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The Gift Revisited: Marcel Mauss on War, Debt and the Politics of Nations

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Abstract

This article offers a new interpretation of *The Gift* written by Marcel Mauss. It provides a contextual interpretation of the formation of Mauss' thinking about international relations in the question of German reparations paid to the Allies. The article starts by showing the intellectual origins of the concept of "reparations" in the "solidarist" and socialist movements in which Marcel Mauss, Charles Gide and Léon Blum participated. Then, it shows that Mauss, just before *The Gift* was first published, argued in favor of granting to Germany a moratorium on its payments of reparations in 1924 and giving back part of their war debt to the Germans. At last, in *The Gift*, Mauss constructs a normative model of international relations which explains why and how nations honor their debts by circulating gifts which are paid back after some indeterminate amount of time. Thus, *The Gift* can be conceived as a juridical attempt to establish a legal precedent, especially in German legal culture, that gifts are paid back by counter-gifts, particularly if the rituals and the discontinuous temporality of gift-giving practices are respected.

The Gift Revisited:

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The Gift is probably the best-known essay written by a French anthropologist. It is still required reading for all anthropology graduate students in the U.S. or in France. *The Gift* was written by Emile Durkheim's nephew, Marcel Mauss, for the first volume of *L'année sociologique* published after the First World War and after Durkheim's death.[1] *The Gift* was a theoretical essay which did not draw upon any primary fieldwork,[2] but upon a large range of anthropological references, mostly from British sources, but including German folklore, Hindu religion and Roman history. As such, *The Gift* crafted a universal theory of gift-giving practices; whose generality might explain why, especially in the French context, it has been at the center of all the postwar disputes between social theorists, from Claude Lévi-Strauss (1950)[3] to Pierre Bourdieu (1994, p. 174-5).[4] To the extent that it has become the focus of so many academic controversies, *The Gift* deserves to be ranked as a classic (Karsenti 1994).

Still, as is the case of many classics, *The Gift* is too often read outside of its context of publication and in particular without reference to Mauss' political writings. This article demonstrates that *The Gift* prolongs Mauss' writings on the German war reparation and debt crisis of 1923 and 1924, which he published in *Le Populaire* and which echoed the articles of Léon Blum and Charles Gide. Mauss' writings on the

[1] *L'année sociologique* was not published from 1913 until 1925.
[2] In contrast to British anthropology, with its positivist emphasis on direct observation (Geertz 1990).
[3] In the 1950s, Lévi-Strauss (1950, p. xxxix) read in *The Gift* a half-baked theorization of the exchange system that announced Lévi-Strauss' own structuralism – a misinterpretation that phenomenologists were quick to denounce (Merleau-Ponty 1959; Batailles 1976).
[4] Bourdieu used the Maussian paradigm of reciprocity to theorize about the non-utilitarian logics of economies – a post-structuralist interpretation which was challenged by scholars of epistemology and hermeneutics (Derrida 1991; Descombes 1996; Boltanksi 1990).

question of Franco-German reparations are now known to French readers, thanks to the masterful work of his biographer Marcel Fournier, but as Sylvain Dzimira (2007, p. 27) notices, "rare are the commentators who associate Mauss' scientific studies with his normative conclusions,"[5] even though Mauss (1990 [1925], p. 65) himself pointed toward the applicability of his conclusions in *The Gift* to contemporary issues. Until now, no author connected these writings to *The Gift*,[6] with the one exception of Philippe Steiner, who sees in Mauss' political essays a convergence between Mauss' theoretical program and that of François Simiand, who moved toward a general theory of trust and economic value extended to "primitive economies" (Steiner 2005, p. 209, 225). My reading of these essays will be different, as I read in *The Gift* an attempt to find legal precedents for the kind of policies that "solidarist" and socialist writers like Marcel Mauss advocated with respect to German reparations and inter-Allied debts.[7]

This article first presents the intellectual career of Marcel Mauss and his involvement in the "socialist," "solidarist" and "cooperativist" movements along side with Léon Blum and Charles Gide. Second, the paper shows the intellectual origins of the provisions of the Versailles Treaty (1919) on German reparations in the "solidarist" movement. Third, it shows how Mauss criticized the rightwing governmental coalition in France for ignoring the spirit in which the reparations provisions were written and refusing to extend a moratorium on payments to the Germans. Fourth, this article ends by

[5] In this paper, all translations from the French are mine.
[6] With the recent exception of Frédéric Ramel (2004), French scholars close to the M.A.U.S.S., which stands for "Mouvement Anti-Utilitariste en Sciences Sociales," have mostly related Mauss' anthropological writings with his political writings on domestic issues, such as the creation of a welfare system of distribution based on the notion of "solidarity" (or reciprocity) (Dzimira 2007).
[7] Mauss himself emphasizes domestic issues in his concluding chapter of *The Gift* (Mauss 1990 [1925], p. 67,8), when he writes about the "social insurance legislation" or the "family assistance funds" set up by industrialists for their workers, which reflect the presence of a "group morality" (Mauss 1990 [1924], p. 68) in Alsace Lorraine, Germany and France.

showing how *The Gift* can be conceived as a juridical attempt to establish a series of precedents in legal culture, and especially in European legal culture, that gifts are paid back by counter-gifts, especially if the rituals and the temporality of gift-giving practices are respected. In that sense, *The Gift* can be read as a generalization and a legal justification of the policies that Mauss and Blum advocated with regard to German reparations and in particular the moratorium on German payments.

1. The Formation of a Heterodox Intellectual: The Case of Marcel Mauss

Humanist and Socialist: Marcel Mauss and the Dreyfusards

Marcel Mauss (1872-1950) was one of the most prominent French anthropologists and sociologists, himself the nephew of Emile Durkheim (1858-1917). Mauss was born on May 10, 1872 in Epinal,[8] France to a Jewish family one year after the Alsace Lorraine became German territory. He first studied in the 1890s in Bordeaux under the tutelage of his uncle. Although he passed the "aggrégation" in 1895 (the competitive exam which opened the door to teaching in the prestigious "lycées"), Mauss decided to travel for a year in Oxford and the Netherlands in 1898 to complement his studies (Fournier 1994). Mauss then taught for almost thirty years at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, an institution founded in 1868 on what the French saw as the German model of "researchers,"[9] and then at the Collège de France from 1931, when he was elected to the first chair of sociology, until his exclusion by the Vichy regime in 1941.

[8] His father decided to move from Alsace Lorraine to Epinal, (situated in Moselle) in order to remain a French citizen after the German Reich annexed the French provinces of Alsace and Lorraine in 1870.
[9] The Ecole Pratique gave the opportunity to professionals with a specific expertise to teach research seminars, which allowed Mauss to teach on the sociology and history of religions without having completed his doctorate. There, Mauss worked under the guidance of Sylvain Lévi, a famous Hindu specialist, amply cited in *The Gift*.

For many "intellectuals"[10] of Mauss' generation, their discovery of politics was shaped by the Dreyfus affair: when Captain Dreyfus, a Jewish officer from the same Eastern parts of France as Mauss, was declared a traitor and sent to labor camps by a military tribunal with almost no evidence against him. For well-assimilated Jews, or, as Pierre Birbaum (1998) has called this generation of intellectuals, for "Jews of the State"[11] ("*Juif d'Etat*") e.g. "secularized Jews devoted to the public service of their country who, integrated into French society by and through the Republic, identified completely with the laic universalism of the modern French state" (Judt 1998, p. 41), the universal rights of man were threatened by the army in the Dreyfus affair. This attack called for a universalistic response rather than a particularistic response based on the defense of the Jews in France. Emile Durkheim thus participated in the creation of the "Ligue des droits de l'homme," in Bordeaux. Mauss signed petitions not as a Jew defending another Jew, but as a Frenchman defending human rights.[12] The fight of Dreyfusards for Justice was altogether a fight for human rights, a fight against militarism, and a fight for socialism. For them, anti-Semitism could only be vanquished by the triumph of socialism and the sense of "solidarity" shown by groups toward other groups (Birnbaum 1988, p. 73).

This generational fight created long-lasting political bonds between Marcel Mauss and a group of students from the Ecole Normale Supérieure who were all roughly of the same age: in particular, Léon Blum (1872-1950),[13] by then a young "Rapporteur" at the Conseil d'Etat (the highest court in administrative law) who wrote the legal defense of

[10] The word was invented during the Dreyfus affair, by Barrès, to point to the Dreyfusard.
[11] In opposition to the "Jew of the Court," the traditional role of Jewish bankers at the court of the Austrian empire.
[12] Anti-Dreyfusard intellectuals, like Maurice Barrès, attacked the Jews who make "a enormous mistake" to publicly support another Jew, Dreyfus (Berstein 2006, p. 56). In contrast, Mauss and Blum criticized the Jews who believed "that the Anti-Semitic passion would die out by their obsequious neutrality" (Birnbaum 1988, p. 74)
[13] Blum was Mauss' exact contemporary: born a month before Mauss and deceased a month after Mauss.

Captain Dreyfus; and François Simiand (1873-1935), a philosophy student who turned to the analysis of law and economics (Berstein 2006, p. 71) and later to economic sociology when he entered in the editorial board of *L'Année Sociologique* (the sociological review founded by Emile Durkheim in 1898). Mauss also became a central figure of the Librairie Bellais, created by other young "normaliens," including Charles Péguy,[14] and their elders such as Lucien Herr (1864-1926), the librarian of the Ecole Normale Supérieure whom Durkheim met in 1883 (Mauss 1997 [1928], p. 741), and Jean Jaurès (1859-1914), the leader of the Parti Socialiste de France at the time.

