Fascism, Liberalism and Europeanism in the Political Thought of Bertrand de Jouvenel and Alfred Fabre-Luce

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Fascism, Liberalism and Europeanism in the Political Thought of Bertrand de Jouvenel and Alfred Fabre-Luce

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Dieser Krieg ist in Wirklichkeit eine Revolution. Die alte soziale Ordnung, das alte politische Regime sind am Zusammenstürzen. Hitler stellt eine Art elementarer oder dämonischer Kraft dar, die eine vermutlich notwendig gewordene Zerstörungsarbeit verrichtet… Ob Hitler die politische Einheit Europas zustande bringen wird, läßt sich nicht voraussagen; wahrscheinlich ist er vor allem ein Zerstörer, der Hindernisse aus dem Wege schafft.
Hendrik de Man, De Panne, 20 May 1940

All we need is one world, one vision
One flesh, one bone
One true religion
One race, one hope
One real decision
Wowowowowo woh yeah oh yeah oh yeah
Queen, 'One Vision' (1985)

Weil du Probleme hast, die keinen interessieren
Weil du Schiss vor schmusen has, bist du ein Faschist
Du musst deinen Selbsthass nicht auf andere projizieren
Damit keiner merkt, was für ein lieber Kerl du bist.
Die Ärzte, 'Schrei nach Liebe' (1993)

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Preface

More than 70 years after the end of its era, fascism continues to haunt our political and cultural imagination. It is the classic Hollywood villain, the standard ingredient of dystopian science fiction and a multi-use political swear word. Its more attractive elements have permeated modern pop culture, and its symbolism survives in brands, emblems and music. Recently, it has also made its comeback in headlines of the international press. Although not primarily motivated by present-day concerns, this study was inspired by the lasting relevance of fascism. It sets out to explore this relevance, especially in relation to two other prominent modern political phenomena: Europeanism and neoliberalism.

This book is a reworked, updated and partially extended version of the doctoral thesis I defended at the European University Institute in November 2015. As it is the result of years of research in different countries, I owe gratitude to more people than I can possibly mention on these pages. First, I want to thank my supervisor Dirk Moses and my second reader Laura Lee Downs, who have both been crucial for the success of my thesis. I also express my gratitude to Professors Peter Romijn and Kevin Passmore, and to Heinz-Gerhardt Haupt, Kiran Klaus Patel, Anthony La Vopa and everybody working at the EUI history department, in whose midst it has been a true pleasure to pursue my research. During my MA years at the University of Amsterdam (UvA), Professor Frits Boterman gave me the guidance, inspiration, enthusiasm and historical *Bildung* that made it possible for me to imagine becoming a historical researcher in the first place.

My Florence years would never have been so pleasurable without the company of my Florentine friends, with whom I have shared so many unforgettable moments. Besides being a 'community of scholars', the EUI is also a great place because it is an endlessly inspiring and energising melting pot at all kinds of less scholarly levels. With Jonas, Gabriele and Karena, I have thrown myself down snowy mountain slopes, discovered unknown islands and cycled through the impressive landscapes of the Mugello and the Chianti. With Robrecht, I shared so many drinks, hikes, crappy football games, serious thoughts and laughs that I can't wait for the next Benelux meeting with him, Griet and of course little Kasper and Suzanne. I have also experienced countless memorable moments with Matti, Vera, Alan, Sani, Kaarlo, Pol, Bart, Roel, Tommaso, Andrea, Brian, Carolina and so many others, and I hope that official and unofficial occasions will keep bringing us together.

Archival research brought me to Paris for several short and less short stays. I wish to thank Anne de Jouvenel and the descendants of the Fabre-Luce family for generously giving me access to their relative's private archives, kept at the Archives Nationales and the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. At this latter institution, I am grateful to conservator Michèle Le Pavec for preparing the manuscripts I wished to consult, and for her friendly and important guidance through the vast Jouvenel archive. I would also like to thank Anne de Simonin and Pascal Raimbault, who have been very helpful in directing me towards Fabre-Luce's *Épuration* dossier. I am grateful to the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach for hosting me, for several snowy February days, in a studio right next to their beautiful archive, where I consulted the Ernst Jünger papers.

During the past years, my good old UvA has provided me with an academic refuge of the best kind. I am very grateful to James Kennedy and Jouke Turpijn for giving me the occasion to further develop myself as a visiting scholar and subsequently as a lecturer. My office mates, colleagues and friends, Tim, Frans, Josephine, Thomas, Alberto, Valentina, Guido, Eleá, Jan, Lisa, Karlijn, Robin, Lotte, Nathan, Merel and Marjet, made my working environment a fantastic place where I liked to spend time, albeit occasionally slightly too much time. The editors of Historisch Café deserve a special mention here, as do all the students of the Grand Tour historical study trip, with whom I have shared unforgettable experiences.

Although it would be impossible to mention them all, I want to thank all my Amsterdam friends – Tim, Micha, Tim, Matthijs, Ambi, Harmen, Ellen, Tim, Onno, Willemijn, Thomas, Bo, Ambi, Lea, Maria, Sterre and so many others – for supporting me, distracting me and most importantly for just being there. For general inspiration, I wish to thank Wamberto. The German, Italian, Austrian and Swiss national railways have carried me, the seldom-flying Dutchman, across Europe on so many occasions that they also deserve my gratitude. They gave me breathtaking views of the Alps and ample time to think, read and listen to music, while feeling weirdly happy. *I senk ju för träweling.*

Lastly, I want to thank my parents, Jette and Robert, for everything that I have done in life. And I thank my brother Bram and his family, Anne-Rose and Jonas, for being such great people. And finally, of course, my love Julia, with whom I share my life and who has given me our children Simon and Elsa. This book is dedicated to them.

Daniel Knegt
Amsterdam, 18 February 2017

List of Abbreviations

AFL	Alfred Fabre-Luce
AN	Archives Nationales
ARPTR	Association des Représentants du Peuple de la Troisième République
BdJ	Bertrand de Jouvenel
BNF	Bibliothèque Nationale de France
CdF	Croix-de-Feu
CFA	Comité France-Allemagne
CIRL	Centre International d'Études pour la Rénovation du Libéralisme
CNE	Comité National d'Écrivains
CNIP	Centre National des Indépendants et Paysans
EDC	European Defence Community
EUI	European University Institute
FFI	Forces Françaises de l'Intérieur
LVF	Légion des Volontaires Français Contre le Bolchévisme
MPS	Mont Pèlerin Society
MRP	Mouvement Républicain Populaire
MSI	Movimento Sociale Italiano
NRF	*Nouvelle Revue Française*
PCF	Parti Communiste Français
PPF	Parti Populaire Français
PSF	Parti Social Français
RNP	Rassemblement National-Populaire
SD	Sicherheitsdienst
SFIO	Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière
STO	Service du Travail Obligatoire
USR	Union Socialiste Républicaine
UvA	Universiteit van Amsterdam

Introduction

Fascism in France and Beyond

This study analyses the political ideas of two twentieth-century French intellectuals, Alfred Fabre-Luce (1899-1983) and Bertrand de Jouvenel (1903-1987), between 1930 and the early 1950s. During this period, both intellectuals moved from the republican centre-left to fascism and the post-war extreme right. Despite these lasting extreme-right connections, they also reinvented themselves as right-wing liberals and cold warriors. My leading argument is that Jouvenel and Fabre-Luce's political trajectory needs to be seen as the result of an interplay of Europeanism, fascism and (neo)liberalism. Not only were Europeanist and pacifist convictions an important element in both intellectuals' 'fascist drift'; the same ideas permitted them to make an important contribution to the post-war intellectual renewal of the French extreme right. Paradoxically, their continuing involvement with the extreme right did not collide with their post-war adherence to neoliberalism. Rather, Fabre-Luce and Jouvenel seem to have been inspired by anti-communist, Europeanist and elitist ideas that were common to both the extreme right and the early neoliberal movement. This interpretative framework is mainly based on scholarship on fascism and the French extreme right, but it also takes inspiration from other directions such as the study of internationalism, technocracy, early neoliberalism and collaboration during the Second World War. With this approach, I aim to contribute to a better understanding of the links between French fascism, Europeanism and intellectual renewal between the interwar and the post-war period.

Intellectual Fascism?

In 1982, the Italian legal philosopher Norberto Bobbio said in an interview: 'Where there was culture, there was no fascism; where there was fascism, there was no culture. There never was a fascist culture.' Half a decade later, the French historian Lionel Richard described Nazi cultural policy as 'the inverse of King Midas'.[1] The message of these claims is clear: fascism is to be seen as negative and barbaric, the natural enemy of all things respectable in human society. Fascism and culture can never truly combine, and as soon

1 Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism*, 22; Richard, *Le Nazisme et la Culture*, 7.

as fascism does 'touch' culture, it does not, like the mythical king, change it into gold but into barbarity. Even though Richard supported his statement with some convincing examples of Nazi cultural barbarity, it can be taken with a grain of salt in the light of modern scholarship n fascism. In the first place, it is not always possible to clearly distinguish between culture and barbarism or to find objective criteria to separate respectable from unrespectable manifestations of human culture. Secondly, fascism seems to have been both cultural and barbaric at the same time, placing extreme forms of 'redemptive violence' as its core method but also attracting the service of path-breaking artists, architects and musicians.

