was able to benefit from the significant symbolic value he gained from participating in the *Comité national des écrivains* (CNE) [National Committee for Writers], although he was not particularly active in the Resistance. The CNE was a collective institution for literary resistance which, in the context of the Liberation, had a monopoly over its legitimate definition (Sapiro 2014). The figure of the prince's advisory, as personified by André Malraux, was henceforth totally opposed to *collective intellectual* as embodied by the RDR (Sapiro 2009: 14). Whereas the former claimed to be positioned amongst those dominating the literary field, the latter instead belonged to the dominated. While the prince's advisor was meant to provide general knowledge to the one he serves, the collective intellectual gathered together individuals situated in the autonomous pole of their field of origin (Bourdieu 2003). If we consider the collective intellectual as a pooling of (previously individual) skills, resources, and intellectual recognition into a collective which aimed to intervene in the public sphere in the name of its singularity (Amiel 2017: 595; Pudal 2004: 185), we can henceforth consider that the RDR's intellectuals were at least in part inscribed in this approach. This was Sartre's case at least, who, at the time when his authority within the intellectual field was being



consolidated, tried to invent a new political position which would potentially allow him to combine concrete political action with intellectual autonomy (Amiel 2013: 367).

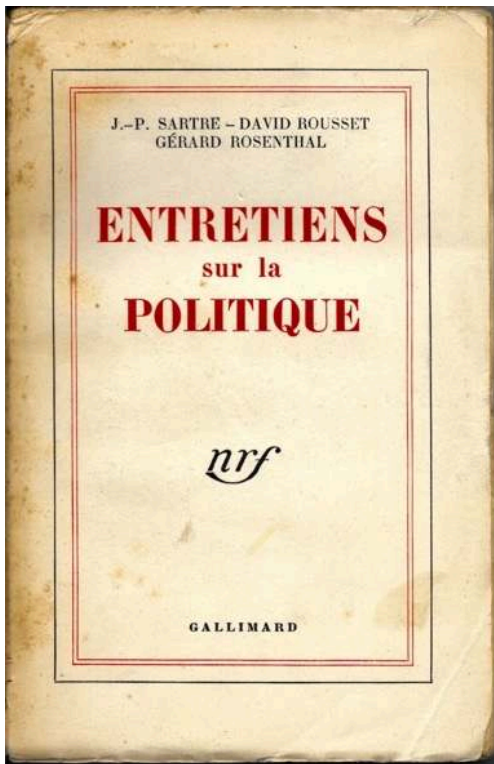
## 2. The RDR's Forms of Intervention and Positioning: Between Partisan and Intellectual Logics

- 28 Having outlined the link between the RDR's enlisting process and the logics of political commitment of its members in relation to the state of the political field, we can now examine its political practices and positionings. We shall first see that partisan and intellectual methods used within the RDR were inscribed within the forms of its activism. We will then examine how the RDR's positionings call upon the international dimension as a heterogeneous resource, reinvested in national stakes, in the context of a strong injunction to take sides with the Atlantic or Soviet blocs. The group's noteworthy claims were thus its support for the anticolonial struggle and the refusal of the upcoming war, since they aspired for a neutral European coalition.

### 2.1. Intellectual Forms of Partisan Engagement

- 29 The *Entretiens sur la politique* [Discussions about politics] created an editorial space for formalizing the RDR's political ideas. They were first published in *Les Temps Modernes*, Jean-Paul Sartre's magazine, then as a book (Sartre, Rousset, Rosenthal 1949), along with a new interview with Gérard Rosenthal, and established their positionings while reaching out to new audiences. Publishing it in a magazine and then as a book was not a trivial choice, insofar as the text henceforth no longer seemed like a partisan production, but as a text which benefited from the value given to an unpublished book by Jean-Paul Sartre, published in the "collection blanche" of Gallimard - a renowned publisher. The *Entretiens* were in the same vein as the writers' publications - despite being new in the sense that they constituted his first collective work - and they were thus likely to be bought and read by an audience that did not solely buy or read works according to political affiliation.<sup>16</sup> In this autonomous editorial space, partisan ideas were produced - ideas that they aspired to make audible within the intellectual field (Matonti 1996: 95).
- 30 At first the authors focused mainly on justifying the creation of their collective, which aimed to merge the working and middle class through a rally, rather than a party, into an organisation managed by its members, and to thus "shatter" "Marxist scholasticism" (Sartre, Rousset & Rosenthal 1949: 12), as was recommended by David Rousset. Thus the RDR's members called the RPF model into action as an efficient partisan way to unify fractions of the bourgeois class, while denouncing its reactionary ideas and organisational approach. According to Jean-Paul Sartre, "it is obvious that the RPF is capitalising on the idea of an eternal France, and, from that point of view, it is certain that the policies that it is likely to adopt, whether on an international or national level, amount to mere opportunist and episodic policies intended to save some elements of a supposedly unchangeable France" (Sartre, Rousset, Rosenthal 1949: 37-38). David Rousset expanded on the Gaullist Rally's absence of a social agenda, which he explained through the recovery of "the Vichy conception, and thus, in my view, the most reactionary conception in France" (Sartre, Rousset, Rosenthal 1949: 57).