The Dreyfus affair convinced these intellectuals of the necessity to link research and politics, even if it cost them their academic position. Most remained at the margins of the university system throughout their career.[15] For instance, François Simiand accepted a job as librarian of the Ministry of Commerce and Labor before teaching in the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in 1910, and then at the Ministry of Armament, where he became the "intellectual master" (Mauss 1997 [1935], p. 756) of Albert Thomas (1878-1932), another normalien close to Lucien Herr. Thomas later became the Secretary and then Minister of Armament during the war (and was the first director of the International Labor Organization of the League of Nations after the war).

Freed from the academic constrains of teaching, these intellectuals (Simiand, Mauss, Herr, Blum) made their first attempt at political journalism when they created *L'humanité* (Berstein 2006, p. 84), directed by Jean Jaurès. Still, the Durkheimians

[14] Mauss' relationship with Péguy was short-lived: largely because Mauss disliked Péguy's lack of economic accountability which almost ruined Herr (Mauss 1997 [1928], p. 741), Mauss abruptly ceased to see Péguy, although the latter continued to fantasize homo-erotically about Mauss which he called "the dream of my sleepless nights, the image of my feverish nights." (cited in Fournier 1994, p. 206).
[15] In contrast, Célestin Bouglé (1870-1940), preferred to teach at La Sorbonne, and to publish some works of popularization, rather than research-based essays (Heilbron 1985).

remained distant from *L'humanité* because they disagreed with Jaurès' decision to merge, in 1905, his Parti Socialiste de France with the Parti Socialiste Français of Jules Guesde, an orthodox Marxist in France who had criticized the intellectuals' involvement in the Dreyfus affair. In exchange for Guesdes' support of a new socialist party, the Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière (SFIO), Jaurès recognized that the fight against "medieval, military and clerical forces" should be an exception rather than the rule, and that it should not divert socialists' attention from struggles where workers' interests were at stake (Berstein 2006, p. 85). For Mauss, Blum or Simiand, this was an aberration and an acceptable compromise: they did not see any contradiction between the socialist and humanist aspects of their involvement. In protest, they decided to stop writing for *L'Humanité,* though they kept their card in Jaurès' new SFIO (Berstein 2006, p. 87).

1905-1914. From Socialism to Solidarism: the Cooperativist Movement

Leaving political journalism, while keeping his card in the unified SFIO, Mauss turned to a new cause: to unify the "cooperativist" movement, which was still split between the socialist and the non-socialist organizations. The synergies between the socialist and the non-socialist "cooperatives" were long blocked when, in 1880, the same Jules Guesdes condemned consumer cooperatives ("*coopérative d'achat en gros*"), or Wholesales,[16] for delaying the coming revolution by allowing workers to bargain cheaper prices (Pénin 1997, p. 103, 5). This offended Charles Gide (1872-1932), a leader of the non-socialist cooperativist movements. Gide was a lawyer by training[17] and had been a

[16] These groups were given a legal existence only after the 1901 law on the freedom of association first gave collective groups in civil society the right to be recognized as "legal persons."

[17] At the time, economics was taught (when it was taught) in the Faculty of Law. A Protestant, in 1872 Charles Gide completed a doctorate in Law on the right of association and the right of gathering: important rights to protect religious minorities which had been almost non-existent during the twenty years of the dictatorial regime of Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte (1851-1870).

professor of political economy in the faculty of law at Montpelier from 1880 until he moved to Paris in 1898, where he integrated the faculty of Law at the University of Paris and joined the Dreyfusard side.[18] In 1880, Gide had co-founded a cooperative of consumers called *La Solidarité* ("solidarity" or "reciprocity" in English) in Montpelier, with Auguste Fabre and a half-Briton, Edouard de Boyve, who was inspired by the "Christian socialists" in the U.K. (Pénin 1997, p. 42). Since then Gide had become one of the most important voices promoting the "economic program of solidarists."[19]

Mauss applauded the creation of these Wholesales, but along with Blum, Herr and Simian, he participated instead in the creation of cooperatives of teaching and learning (socialist universities) (Mauss 1997 [1928], p. 744). Together, they created the Société nouvelle de libraire; the Ecole Socialiste in the Latin Quarter (Berstein 2006, p. 72); and the "Bourse du travail des cours sur le mouvement syndical," which they animated from 1898 to 1910. But their cooperatives were not very different from the "Coopérative des Idées, Universités Populaires," created by Charles Gides, which offered classes to workers from 1898 to 1905 (Pénin 1997, p. 90).

The merger of tendencies in the cooperativist movement was a result of the active leadership of Marcel Mauss and Albert Thomas (Pénin 1997, p. 136). In June 1905, as the French envoy sent by the "Bourse Coopérative" to a British congress of more than 1700 delegates, Mauss (1997 [1905], p. 177), reached out the British Wholesales

[18] Like Durkheim, Charles Gide had a famous nephew, the most famous novelist and dramaturgist of his generation (and a Nobel Prize winner), André Gide (1869-1951), a close friend of Léon Blum.
[19] Gide's first appointment was at the University of Bordeaux, where he taught from 1875 to 1880, before Emile Durkheim taught there after 1887, and where Léon Duguit studied. Still, Gide's "solidarism" differed from that of Mauss, Blum and other secular Jews, for Gide did not define solidarity in sociological terms (Pénin 1997, p. 63), but rather in natural terms which he reconciled with his Protestantism: atoms were "*solidaires,*" in the sense of having reciprocal effects on each other, in the same way that all men shared the same destiny as outcasts from paradise as a consequence of man's original sin (Gide 1932).

movements, with which Charles Gide had forged strong bonds.[20] The socialist cooperatives united in the "Bourse Coopérative" created in 1896, and moved from 1905 to 1910 toward an alliance with international organization in the "Alliance Coopérative Internationale," created by Gide. In 1911, the merger between the socialist and non-socialist organizations was achieved by a Pact of Unity, written in 1912 by Gide, which called for the "gradual and collective appropriation of the means of exchange and production by associated consumers" in complete "autonomy from political parties and trade-unions." Consistent with Mauss' future claims in *The Gift*, that organized economic transactions create transnational bonds, which delay the eruption of wars, Gide and Mauss (Pénin 1997, p. 160) vainly tried to use these transnational civil associations of consumers as a platform in favor of international peace.

In 1914, despite their pacifism, all the solidarists joined the war effort, although not all on the battlefield: Simiand lead the collection of statistics on Allied food suppy ("*ravitaillement*") at the Minister of Armament directed by Albert Thomas; Blum joined in 1914 the Ministry of Public Works, and Mauss' mastery of the English language had him drafted as a translator in the 27th armored British division. Their involvement was not contradictory with their socialist and humanist creed, as they sided with democracies against the German Reich.

The Disputes between Bolsheviks and the Solidarists on the Centrality of Debts

At the end of the war, the relationship with the Bolshevik revolution was the major issue of the day for socialists. The schism between humanist socialists and communists liberated Mauss and Blum: they no longer had to hide their political

[20] Mauss' anglophile social scientific culture not only infused his research, but also his politics, as he [was inspired by Béatrice and Sydney Webb and the Fabians (with John Maynard Keynes) (Mauss 1997 [1920]).

opposition to the orthodox Marxists who did not seek to integrate humanism and socialism together (Colton 1966, p. 62). The National Congress held by the SFIO in December 1920 revealed that the majority of the party wanted to adhere to the Third International and create the Section Française de l'Internationale Communiste (SFIC), with *L'Humanité* as its official journal. Instead, Mauss wanted to remain in the old SFIO, which Blum was elected to lead (Fournier 1994, p. 417). As a result of this schism in the socialist movement, Mauss and Blum started publishing extensively in *La vie socialiste* and *Le populaire*, a journal partially funded by Blum, Belgian cooperatives and private donors, which initially issued 2,225 copies a day when it was first published in April 1921 (Berstein 2006, p. 227).[21]

From 1920 to 1924, whether the subject concerned the Soviet regime in Russia or the European settlement of the question of reparations, Mauss and Blum focused on the question of international debts in their editorials for *Le populaire*. The question of debt already figured prominently in the mind of Marcel Mauss in his decision to oppose the socialists' adhesion to the Third International. For Mauss, one of the main political faults committed by the Bolsheviks was that they had failed to honor "the tacit international contracts" which were broken when they repudiated the exterior debts of the old Tsarist regime, in particular when they confiscated all the property right of foreign nationals on Russian soil. This was a crime against the principle of reciprocity, or inter-dependence – two synonymous concepts for Charles Gide (1932). For Mauss (1997 [1924a], p. 539), the international reaction to Russia's revolution (the war against the Bolsheviks) was the logical consequence of Russia's inconsequent ignorance of the founding principles of

[21] Whereas *L'Humanité* issued 200,000 copies a day. Intellectuals close to Blum, like Mauss, and also André Gide wrote for the journal: it was in *La vie socialiste* that André Gide published his famous criticism of imperialistic practices in the Congo in 1927.

international law (good faith and avoidance of unilateral acts), since "a State has only the right to apply its laws to its citizens and to the foreign nationals who are residents, but it has to avoid giving the appearance of committing any injustice and any violations against tacic international contracts, e.g. against public and private international law."[22]

Mauss' reflections on Bolshevism were influenced by the solidarist doctrine, which placed the notion of "debt" at its center. As captured by Célestin Bouglé (1924, p. 84), the theory of solidarism inspired by Léon Bourgeois[23] and Emile Durkheim was based on the two notions of "social debt," the debt that every individual is born with; and the notion of a "quasi-contract," which "shares with other conceptions of contractual law… the care to 'protect social equality', in the sense that it seeks to correct the present organization of society so that its members could live as if they had debated the social contract in all freedom, and as if they had debated these conditions with the same amount of freedom."[24] Léon Bourgeois's substitution of the word "debt," to the word "duty," moved away from the notion of "solidarity" through culture and memory, where it was portrayed by Ernst Renan's (1882) famous definition of the "nation" as "a glorious past in common, some regrets to share, a program to realize in the future," to the domain of law. As Charles Gide (1932, p. 123) emphasized, the notion of social "debt means law, it means implementation, it means sanctions, it mean civil duty," and not just a moral duty to give.