Of course, Bobbio and Richard were not the first to advocate a fundamental opposition between fascism and culture. There is a longer intellectual tradition of denying fascism any positive characteristics and describing it as a purely negative, incoherent political phenomenon – as having no real ideology at all but being just an instrument of the base and inhumane.[2] Consequently, supporters of fascism can only be brutal sadists, opportunists or misguided petty bourgeois. In the Marxist variant of this tradition – one of the first to develop in the late 1920s – fascism was reduced to being the ultimate defence reaction of late capitalism in crisis. This was the only way to make fascism 'fit' into the historical-materialistic theory of the course of human history. Marxists had been puzzled by the rise of fascism, since it seemed to contradict their convictions of a direct transition from liberal capitalist society to socialism. They embraced a conception of fascism as 'the power of finance capital itself', a form of 'political gangsterism' based on deceit and brutality, typical of the transition phase before the coming of revolution and 'real' social progress.[3]

On a more general level, the view of fascism as the antithesis of culture seems to be almost as old as fascism itself. It can be traced back at least to Benedetto Croce's 'Manifesto of the Anti-Fascist Intellectuals' from 1925. Croce, an Italian liberal, had endorsed the Mussolini regime during its first years, even raising his hand in support of the *Duce* during key moments such as the parliamentary vote of confidence after the assassination of Giacomo Mateotti. One year later, however, shortly after the publication of a 'Manifesto of Fascist Intellectuals' – written by the philosopher Giovanni Gentile and signed amongst others by Curzio Malaparte and Luigi Pirandello – Croce wrote a counter-manifesto, signed by many intellectuals

2 See Rauschning, *Die Revolution des Nihilismus*.

3 Iordachi, 'Comparative Fascist Studies: An Introduction', in *Comparative Fascist Studies*, ed. Iordachi, 6, 7.

including Gaetano Mosca and Luigi Albertini, in which he expressed his scepticism about fascist claims as to having founded a 'new religion' and a 'new culture'. He accused the fascist intellectuals of betraying not only the liberal nationalist tradition of the *Risorgimento* but also – foreshadowing Julien Benda's famous thesis of the *Betrayal of the Intellectuals* – their task as intellectuals owing allegiance to humanity as a whole instead of a political party. He pointed to the inconsistencies of the fascist manifesto and called the fascist attempts at culture 'sterile nods in the direction of a culture devoid of the necessary premises, mystical swoons, and cynical utterances'.[4]

After the Second World War, historical scholarship on fascism echoed this conviction. Hannah Arendt famously wrote in 1945 that Nazism 'owed nothing to any part of the Western tradition, be it German or not, Catholic or Protestant, Christian, Greek or Roman'.[5] Scholars generally neglected cultural aspects of fascism, preferring to analyse it from an economic, political or social point of view. This situation might have also been influenced by a contemporary political agenda – the Cold War context favouring a quick integration of Germany and Italy into the liberal West – while theories on 'totalitarianism' permitted fascism to be lumped together with Soviet communism as antithetical to Western liberalism. If fascism could be considered a shallow political phenomenon, born out of the First World War and dead because of the next, it could be presented as nothing more than a regressive interlude in an otherwise progressive narrative of triumphant liberal modernisation. This meant that no fundamental investigations were necessary as to its origins, heritage and relationship with mainstream culture and mentality.

This situation changed during the 1970s because of a new generation of scholars like George L. Mosse who explicitly approached fascism from a cultural perspective, demonstrating that culture was at the centre of fascist politics and that fascism often shared many aspects of its culture with other political currents of the interwar period. According to Mosse and later also Emilio Gentile, fascism ought to be seen as a 'political religion' that mobilised key elements of the culture, traditions and mentalities of a society with which it was profoundly connected.[6] Since the 1990s, the relationship between fascism and modernism, modern mass culture and

4 Sternhell, 'How to Think about Fascism and its Ideology', 280. An English translation of both manifestoes is included in Schnapp, ed., *A Primer of Italian Fascism*, 297-307.

5 Arendt, 'Approaches to the German Problem', in idem, *Essays in Understanding*, ed. Kohn, 109.

6 Gentile, 'Fascism as Political Religion', 229, 232.

postmodernism has become a key focus of study, even to the point where scholars have spoken of a 'new fascination with fascism'.[7]

What can be said about the cultural aspects of fascism also applies to its intellectual dimensions. For a long time, many scholars were largely unable and unwilling to explain why fascism was so attractive to some of the twentieth century's brightest intellectuals. How could great minds like Martin Heidegger, Louis-Ferdinand Céline and Giovanni Gentile have 'betrayed' their role as intellectuals and involved themselves with an anti-intellectual ideology of violence and hatred? Several strategies have been used to avoid asking this question, all starting from the assumption that fascism is incompatible with intellectual thought. The first is to ignore an intellectual's political affiliations and focus solely on his or her contribution to the arcane realm of the mind, pretending that it is completely independent of the 'profane' world of politics. This strategy has often been used in studies on Heidegger. The second strategy is either to deny that the intellectual in question 'really' was a fascist or, where this is impossible, to stress mental instability or to question his or her qualities as an intellectual. This has often been the case with treatises on Céline or his fellow novelist Pierre Drieu la Rochelle.[8]

This study takes a fundamentally different approach. In line with Zeev Sternhell, A. James Gregor and Roger Griffin, I argue that fascism can only be understood properly if it is taken seriously both as an ideology and as an intellectual phenomenon. This approach, of course, does not imply any kind of sympathy or admiration for fascism, nor is it an attempt to trivialise the crimes against humanity that were committed as a direct consequence of fascist ideology. On the contrary: this study stresses that the effort to take the intellectual dimensions of fascism at face value is a better guarantee against related phenomena occurring today than a lazy denial that it could in any way be attractive to a developed mind. If there is any truth to Sternhell's claim that fascism 'impregnated the political life of Europe in the period between the two World Wars to such a degree that it became its distinctive feature, its *Zeitgeist*', fascism simply cannot be dismissed easily and a fundamental investigation must be undertaken as to its ideology, meaning and attractiveness.[9]

7 Schnapp, 'Fascinating Fascism', 237; Betts, 'The New Fascination with Fascism', 541.

8 Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism*, 358; Brown, 'Language, Modernity and Fascism: Heidegger's Doubling of Myth', 138; Soucy, *Fascist Intellectual*, 11.

9 Sternhell, 'How to think about Fascism', 284; Gregor, *Mussolini's Intellectuals*, 8; Griffin, 'Studying Fascism in a Postfascist Age', 6.

For reasons that will be discussed below, this is especially true for the way fascism manifested itself in the French context. Although France is traditionally not counted among the countries that were central to the development of fascism, several scholars have stressed fascism's influence on French interwar society, its specifically intellectual character and its strong ties to related phenomena abroad. In comparison with other national manifestations of the fascist phenomenon, French fascism was organisationally weak, with a plethora of competing, generally short-lived political formations, none of which was at any time able to monopolise the extreme right. But French intellectuals played a very important role in developing and spreading fascist ideas. They often looked abroad for inspiration, establishing connections in Italy and Germany as well as with related movements and intellectuals in other countries, giving French fascism a pronounced international outlook. In the complex international context of the late 1930s, French fascism could even present itself as a form of pacifism and internationalism, entering conflict with traditional nationalism. This paradoxical situation endured during the German occupation and the Vichy regime and survived even in the post-war era, when many former fascists clung to Europeanist ideas and advocated the construction of an international human rights regime. To explain these specific characteristics of French fascism, a deeper excursion is necessary into the development of the scholarly debate on the topic.

Between Immunity and Pan-Fascism

In his classic work *La Droite en France* (1954), the French political historian René Rémond established an interpretation that would hold a dominant position in French academia. According to Rémond, the French political right consisted of three currents that were born in the nineteenth century: an 'Orleanist' (bourgeois-liberal), a 'Bonapartist' (authoritarian) and a 'legitimist' (reactionary monarchist) current. Since in Rémond's view all French right-wing movements and parties necessarily belonged to one or more of these currents, there was no room for any kind of French fascism. The few authentic fascist movements, he claimed, existed in the very margins of political life because they did not fit within the political tradition of the French right. Parties and movements that called themselves fascist were not only small, they also largely depended on financial support from Italy and/or Germany. It was only after the country's traumatic defeat in 1940 and in the special circumstances of the Vichy regime that some

political space was to open for fascists in France. Even this collaborating regime was, according to Rémond, essentially conservative, not fascist. Anti-parliamentary right-wing groups from the 1930s that did attract a big following, such as the Croix-de-Feu movement of Colonel François de la Rocque, could not be labelled as fascist. Rémond stated that these parties had a clear Bonapartist affiliation.[10]

In the decades since its publication, Rémond's book was regularly reprinted in updated editions. It laid the foundations of the French school of political history, and it became mandatory reading at the *grandes écoles* in Paris, where the French political and intellectual elite is trained. Consequently, generations of French historians and political scientists were taught Rémond's paradigm. His political institutional approach included a preference for the use of French historical comparisons at the expense of contemporary international parallels.[11] Another reason for Rémond's success lies in the political and social context of post-war France, that is, implicit assumptions about the fundamentally democratic character of the French people fit his approach well. Henri Rousso has described how, during and after the Algeria War, a 'relative consensus' around a Gaullist 'resistance myth' dominated French memory and provided French society with democratic and anti-fascist credentials.[12] After Charles de Gaulle's return to power in 1958 and the foundation of the Fifth Republic, Rémond could state that the right had been definitively reconciled with the Republic. With Gaullism, which Rémond saw as a mixture of Bonapartism (De Gaulle's authoritarian style of leadership and his establishment of a presidential system with a very strong executive) and Orleanism (De Gaulle's democratic convictions and support for civil liberties), the conflict between the right and a republic – initially considered an adventure of the left – seemed to be solved.[13]

It took foreign intervention to finally break this silent consensus about the marginality of French fascism. Already in 1963, Ernst Nolte had attacked Rémond's thesis in his *Der Faschismus in Seiner Epoche*. By emphatically associating the Action Française with Italian Fascism and German National Socialism as three manifestations of the 'fascist era', Nolte identified France as one of the heartlands of European fascism. Although a French translation