Fig. 3. Entretiens sur la politique



Cover of the book *Entretiens sur la politique*, by Jean-Paul Sartre, David Rousset et Gérard Rosenthal (Gallimard, 1949)

Source: Private Collection.

- 31 The opposition was obvious in the speeches given during a “meeting of intellectuals” organised by the RDR (Bernard 1949). This designation, which was also found in the “Renseignements généraux” archives, betrays a double allegiance, both intellectual and partisan. The meeting was called “L’internationalisme de l’esprit et la paix dans la monde” [Internationalism of spirit and peace in the world] and took place in Paris in the *Salle Pleyel* on December 13<sup>th</sup>, 1948. This event provides us with a good example of how political positionings were produced within the RDR, through public speeches by intellectuals in the context of the re-configuration of the intellectual sphere (Boschetti 2009), which brought the Sartrean definition of the politically active intellectual into play (Sapiro 2018: 73).
- 32 Indeed, besides RDR members such as Georges Altman, Gérard Rosenthal, David Rousset and Jean-Paul Sartre, other celebrities who were present were distinctive in the sense that they occupied political positions that were close to the RDR, without having invested more than symbolic support in the venture. Such was the case for Albert Camus, André Breton, Claude Bourdet and Simone de Beauvoir. They rubbed shoulders with the “great writers from Europe and overseas”, as announced by the poster advertising the event. These sympathiser intellectuals contributed towards the RDR’s political mobilisation through interventions, with their position as intellectuals and the symbolic capital tied to it as a guiding principle. The phrase coined by the Vietnamese intellectual Le Quan-Dung, “the most superior power of all: Spirit” (Quan-Dung 1948), sums up their wish to assert political action methods that could compete with traditional forms of activism, in order to guarantee peace and the integration of their



discourses into a performative process, based on the belief in their capacity for mobilisation.

- 33 In front of two thousand five hundred people according to police estimates<sup>17</sup>, and over five thousand according to the organisers (Altman 1948), many intellectuals took turns to speak. These included Richard Wright, a North American writer who wrote the novels *Native Son* and *Black Boy* (Wright 1940, 1945), former member of the communist party and member of the editorial board for *Les Temps Modernes*; Jef Last, a Dutch poet, writer and sinologist, friend and translator of André Gide, former activist in the Dutch socialist party, the communist party and member of the international brigades (Gide & Last 1985); as well as Juan Andrade, Spanish journalist and editor, POUM (Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista - Marxist United Workers Party, created in Barcelona in 1935 and active during the Spanish Civil War) activist and former founding member of the Spanish communist party. The meeting was organised to make up the numbers, especially given that the description of people crowding up on the pavements was a systematic indicator for the success of a political gathering (Cossart 2010: 241).
- 34 This considerable number of international supporters from outside the RDR accepted to put their literary and intellectual legitimacy at its service, as a political statement, notably insofar as their position within the intellectual field in their native country was often in direct relation with the political dimension of their literature. The *Franc-Tireur's* coverage of the day was moreover an opportunity to recall the political dimensions of their work, in connexion with the narrative setting of the meeting after it happened (Cossart 2001: 136):
- “This is not solely a Parisian event; it goes beyond the borders of this great public confrontation of the representatives of world culture. Invited by the *Rassemblement Démocratique Révolutionnaire*, they are coming tonight at 8:30 pm, to the *Salle Pleyel*, in total freedom of speech, to call for the ‘internationalism of spirit’. Who are they? You already know them. There will be *André Breton*, the great rebel poet and writer; *Albert Camus* whose harsh, uncompromising dignity we cherish; *David Rousset*, a powerful witness to the concentration camps and a magnificent orator; *Jean-Paul Sartre*, whose human intelligence, acute talent, and deep intellectual honesty are appreciated by a wide audience; *Simone de Beauvoir*, a highly talented novelist and essay writer. *Richard Wright*, whose remarkable novels on the lives of black people in the United States we have read, ‘*Native Son*’, ‘*Black Boy*’; *Carlo Levi*, whose book ‘*Christ stopped at Eboli*’ is a powerful testimony of the lives of Italian anti-fascists in Italy itself. [...] Also for the first time, *Theodor Plievier* shall appear before the democratic and revolutionary people of Paris, the great German anti-Nazi writer, author of the staggering book ‘*Stalingrad*’, whose translation is already a sensation in Paris [...] Truly a tremendous gathering, where the talent, originality and art of each of these intellectuals deeply resonates with and will give new nuances to the struggle for freedom and brotherhood”<sup>18</sup>.
- 35 In contrast to the process, described by Paula Cossart, in which partisan press tended to favour photographs of the public so as to show the crowd, the issue that *La Gauche* devoted to the meeting did not focus on showing the audience, but instead included individual portraits of the speakers, thus valued as intellectuals. For the majority, the interventions were confined to an overhanging positioning of intellectuals concerning political issues and the war to come, which was at the center of their preoccupations.
- 36 André Breton not only denounced political parties as incapable of hindering such a conflict - thus claiming a particular intellectual autonomy compared to partisan organisations - but also criticised the surge in nationalist positionings. His speech

