

Action Francaise

Radical French right-wing antisemitic movement. The *Action Francaise* was founded by Charles Maurras during the Dreyfus Affair in 1894, to oppose the liberal intellectuals who supported the Jewish army captain accused of treason; it was dissolved at the end of World War II.

Action Francaise was a nationalistic movement that regarded France as a superior motherland that deserved the utmost allegiance. Members advocated the removal of the republic and return to monarchy. They also believed that France had four enemies constantly trying to destroy her: Jews, foreigners, Protestants, and Freemasons. The nation had to expel those enemies, and other destructive elements such as democracy. For nearly 50 years, Maurras's movement was a frontrunner of French Antisemitism.

During World War II, Maurras considered himself the idea man behind the Vichy government's "national revolution." He gladly received the anti-Jewish laws (*Statut des Juifs*) passed in October 1940, which attempted to do exactly what *Action Francaise* had been calling for since 1894: exclude the Jews from French life.

When the war ended Maurras was sentenced to life in jail for collaboration. Despite its relatively small size, *Action Francaise* had enjoyed an inordinately large amount of intellectual influence both in France and other European countries. (For more on Vichy, see also France.)