10 Rémond, *La Droite en France*.

11 Sternhell, 'Morphology of Fascism in France', in *France in the Era of Fascism*, ed. Jenkins, 22-64, 31.

12 Rousso, *Le Syndrome de Vichy*, 117.

13 Rémond, *Les Droites en France*; Jenkins, 'The Right Wing Leagues and Electoral Politics', 1360.

appeared in 1970, Nolte's book seems to have had surprisingly little influence on French scholarship on the topic.[14] *Vichy France* (1972), Robert O. Paxton's work of reference on the Vichy regime, had a more significant impact. Paxton's analysis collided with some of Rémond's key assumptions about the period of the Second World War. In Paxton's view, 'Vichy' was not Rémond's conservative government mainly trying to protect its own population from the worst aspects of Nazi occupation but an anti-democratic regime that enthusiastically collaborated with the Nazis while wilfully taking part in the Holocaust.[15]

French historians were quick to adopt Paxton's analysis of the Vichy regime, but this at first did not lead to a reconsideration of French fascism and its presumed marginality. Regarding this point, it was the Israeli historian Zeev Sternhell who opened the debate sometime around the turn of the 1970s. Sternhell had first published a study on the nationalist writer Maurice Barrès that had largely gone unnoticed, but his next two, more ambitious books caused a big stir. In *La Droite Révolutionnaire* (1978), Sternhell traced the birth of fascism to ultra-leftist circles in fin-de-siècle France. Long before the start of the First World War, these marginal groups had developed a synthesis of revolutionary syndicalism, anarchism and nationalism. Under the influence of the sociology of Georges Sorel, the philosophy of Henri Bergson and a fundamental rejection of liberal politics and the bourgeoisie, a completely new ideology was born that combined anti-rationalism, anti-Marxism, elitism and a cult of violence and heroism. The implication was that fascism had a pedigree preceding the First World War. All the war had done was to spread this thought among larger circles in Europe, preparing the ground for a political mass movement that was finally given the name of fascism by Mussolini a few years before its coming to power in Italy.[16]

By far the greatest controversy arose after the publication of Sternhell's third book, *Ni Droite, Ni Gauche*, in 1983. In this book, Sternhell radicalised his thesis from *La Droite Révolutionnaire* and extended it to the period after 1919. He claimed not only that French interwar society had been 'impregnated' with fascist thinking, which had taken hold of a large number of intellectuals, writers and politicians who mostly did not see themselves as fascists. Sternhell also described – using a history of ideas approach far

14 Nolte, *Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche*; idem, *Le Fascisme dans son Époque*.

15 Paxton, *Vichy France*, 233, 371. Surprisingly, in 1963 Nolte had already suggested something comparable on the Vichy regime, of which he stressed the popularity. Nolte, *Der Faschismus*, 120.

16 Sternhell, *Maurice Barrès*; idem, *La Droite Révolutionnaire*. For an interpretation of Sternhell's work, see: Costa Pinto, 'Fascist Ideology Revisited', 471.

removed from Rémond's classical political history – how fascism came to symbolise an ethical, anti-materialist and anti-Marxist revision of socialism. Once 'freed' from the materialism of Marx, this socialism presented itself as a 'third way' between liberalism and communism. Its goal was no longer a revolution for the proletariat but a 'revolution for the entire nation'.[17] In the climate of political and economic insecurity of the interwar period, reinforced by widespread cultural notions of decadence and decline, this fascism was highly attractive to large parts of French society.[18]

Sternhell pays much attention in his book to 'non-conformist' politicians and intellectuals. Dissident socialists and communists like the Belgian Hendrik de Man and the Frenchmen Marcel Déat and Jacques Doriot, who opted out of their left-wing parties and ended up advocating fascist ideas, figure prominently. Sternhell also addressed a specific group of young French intellectuals whom the French historian Jean-Louis Loubet del Bayle labelled 'the non-conformists of the 1930s' in his 1969 classic. These non-conformists consisted of several small circles centred around intellectual periodicals and thinkers such as Emmanuel Mounier, Denis de Rougemont and Thierry Maulnier who distanced themselves from all political parties during the early 1930s and engaged in a quest for radical political renewal. Sternhell's analysis of these groups was fundamentally different from Loubet's. While Loubet considered their thought as an experimental but altogether valuable contribution to the post-war renewal of democracy, Sternhell saw them as democracy's fascist or semi-fascist gravediggers.[19]

The response to Sternhell's book was massive, both inside and outside academia. Bertrand de Jouvenel, one of the main characters in *Ni Droite, Ni Gauche* and still alive during the 1980s, took the Israeli historian to court in a libel suit that became a media event involving prominent French and foreign intellectuals. Among others, Nolte, Rémond, Mosse and Stanley Payne testified in defence of Sternhell, often stressing that they disagreed with his analysis but wanted to defend its academic legitimacy. Jouvenel was supported by friends he knew from the post-war period: prominent names like Henry Kissinger, Milton Friedman and Raymond Aron, who – adding to the drama – died of a heart attack just a few hours after leaving the court. Caught in the difficult situation of having to pronounce a verdict on a history book, the judge refused to persecute Sternhell on his claims that Jouvenel had

17 Sternhell, *Ni Droite, Ni Gauche*, 295.

18 Sternhell, *Ni Droite, Ni Gauche*, 235; Robert Wohl, 'French Fascism: Both Right and Left', 92.

19 Loubet del Bayle, *Les Non-Conformistes des Années 30*, 464. For a longer treatment of this subject, see chapter 2.

been a leading fascist intellectual during the 1930s and that he had after 1945 actively tried to hide these compromising elements of his past. Instead, he reached a different verdict on Sternhell's other statements about Jouvenel's proximity to collaborationism during the war. Judging this claim unfounded in empirical evidence and therefore libellous, he condemned Sternhell to a fine of 1500 French francs without ordering that the book's text be changed.[20]

Outside the courtroom and within French academia, the reactions were no less intense. French political historians like Michel Winock, Serge Berstein and Jacques Julliard repeated the arguments of their tutor Rémond, presenting what Michel Dobry has described as the 'immunity thesis'.[21] Berstein argued that French society of the 1920s and 1930s was to a large extent immune or 'allergic' to the 'fascist impregnation' that Sternhell claimed to signal. Established in 1871, democracy had more time to settle in France than in the unstable young democracies of Germany and Italy. With the Parti Radical, France also had a strong party of the republican centre that could dominate politics and function as a bridge between the left and the right. As a result, an overwhelming majority of the French population considered democracy a positive achievement, not a façade for a political oligarchy (Italy) or a *Fremdkörper* installed by foreign victors (Germany). Finally, the relative mildness and slow development of the Great Depression shielded French politics from the degree of destabilisation experienced by other European countries at the start of the 1930s.[22] Winock added that the absence of any kind of irredentism after 1919 effectively robbed French fascism of much potential support. As a victor of the First World War, France had reintegrated the lost territories of Alsace and Lorraine and added several protectorates to its colonial empire. Therefore, from a territorial point of view, the country could not have been more satisfied.[23] Because of these elements, so the argument went, France never experienced a fascist takeover, its extreme-rightist movements only able to achieve at most short-time success.

Sternhell's French and foreign opponents mainly protested his analysis of the leftist origins and the revolutionary character of fascism. By using a very

20 For an analysis of the historical and legal context of the lawsuit, see Assouline, 'Enquête sur un Historien Condamné pour Diffamation', 98-101; Bredin, 'Le Droit, le Juge et l'Historien', 93-111.

21 Dobry, 'Février 1934', 512.

22 Berstein, 'La France des Années Trente Allergique au Fascisme', 93.

23 Winock, 'Fascisme à la Française ou Fascisme Introuvable?', 42; idem, 'Retour sur le Fascisme Français', 5; Julliard, 'Sur un Fascisme Imaginaire', 859; Milza, *Fascisme Français*. For a reaction by Sternhell, see Sternhell, 'Le Fascisme: Ce Mal du Siècle', in *Le Mythe de l'Allergie*, ed. Dobry 390.

selective definition of fascism as the anti-materialistic revision of Marxism and by focusing almost exclusively on young, non-conformist intellectuals, Sternhell was said to have closed his eyes to evidence that contradicted his theory. He was also accused of neglecting political reality because of his history of ideas approach and of underestimating the importance of the First World War in the genesis of fascism. Sternhell also seemed to pay little attention to the Third Reich, a clear example of right-wing fascism that did not seem to fit his theory well.[24]

Although Sternhell clearly overplayed his hand and used an excessively polemical style, he changed the field of scholarship on French fascism, despite the fact that most of the French and foreign reactions to his books were critical. Because of the heated debates following the publication of his book, French fascism became more closely linked to wider developments in the international discipline of fascist studies. As the dust settled, two questions remained:

1 Is fascism essentially an anti-bourgeois, modernist and revolutionary phenomenon that is clearly related to radicalism of the left? Or should it be considered an extreme variation of the conservative right, happy to use revolutionary rhetoric but always willing to collaborate with the forces of business and capital?

2 How receptive was French interwar society to fascist thought, and which political movements can be labelled fascist? And what does this say about key political events of the 1930s such as the anti-government riots of 6 February 1934 and the rise and fall of the Popular Front government in 1936-37?

The American historians Robert Paxton and Robert Soucy agreed that there were many fascists in interwar France, but they claimed that Sternhell was looking in the wrong places. Instead of Sternhell's intellectual approach, Paxton proposed to study fascism 'in motion' and 'contextually', mainly focusing on the paramilitary *ligues* and parties of the French extreme right and their relationship with non-fascist groups.[25] On the basis of extensive research on this wide palette of movements – from Charles Maurras' anti-Semitic and monarchist Action Française via Henri

24 For example: Berstein, 'La France des Années Trente', 85; Julliard, 'Sur un Fascisme Imaginaire', 851; Burrin, *La Dérive Fasciste*, 25; Wohl, 'French Fascism', 93-94.