aimed at contesting the putative conflict: “We must stamp out this drunk and bloodthirsty nationalism today, wherever it may be, we must stop this rival imperialism of Coca-Cola and denatured Marxism from consuming the sacrifice of our lives, as quickly as possible”. In his intervention, Jean-Paul Sartre called for the construction of a socialist Europe against totalitarianism “in any form”, with the prerequisite of demilitarising both countries and minds.

- 37 The call for intellectuals came up in most of the speeches. Indeed, although this “meeting of intellectuals” was backed by the RDR, it remained a meeting addressed to intellectuals. David Rousset thus wished to mobilise the latter in the name of the unity of freedom which, “if it ceases to exist in the political domain [...] shall cease to exist in the domain of arts and sciences” before referring to the existence of concentration camps in the USSR, which he condemned.
- 38 Richard Wright’s intervention allows us to better grasp the intention of these speeches and the audience in mind: these were intellectuals addressing their peers. Wright denounced the Cold War not as a conflict between the USSR and the United States, but rather as a war on culture. He likened Hollywood to Prague, warning: “listen up, writers and artists: the men who are leading the world today have declared war on you!” He also advocated political engagement, redefining, after Sartre, the dichotomy between actions and discourse: “actions, that is what you intellectuals must accomplish, actions with words, actions that shall be expressed by your needs, your desires, your dreams.”

## 2.2. Political Positioning: Anticolonial Struggle and the Construction of a European Alternative to the “Blocs”

- 39 The RDR’s position concerning international politics was based on the following analysis: “Three years after the end of hostilities, two of the greatest powers are facing each other in a ‘Cold War’, instilling the fear of a new, more destructive war than ever before on both sides” (RDR, 1948). From then on, playing the “blocs” game would mean precipitating the conflict in which the United States were trying to maintain capitalism to ensure their economic hegemony - to the point of supporting any regime which might stop the expansion of the USSR, including dictatorships - while the USSR, which saw socialism as the solution for peace, based its development on the extension of the Russian model “which does not respect all liberties”. Thus, in order to avoid giving the impression of supporting one by denouncing the other, the RDR members refused to choose and advocated “peace by and for revolutionary democracy”. They moreover refused France’s participation in any economic or political groups which would situate it within one of the blocs and advocated for a “revolutionary and democratic upheaval of national structures” within a federation of European peoples. The RDR’s work plan called for a constructive struggle against the Marshall Plan, seen as both necessary and problematic. Lastly, the text called for a fight against the plan’s militarisation and demanded Union control of distribution and use of aid in order to open it up to trade with the Eastern bloc.
- 40 The opposition between the two blocs was part of a Cold War dynamic that partly structured political oppositions according to an East-West dichotomy. The obligation of being situated according to this dichotomy weighed down on individuals and groups. However, the RDR was original in that it refused to position itself. Jean-Paul Sartre

indeed stated: “actually we are not *against* anybody. A wartime fatalism has spread across Europe today, which means that some, who want protection from the USA, end up having to be against the USSR, such as the RPF, while others, who wish to protect themselves from fascism or US imperialist capitalism, embrace the USSR and thus also become a cause for war. It seems to us that the existence of these two camps which characterise today’s Europe was borne out of dividing the world into two rival power groups and is thus becoming a backlash cause for war” (Sartre, Rousset & Rosenthal 1949: 82). The RDR resisted the dichotomy which strongly structured national and international issues in the name of an intellectual position - the defence of peace. This was simultaneously a way for the RDR’s members to (unsuccessfully) assert a distinctive resource produced according to international issues in a French competitive space, while also advocating for a political translation of their intellectual resources.