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[22] Contrasting the French and Russian revolutions, Mauss (1997 [1923], p. 518) concluded that Bolshevism would remain known in history for the "paucity of its ideas and of its legal and administrative accomplishments," whereas the French Revolution underwent a "formidable work of legislation and administration so perfect that it only remained to the following regimes (the Consulate and the Empire) to codify it."

[23] Léon Bourgeois (1851-1925), a lawyer by training and the leader of the Republican "radical socialists" in Parliament, became the first President of the League of Nations in 1919, an activity for which he received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1920.

[24] "Léon Bourgeois also said of the quasi-contract, that it is '*le contrat rétroactivement consenti*'" (cited in Gide (1932, p. 127).

For Mauss, the Soviet financial meltdown which resulted from the unilateral cancellation of Russian debts showed the necessity for European nations to honor their debts and to respect international law. Otherwise, violations against international law would lead to "the disappearance of any faith in the money, in any kind of contract, in any rule." (Mauss 1997 [1922i], p. 504) Knowing this fact, French socialists had to "save France from the danger that Russia did not succeed in escaping largely as a result of bolshevism, which was only the mean by the Russian state to declare its bankruptcy, or rather, to declare the Tsarist regime bankrupt" (Mauss 1997 [1922i], p. 504).

2. The Solidarist Origins of the Concept of Reparations

Of Reparations: The Solidarist Inspiration of the Versailles Treaty

After the First World War, the solidarists believed that Europe had a debt to honor to those citizens whose private wealth had been most damaged by the war. Those responsible for the war had to pay that debt to these private citizens. The state had to honor the tacit contract between those living behind enemy lines during the war, and those Belgians and Frenchmen whose material possessions were located on the battlefield.

The presence of "solidarists" like Albert Thomas, Deputy and then Minister of Armament, in the French government explains why this solidarist idea was actually turned into law in France.[25] On October 22, 1915, the French Parliament enacted a law stating "The Republic proclaims the equality of all Frenchmen and the solidarity of nations in supporting the costs of war; the damages caused in France to the movable

[25] During the war, the French government also encouraged the creation of consumer cooperatives in order to fix the prices of consumption goods. A "Conseil Supérieur de la Coopération" was even created in 1918 and associated with the Ministry of Labor (Pénin 1997, p. 180).

properties and real estate property, by acts of warfare, open the right to a complete reparation" (cited in Gide 1932, p. 22). As Gide saw it, this law expressed a form of "national solidarity, which had never before been expressed in such an affirmative way by France" – after previous wars, like in 1870, "it was said that the victims of the war might be compensated for their loss, but nothing was done, and nobody had raised to the possibility of complete reparation."

These solidarist notions also became instruments of international law in sixteen articles (from art. 231 to art. 247, and all the annexes) of the Versailles Treaty, signed in June 1919 between Germany and the Allied Powers.[26] Indeed, after establishing "the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies" (art. 231), the Allies set up a Commission of Reparations, to determine the extent to which Germany could "make complete reparation for all such loss and damage done to the civilian population of the Allied and Associated Powers and to their property during the period of the belligerency,"[27] (art. 232) and to "make reimbursement of all sums which Belgium has borrowed from the Allied and Associated Governments up to November 11, 1918" (art. 232). The Allies planned that Germany would "make a special issue of bearer bonds" (art. 232) to restore the properties of civilians, the final amount of which, as well as the schedule of payments, depended on the recommendation of the

[26] http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/versailles231-247.htm
[27] And in general all damage as defined in Annex l of the Versailles Treaty.

Reparations Commission (art. 233),[28] which shall "give to the German Government a just opportunity to be heard."

All the solidarists, including Marcel Mauss, Léon Blum and Charles Gide, saw in the principle of reparations a formidable advance for civilization. When addressing his fellow European socialists in 1923, Léon Blum (1972 [1923], p. 273) told them that, although the French socialists fought against the Versailles Treaty in the beginning, they recognized that the Versailles Treaty represented a great progress in international law, in part because of the inclusion of reparations to private citizens:

> The principle of reparations reflects one of the idealist inspirations of the Treaty of Versailles. It is neither a punitive sanction, nor a war bounty, but a reparation for damages caused. This is the first time this principle is applied, and it is the basis for a new Law. Indeed, why must Germany pay some reparations to France and Belgium? Because France and Belgium have committed to repair the damages caused by the war to their own nations. The commitment of Germany toward France and Belgium is only a consequence of the commitment of France and Belgium toward its own victims, which is entirely new. Indeed, until then, a man whose house was burned by the war had no right to claim reparation from the State, which could object that there is a risk of war, when it is a supreme imperative. This notion of reparation is a new right, a rule of collective solidarity, a principle of national insurance, in which the socialists can only place their hopes. This is why we, socialists, remain attached to the duty to repair, which

[28] The Reparations Commission also could change the deadline of payment (art. 234). Once paid, the Reparations Commission would determine how "claims will be divided by the Allied and Associated Governments in proportions which have been determined upon by them in advance on a basis of general equity and of the rights of each" (art. 237).

responds to an ideal of justice in the relationships between States and their citizens, and which responds to a new legal notion in inter-state relations."

When asking for reparations, then, the State acted according to its legitimate role as defined by solidarists. Solidarists saw the legitimacy of the State as being the guarantor of, or the institution responsible for safeguarding, the private contracts that private citizens had explicitly or tacitly contracted. Indeed, as Célestin Bouglé (1924, p. 84) wrote, "thanks to the theory of quasi-contract, the law of the State becomes the translation of pre-existing wills of its members. The State stops being the lawgiver who brings the tables of the law from some distant Sinaï: it is in the river of everyday life, in the current of private law, that the State finds its reason to intervene." The notion of tacit contract legitimized these reparations policies, which were the first pan-European re-distribution policies.

Solidarists on Reparations: Good Idea, Bad Implementation?

If the solidarists were in favor of the idea of reparations included in the Versailles Treaty, they disapproved of the amount that the French government asked Germany to pay. In a series of seven articles published in *Le populaire* at the end of 1922, Mauss blamed the rightwing governmental coalition in France for the rise of European disputes on the question of reparations. He wrote, "the ones who carry the blame are the idiots who implemented the Versailles Treaty: Mr. Klotz, the rightwing press of *Le Matin* and *l'Echo de Paris*, the stupid crowds who believed in their claims that 'Germany will pay'" (Mauss 1997 [1922c], p. 478). Mauss' favorite target in the government was Louis-Lucien Klotz, the Minister of Finance from 1917 to 1920, "the only Jew who does not understand a word of finance" (Mauss 1997 [1924c], p. 572); the "scapegoat" whom

George Clemenceau, the French President of the Council, "perhaps displaying satanic tendencies" had placed as Minister of Finance to "expiate the sins of Israel and of the nation"[29] (1997 [1924i], p. 608; see also Mauss 1997 [1924k], p. 617).[30]

For Mauss, the cardinal sin of Louis-Lucien Klotz was to forget the value of the solidarist notion of *reciprocity* in international negotiations. The claims that "Germany will pay" whatever formidable sum that the French would ask was a sign of bad faith, and a breach of the Versailles Treaty, which delegated to the multilateral Reparations Commission the responsibility to determine the amount to be paid by Germany to the different allies (France, but also Belgium, the U.K., etc.).[31] As Mauss wrote, it was a shame that "Mr. Klotz called 'an atrocious attitude' the request expressed by our Allies [through the mouth of Mr. John Maynard Keynes who sat in the Inter-Allied Committee on Exchange Rates on February 18, 1919] that the duties must be *reciprocal*, and that the loans borrowed on German reparations should not always be working to the advantage of France only" (Mauss 1997 [1924k], p. 617). Furthermore, in contrast to the British government,[32] Klotz insisted that France would start paying interests on its debts to the U.S. when Germany would pay her reparations – which France did not, since Germany did not pay. In the meantime, to reconstruct its devastated regions, France borrowed

[29] The Great War temporarily healed the division between Jews and Catholics opened by the Dreyfus affair, and some Jews acceeded to the highest governmental offices (Birnbaum 1988, p. 158; Millman 1992, p. 39)
[30] Mauss' attacks on Klotz predated the war, when Klotz, already Minister of Finance, raised by 10 percent the price of establishing a Wholesales cooperative in France. Mauss (1997 [1913], p. 201) denounced a "plot by janissaries and eunuchs" from the "party of bistros."
[31] In the meantime, it was only agreed that the new German Republic had to pay 20 billion gold marks (art. 235) and the occupation costs of the Allied army, either in cash or in coal.
[32] At the time, only the British were paying their debt to the U.S. in a very harsh policy of "revalorization," which aimed at returning to the pre-war parity between the price of gold and the price of the pound by budget deficits and high taxes, and which Mauss did not advocate for the franc. But still, Mauss believed it to be preferable to the lack of policy of the French government, as "a people gets richer by paying its debts, because such a people gets richer of all the credit it gets from the world" (Mauss (1997 [1924j], p. 614).

money with floating interest rates, e.g. rates that were indexed on the future amount of German payments to be determined.