25 Paxton, 'The Five Stages of Fascism', 10.

Dorgères' pitchfork-wielding peasant militias to the authoritarianism of La Rocque's Croix-de-Feu – Soucy and Paxton concluded that French fascism was not associated with the left, as Sternhell claimed, but belonged to the political right, its agenda corresponding to the political programme of conservative parties.[26] Soucy showed that right-extremist movements were at their strongest around electoral victories of the left – the Cartel des Gauches in 1924 and 1932 and the Popular Front in 1936. At these times, they could present themselves as the necessary allies of the conventional parties of the right. By manifesting their willingness to fight the danger of a 'Bolshevik' takeover using every possible means, they attracted political and financial support from alarmed rightists. After political change led to a government coalition of the centre-right – as happened in both 1926 and 1934 – conventional rightists were much less interested in working together with the extreme right, which was weakened as a result. This means that where Sternhell implicitly drew a line between moderates and extremists, Soucy and Paxton re-established the traditional political spectrum, where the main division is between left and right.[27]

If there was much agreement between English-speaking historians like Soucy and Robert Wohl and their French colleagues Winock, Berstein and Pierre Milza on the point of criticising Sternhell, on other issues they still split along language lines. The biggest source of division was the question of the size and importance of French fascism. Strikingly, many French scholars implicitly shared Sternhell's view of fascism as an essentially revolutionary phenomenon related to the radical left, defining it in such a way that the *ligues* of the extreme right hardly meet the criteria. While Sternhell, as a historian of ideas, stressed that this revolutionary fascism 'impregnated' French society and its intellectuals, they conclude based on their political history approach that there were hardly any political organisations that could be called fascist, which made French fascism a very marginal phenomenon. English-speaking historians tended to apply less sharply delineated definitions of fascism, including large parts of the French radical right in their definition. In their approach, interwar France suddenly seemed to be sprawling with fascist and semi-fascist parties, movements and *ligues*.[28] Later exchanges between Winock, Soucy and Berstein on the pages of the periodical *Vingtième Siècle* suggest that the gap remains wide

26 Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*, 68.

27 Soucy, *The First Wave*, 234; and especially the historiographical introduction of the second part: idem, *The Second Wave*, 5.

28 Soucy, *The Second Wave*, 6-8; Jenkins, 'The Right-Wing Leagues', 1360.

between French and English language historians, which does not improve the tone of the debate.[29]

Within this ongoing debate, the Croix-de-Feu (CdF) and the Parti Social Français (PSF) play an important role. Under the charismatic leadership of Colonel de la Rocque, the Croix-de-Feu grew from a war veterans' social club into a very large anti-parliamentary league marked by a paramilitary style, strictly organised storm troopers, an absolute authority of the leader and code speech about an 'H hour' on which 'action' was to be taken. After the victory of the Popular Front in 1936 and with the political union of the left against the presumed 'fascism' of La Rocque and others, all paramilitary *ligues* were dissolved by government decree. La Rocque, who had always maintained that he was a republican, responded by founding the Parti Social Français, a party that appeared to be more moderate and that publicly respected the rules of parliamentary democracy. The allusions to a coup and to founding a new, authoritarian regime never completely disappeared, though, and after 1940 La Rocque radicalised his opinions again. Because of its sheer size, the question of whether the CdF/PSF could be called fascist is of major importance. When it was dissolved, the CdF had peaked at 500,000 members, and two years later the PSF achieved a high point of probably around one million members. That is more than the French socialist and communist parties combined and almost as much as Hitler's NSDAP in 1932. If the PSF was indeed fascist, the immunity thesis cannot be maintained.[30]

The Paris riots of 6 February 1934, known in French public memory simply as *Le Six Février*, is the second key issue in this debate. After the victory of the centre-left in the 1932 elections and in response to the government's incapacity to deal with the consequences of the Great Depression, right-wing opposition against the government kept growing, reaching its climax at the end of 1933 in the Stavisky scandal. This corruption scandal involving several prominent members of the governing Parti Radical was seized upon by radical right-wing groups to illustrate the 'perfidy' of the parliamentary system and to call for a general 'cleansing' of French politics. After a reshuffling of ministers, Prime Minister Édouard Daladier wanted to assure his government of the support of the Socialist Party by firing the police prefect of Paris, Jean Chiappe, a known reactionary lenient in his

29 Winock, 'Retour sur le Fascisme Français'; Soucy, 'La Rocque et le Fascisme Français', 219-36; Winock, 'En Lisant Robert Soucy', 237-42; Berstein, 'Pour en Finir avec un Dialogue de Sourds', 243-46.

30 Brian Jenkins, 'Introduction: Contextualizing the Immunity Thesis', in *France in the Era of Fascism*, ed. Jenkins, 1-21, 15; For an extensive description of the CdF/PSF: Soucy, *The Second Wave*, 104-203.

dealings with violence by right-wing groups. The radical right responded immediately, organising a day of demonstrations and violence in Paris. On 6 February 1934, a demonstration of some tens of thousands of members of right-wing parties, *ligues* and veterans organisations on the Place de la Concorde escalated into shootings with the police and an attempt to storm parliament which left 17 dead and thousands injured.[31] Three days later, in a civil war atmosphere, the French communists staged a counter-demonstration against what they saw as a 'fascist coup attempt'. The police intervened, killing six and injuring hundreds.

During the afternoon of 6 February and with the violence still raging outside, Daladier resigned as prime minister, making room for a government of national union led by former president Gaston Doumergue. His grandfatherly aura and the broad base of support for his government soon brought a relative return to tranquillity, but the events of *Le Six Février* cast a shadow over French politics throughout much of the 1930s. The perceived threat of fascism played an important role in bringing together the parties of the left in the Popular Front coalition, and in the large electoral victory it achieved at the 1936 elections. At the same time, the events marked the breakthrough of La Rocque's CdF, at that moment a minor group in the wider landscape of veterans' *ligues*. His troops had caught the country's attention through their military discipline and organised behaviour. Instead of taking part in the improvised attack on parliament, they had manoeuvred tactically, approaching the building from behind but in the end refraining from attacking it. La Rocque himself had not been among his men but in a secret headquarters, where he was in constant touch with his troops. This display of force and discipline brought the CdF a tremendous reputation on the far right while at the same time making it the organisation the left feared most.[32]

These two subjects are treated very differently by English-speaking historians and by French-speaking representatives of the immunity thesis. Many French historians stress the spontaneous character of the violence of 1934. Most demonstrators had been unarmed, and not all belonged to the extreme right, with even a small number of communist war veterans taking part. They also argue that for many participants, cuts in the veterans' benefits had been the principle reason to protest. These historians consider the CdF/PSF as an authoritarian but essentially conservative formation, its

31 Soucy, *The Second Wave*, 32.

32 Didier Leschi, 'L'Étrange Cas De la Rocque', in *Le Mythe de l'Allergie*, ed. Dobry, 155-194, 169; Soucy, *The Second Wave*, 107.

paramilitary style being nothing more than uniformed folklore or 'political boy scouting for adults', according to a famous quotation from Rémond.[33] La Rocque's ideology clearly became more moderate and republican after 1936, showing more commonality with post-war Gaullism than with contemporary fascism. Finally, French historians stress the difference between the PSF and Jacques Doriot's smaller and more radical Parti Populaire Français (PPF). If there was an authentically fascist movement in France during the late 1930s, this had to be the PPF, not the more moderate PSF.[34]

English-language historians such as the American Soucy, the Canadian William Irvine and the British Brian Jenkins – and to a lesser extent also Kevin Passmore – have refuted the conclusions that French historians drew from *Le Six Février*. They conceded that the violence had indeed been largely spontaneous and that most demonstrators had been mainly interested in bringing down a government of the left rather than staging a fascist coup. But in their eyes, this did not necessarily mean the movements involved were not fascist. La Rocque's attitude during the riots seems to have been at the very least ambiguous. Moreover, a certain degree of political legalism can be easily combined with fascist convictions.[35] Recently, the French scholar Laurent Kestel has joined these critics by attacking the false dichotomy between republicanism and fascism. He argued that, on the extreme right, 'republicanism' was mostly used to distinguish oneself from Maurrassian monarchism, while it did not imply any attachment to a republic with a democratic, let alone a parliamentary character. During the 1930s, France produced some models for a future 'republic' that in reality looked more like authoritarian or corporatist regimes led by an almost almighty dictator. La Rocque's self-asserted republicanism should, according to Kestel, not be taken as an affirmation of anti-fascism.[36]

Furthermore, Mussolini and Hitler also allowed their parties to participate in parliamentary politics and sometimes suggested fidelity to republican rules before finally coming to power not through a violent takeover but in a semi-legal political way. The French circumstances of the late 1930s offered no opportunity for La Rocque to proceed with a comparable *Machtübernahme* – the apogee of his movement coincided with a Popular Front government that kept a close watch on the PSF, and after 1938 interior

33 Cited in Dobry, 'Février 1934', 527. See also Passmore, 'Boy Scouting for Grown-Ups?', 528.

34 Winock, *Nationalisme, Antisémitisme et Fascisme*, 255; idem, 'Retour sur le Fascisme Français', 27; Burrin, *La Dérive Fasciste*, 192.