- 41 These positionings were similar to those held by the founders of the Mouvement socialiste pour les États-Unis d’Europe [Socialist Movement for the United States of Europe]. This movement belonged to the “political pole” of the European relational transnational space in the making (Cohen 2006: 116), in which the RDR and its members participated, along with the SFIO and celebrities such as Georges Izard or Claude Bourdet. This gave the RDR a certain legitimacy both within the French political field as well as on a transnational level, creating a resource that could be used both occasionally and locally (Gobille 2005). Indeed, theorising a “neutral” Europe as a peace factor between both blocs was in part inspired by India and prime minister Nehru’s post-independence politics, leading to the definition of the international “non-aligned” alliance (Lee 2010; Durantin 1981).
- 42 The RDR’s social demands were thus articulated around a refusal: “the RDR is a *democratic and revolutionary* rally; this will dictate its attitude toward each international opportunity for democracy and revolution. Against all oppressive occupations, whether from the USSR or the USA, it shall be a clandestine body for resistance. [...] Consequently, before adjusting its politics according to a worldwide conflict which leaves no hope for democracy, the RDR is *first and foremost* unconditionally *against war*. And all struggle against war is also a social struggle” (Sartre, Rousset, Rosenthal 1949: 183-185).
- 43 The struggle against colonial oppression, which was mentioned in the Call, belonged to the RDR’s positionings. The group criticised the SFIO for repressing the Malagasy and Vietnamese uprisings, as well as the lawsuits filed against activists for independence. While group members may have partly disagreed on the way in which colonised peoples should be emancipated (autonomy or independence), this positioning was claimed as one of the RDR’s distinctive features. We must also examine the reasons for such political engagement in its members’ previous trajectories. They were activists in Paris in the 1920’s and 1930’s, when the city was the collective place for defining “anti-imperialist nationalism” (Goebel 2017: 7-8) and they took up the defence of colonised peoples early on. In *Entretiens sur la politique*, David Rousset suggested “political, administrative and judiciary autonomy” for Overseas and North African territories, in order to create economic partners and benefit from their resources. He then went on to specify that, according to him, the government was getting ready to start a military operation in Vietnam and he criticised a scandalous trial in Madagascar which led the Malagasy population to rise up against France. “In North Africa the government is carrying out nit-picky, stupid policing towards people such as Messali Hadj, who

represents an influential party in Algeria. In Morocco, we are seeing a politics of censorship and asphyxia.”<sup>19</sup> He concluded that “I am deliberately for granting the right to independence to the peoples in overseas territories” (Sartre, Rousset, Rosenthal 1949:191). Gérard Rosenthal believed that these territories should be allowed independence at any time, but that French workers and those from these territories would rather benefit from an arrangement regrouping the various entities. This position was original in the political field of the time and was passed on amongst organisations that struggled against colonial politics, such as the Peoples’ Congress, which RDR members such as Jean Rous belonged to.