In contrast, Mauss lauded the work of the international experts of the Brussels Conference, held in December 1920 to determine the amount of the reparations with Charles Gide representing France. As Mauss (1997 [1922d], p. 481) wrote, in Brussels "illustrious experts (Irving [Fisher] from New York, Gide from Paris, [Arthur Cecil] Pigou from Cambridge) agreed on the substantive claims that it was necessary: 1) to fix a rational reparations policy based on a reasonable estimate of the credit and debit of each warring party; 2) to devalue depreciated moneys in proportion of that estimate; 3) in the meantime, to find enough international capital in order [for central banks] to let enough gold circulate to restore the gold-standard." The international experts determined that Germany would need to pay annual payments of 3 billion gold marks each year for 42 years. This sum seemed more reasonable than the French government's proposal, which asked Germany to pay 42 annual payments of 12 billion gold marks, to reimburse a total Allied need set at 200 billion gold marks, with France claiming 110 billion gold marks (Maier 1988, p. 237). Even though the Germans claimed that 3 billion was excessive and offered in return only 2 billion annually, in Brussels the British brokered a compromise with the French, setting the amount of yearly payment to 6 billion gold marks for 42 years (and 12 percent of German benefits on their exports), as well as the cancellation of the 20 billion gold-marks that Germans had agreed to pay in 1919, as contracted in the Versailles Treaty (art. 235), and which they had refused to pay.

With the mandate of the experts gathered at the Brussels Conference, Charles Gide was commissioned by James Shotwell from the Carnegie Endowment of

International Peace to participate in the collaborative study of the costs of the Great War,[33] charged with independently assessing a "reasonable estimate of the credit and debit of each warring party" (Gide and Oualid 1931).[34] Gide (1931, p. 3, 4) noted that "[a]mong the damages resulting from the war, we have the debts that each warring party has contracted (which weigh to a greater extent on the victors than on the vanquished)." For example, the Brussels Conference determined "that France owes 219 billion pre-war francs in loans," mostly borrowed on the French nationals' capital, and to a small extent (about a sixth, or 38 billions), on foreign (British and American) creditors.[35] "This amount," Gide (1931, p. 5) pursued, "corresponded exactly to our estimate of the general wealth of France; or if we prefer to measure interest rather than capital, it corresponded to 14 billion francs-gold, to which were added 10 billion francs-gold in pensions to invalids, widows and children (a debt also contracted because of the war), which meant that France had to pay 24 billion francs-gold of interest, e.g. more than 70 per cent of the total yearly income which was not over 35 billion. That was the extent of the wound."

The assessment of the credit and debit of the nation was just the preliminary step before the implementation of a policy of stabilization for the franc: "a legal change in the value of the money, a procedure which we call 'stabilization', a euphemism" for the re-evaluation of the debt, as Gide wrote (1931, p. 4; see also Mauss (1997 [1922f], p. 494).

[33] In 1893, Gide participated to the creation of a journal, *La paix par le droit* (Pénin 1997, p. 65), whose international diffusion might explain that he came to be known to Andrew Carnegie. In 1911, Gide was chosen by the newly founded Carnegie Foundation created to abolish the causes of war to chair the section on "economics and history (Pénin 1997, p. 160).

[34] The French team working under James Shotwell's leadership included other "solidarists" like Arthur Fontaine (1860-1931), a labor inspector and philanthropist (close to André Gide), who was responsible for writing section XIII of the Versailles Treaty bearing on the creation of the International Labour Organization (ILO), whose Board of Trustees he chaired at its birth; or Charles Rist (1874-1955), a professor of law and economics who coauthored with Charles Gide the *Histoire des Doctrine Economiques*, whose book on *La Déflation* was lauded by Marcel Mauss (1997 [1924], p. 624). The German assessment was lead by Carl Melchior; the British by William Beveridge with John Maynard Keynes.

[35] Mauss (1997 [1922f], p. 492) used the same numbers when he presented the amount of the credit that France owed to its stockholders who bought the bonds issued by the government during the war.

For Gide, the creditors should not expect to recover the entirety of their loan, as "the taxpayers would have to give away the entirety of their fortunes to pay back the nation's debt to the stockholders (or 70 per cent of their yearly income)." The "stabilization" of currencies advocated by the experts of the Brussels conference meant that governments would choose one between two extremes: "to sacrifice stockholders rather than taxpayers" (Gide 1931, p. 4). "Stabilizationists" like Mauss proposed a middle road, which consisted paying back the debt, if scaled back to a half or a third of its pre-war value, with real money, and not just pay the interests of the debt with fake money artificially created by the printing press (Mauss (1997 [1922d], p. 482).

Mauss and Gide saw an important difference between the policy of stabilization, which would undercut a large amount of the debt to the national stockholders, and the policy of bankruptcy, which was based on bad faith, the maintenance of illusions, and the refusal to provide the French people with a fair and rational estimate of the worth of the credit and debit of their nation . The German policy in 1921 and 1922 was exactly the policy of bankruptcy which Mauss (1997 [1922e], p. 484, 5) condemned when he wrote "the German Republic wished to demonstrate that it could not pay the reparations that the Allied bankers believed it capable of paying, and for that reason, she let its gold and its credits be exported outside of its soil, with the result that the whole wealth of Germany is now depreciated… so that the German public no longer trusts the mark, but places its faith in foreign currencies instead."

The need for stabililization became the slogan of a transnational movement which gathered under the same banner an unlikely alliance of bankers, socialists and solidarists. For instance, the Stable Money League (and then Association) was founded in 1921

(Rothbard 1963, p. 175), and its successive presidents show the political diversity of the coalition: from socialists like Norman Thomas, to solidarists like Charles Rist (Gide's protégé), to international bankers, like Max Lazard (Lazard Frères of Paris), Louis Rothschild (Austria) and Sir Josiah Stamp (from the Lazard Bank in London). In parallel Albert Thomas, President of the International Labour Office (ILO) in 1921 created a Joint Committee on Economic Crisis, whose 1923 report, written by Thomas, demonstrated the causality between the fall in the price level and unemployment (he identified the risk of deflation) (Rothbard 1963, p. 175).[36]

Mauss saw no contradiction between his socialist creed and his call for France to pay back its (reduced) debt. For Mauss (1997 [1922g], p. 496), the policy of stabilization came hand in hand with a socialist fiscal policy which consisted in raising levies and taxes on capital: "to devaluate the value of the franc at the same time as taxing the gains made on the capital."[37] The stabilization, based upon a rational evaluation of each nation's credit by the Conference of Brussels, reflected a socialist concern for the wealth of the nation, which the bourgeoisie threatened to destroy. As Mauss (1997 [1922e], p. 485) was aware, "it was the French bourgeoisie who were buying dollars and pounds because they no longer trusted the franc, and it was the industrialists who covered their operation by buying dollars because they couldn't trust the franc to remain at a stable level." The depreciation of the franc, while it imperiled the credit of the French nation, worked in the advantage of the little speculators who could move their capital to foreign lands, buying lands and goods where they were cheap.

[36] The ILO also endorsed in 1928 a report by Max Lazard calling for price level stabilization (Rothbard 1963, p. 179).

[37] Income taxation was a relatively new procedure which was long postponed because of its socialist origins: France only instituted income taxes in 1916 but privileged national loans and inflation to pay the interests of the debt.

3. Mauss and the Stabilizationists: Prophets in the Desert?

The Entente Déplorable (1922): French Disputes with British and American Creditors

The socialist and solidarist reparation policy that Mauss and Gide advocated in 1922 was exactly the policy that the French rightwing government refused to implement. Instead, in April 1921, confronted by the disingenuousness of German claims that they could not pay, the French threatened to occupy the Ruhr in retaliation.

The British asked for temporizing and honoring legality, as the Versailles Treaty planned that sanctions should occur after a default of payment, and not in anticipation of a default.[38] A new deal (known as the "London Agreement) was finally approved in London in May 1921. The Germans escaped occupation by accepting a new total set by the Reparations Commission set at 132 billion (rather than 200 billion) gold marks to be paid in two steps: first the Germans would pay the annual interest and amortization of a loan of 50 billion gold-marks used for Allied reconstruction (corresponding to the 2 billion gold marks per year, the sum that the Germans had proposed to pay in 1919, plus some 26 percent of the benefits of German exports); second, after German economic recovery, the Germans would pay the interest and amortization on another Allied loan for the remaining 82 billion gold marks to be paid to the Allies (Maier 1988, p. 241). Furthermore, all the Allies were to receive German payments in fixed ratios, which meant

[38] Charles Gides also disputed in May 1923 the legality of the occupation of the Ruhr, as the Versailles Treaty did not specify any compliance mechanism, which meant that the League of Nations Council or the Permanent Court of Justice should have decided of the nature of sanctions (Pénin 1997, p. 215).

that "deficiency in payments would be borne proportionally most heavily by those who had suffered most," e.g. by France (Maier 1988, p. 243).[39]

Still, the London Agreement was not implemented, as it avoided the necessary stabilization of the mark and franc, which the German and French governments still refused. When the time came to pay the 1922 annuity, Germany stumbled upon two problems: the balance of payment and inflation. Due to the large decrease of its foreign exports during the war and postwar eras, Germany did not have enough foreign currency to pay the Allies with French and Belgium francs and British pounds. As a result, Germany had to sell marks (rather than exported goods) to buy foreign moneys, and the speculation against the mark led to the further depreciation, starting a hyper-inflation cycle (Maier 1988, p. 244).