35 Passmore, *The Right in France*, 297, 307.

36 Kestel, *La Conversion Politique*, 122. See, for example, Gustave Hervé's 'République Autoritaire' as described in: Hervé, *C'est Pétain qu'il Nous Faut!*, 26.

political struggle was mainly suspended under the threat of war and foreign invasion. This lack of opportunity does not necessarily mean that La Rocque did not cherish plans to seize power. These historians not only considered the differences between the CdF/PSF and Doriot's PPF to be smaller than French historians claimed, they saw both parties as ideologically linked with fascism.[37] Sternhell has made known that despite his own focus on non-conformist intellectuals, he has been convinced by the arguments of Irvine and Soucy that the CdF/PSF was a fascist movement.[38]

New Perspectives

Although the 'deaf men's dialogue'[39] between French-speaking representatives of the immunity thesis and English-speaking members of the 'pan-fascist school'[40] seems to be far from over, research is also turning into new directions. Firstly, the French political scientist Michel Dobry, who already criticised the immunity thesis in 1989, has gathered a group of young French academics around him who do consider French fascism a significant phenomenon. Inspired by a sociological perspective borrowed from Pierre Bourdieu, they reject the immunity thesis and the general 'classificatory logic' of historians involved in the controversy about French fascism. Instead, and in contrast with their older French colleagues, they prefer to focus on aspects of intellectual and social history. Since they also do not seem to be willing to fully accept the conclusion of English-language scholars, they have generally considered the debate undecidable and relatively irrelevant to their approach.[41]

Secondly, after research on French fascism having been entirely dominated by the question of who was fascist and who was not, in the last fifteen years researchers are finally also turning to other topics. Developments in

37 Irvine, 'Fascism in France and the Strange Case of the Croix-de-Feu', 274; Soucy, 'Fascism in France: Problematizing the Immunity Thesis', in *France in the Era of Fascism*, ed. Jenkins, 65-104, 92; Jenkins, 'The Right-Wing Leagues', 1372; Millington, 'February 6', 547.

38 Sternhell, 'Morphology of Fascism in France', 49.

39 Term coined by Berstein, 'Pour en Finir avec un Dialogue de Sourds', 243.

40 Term coined by Winock, 'Retour sur le Fascisme Français', 5. Generally, immunity thesis historians declare the discussion closed since they claim they have convincingly established the marginality of fascism in France. English-speaking scholars stress that many questions are still unanswered and insist on continuing the debate.

41 Dobry, 'Février 1934'. See also the contributions of Dobry, Annie Collovald, Didier Leschi, Gisèle Sapiro and Bruno Goyet in *Le Mythe de l'Allergie* and the recent book by Kestel, *La Conversion Politique*, 232.

the wider international field have also started to have a larger impact on the research into fascism in France. In the wake of Dobry, some scholars have dropped the idea that there is a fixed definition of fascism or an essential 'fascist minimum'. As a consequence, researchers have been free to pick any working definition, which is worthwhile only in as far as it leads to new insights within one's own research. This development has led to the popularity of the use of the plural 'fascisms' instead of the singular form, intended to illustrate the impossibility of including all variations of fascism within a single definition. There has also been a rise of micro-studies, often concentrating on a single organisation or on the developments in one region or town. Provincial France, Algeria and Indochina have started to receive attention instead of the formerly exclusive focus on Paris.[42] Themes from social history such as the relationship between gender and fascism are also starting to receive more attention.[43]

Thirdly, the cultural turn in fascist studies seems to have increasingly influenced the French debate. Scholars have not given up asking questions about fascism as a general phenomenon, and the search for a definition or a theory of 'generic fascism' continues. The primacy of culture in thinking about fascism could open doors to more agreement between French and English-speaking historians, since it avoids key issues from the Sternhell controversy. Roger Griffin has repeatedly called upon his French colleagues to give up their resistance to a general definition and join his 'new consensus' definition, stressing the importance of populism within fascism as well as the 'palingenetic' myth of national rebirth after a period of decadence. It is very questionable whether Winock, Milza and others will accept this invitation.[44] Also outside of France, disagreement on the nature of generic fascism is still the rule rather than the exception. Griffin has himself been accused of academic 'imperialism' – trying to impose a non-existent consensus definition within a still very heterogeneous field of research.[45] While Stanley Payne seems receptive to Griffin's 'new consensus',

42 For example: Passmore, *From Liberalism to Fascism*; Paxton, *French Peasant Fascism*; Goodfellow, *Between the Swastika and the Cross of Lorraine*; Jennings, 'Conservative Confluences'; Kéchichian, *Les Croix-de-Feu à l'Âge des Fascismes*; Kalman, '"Le Combat Par Tous les Moyens"'.

43 Passmore, 'The Gendered Genealogy of Political Religions Theory', 663. See also Kennedy, 'The End of Immunity?', 39, 41; Meyers, 'Feminizing Fascist Men', 109-42; Downs, '"And so we Transform a People"', 2-39.

44 Griffin, '"Consensus? Quel Consensus?"', 59, 68. Griffin has repeated this request at a more general level in 2012: see Griffin, 'Studying Fascism in a Postfascist Age', 12.

45 For a rich collection of reactions to Griffin – and for another example of the problematic confrontation between different national traditions in fascist studies – see the exchanges in the special theme edition of *Erwägen, Wissen, Ethik: Streitforum für Erwägungskultur* 3 (2004).

Paxton, Soucy and Passmore have declared their unwillingness to join his approach, stressing that it overestimates fascism's revolutionary character and places too much emphasis on intellectual currents in the early 'stages' of fascism – at the expense of the 'real' politics of fascist regimes once power has been achieved.[46]

French fascism appears to be more in touch with international developments in studies that stress its participation in an international phenomenon. Within this approach, fascism is considered a transnational ideology that manifested itself within different national contexts. The influence of the two fascist regimes on comparable movements in France is an obvious subject for such studies, but this approach opens a much wider field of transnational and comparative analysis within fascist studies. Studies on international relations at the level of intellectuals, organisations and governments could shed new light on the way fascism functioned during the interwar era, exploring the 'entanglement' of different manifestations of fascism in Europe and beyond. Recent publications – such as Dietrich Orlow's book on the relationship of Dutch and French fascists with Nazi Germany and Robert Grunert's work on Europeanist ideas among Dutch, Belgian and French fascists – are inspiring examples of this new direction of research.[47] Similarly, Arnd Bauerkämper has refused to dismiss fascist Europeanism as mere propaganda, stressing the role of European discourses, entanglement and transfer within different fascist movements.[48] Samuel Goodfellow has applied the same method on a regional level, tracing a transnational fascism in interwar Alsace.[49]

Another recent and controversial development concerns the question of the existence of fascism outside its 'classical' geographical and temporal boundaries of Europe during the first half of the twentieth century. It would take us far beyond the scope of this introduction to discuss the possible existence of fascism in Brazil, Argentina, the United States, South Africa, Egypt, amongst anti-colonial groups in India and China or even among the present-day Israeli

46 Payne, 'Fascism and Racism', in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Political Thought*, eds. Ball & Bellamy, 124; Passmore, *Fascism*, 21; Soucy, 'What is Meant by "Revolutionary" Fascism?', 351; Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*, 205.

47 Orlow, *The Lure of Fascism in Western Europe*; idem, 'Der Nationalsozialismus als Export- und Marketing-Artikel', in *Das Unrechtsregime*, ed. Büttner, 427-68; Grunert, *Der Europagedanke*; idem, 'Autoritärer Staatenbund oder Nationalsozialistischer Großraum?', 442-448.

48 Bauerkämper, 'Ambiguities of Transnationalism', 45; idem, 'Transnational Fascism', 238; idem, 'Interwar Fascism in Europe and Beyond: Toward a Transnational Radical Right', in *New Perspectives on the Transnational Right*, eds. Durham & Power, 41.

49 Goodfellow, 'Fascism as a Transnational Movement', 87-106.

extreme right (or, according to one's preferences, in the 'Islamo-fascism' of Muslim extremists).[50] The question of fascism after 1945, however, certainly deserves some attention here, especially since it is very relevant for the French case. French post-war history suggests the continued existence of a right-wing extremist tradition from the Vichy years until the present day: from the neo-fascist and Pétainist circles of the 1950s, the terrorists of the Organisation de l'Armée Sécrète (OAS) during and after the Algerian War, the later intellectual prominence of the French New Right (Nouvelle Droite) as well as the enduring success of the 'national-populist' Front National (FN).[51] Seen in this light, Jean-Marie Le Pen's succession at the head of the FN by his allegedly more 'modern' daughter Marine – who saw the FN become the country's biggest party at the 2014 European elections and captured close to 34 % of the votes in the second round of the 2017 French presidential elections – is just another chapter in the history of the French extreme right.[52]

Many historians of fascism are inclined to treat their subject of study as something that perished in May 1945 and was buried under the ruins of Berlin. For all his later controversial statements, Ernst Nolte was following a generally accepted idea when he published his study of Italian, German and French fascism 'in its epoch', that is, the period between 1919 (or, for some, the end of the nineteenth century) and 1945.[53] Many felt that transcending these temporal boundaries by examining a period with fundamentally different dynamics and political culture risked inflating the concept of fascism to the point of blurring it. Although the existence of post-war neo-fascist groups could not be denied altogether, they were generally considered too marginal to merit serious consideration. After all, skinhead and neo-Nazi groups posed (and continue to pose) more of a problem of public order than a menace to democracy, their symbols and slogans giving rise to almost universal revulsion in modern society. The same cannot be said of the political parties of the more 'modern' post-war extreme right, who have achieved considerable electoral support in France and many other European

50 See Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*, 191; Griffin, 'What Fascism Is Not and Is', 260.

51 Mammone, 'The Eternal Return?', 175; Annie Collovald, 'Le "National-Populisme" ou le Fascisme Disparu: Les Historiens du Temps Présent et la Question du Déloyalisme Politique Contemporain', in *Le Mythe de l'Allergie*, ed. Dobry, 280. Mammone's recent monograph is an excellent treatment of this continuity. See Mammone, *Transnational Neofascism*, 98, 230.

52 'With Eye on Far Right Leadership, Marine Le Pen Stirs the Pot', www.france24.com (retrieved 4 November 2013); Kim Willsher, 'Marine Le Pen Scores Stunning Result in French Presidential Election', *The Guardian* (22 April 2012); idem, 'Marine Le Pen's Confidence Vindicated by Front National Election Triumph', *The Guardian* (25 May 2014).