- 44 The RDR did not only intervene as a political organisation against the constitution of the French Union in order to further previous struggles for the independence of colonised peoples. It was also a way to contest the bi-polar order which was being established by forming alliances with revolutionary movements struggling for independence. This discourse, which was voiced during a period of conflict in Indochina and repression in Madagascar, amounted to trying to create an original position, nationally as well as internationally, especially through intellectual interventions. Thus Vietnamese, Malagasy or Algerian activists were invited to participate in intellectual meetings organised by the RDR, and leaders such as Messali Hadj of the Algerian People’s Party were interviewed for *La Gauche*, a journal which also published articles about the Palestinian, Algerian, Indochinese and Malagasy movements. Towards the end of the 1940’s, this kind of positioning was rare and contrasted with governmental left-wing parties (Biondi & Morin 1992: 286). The RDR thus set a precedent for a long history of a non-communist minority Left that stood beside colonised peoples (Hamon & Rottman 1979: 36).
- 45 In short, whether they systematically refused to respond to the “rhetoric of choice” or took the form of an overarching discourse denouncing a possible Third World War, the RDR’s political ideas appear to have been original in the French political field at the time. However, the construction of an alternative took the form of a coalition between the RDR and other organisations, both French and foreign, specifically around a project for a Socialist Movement for a United States of Europe. Nevertheless, the dual nature of practices within the RDR, due to the impossible cross between intellectual and partisan activism methods (Matonti 2005b; Sapiro 2009), made these positions practically inaudible. Even more so given that the intellectual members of the political venture narrowed their activism down to the production of discourse which was mostly disconnected from the RDR’s partisan activism.
- 46 The confrontation between these differentiated mobilisation methods can help to explain the swift end to the groups’ activity. The intellectual and political logics which were meant to be complemented in view of a “total” commitment (Bourdieu 1980) were not sufficiently integrated into concrete partisan practice. Furthermore, the field effects that the members intended to escape by creating a collective beyond borders ended up being enforced upon them and disqualifying their attempts in both spaces. The RDR’s intellectual mobilisations formed a kind of mantra, and its members who were furthest from partisan practices seemed blind to the cost and efforts required in concrete activist methods, which would have been necessary for a partisan venture to take root.

## Conclusion. The Failed Encounter Between a Collective Intellectual and a Partisan Venture

- 47 An analysis of the RDR members' production of ideas allows us to grasp the specific nature of this political venture, inscribed within the Left of the French political field in the Cold War context. The search for an original position within the Left sub-field, between the SFIO and the PCF, as well as heterodox positionings regarding the anticolonial struggle and the confrontation between the Eastern and Western blocs, were owed to the particular and heterogenous dispositions of its members (namely intellectuals with a certain amount of "reputational capital"). While this allows us to discern the concentration of idea production within spaces which were not at the center of the partisan mobilisation context, this was also due to the coexistence of activists with purely political capital, with others characterised by their position as intellectuals in its midst.
- 48 Lastly, the place of ideas in this "party of intellectuals" highlights the use of a large amount of exogenous ideological production sources, including within the field of ideological production (Bourdieu 1984). The group had a specific way of structuring political activity. It separated the production of political discourse related to "ideas" - reserved for "autonomous" intellectual spaces - from partisan mobilisation spaces such as local committees, public meetings and electoral operations, activist political practices which were less involved in the production of discourse. It seemed as if two partly airtight spheres coexisted: a collective intellectual (Pudal 2007) and a partisan organisation. The collective intellectual is considered here as a group of intellectuals who drew their legitimacy to intervene politically both from the autonomous position they held in their field of origin, and from the specific knowledge they gathered in their domain; their political positionings were supported by the intellectual and symbolic resources created and used by its members. In this case, and despite the dominant positions of some of the RDR's intellectuals, its legitimate and long-term acceptance within the political field failed because, on the one hand, the political role of intellectuals at the time was disqualified, and, on the other, because the political field quickly resorted to more traditional partisan methods. A division of political labour partly resulted from the fragmentation of the space for idea production within the RDR. This division not only aimed to set the production of ideas aside for intellectuals, but also confined them to spaces which remained close to their professional habits, partitioning the RDR's discretionary repertoire of collective actions even further. The "encounter" hoped for and advocated by these two forms of mobilisation thus ended in failure. This was notably due to the fact that the group's structure alone could not question the symbolic boundaries between activists' practices linked to their *habitus*, acquired within their own field: the political field for activists with a certain amount of political capital, and the intellectual field for those who professed to have produced symbolic goods. Thus, a dichotomy persisted within the group, between activists engaged in tangible partisan practices, and the intellectual activists whose belief in the performative nature of their discourse forbade them from putting necessary measures into place for a more clear-cut partisan effort for mobilisation.

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## NOTES

1. Available at the “University Office of Socialist Research” *Office universitaire de recherches socialiste* (Ours).
2. *La Contemporaine*, Library, Archives, Museum of Contemporary Worlds in Nanterre. Periodicals section, *La Gauche*, n°1-13, cote GF P 3660.
3. Deux-Sèvres departmental archives, Niort, 1426W4.
4. Mainly Paris, Lyon, Nancy, Toulouse and Bordeaux. In comparison, the number of urban inhabitants in France at the time was 38.9% (Casevitz 1947: 107).