The German default of payment led to new tensions between the French and British governments. The French government lobbied for the stabilization of the mark (Mauss 1997 [1922g], p. 496), although they refused stabilizing the franc. Furthermore, to bypass the German problem of buying foreign currencies, the French government insisted on being paid in kind (in coal), or in cession of industrial shares of the industrial coal conglomerates upon which France's steel industries of the Alsace and Lorraine region depended (Maier 1988, p. 251). But the German industrialists opposed a tax on capital, and only agreed to increase taxation on wage-earners. They had the support of the British government, who favored the stabilization of the mark, but opposed the creation of large Franco-German cartels especially in the coal sector, which might have closed the continental markets to the British coal producers (Maier 1988, p. 251).

[39] Critics of the Versailles Treaty like John Maynard Keynes (cited in Maier 1988, p. 242) welcomed approval by the Allies of the London Agreement.

At the end of 1921, when the British realized that Germany was going to default and facing the threat that France would occupy the Ruhr, the British urged German Foreign Minister Walter Rathenau to apply for a moratorium on payments (Maier 1988, p. 267). The socialists of the SFIO, especially Mauss and Blum (1972 [1923a], p. 281) insisted, "Germany must meet its obligations, but to do so, we must give her the means to recover economic prosperity." The temporary sequence advised by Mauss and Blum looked as follows: 1) France and its Allies would make a large gift to Germany by writing off a large amount of the reparations debts; 2) Germany would take the time to reorganize its economy and financial system; 3) Germany would pay back the original gift by reimbursing its restructured debt. As Mauss (1997 [1922i], p. 502) underlined, it was important "that 1) the Allies should grant a moratorium long enough to recover its payments on its budget surplus, 2) that they should reduce the German debt to a reasonable level, 3) that the Germans should balance their budgets; 4) that they should stop inflation which meant to adopt a higher interest rate." As we see, Mauss (1997 [1922f], p. 494) introduced this notion of discontinuity in the temporality of payments of a debt by arguing that if "the State stops paying its debts during a certain amount of time [until it proceeds to devaluation], then it can resume its payment, which even if reduced, would again be payment in gold, and with amortization of the debt."

Still, the French government flatly refused the idea of a moratorium on German payments. As a result, controversies between the French government on one side and the British and American governments on the other side escalated during 1922, reaching a high point when the question of inter-allied debt was also raised.[40] The French

[40] To describe the state of the alliance which had won the Great War only four years before, Charles Maier (1988, p. 251) called it the "*Entente deplorable,"* and no longer the *"Entente cordiale."*

government agreed to re-assess one more time the amount of reparations, but it asked that its own creditors, the British and the American banks (especially J.P. Morgan, which floated loans to the British and the French for almost half a billion dollars in 1915 and 1916) first cancel part of the French debts.[41] When J.P. Morgan accepted to float a loan to Germany so that it could avoid a default for 1922, and proposed that, in exchange, France write off some of the amount of reparations (Maier 1988, p. 287), the French government of Raymond Poincaré only agreed to write off part of the 82 billion gold-marks that Germany had to pay in the future (and not any of the 50 billion gold-marks that it had to start reimbursing immediately). Mauss (1997 [1922h], p. 499) described the financial scheme invented by Poincaré as a "fake sacrifice since the French would only renounce payments that could not be made, while asking the British and American taxpayers for a large gift" with the immediate cancellation of inter-allied debts.

The main cause of the deadlock was temporal: no nation wanted to make the first move, after which the others might come to reveal their position. In other words, prefiguring Mauss' reflection in *The Gift*, no nation wanted to be the first to give, as a gift would be perceived as a sign of weakness, and not of strength. The U.S. bankers and the U.S. government in Washington warned in July 1922 that they would agree to lower the inter-allied debts, but "if French leaders were to wait for this before their own revision of reparation, they shall wait in vain" (cited Maier 1988, p. 289). In *Le Populaire*, Mauss (1997 [1922i], p. 501) told his fellow socialists that if the French cancelled part of the German debt, then "the British and the Americans could not but do the same, but the British and American taxpayers would never admit that the interests of a debt contracted

[41] Already in 1918, Charles Gide had written that at some point, inter-allied debts needed to be cancelled; or that, if their total was re-negotiated, a lesser amount could be reimbursed for instance by the creation of a pan-European loan, "*un grand emprunt international solidaire*" (cited in Pénin 1997, p. 185).

by France would be cancelled if the French creditors were not first treated in a similar way," e.g. if France did not devalue the franc (and its national debt to French creditors) by sixty percent (in 1922, Mauss estimated the franc at 40% of its pre-war value).

This is the context in which Mauss (1997 [1922h], p. 499) first wrote about the necessity for France to make a large gift to the Germans. Mauss proposed that the French should have emulated the precedent of the British government after their victory over Napoleon: "after victory, the British lent France some money … the gold with which the government of Louis XVIII operated during its first month was British gold which was introduced into France thanks to the Rothschilds," the ancestors of the Jewish bankers who proposed to stabilize the mark and franc in 1922 — and this historical precision, Mauss underlined, was "dedicated to the *Action Française*"[42] the journal of the French anti-Dreyfusards, monarchists and anti-Semites. Indeed, as Michel Winock (1982, p. 125) writes, the name of Rothschild immediately evoked a popular form of anti-Semitism.

But Mauss was not heard, and Anti-Semitism and nationalism were on the rise in Europe again. They showed their ugly faces when a rightwing fanatic assassinated the German Foreign Minister, Walter Rathenau, during the conference of bankers held in June and July 1922 on the question of inter-allied debt and reparations. His assassination showed the price that German politicians would pay for agreeing to negotiate with the Allies, especially when they were Jewish like Walter Rathenau.[43]

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[42] Edouard Drumont, the publicist who gave a new articulation to Anti-Semitism with his book *La France juive*, pointed nominally to Rothschild as the headmaster of the Jewish plot against the French nation. In the midst of the Dreyfus affair, as he condemned the presence of Jews in the French army, Drumont wrote for instance that "the day [the Jews] will command the army, Rothschild will get all the military plans, and he will use them for the goals we know all too well" (cited in Birnbaum 1988, p. 231).

[43] Léon Blum, shortly after he acceded to the post of President of the Council in 1936 (the first time that the "old Gallo-Roman nation was governed by a Jew and a cunning Talmudist," in the infamous words pronounced by the rightwing deputy Xavier Vallat in the French assembly), escaped the same fate by a

The Catastrophe of the Ruhr (1923-4): Mauss' Fight Against Imperialism

The first series of seven articles that Mauss published in *Le Populaire* in December 1922 failed to influence the opinion of the French government. In a second series of 28 articles written from December 1923 to May 1924, Mauss attacked the policy of the Bloc National, the rightwing coalition which Raymond Poincaré led for re-election in May 1924. Ultimately the "Cartel des gauches" won the election, with Leon Blum's SFIO as the first party in the new parliamentary majority. During the election, Mauss attacked two broader targets which Poincaré's policy embodied: imperialism and speculative capitalism, which were two sides of the same coin (one being the geopolitical side, and the other the socio-economic side).

When the Reparations Commission found Germany in default of its coal payments in January 1923, Poincaré immediately sent French troops to occupy the Ruhr. In reaction, Berlin adopted a policy of "passive resistance" in the Ruhr by paying workers to stay at home. Then, Paris and Brussels sent French and Belgian engineers and workers to man the trains and mines of the Ruhr (Maier 1988, p. 357), although with some loss in productivity. In December 1922, Mauss already had warned that this policy was counter-productive, as he bet that, should the French army decide to invade the Ruhr, France would not prove capable of administering the industries of the Ruhr (Mauss 1997 [1922c], p. 479).[44] He reached the same conclusion as Gide, for whom the occupation of the Ruhr reflected the fact that "international public law lagged years behind private law,

short margin: in February 1936, he was dragged from his car and almost killed by the young Camelots du Roi, the armed branch of the *Action Française*.

[44] British conservatives also believed that "the only way to collect [German payments] was to make the German economy credit-worthy, whereas sanctions would only preempt her collateral" (Maier 1988, p. 293).

where the idea that an insolvent debtor should be jailed or dismembered was no longer fashionable" (cited in Pénin 1997, p. 214).

The occupation of the Ruhr and the general imperialistic policy of the French government of Poincaré just ruined France.[45] Gide and Mauss were soon proven right, although even they did not predict how bad the situation would become in the fall of 1923. The French occupation of the Ruhr made it hard for Germany to obtain foreign currencies: since they could no longer export manufactured goods, Germany again had to exchange marks against foreign currencies to pay the reparations. This exchange problem accelerated the rampant inflation to unprecedented levels. Inflation spiraled out of control: between August and November 1923, prices increased a millionfold, as the mark was depreciated. The collapse of the mark deprived the German government of any leverage with respect to the reparation question, which the French re-negotiated directly with the German industrialists of the Ruhr, striking an agreement in Dusseldorf in September 1923, which, as Léon Blum (1924; p. 315-8) saw it, worked against the interests of German workers (and indirectly against French workers). Indeed, to stop the policy of passive resistance by workers, the industrialists gave the French 18 per cent of the coal produced as reparations as well as shares in the German cartels, in exchange for the abolition of the pro-labor laws passed by the Weimar Republic since the end of the war (Maier 1988, p. 369, 392).[46]

[45] Indeed, at the time, the French armies were not only dispatched in the Ruhr, they also occupied Syria and Lebanon, where they opposed the army of Feisal at a cost which Mauss (1997 [1924e], p. 579) estimated to one billion francs (half of the yearly German reparations). At the same time, the French army in Morocco cost France an estimated two billions and a half francs in five years (Mauss 1997 [1924b], p. 579). Poincaré also agreed to lend almost 2 billions (the very sum that the Germans failed to pay in 1922) to Poland and East European States of the "Petite Entente," so that they could buy French weapons (Mauss 1997 [1924b], p. 569).