53 Nolte, *Der Faschismus in Seiner Epoche*. See also Payne, 'Fascism and Racism', 148.

countries and have sometimes even participated in coalition governments. Not only do these parties themselves energetically reject any affiliation with fascism, they also generally lack such prominent characteristics of 'classical' fascism as a paramilitary style, uniforms, a leader cult and an official agenda to abolish parliamentary democracy. The question is whether these are merely 'superficial' aspects of fascism that could easily be shaken off to adapt to the political culture of a new era or whether their absence simply means that the fascist element is gone.[54]

Despite these understandable hesitations, several younger academics such as Andrea Mammone and Tamir Bar-On have pointed to some striking resemblances between the interwar, wartime and post-war European extreme right, while at the same time showing how it could adapt to radically new circumstances. They signalled the rise, especially in the ranks of 1950s French and Italian neo-fascism, of a European and internationalist discourse that had been overshadowed by ultra-nationalism during earlier stages. Neo-fascist movements were also eager to establish relations with like-minded groups in other countries. Support for the extreme right waned during most of the 1960s, but the student movement of 1967-69 provoked a right-wing backlash, providing a new stimulus for extreme-rightist and neo-fascist groups and laying the basis for the new successful 'populist' parties of the late twentieth century. Underlying these new directions, Mammone and Bar-On have traced a high degree of personal and ideological continuity of the European extreme right from the 1930s well into the late twentieth century.[55] In articles covering a wide range of post-war extreme rightist groups, parties and individuals, Roger Griffin has concurred with Mammone and Bar-On, declaring that large parts of the post-1945 extreme-right conform to his 'consensus' definition of fascism.[56]

Despite these new tendencies, Sternhell's original perspective has not entirely left the stage. Even if most historians are critical of Sternhell's conclusions, it is hard to completely dismiss his analysis. Some French scholars have started to follow Sternhell's (and Loubet del Bayle's) focus on young intellectuals in the 1930s without necessarily abandoning the immunity thesis. In *'L'Europe Nouvelle de Hitler'* (2003), Bernard Bruneteau looks back from the perspective of intellectuals who supported the Vichy

54 Griffin, 'Fascism's New Faces', 293; Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*, 185.

55 Bar-On, *Where Have All the Fascists Gone?*, 142; idem, 'Transnationalism and the French Nouvelle Droite', 208; Mammone, 'Revitalizing and De-Territorializing Fascism in the 1950s', 296; idem, *Transnational Neofascism*, 27.

56 Griffin, 'Fascism's New Faces', 295; idem, 'Studying Fascism in a Postfascist Age', 16; Bar-On, 'The French New Right's Quest for Alternative Modernity', 28.

regime in 1940. How could these intellectuals, many of whom belonged to the progressive left, end up supporting a collaborating regime of the reactionary right? His striking conclusion is that Europeanist idealism and a longing to break with 'old-fashioned' nationalism often played an important role in their choice.[57] Other scholars are less willing to make this link, preferring to adopt a more technical approach to their study of circles of young intellectuals in 1930s France and Belgium. Olivier Dard is hostile to Sternhell's thesis, even concluding at the end of a 300-page general study that France's young intellectuals failed to develop original ideas or to achieve any considerable influence.[58]

It is also possible to both apply and refute Sternhell's method at the same time, as the Swiss historian Philippe Burrin has done. On the one hand, Burrin distanced himself clearly from Sternhell with arguments that show a strong similarity with those used by representatives of the immunity thesis: Sternhell was using too narrow an approach and his focus on non-conformists and dissident ex-socialists made him inflate a marginal phenomenon to excessive proportions.[59] On the other hand, Burrin's own book, *La Dérive Fasciste* (1986), shows clear affinity with Sternhell's approach. He conducted extensive research on three leftist militants who 'drifted' towards fascism during the 1930s: the communist Jacques Doriot, the socialist Marcel Déat and the liberal Gaston Bergery. Burrin described how, in the case of all three militants, a combination of idealist ambitions, personal frustrations and psychological identification with a former opponent (fascism) contributed to this drift.[60]

Burrin noticed that within the international and national tension field of the late 1930s, fascism was highly attractive to a host of mostly young intellectuals. Widespread notions of decadence, political 'putrefaction' and the inertia of the Third Republic made them long for a more powerful and 'masculine' regime that would put an end to eternal division and install a new, harmonious society. Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany seemed to reflect this longing, but at the same time these countries were a manifest threat to European peace. Through their aggressive attitude, Italy and Germany increasingly challenged the order of Versailles, and the incapacity of the French government to act against them reinforced the image of the weak

57 Bruneteau, *'L'Europe Nouvelle de Hitler'*, 336, 338.

58 Dard, *Le Rendez-Vous Manqué*, 286.

59 Burrin, 'La France dans le Champ Magnétique des Fascismes', 54.

60 Burrin, *La Dérive Fasciste*, 14, 448. Burrin's ambivalent attitude is noticed by Michel Dobry (amongst others), 'La Thèse Immunitaire Face aux Fascismes: Pour une Critique de la Logique Classificatoire', in *Le Mythe de l'Allergie*, ed. Dobry, 51.

and divided democracies versus the dictators marching from one success to another.[61] The establishment of the Popular Front government and the wave of strikes and factory occupations that came in its wake increased fears of chaos and class war. At the same time, across France's southern border, the election of a related Spanish Popular Front government escalated into civil war. And in France itself, the 1936 elections resulted in the country's first ever socialist becoming prime minister, Léon Blum, whose Jewish origins made him susceptible to verbal and physical violence from right-wing anti-Semites.

After the German remilitarisation of the Rhineland in 1936, the threat of European war loomed ever larger over French politics. In their desire to maintain the peace at all costs, France's non-conformist intellectuals typically combined progressive and nationalist elements. From their period on the left, they had preserved a pacifism rooted in the experience of the First World War. This was joined by the conviction that France would have more to lose than to win from a future war. They were hoping that peaceful concessions to the fascist regimes could keep France out of this war, but this hope was frustrated considerably with the signing of a Franco-Russian pact in 1935.[62] Doriot, Déat and Bergery were sufficiently informed about the agenda of National Socialism to consider a conflict with the Soviet Union to be inevitable. Their fierce anti-communism and their increasing identification with the fascist regimes meant that they rejected the pact as a step towards war. Some French intellectuals were convinced that 'world Jewry' was in some way working towards war because it 'selfishly' wanted to punish Germany for its anti-Semitic policies. If only France could rid itself of its 'Jewish yoke', entente with the 'new' Germany and Italy could surely be achieved.[63]

The radicalisation of a large part of the French intelligentsia, combined with the complex international constellation, led to unexpected alliances: the declaration of war in 1939 was denounced by an unlikely coalition of fascists and radical pacifists, both unwilling to 'die for Danzig' in the name of democracy or the French guarantees of the Polish border. They faced a broad majority of conservatives, liberals and socialists who, despite their fundamental differences, all agreed that Hitler had gone too far and that the mistake of 'Munich' should not be repeated. Communists were divided between loyalty to the Komintern (which meant loyalty to the

61 Sternhell, 'Le Fascisme', in *Le Mythe de l'Allergie*, ed. Dobry, 394; Burrin, *La Dérive Fasciste*, 215.

62 An important element was the effective use of double language by Hitler, who accompanied every act of aggression (remilitarisation of the Rineland, 'Anschluss' of Austria, annexation of Sudetenland) with declarations that Germany had no territorial claims on French territory and that he wanted to achieve Franco-German reconciliation. Burrin, *La Dérive Fasciste*, 212.

63 Burrin, *La Dérive Fasciste*, 197, 231, 241, 295; idem, 'La France dans le Champ Magnétique', 54.

Molotov-Von Ribbentrop Pact) and a rejection of fascism combined with a patriotic affection for France. The same disarray in the political spectrum caused some convinced fascists to end up fighting in the Resistance, while others completely identified with the Nazi European order.

Laurent Kestel, a former student of Dobry, has recently published a book dedicated to Doriot and the PPF in which he criticises Burrin's approach as based too much on intellectuals, ideas and international developments. Instead, Kestel proposes a 'socio-political' analysis of Doriot and his peers' process of political 'conversion', strongly inspired by Bourdieuan sociology. Within this perspective, Doriot is reduced to being a political entrepreneur who manoeuvres across a political field, his actions influenced by the opportunities and barriers of a given moment. In Kestel's analysis, Doriot's exclusion from the French Communist Party (PCF) and from the Popular Front coalition brought him to the frontiers of a new political field, directing Doriot towards the foundation of the PPF. Kestel's book does an excellent job in refuting the use of the Doriot case to either lazily lump together communism and fascism or to analyse the psychological disposition of a supposed 'fascist mind'. He fails, however, in his attempt to refute the importance of ideas. Halfway through his book, in order to explain the attractiveness of the nascent PPF to young non-conformist intellectuals, Kestel grudgingly finds himself obliged to dedicate an entire chapter to their thought. He shallowly concludes that all these intellectuals were essentially 'reactionaries'.[64] It is also questionable what the added value of some of Kestel's comparisons is, such as the one between Doriot and Martin Luther as rejected prophets vengefully turning to repressive and 'reactionary' ideas.[65] As this study is more about the ideas and activities of intellectuals than about politicians 'converting' to fascism, Kestel's approach is of less use to us than Burrin's. But for this to become clear, I must explain in more detail what this book aims to do.