5. Professions declared by the activists were aggregated according to the 1954 nomenclature - the one closest to the period under discussion - on the basis of their title in the RDR's members list used. Ratio is calculated compared to the results produced by Paul Clerc for the period from 1954 to 1962 (Clerc 1964).
6. Professional data is missing for three of the Directive Committee members, and the last one, Hubert Jean, is a farmer in la Manche.
7. Born on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 1915 in Saint-Pierre-d'Albigny (Savoie) and died in Ivry-sur-Seine on April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011. A professor specialised in literature at the Chartres lycée, she was also a journalist for *Resistance*, *La Jeune République* in 1946 and then for *L'agence Européenne de Presse* and *Ce Matin* in 1947. She then went on to teach at the Lycée Fénelon in Paris. She was also a member of the Young Republic and ran in the 10th November 1946 legislative elections for the "Rally for the Republican Left". Paris police archives, general enquiries, individual files, on a partial waiver, 77W 4179 439. 647.
8. Forty years later, Bertrand Geay saw the same phenomenon amongst the schoolteachers he studied (Geay 1999: 21).
9. According to David Rousset's expression (Rousset 1948: 1).
10. Paris Police archives, November 1948, Revolutionary Democratic Rally, file GaR2. For comparison purposes, *Franc-Tireur* distributed about 370 000 copies, while *Le Figaro* claimed to have sold 343 664 copies, *Le Figaro*, 20<sup>th</sup> March 1948.
11. However, among the five texts supplied by Jean-Paul Sartre, only two were unpublished, while the others were reprints from other journals.
12. Structure including France and its colonies and protectorates.
13. The split between the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT) et la Confédération Générale du Travail-Force Ouvrière (CGT-FO) (workers' unions) occurred in December 1947. The RDR's position favoured trade union unity and the reconciliation of political leanings and can thus be likened to that of the Fédération de l'Éducation Nationale (FEN) [National Federation for Education], which was independent since an internal vote in March 1948.
14. The following quotations are taken from "Appel du Comité pour le Rassemblement Démocratique Révolutionnaire", mimeographed, undated (probably February-March 1948), Jean-René Chauvin Fund, Centre for 20<sup>th</sup> Century social history, 1-JRC-3H.
15. Deux-Sèvres departmental archives, "Profession de foi de Charles Marché", March 1949, file 1426W4.
16. It is difficult to measure the books' success, due to a lack of information on its printing.
17. Paris police archives, General Intelligence, "Confrontation publique des représentants de la culture mondiale organisée par le Rassemblement Démocratique Révolutionnaire", 14<sup>th</sup> December 1948, RDR, file GaR2.
18. "Pour la liberté et la fraternité de tous les peuples", *Franc-Tireur*, 13th December 1948, p. 2, underlined in the article.
19. The alliance between the RDR and its Trotskyist members with the North African "star" Messali Hadj can also be explained through the latter's 1928 break with the PCF (Noiriel 2018: 545).

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## ABSTRACTS

The Rassemblement Démocratique Révolutionnaire [Revolutionary Democratic Rally] (RDR) was a political venture created in France in 1948 with the aim of defending a neutralist position, refusing the either-or alternatives between the Atlantic and Soviet blocs. This article begins with a sociographic presentation of the militant intellectuals who founded this original political initiative; then, we address the political activism and positionings of this distinctive partisan milieu, where intellectuals were characteristically overrepresented. We analyse the RDR's methods of establishing a new position within the political and intellectual fields, as well as the way in which their forms of intervention and positionings were influenced by their members' social profiles and trajectories as activists. Lastly, we question how the RDR's members intervened within the domain of ideological production - both as a partisan venture and a collective intellectual - and to what extent the search for such a fragile equilibrium impacted its success or failure.

Créé en France en 1948, le Rassemblement démocratique révolutionnaire (RDR) est une entreprise politique qui défend une position neutraliste de refus de l'alternative entre les blocs atlantiste et soviétique. Partant de la présentation sociographique des intellectuel·les engagé·es dans la fondation de cette entreprise politique originale, cet article entend interroger la mobilisation et les prises de positions politiques de ce milieu partisan particulier, marqué par la surreprésentation des intellectuel·les. Il s'agira d'analyser les logiques de construction d'une position nouvelle au sein des champs politique et intellectuel, mais également la manière dont les formes d'intervention et les prises de position du RDR sont influencées par ses logiques sociales de recrutement. Finalement on se demandera comment les membres du Rassemblement interviennent à double titre au sein du champ de production idéologique : comme entreprise partisane et comme intellectuel collectif, et combien la recherche d'un si fragile équilibre peut peser dans la réussite ou non de leur entreprise.

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