[46] A turn that was violently attacked by the nationalists as a national betrayal.

For Blum and Mauss, this fateful episode illustrated the relationships between imperialism and speculative capitalism, which combined to produce terrible effects not only in Germany, but also in France.[47] The French occupation was indeed economically unsound, in addition to being unfair to both German and French workers. Mauss (1997 [1924e], p. 580) reminded his readers that before the occupation of the Ruhr, Germany paid the "costs of the keeping a standing army for three years: these were 2 billion gold-marks that went to the bailiff rather than to the victim," e.g. the Belgian and French families whose properties were destroyed; then, in 1923, France paid "costs of that army for one year, and all the sums that Germany stopped paying since the French army entered the Ruhr." Furthermore, French engineers failed to produce the same amount of coal from the Ruhr as the Germans. As a result, "whereas the Germans had sent 11 million tons of coal to France in 'reparations in kind,'[48] by invading the Ruhr, the French government spent millions to only produce 4 million tons and bought from the British their coal to supply the difference, which was equivalent to 600 million gold-marks lost" (a third of the yearly reparations) (Mauss 1997 [1924e], p. 581). In this light, the occupation of the Ruhr looked like a complete fiasco.

The only reason why such an imperialistic policy was continued, concluded Mauss, was that it worked in the interest of the French class of speculators. Since the end of the war, the French bourgeoisie had been speculating on German properties. Thanks to the hyper-inflation of the mark and the rush for foreign currencies among Germans, "the

[47] Not all segments of German society suffered the same though. As Charles Maier (1988, p. 362) writes, German speculators with access to foreign currencies turned the crisis to their advantage, while "pensioners, retailers and those who had patriotically held government bonds were the silent victims" of hyper-inflation.

[48] What Mauss (1997 [1924n], p. 631) called the "*prestations en nature*" using the same term of "*prestation*" that he latter used in *The Gift* to qualify the gifts exchanged. The term "*prestation*" is similar to "*prêt*," which is translated by "loan," and which can mean the rendering of a service, and was used in old English law to refer to the kind of service paid to the Church.

French bourgeoisie, and even the French petty bourgeoisie," Mauss wrote, "have been touring the occupied countries like conquerors going for their bounty, in the hope of profiteering from the exchange rate, which disfavored the poor Germans, and which allowed the Frenchmen to live like little princes" (Mauss 1997 [1924d], p. 575). For Mauss (1997 [1924d], p. 577), the "many Frenchmen … who purchased houses and hotels in the Rhineland, even in Berlin … in enemy territory," and who therefore exchanged francs against marks, committed "crimes against the credit of the State and of the Nation." As Mauss (1997 [1924d], p. 578) concluded, "it was the foreigners who trusted us, and it was the French capitalist, cosmopolitan *par excellence*,[49] who got rid of the national currency."

The effects of imperialism and speculative capitalism were similar in Germany and in France, although the responses were different in the short term. In Germany, the crisis convinced the government to stabilize the mark by creating a new devalued money: the Rentenmark, created on November 15, 1923.[50] After the mark recovered its value, the franc suffered in January 1924. This was partly a success of the stabilization of the mark. Indeed, as Mauss (1997 [1924e], p. 580) explained it, "the French army in the Ruhr, which is on a French payroll… finds its subsistence on location, spends money on location, and exports so many Francs that … the Germans and the little German girls are

[49] Interestingly, Mauss reversed the stigma of being "cosmopolitan," by which the rightwing press behind *L'Action Française*, meant "uprooted," against the French bourgeois who lost sight of the fact that investing money somewhere entails a political bond. By "uprooted," one had in mind at the time, the "*déracinés*," as Maurice Barrès named in his novel *Les déracinés* the French youth from Lorraine, whose sense of moral value was corroded by the Kantianism of their Republican teachers.

[50] Still, it was not adopted on all German land immediately, as the French occupation complicated the matter. The Germans hesitated to send Rentenmarks to the Ruhr, for fear the French would seize them. In parallel, the French encouraged the efforts of the separatists in the Rhineland, led by the mayor of Cologne, Konrad Adenauer, who proposed to create an autonomous Rhineland Bank, controlled at 60 per cent by the French and 40 per cent by the Germans. This Rhineland Bank, issuing its own money, would have acted "as a Trojan horse for outright separation of the Rhineland" (Maier 1988, p. 398). But after the Bank of England opposed the creation of a Rhenish currency, and after French franc went under attack in January 1924, the new mark circulated freely in Germany at a relatively stable price.

full of Francs, which they now sell." Indeed, as a result of the stabilization of the mark in November 1923, the "Germans started to prefer their *renten mark* to the franc, and even to gold. Therefore, they gave away masses of francs, and they are still selling them on the market" (Mauss 1997 [1924f], p. 585). The effects of these sales of francs were combined with the desperate need for France to buy foreign currencies at the end of 1923. Indeed, the French government expected the Ruhr occupation to be a success. When it realized, too late, that the occupation had failed, and that the French government needed to buy more coal and other goods on foreign markets, every speculator exchanged their own currencies against francs for a much higher price than their real value (Mauss 1997 [1924g], p. 593). This led to the rapid depreciation of the franc — the result of four years of self-deception by the French nation, which had refused "to suppress the inflation of military budgets (naval, colonial, imperial)" (Mauss 1997 [1922g], p. 497).

The Jewish and Protestant Bankers Save the Franc

In March and April 1924, the franc was saved. As Mauss explained it, the stabilization proved that investments, at least for the responsible bankers, were not just monetary investment following a purely utilitarian logic as the "cosmopolitan" French bourgeoisie and their imperialistic government believed. Rather, investments entailed the formation of alliances, the creation of specific bonds between nations, which manifested an inter-nationalism that was the exact opposite to the irresponsible cosmopolitanism of the French speculators. To win what was known as "the battle for the franc." (Mauss 1997 [1924o], p. 637), France forged anew the wartime alliance, causing France's allies to start buying francs against all odds, to show that one could trust the French nation to hold its obligations. As Mauss (1997 [1924o], p. 638) wrote, the franc stopped plunging

when “the international finance gave for the franc and saved it.” It proved that “universal peace and inter-allied Entente could not but raise our credit” (Mauss 1997 [1924p], p. 640).

Here, Mauss inversed the stigma placed upon the American and Jewish European bankers by the rightwing French press, according to whom the foreign bankers of international finance were the cosmopolitan enemies selling the franc. On the contrary, Mauss claimed that they were France’s true allies, who worked in the interest of not only the working class, but the nation as a whole. The franc stopped collapsing when “the Bank J.P. Morgan started buying francs, as well as the ‘five Big’ banks in London that were associated with the Rothschild Bank and the Montagu Bank” (Mauss 1997 [1924o], p. 637; 1997 [1924q], p. 647). Not only foreign Jewish banks like the Rothschild started giving for the franc, but also French Jewish banks: the Bank Lazard Frères of Paris (Mauss 1997 [1924o], p. 638), directed by Max Lazard, who had joined the Stable Money Association in favor of the stabilization of money along with other solidarists and socialists, also gave for the franc.

It was important for Mauss to underline the fact that these bankers were Jewish and Protestants, and not the Catholic Italian bankers who speculated against the franc. Indeed, in 1924, Mauss sensed the rebirth of anti-Semitism, which he saw appearing not only in the popular press, but also under the pen of social scientists and historians. For instance, in a review essay published in the same volume of *L’année sociologique* as *The Gift*, Mauss (1925c, p. 372) attacked the raciology developed by German scholars who distinguished “between the societies and classes in which *altruistic* exchanges are common, and the societies and classes which are *parasites* of the exchange systems

(aristocracies, plutocracies, Jews)." As Mauss (1925c, p. 373) sensed it, the anti-Semitic representation of Jews as greedy individuals unable to give, was still found in these "political apologies of the most vulgar type." Another Durkheimian close to Mauss (Fournier 1994, p. 620), Jean Ray, who edited the section on international law in the same volume of *L'année sociologique*, also wrote in defense of the Jews, who were the first to institute human rights as "a group right, rather than a right of individuals," and who, "as organized minorities, were granted a status of legal persons of public law," precisely because they observed ritually these exchanges of gifts with non-Jews (Ray 1925a:703; Mauss 1924b:293).