Europeanism, Fascism and Neoliberalism

No definitive conclusions can be drawn on the leftist or rightist character of fascist ideology and practice. The debate on this topic is beginning to repeat itself, although the tone is not showing signs of calming down.[66] Meanwhile,

64 Kestel, *La Conversion Politique*, 9, 109.

65 Ibid., 231.

66 For example, see Roussel, 'Le Fascisme Français ne Passera Pas', *Le Figaro* (27 November 2014).

recent research is spreading in a range of directions, which will surely enrich our understanding of the fascist phenomenon but at the expense of a general overview of the field. Even so, it is possible to arrive at a few preliminary conclusions. Fascism draws its attractiveness from the fact that it combines revolutionary as well as conservative elements within its ideology, which makes it not 'ni droite, ni gauche' but both right and left at the same time, in the words of Robert Wohl.[67] Revolutionary and anti-capitalist rhetoric and a considerable social agenda almost always joined hands with a political praxis that robbed workers of their rights as well as a readiness to ally the movement with conservative elites. It should also be stressed that, upon achieving power, fascist regimes have generally proved themselves to be much fiercer enemies of left-wing parties and organisations than of conservative groups. This is not to say that social arguments played no role in the 'fascist drift' of certain intellectuals. On the contrary: its capacity to present itself as a revolutionary, anti-capitalist ideology without the frightening downside of class war was one of the elements that made fascism especially attractive to non-conformist intellectuals.

With the calls for a 'new consensus' and the arrival of a new, sceptical generation of French scholars, it seems that the immunity thesis has had its time. No state can be considered historically 'immune' to fascism, and in the case of interwar France, the steadily growing influence of fascist thought cannot be denied. Marshall Pétain's 'National Revolution' reached back to a strong indigenous anti-democratic tradition, and his regime was anything but an incident uniquely born out of military defeat. Long before 1940, the French republic had been undermined by an anti-rationalist and anti-republican counter-culture that showed many commonalities with the fascist tradition, being just as strongly rooted in the French past as it was influenced by contemporary phenomena in other countries.[68] This counter-culture persisted in post-war France, manifesting itself in different movements and parties of the extreme right, some of which remained confined to intellectual or extremist circles while others received mass electoral support.

French fascism must be taken seriously both at the level of organisations (parties, groups and *ligues*) and as an ideology that attracted a large following among the country's intellectuals. An approach focused purely on intellectual history does not do justice to fascism's very concrete political

67 Wohl, 'Both Right and Left', 95.

68 Zeev Sternhell, 'La Modernité et ses Ennemis: De la Révolte Contre les Lumières au Rejet de la Démocratie', in *L'Éternel Retour*, ed. Sternhell, 37.

context in interwar Europe. The same is true for traditional political history, since it fails to explain the reasons why fascism was so attractive to intellectuals and why it exercised such a wide influence on culture and society during the interwar period. This study combines these two approaches instead of focusing solely on one of the two manifestations of fascism. In this sense, it is not so far removed from the one proposed by Tony Judt in his classic book *Past Imperfect*, dedicated to the intellectual irresponsibilities of the French post-war Marxist intelligentsia. In his introduction, Judt stated that he was not conducting a full-fledged history of ideas but rather 'a history of conversation: the one conducted among themselves by a generation of French intellectuals and addressed to questions of "engagement", "responsibility", "choice", and so forth'.[69] Though this study will neither treat an entire generation nor follow Judt's focus on moral failure, it is similar to Judt's approach in its focus on the political engagement, choice and responsibility of intellectuals.

Fascism should also be studied as an international phenomenon that manifests itself within different national contexts. There is an obvious interrelatedness of European fascist movements, but scholarship has too often stuck to the boundaries of a single nation-state, as if an ultra-nationalist phenomenon like fascism did not 'look' at what was happening across the border. In the same way, more attention should be paid to the links between fascism and internationalist and Europeanist intellectual currents in interwar Europe. Contrary to what one would intuitively expect, elements of the French liberal and internationalist intellectual avant-garde turned out to be very receptive to fascist ideas during the 1930s –and sometimes even kept thinking along these lines well into the 1950s. Fascist sympathies could evidently coexist with European engagement and the longing for a peaceful international order. After the Second World War, Europeanism became an even more important part of the extreme right's discourse. Not only did it provide a way to escape political isolation and association with aggressive war within the national context; it also allowed for extensive contacts and collaboration with neo-fascist and extreme-rightist groups in other countries.[70]

This study explores the development of the political thought of two French intellectuals who belonged to this Europeanist avant-garde while placing special emphasis on the way their 'fascist drift' related to their Europeanist and internationalist ideas. Alfred Fabre-Luce and Bertrand

69 Judt, *Past Imperfect*, 10.

70 Mammone, 'Revitalizing and De-Territorializing Fascism in the 1950s', 301.

de Jouvenel were precocious and productive journalists, novelists and political writers. During the 1920s, they were among the 'Young Turks' of the Parti Radical, the governmental flagship of French progressive liberalism. Enthusiastic about the League of Nations and detesting the traditional nationalism they held responsible for the outbreak of the First World War, they advocated a programme of elaborate reforms, Franco-German reconciliation and the construction of a 'United States of Europe'. Jouvenel came from a prominent family of politicians and notables, while Fabre-Luce was the grandson of Henri Germain, the founder of the Crédit Lyonnais bank. Because of their wealth, their foreign acquaintances and their journalist work, they could travel frequently. Both regularly visited Britain and all of France's neighbouring countries, while Fabre-Luce spent several months in the Soviet Union and Jouvenel in the United States.

From the end of the 1920s, Fabre-Luce and Jouvenel rapidly lost faith both in the capacity of the Third Republic's political system to renew itself and in the capacity of free-market capitalism to survive the Great Depression. The years between 1932 and 1936 marked a turning point in their political thought and engagement: they left the Parti Radical, developed a hatred of the Marxist left and the Popular Front, and called for a revolution that would sweep away both the parliamentary and the capitalist system. This revolution, they claimed, would have to be both national and socialist. Shortly after its foundation by Doriot, they joined the PPF and became members of its political bureau. Their visits to foreign countries seem to have played an important role in their rising anti-capitalism: both were shocked by the misery of the unemployed in Liverpool, Chicago and the American South, and admired the leadership of Hitler, who seemed to have pulled his working class out of inertia and imbued it with energy and hope. In the same way, they saw Doriot's party as a way to bridge the class divide and to construct a 'healthy' national community. Although both distanced themselves from Doriot in the wake of the Munich Agreement in 1938, their fascist conceptions of society did not change. After France's defeat against Germany and the establishment of the Vichy regime, both were fascinated by the German victory and the unseen chances it offered for building a fascist Europe and a continental economic bloc. While Fabre-Luce fully embraced collaboration out of a conviction that a nationally regenerated France would have a rightful place within the new German-dominated Europe, Jouvenel was more hesitant, preferring to support the collaboration politics of the Vichy regime rather than the more radical Paris-based Germanophiles. Both Jouvenel and Fabre-Luce were in close contact with French collaborators and high-ranking officials of the German embassy.

This attitude gradually changed in 1942 and 1943. The increasingly harsh occupation regime, the German occupation of the 'free' southern zone and the prospect of German defeat led Fabre-Luce and Jouvenel to begin to question their prior engagements. Jouvenel managed to flee to Switzerland, while Fabre-Luce, who remained in Paris, was first imprisoned by the Germans and later by the Free French. Despite their very critical attitude towards De Gaulle and the Resistance and a fundamental rejection of the Fourth Republic, after 1945 Jouvenel and Fabre-Luce were able to gradually reintegrate into the political mainstream while embracing the post-war European project. At the same time, Jouvenel and especially Fabre-Luce remained prominent members of right-extremist and neo-fascist circles. By relating both intellectuals' 'fascist drift' to their Europeanism and their economic and political ideas for French politics from the beginning of the 1930s until the early 1950s, this study explores the implications of fascist engagement for two of France's leading intellectuals. In doing so, it also raises the larger and thornier question of the relationship between fascism and Europeanism between the 1930s and the early 1950s.

Both Fabre-Luce and Jouvenel lived long lives and enjoyed an extraordinarily long period of intellectual production spanning seven decades. In 1922, at the age of twenty-three, Fabre-Luce published his first political book, a study of Franco-British relations since the end of the First World War.[71] Jouvenel was made editor-in-chief of the progressive journal *La Voix* when he was twenty-five, and his first book appeared that same year.[72] Both continued to publish until shortly before their deaths in the 1980s.[73] From the dozens of books and thousands of articles they wrote, it is possible to analyse many different intellectual and political currents of the twentieth century. Especially in the case of Jouvenel, the better-known and probably the more Janus-faced of the two, this longevity and productivity have led to different and often mutually hostile readings of his work. Considered by some authors to be essentially a liberal political scientist and the spiritual father of ecology and future studies, others have called him an 'aristocratic' or a 'melancholic' liberal and a neoconservative avant la lèttre, while still others have labelled him one of France's leading fascist intellectuals and a wartime collaborator.[74] Although one claim does not necessarily exclude

71 Fabre-Luce, *La Crise des Alliances*.

72 Jouvenel, *L'Économie Dirigée*.

73 Casanova, 'Hommage à Alfred Fabre-Luce', 608; Ullmann, 'Hommage à Jouvenel', 366.

74 Essentially, see Sternhell, *Ni Droite, Ni Gauche*, 132; Soucy, *The Second Wave*, 256; De Dijn, 'Bertrand de Jouvenel and the Revolt Against the State in Post-War America', 376; Jouvenel &

the other – and all three seem to be at least partially true – these different readings have sparked controversy and conflict all the way up to the French courtroom, as we have seen. Fabre-Luce has almost exclusively been the object of shallow commentaries in which the conclusion is fully determined by the political positions of the writer. While Marxists and former members of the Resistance attacked him as a 'reactionary' and a collaborator, his only existing biography is in fact a hagiography, whose author attempts to justify and praise about every political position taken by Fabre-Luce during his life.[75]

To avoid the conflicts of definition and categorisation that have already dominated the study of fascism in France for too long, and being all too aware of the absence of a real 'consensus' in fascist studies about its own exact subject of analysis, I prefer not to start from a fixed definition of fascism. Working with a definition based on present-day scholarly insights carries the additional risk of according a meaning to a historical phenomenon that is very different from how contemporaries interpreted it – an inconvenient situation for anyone writing the history of intellectuals. Instead, I choose to focus on what meaning the relevant concepts of fascism, Europe and (neo) liberalism had for the intellectuals themselves during the period with which I am concerned. This means that I also consider fascism a relevant concept for the years following 1945, since during this period it was extensively interpreted and discussed by Jouvenel and Fabre-Luce.

