



An end to René Guénon's political affiliation rumors

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P.-S.- We are asking our correspondents to refrain from asking us questions related closely or by far to the political field, subject we know absolutely nothing about and of which we intend to remain completely out."

(René Guénon, *Articles et comptes rendus – Tome I*, page 254, translation P. Béthel)

There is in America a current interest in linking René Guénon and his work to fascism, or at least to give it a political meaning. One of Guénon's book, in particular, was at the source of such rumors, *The Crisis of the Modern World*. At the time he wrote this book, in 1927, Guénon was making a statement against modernity, but it is very important to state that he was placing himself in a metaphysical and traditional context. His contingent observations of actual events were all placed within the perspective of Tradition and a particularly acute observation of cyclical events in humanity as a whole. Guénon's "call of action" in this book is what might have categorized him as a political activist for some superficial readers (he suggested for example that a spiritual elite should bring the Western world back to its traditions, suggesting the Catholic Church after reforming herself).

But why is it that such accusations are not made in France where the books were originally released, and where fascism was certainly felt hard during World War 2?

Several hypotheses can be made; the first one that comes to mind is that the meaning in his books was lost in the translation from French to English. It is well known that Guénon is difficult to read in general. He uses very long sentences, can go into several digressions within a same paragraph and requires all the reader's attention and concentration. So it could very well be that his books' translation was not done properly and that the clear meaning of his work was lost when written in English? This would require the comparison of the two versions of his books by someone familiar with both languages to confirm this idea, starting with *the Crisis of the Modern World*.

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However, this would not explain why most readers of the English translations do actually understand his work and do not accuse him of political deviation. Obviously the problem is with only a few readers because the personal negative critics are a minority but unfortunately they are screamed loud and clear in books and on the internet.

What we are seeing here is actually one of the deviations detected by Guénon as symptoms of the crisis of the modern world: the loss of spiritual insight and the interpretation of metaphysical concepts into secular irrelevance by uninformed people. The way such misinterpretations and falsities spread is unfortunately very similar to the way tabloids sell their gossips. Some secular people are eager for negativity, they feed on drama, probably the symptom of some kind of jealousy for the success of others, or even a superiority complex from the readers, and in this particular case, the general praises by scholars toward Guénon's work for decades have led others to read his work and not understand its metaphysical basis and meaning and therefore conclude that Guénon was wrong or a political extremist.

A significant anti-guenonist movement is developing today, mainly in America. Now let us clarify one thing before going any further: we are not targeting here the people who disagree with Guénon for his ideas, everyone is free to think whatever he wants. We are going after the people who are spreading false information with the clear intention to destroy the author's reputation.

We certainly hope that the opening quotation from Guénon himself will put an end to any assertions about his supposed political affiliations. Guénon clearly stated that he knew nothing about politics and did not want to be asked or associated to it in any way.