For Mauss (1997 [1924p], p. 639), the "stupidities of *L'Action Française* and the crowds of fools who accuse foreigners of speculating against the franc" started from the assumption that the French government knew what the value of the franc was and that the international speculators were deceiving the public into believing it was worth less. Léon Daudet (1867-1942), one of the leaders of the anti-Dreyfusards, was the French theorist of *L'action française* who relentlessly attacked "the Jewish and Protestant bankers, against whom only His King could fight" (Mauss 1997 [1924] May 14, p. 691). This representation of bankers was also characteristic of the implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) anti-Semitic attacks against the cunning Jews, who deceived the good old Gauls in order to get their money. But here again, Mauss (1997 [1924h], p. 599) inversed the stigma placed on bankers. He argued that the foreigners knew better what the French government was, in fact, hiding from the nation, and that "the foreigners read clearly in our books: the foreign bankers know exactly the value of our gold and our merchandise which cover both the mass of paper-francs in circulation and our loans (both short-term

and long-term). When the franc [wa]s attacked, we [we]re weighted, and our paper money [wa]s tested, just like the bad gold money of the king was tested by goldsmiths and money-changer, the good bourgeois, the Jews and Lombardi with their cupel and blowlamp. " What these foreigners, these modern Jews and Lombardi, realized, warned Mauss (1997 [1924h], p. 599), was that the franc "might have been a bit less than 40 per cent of its parity with gold in 1922, and now it was close to 23 per cent." In all fairness, the Allied bankers behaved like good doctors when they brought back the franc to its real value: they started buying francs when the enemies (the Italian and Austrian banks) continued to speculate against the franc (Mauss (1997 [1924r], p. 652).

When the Allied bankers' strategy worked, putting an end to the depreciation of the franc, Raymond Poincaré actually moved toward the acceptance of a stabilization plan drawn by a Committee of experts (known as the "Dawes Plan," written under the Chairmanship of Charles Dawes), to review Germany's capacity to pay reparations and France's capacity to pay inter-allied debts (Mauss 1997 [1924q], p. 649).[51] As Léon Blum (1972 [1924]) wrote in *Le populaire* in April 1924, at last "the experts, disavowing the policy of Poincaré, declared themselves in favor of a moratorium" along the lines that Blum and Mauss advocated: "during the first years, limited contribution of the Germans to the Allied reparations effort by payments in kind" until the Germans could accumulate enough money to start paying back. As Mauss (1997 [1924r], p. 652) wrote, exhilarating, "the Bloc was forced to change its general policy, and to adopt the principle of increased taxation [on income and profits], reaching budgetary equilibrium, paying back debts

[51] Putting an end to the Ruhr crisis, the three main points of the Dawes plan of August 1924 were: the end of the French occupation, the immediate payment of 1 billion marks and the Allied supervision of the Reichsbank (Maier 1988, p. 418).

rather than inflating the printed money."[52] At last, the Allies convinced France to abandon its imperialist policy,[53] which Blum (1972 [1923b]) believed was directly responsible for the rise of anti-Semites and nationalists in Germany and Austria, where the coup that Hitler and Luddendorff staged in Munich had almost succeeded. For the first time since the end of the war, Mauss (1997 [1924s], p. 685) seemed hopeful that the "theoreticians of violence and antiparliamentarism [and anti-Semitism, one shall add], the Bolsheviks and Fascists, Mussolonists and Leninists, the Daudetists and the Hitlerists will be proven wrong."

4. *The Gift*: In Search of Legal Precedents for the Solidarist Doctrine

Will the Germans Pay Back? In Search of Precedents in German Legal Culture

The victory of the Cartel des gauches in the May 1924 elections left the editing team of *Le Populaire* exhausted, leading them to stop the publication (Mauss 1997 [1924u]). At the same time, Marcel Mauss was engaged in the rebirth of *L'année sociologique* covering the year July 1923 to July 1924, in which he published (among many short review essays) a large review article titled "The Gift." Mauss had succeeded in putting together the new *L'année sociologique* in 1924, thanks to generous gifts from the Jewish bankers, fellow stabilizationists and "devoted friends Max Lazard, [and] David Weill" of Lazard Frères in Paris (*L'année sociologique* 1924, p. 2),[54] the very same bankers whose financial policy he lauded in *Le Populaire*. The new volume of

[52] Mauss (1997 [1924r], p. 654), specifically thanked Josiah Stamp, the director of the Lazard Bank in London and a member of the Stable Money Association, for that change.
[53] p. For Mauss (1997 [1924r], p. 652), the generosity of the Allies proved that the "purpose sought by the Anglo-American loans to the French and their defense of the franc was clear: to ensure peace."
[54] In this 1924 volume, Marcel Mauss also wrote reviews in the "Civilization," "Sociology of Religion," "Moral and Legal Systems," and "Race and Society" sections.

L'année sociologique also contained other important essays by Mauss' solidarist collaborators, in particular François Simiand, whom Mauss regularly consulted on the question of the stabilization of the franc (Fournier 1994, p. 451).[55] It was not a surprise that some political themes in general, and the questions raised by the reparations dispute in particular, found their way in the sociological volume.

The question that Mauss (1950 [1925], p. 153), tried to answer in *The Gift* was the following: "What is legal rule and the incentive which, in backward and primitive societies, forces the gift received to be obligatorily given back?" This was merely a generalization of the current question that many of his contemporaries asked about Germany's ability to pay. Or rather, it was a slightly displaced way of asking the question asked about France and Germany's ability to pay back their debts. Rather than asking "Will the Germans pay?" Mauss asked: "What is the legal rule that can ensure us that the Germans (or any other nation) will pay their debt?" or, "that France will honor its debt?" In *The Gift*, Mauss (1950 [1925], p. 161, 162) indeed started from the assumption that gifts, when made, were always returned, because they formed part of a legal system that was found in all cultures: a gift indeed was part of a broader set of legal duties, "the duty to give, […] the duty to receive, […] and the duty to give back."

As Mauss repeated throughout *The Gift*, what he captured under these processes called the system of gifts exchanged, was the construction of a legal rule (a *"règle de droit,"*),[56] not just a legal norm (Mauss 1950 [1925], p. 193). Violations of these rules

[55] In particular, François Simiand (1925, p. 780) reviewed positively Keynes' economic writings.
[56] In technically legal terms, Mauss referred to the kind of legal rule as one that existed in the absence of a clear system of written law, or when the law was "poorly written" (Mauss 1950 [1925], p. 197) W.D. Halls translates this term by "rule of legality," but I prefer to use the term "legal rule." I will refer to the translation by W.D. Halls in the American edition of the "The Gift" (1990 [1925]) when we agree on the wording.

were immediately sanctioned by war, because "to refuse the gift, or to neglect an invitation, was treated like a declaration of war, a refusal of the alliance and communion." More precisely, these processes constituted a "regime of contractual law and a system of economic prestations" between collective groups (Mauss 1950 [1925], p. 195). This was a universal legal rule, an eternal "*roc*" (Mauss 1925, p. 264), which Mauss found in legal cultures, from the Pacific Trobriand islands, which he knew from the writings of Bronislaw Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Pacific*, from the American Northwest with the Kwakiutl, to the Eurasian continent with the Hindus, the Romans, and the Germanic nations.

In *The Gift*, Mauss was very much concerned with finding precedents in the European legal tradition, which would back up his political claims that the Germans would understand the moral duties of giving back, after the Allies decreased their debt and gave them enough time to start paying back reparations. As Mauss (1950 [1925], p. 251-2) insisted, "Germanic societies … have such a clearly developed system of exchange with gifts, voluntarily and obligatorily given, received and given back, that one would have trouble finding an equivalent" except, perhaps, "in the practice of gift-exchange found by Mr. Malinowski in the Trobriand islands" (Mauss (1950 [1925], p. 185). As Mauss wrote at the beginning of the Germanic Law section, "the gifts which play such an important role in the legal culture are among the first institutions that are clearly found among the Germans by Tactic himself." From this, and from the "persistence of such mores," Mauss (1950 [1925], p. 253-4) concluded that "they must be very solidly grounded on strong roots in the German soul."

Old German Prestations as a General Model of International Law

Mauss held that legal rule made manifest by the exchange of gifts not only characterized how nations of the same kind (Germanic, Pacific, American, etc.) interacted among themselves, but with foreign nations as well. As Mauss (1950 [1925], p. 251-2) wrote of the Germanic nations, " [c]lans with tribes, great extended families within the clans, tribes between themselves, chiefs and even kings were not confined morally and economically to the closed circles of their own groups; and links, alliances and mutual assistance came into being by means of the *gage* (pledge or collateral)… and other acts of generosity." In fact, Mauss generalized this argument to include other nations, saying that the rule of law described in *The Gift* characterized mostly the "international and intertribal" Kula described by Malinowski in the Trobriand islands *(*Mauss 1950 [1925], p. 187). In fact, the system of gifts allowed "a family, tribe and people to leave the narrow circle of its boundaries, of its interests and even of its rights," (Mauss 1950 [1925], p. 187) in order to interact with other nations which form part of a larger human community.

If one had to situate the type of rule created by gifts in either domestic or international law, then, Mauss would place it in the latter category. Through the exchange of gifts, old Germanic nations (as well as nations from the Pacific or the Atlantic) exchanged the "fundamental proof ["*acte fundamental*"] of the military, legal, economic and religious recognition of the leader of a nation" (Mauss 1950 [1925], p. 210). Through the exchange of gifts, national leaders provoked other leaders, who, if they could not reciprocate with a counter-gift, would be enslaved because of their debt (Marcel Mauss 1950 [1925], p. 212).[57]

Mauss also found in the old Germanic understanding of gifts exchanged a more

[57] *"L'esclavage pour dette"* or "debt-slavery" (Mauss 1990 [1925], p. 42).

genuine understanding of international law than that demonstrated by the Poincaré government when it conducted its imperialistic design in the Ruhr. As Mauss (1950 [1925], p. 253) wrote, " [i]n Germanic law, each contract, sale or purchase, loan or deposit, entails a "gage" or collateral: one partner is given an object, generally something of little value like a glove or a price of money (*Treugled*), a knife, or perhaps – as with the French – a pin or two, and this is returned when the thing handed over is paid for." For the Germans, "the collateral is something ordinary, personal or of little value, and he rightly compares this with the theme of the 'life-token'." So when Poincaré justified, as Mauss (1997 [1924r], p. 654) noticed, the French occupation of the Ruhr by claiming that France needed to get a "*gage*" in order to ensure German payments of reparations, he made a mistake, as the appropriation of the black gold of the Rhine (coal) could not be called the exchange of a "gage," which must be "an object of little value." Poincaré ignored that the gage should not be the gold itself. Otherwise, it was the whole life of a nation which was taken hostage and reduced in slavery by an act of war, a "war of men" rather than a struggle of gifts (Mauss 1950 [1925], p. 188).

The French government could have used a lesson in etymology: as Mauss (1950 [1925], p. 253-4; or 1990 [1925], p. 61) explained it, "our word "*gage*"[58] found its origins in the German legal culture: it comes "from *wadium* (in English, wage),"[59] which refers to "the contractual bond." Indeed, the *wadium* "allows contracting parties in Germanic law to influence one another, since one possessed something from the other, who having

[58] In modern English, "gage" could be translated by "collateral" or "pledge": but gage also exists in English, and is the root of being "engaged," for instance by the exchange of a ring manifesting the creation of a bond.

[59] It is interesting to note that, when giving this etymological explanation of the word "gage," Mauss (1950 [1925], p. 253-4) underlined in a footnote, "the Germanic origins of the system of gage," were distinct "from the 'deposit' [or *arrhes*] of Semitic origin, which was known to later Germanic law, and has even become confused with 'gift'."

once owned it, might well have put a spell on it; or else because the collateral was split in two, a half being kept by each contracting partner" (Mauss 1950 [1925], p. 253). Wary that the French adventure in the Rhine valley might be fatal to the French armies, Mauss tried to alert his contemporaries to the universal understanding of international legal rules found in old Germanic tales and German semantic history. As Mauss (1950 [1925], p. 255; or 1990 [1925], p. 63) wrote, the *wadium* or gage, because of the magical spell it captured, could be harmful to its bearer:

> The danger represented by the thing given or transmitted is possibly nowhere better expressed than in very ancient German law and German languages.[60] This explains the double meaning of the word *Gift* as gift and poison, in these languages … The theme of the fateful gift, the present or the good which turns itself into poison is fundamental in Germanic folklore. The Rhine Gold is fatal to the conqueror, the Cup of Hagen is fatal to the hero who drinks it; thousands and thousands of tales and novels of this kind, either Germanic or Celtic, still haunt our imagination.

For Mauss (1950 [1925], p. 148; 1990 [1925], p. 65), the old Germanic understanding of international law as an exchange of gifts which derived from the "Germanic" impulses to dominate by the "wars of properties" (Mauss 1950 [1925], p.

[60] Again, here I am translating directly from the French, as for instance, the English translation by Ian Cunnison consistently de-emphasized the legal dimension of the gift: for instance, did not mention "in German law" but just "languages."

200) contained more wisdom than the modern utilitarian logic of speculators.[61] The sovereign logic that presided over the exchange of gifts was the exact contrary of the utilitarian logic of speculators and petty merchants, who did not understand that the economic exchanges of gifts were also political acts of alliance-formation. As revealed by rituals of gift giving, national leaders had to reject the petty logic of bargaining as, by giving, they sought to establish the honor of their nations, and even the superiority of their nations over the gift-receiver in the gift-giving contest (Mauss 1950 [1925], p. 203).[62] The two logics of gift-making practices and speculation were thus historically antithetical, added Mauss (1950 [1925], p. 251-2), writing about the Germanic case: the logic of the gift was so strong in this society that "Germanic civilization was a long time without markets … and in earlier times, this civilization only developed the potlatch and more particularly the system of gifts exchanged."

These observations on the rituals of gift-making practices had important consequences on the temporality of the exchange of gifts that nations should observe when crafting international contracts. The temporality of the exchange between sovereign nations was the exact opposite of that manifested by the utilitarian economic exchange of speculators. Economic speculation could only occur in the present, without concern for the past and future of the co-contractors. As Mauss (1950 [1925], p. 199) observed, many of his contemporaries believed that our societies moved "from barter to sales, from cash to credit," because societies had designed a complex system of credit which made it

[61] As Mauss (1990 [1925], p. 65) wrote, "fortunately, everything is not categorized in [the bourgeois] terms of buying and selling … and we possess more than a tradesman morality," by which he meant that "there still remain some people and classes that keep to the morality of former times."

[62] It was also true of the ceremony practiced by the Kwakiutls of the American Northwest, where there was no bargaining, but the parody of a declaration of war, in which the gift-giver must act as if he did not give anything, as if the thing given was ignored… even distrusted … after it has been thrown to its feet by the gift-giver who must affect a fake modesty" (Mauss 1950 [1925], p. 177 or (1990 [1925], p. 22).

possible to anticipate, in the present, the future returns of a deal, and to agree on the payment of interests at the moment of the transaction. In that sense, the utilitarian logic of loans and credit systems allowed the transaction to be encapsulated in the present – but not the present with no past and no future, e.g. the kind of present which Jacques Derrrida (1991, p. 27) associates with the temporality of gifs, which remains "outside temporal chains ([as gifts are exchange in a present with] no memory, no present, no anticipation, no retention, no imminent future)."[63] In the utilitarian logic of modern times, a promise made at one point could not be re-negotiated in the future, as Germany asked, when it threatened to default on its payments, because it had locked the future of contractors at the time of the exchange.

In contrast, said Mauss, citing Simiand, with the exchange of gifts, nations created bonds between past and future, as nations entered a circle in which they lived in anticipation of the future, with the memory of the past, while not being concerned too much about their present. To this extent, Mauss' conception of the gift really differs from that of Derrida, for whom the temporality of the pure gift, like that of the speculation, is consumed in an ephemeral present.[64] For Mauss, the exchange of gifts always escaped the present, as gifts were not even looked at by the gift-giver and the gift-receiver, and always heralded counter-gifts in the future. As Mauss (1950 [1925], p. 199) told his

[63] This was not true for Mauss. Rather, "both barter and sales were based on the system of gifts exchanged and given back in due time, because of a process which brought together temporalities that were disjoined before" (Mauss 1950 [1925], p. 199). As Mauss (1950 [1925], p. 193, see also 198) wrote, this was especially true in the case of German law, which did not need these "distinctions between concepts [of sale or credit] as these antithetical operations were named by the same word," e.g. the gift, which served the same function as these diverse operations.

[64] Transposed to the political realm, Derrida's conception of the gift-as-present would mean, as Jed Rubenfeld (2001, p. 48) writes, that the leader of the nation "would do something that takes no time to do, something that does nothing – but authorize. Something, like *willing*, or *consenting to*, the present state of political affairs." This conception of self-government "in a here and now" of the acclamation (Rubenfeld 2001, p. 153) was precisely the kind of international politics which Mauss wanted to avoid –which Hitler would bring to practice, and which Carl Schmitt discussed in his theory of the acclamation.

readers, "'Time' is necessary to execute any counter-prestation: the idea of a 'term' is always implied" in the exchange of gifts, "when people exchange visits, when they contract marriages or alliances, or when they establish peace." Then, granting a moratorium to the Germans before they would start paying back debts conformed to how nations intuitively understood the settlement of conflicts and the formation of international bonds; it was not an exceptional demand placed upon the French government by unworthy allies.

Conclusion

Without claiming that *The Gift* can be reduced to Mauss' political concerns, this paper demonstrated that many of its themes developed in parallel to Mauss' reflections on the question of German reparations and French debts. *The Gift* provided a normative model of international law, not in the sense that his model would be re-constructed from a utopian definition of the common good, divorced from facts, but in the sense that Mauss sought to find precedents in human life which showed how groups could make peace through the exchange of gifts.

This article also demonstrated that Mauss' battle against anti-Semites and nationalists in France and Germany lead him to demonstrate the idea that gift-practices were universal, and therefore, also practiced by Jews. Just as Maus had fought anti-Semites who attacked Dreyfus by claiming that he defended all men rather than just a Jew, when anti-Semites attacked the Jewish bankers who pushed for extending to Germans a moratorium on their payments, Mauss defended the proposal by claiming that all nations had to participate in gift-making circuits and not just the Jews. Mauss tried to

convince his socialist readers of *Le Populaire* that Jewish banks were not the enemies but rather allies in the political, economic, and even religious sense, since they gave to save the franc, and therefore participated in the religious act of giving.

At the time when he wrote *The Gift*, Mauss and other Durkheimian writers interested in international affairs were optimistic that the perils of Anti-Semitism and nationalism would not threaten their existence as "Juifs d'Etat" and destroy what remained of European solidarity. In 1924, Mauss, Blum, Gide and other Durkheimians like Georges Scelles were hopeful that many "tendencies leading toward regional associations," and "other forms of supranational groupings" would take a life of their own (Ray 1925a, p. 704, 705), nourished by the exchange of gifts, which would make European solidarity manifest. They were proven wrong, as anti-Semitism was not only rising in Germany, but also in France, where the electoral victory of Léon Blum and the SFIO in May 1924, concentrated the attacks against Blum (Millman 1992, p. 39), who was accused in the columns of *L'humanité* of being a "multimillionaire," a "female dancer," and an "intellectual degenerate" (cited in Birnbaum1988, p. 281). Europe shortly turned to its old demons.

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