I base myself on published material by Fabre-Luce and Jouvenel but also on archival sources (letter correspondences, reading notes, unpublished material and personal documents). The main part of the relevant archival material consists of Jouvenel and Fabre-Luce's personal archives, respectively kept at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and the Archives Nationales in Pierrefitte-sur-Seine. While Fabre-Luce's archive is an invaluable source of information about his entire life, the (very extensive) Jouvenel papers mainly consist of documents relevant to the years after 1942, almost all prior material having been lost during the war. Although this lacuna in Jouvenel's papers cannot be filled entirely, a partial solution consists of using the surviving archival fragments, other sources and memoirs written by Jouvenel and his associates. The judicial file of Fabre-Luce's

Roussel, *Itinéraire 1928-1976*, 12; Lapaque, 'Jouvenel: Le Libéral Mélancolique', *Le Figaro* (4 April 2002).

75 See, for example, citations in Blandin, 'Les Interventions des Intellectuels de Droite dans *Le Figaro Littéraire*', 188; Garbe, *Alfred Fabre-Luce*; Sternhell, 'Entre le Tragique et l'Imposture', 80-120.

collaboration trial during the late 1940s, also kept at the Archives Nationales, is an important source on both his activities during the occupation and his post-war experience with the transitional justice of the French *Épuration*. It also offers valuable insight into his sophisticated attempts at whitewashing compromising elements from his own history.

In this study, I focus on both intellectuals' political thought from the beginning of the 1930s to the early 1950s. As this period corresponds to the time of their 'fascist drift' during the 1930s, their involvement with intellectual collaboration during the war and their ambiguous post-war position as extreme-rightists turning to neoliberal ideas, the main aim of this book is to analyse Fabre-Luce and Jouvenel's political trajectory as the interplay of Europeanism, fascism and (neo-)liberalism, a topic that historiography has failed to treat in a proper way. Biographers Olivier Dard and Laurent Kestel mostly stress Jouvenel's anger and frustration with established politics as the prime motivation behind his process of radicalisation.[76] The author of an unpublished PhD dissertation on Bertrand de Jouvenel as a 'disenchanted liberal', written under the supervision of immunity theorist Serge Berstein, largely denies that Jouvenel was anything more than a 'Platonic' fascist very momentarily infected by the 'brown Germanic contagion'.[77] Fabre-Luce's biographer even tries to justify his fascism as an understandable defensive reaction against the communist menace, much along the arguments advanced by Ernst Nolte during the German *Historikerstreit*.[78] The American political scientist Daniel J. Mahoney has written a very sympathetic biography of Jouvenel's post-war 'conservative liberal' thought that is of little use for the period we are concerned with here. Mahoney, whose main aim is to prove the value and relevance of Jouvenel's ideas for current-day use, tries to minimise Jouvenel's fascist period. Altogether, he seems more shocked by the fact that Jouvenel supported the socialist François Mitterand during the 1981 French presidential elections than by his admiration for Hitler during the 1930s.[79]

Klaus-Peter Sick, a scholar of French liberalism, states that an elitist criticism of democracy led Jouvenel to fascist positions, while Fabre-Luce

76 Dard, *Bertrand de Jouvenel*, 89; Kestel, 'L'Engagement de Bertrand de Jouvenel au PPF', 112.

77 Delbecque, 'Bertrand de Jouvenel ou le Libéral Désenchanté', 435.

78 Garbe, *Alfred Fabre-Luce*, 147; Nolte, 'Vergangenheit, die Nicht Vergehen Will', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (6 June 1986).

79 Mahoney, 'A Symposium on Bertrand de Jouvenel: Introduction', 37; idem, *Bertrand de Jouvenel*, 4. Jouvenel's support of a fellow Vichyite and former sympathiser of the CdF who walked an equally winding political path is probably less surprising than it at first sight seems.

was seduced by the concept of a strong authoritarian leader.[80] In a contribution published in the French right-wing liberal review *Commentaire* – to which Fabre-Luce himself frequently contributed during the last five years of his life – Sick describes Fabre-Luce as essentially a liberal who was only seduced by certain superficial aspects of fascism. He wrongly claims that, during the war, Fabre-Luce supported Vichy but retained a certain distance vis-à-vis the German new order. Sick's suggestion that Fabre-Luce always stayed attached to 'the essential elements of liberal centrism' seems rather inspired by wishful thinking and a readiness to please his readers than by a thorough analysis of Fabre-Luce's work from the early 1940s.[81] Bruneteau, in his excellent study of the intellectual seduction of 'Hitler's new Europe', does stress Europeanism and the concept of a new, 'totalitarian democracy'. His analysis remains largely confined to the early 1940s, and he does not explore what happened to this Europeanism once the Nazis were gone.[82]

In their post-war memoirs, Jouvenel and Fabre-Luce stress the social dimension of their move to the extreme right. Fabre-Luce wrote in 1962 that, during the 1920s, he had too long believed in 'fashionable liberalism' but that the Great Depression opened his eyes. He came to believe that large-scale state intervention as promoted by 'Keynes, Hitler and Roosevelt' was necessary to restore the economy to a situation of full employment.[83] In his 1980 memoirs, Jouvenel focuses on the day his political hero Daladier became prime minister on 31 January 1933, one day after Hitler was named Reich Chancellor. Daladier's subsequent failure to launch a New Deal programme along the lines of Roosevelt and Hitler left him with feelings of disappointment and anger, 'with major consequences for my judgment and my conduct'.[84] These explanations might have easily been influenced by the need to retroactively justify fascist political positions for a post-war audience. Regarding the general self-justifying tone of these publications as well as their possible deformation through hindsight, it is appropriate to concentrate on contemporary sources rather than on these later explanations by the authors themselves.

The second element in this book is the development of the two intellectuals' political ideas after 1942, especially their relation to neoliberalism and the post-war extreme right. Although Jouvenel and Fabre-Luce both

80 Sick, 'Vom Neoliberalismus zum Faschismus?', 65.

81 Sick, 'Alfred Fabre-Luce et la Crise du Libéralisme', 561.

82 Bruneteau, 'Antiliberalismus und Totalitäre Verschwörung', in *Rechtsextreme Ideologien*, ed. Backes, 134; idem, *'L'Europe Nouvelle de Hitler'*, 233.

83 Fabre-Luce, *Vingt-Cinq Années de Liberté I*, 165.

84 Jouvenel, *Un Voyageur*, 114.

claimed that their wartime experience laid the basis for a return to the liberal democratic principles of their youth, many ambiguities remained. As public opinion associated them with fascism and collaboration, the years following the Liberation saw them in the position of outcasts resentful of Gaullism, the Resistance and the republican regime. Branded as collaborators and excluded from large sections of the post-war press, they were confined to publishing in extreme rightist newspapers and publishing their books outside France. Thanks to his Swiss exile, Jouvenel was the quickest of the two to adapt to the new circumstances. In his influential magnum opus *Du Pouvoir*, translated into English as *On Power*, he adopted a sceptical form of right-wing liberalism, convinced that both state power and the essentially irrational character of the masses could easily lead to tyranny.[85] Outside of France, this analysis caught the attention of neoliberal academics such as Friedrich Hayek and Wilhelm Röpke, who were equally sceptical of democratic society's potential to survive. Jouvenel was quickly integrated into these international circles and became a founding member of the neoliberal Mont Pèlerin Society in 1947. At the same time, he continued to associate himself with extreme-rightist and even royalist newspapers and journals.

Released from prison but condemned for 'national indignity' and partially stripped of his civil rights, Fabre-Luce initially maintained a principled rejection of the post-war order. In a series of brochures and books, he defended the position of Pétain and his supporters and strongly attacked De Gaulle, the Resistance and Marxist intellectuals like Jean-Paul Sartre. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, Fabre-Luce became a prominent and indefatigable spokesperson of former collaborators, Vichyites and other 'victims' of the French *Épuration*. He frequently published in the extreme-rightist monthly *Les Écrits de Paris* (as did Jouvenel) and even acted as editor-in-chief of the neo-fascist review *Rivarol* as late as 1955. But, paradoxically, in the meantime Fabre-Luce also began to reintegrate into the right-wing mainstream. His support for European integration and especially the project to create a European Defence Community in 1954 seems to have played a certain role in this development. Despite initially fierce clashes, he became a close friend of Raymond Aron and eventually a regular contributor to Aron's right-wing liberal journal *Commentaire*. Apart from the question mentioned above of fascism's relationship to Europeanism, the treatment of Fabre-Luce and Jouvenel's post-war ideas and affiliations also carries a broader relevance, since it could shed new light on three other larger questions: the

85 Jouvenel, *Du Pouvoir*, 26.

intellectual relationship between fascism and neoliberalism, the character of the post-war ideological transformation of the French extreme right, and its relationship to fascism.

The first two chapters are dedicated to Jouvenel and Fabre-Luce's activities and ideas between the late 1920s and the outbreak of the Second World War. The first focuses on Europeanism and international contacts, while the second analyses the two intellectuals' political and economic ideas for France as well as the national framework of their 'fascist drift'. Chapter three provides an analysis of Fabre-Luce and Jouvenel's ideas and activities during the German occupation, including their attitude towards the prospect of a continental Europe under German occupation, issues of collaboration and *attentisme* (wait-and-see), Vichy and the Resistance. The fourth chapter is dedicated to the period from 1944 to the early 1950s, focusing on liberation, persecution and the relationship of both intellectuals to the post-war extreme right and the lasting importance of their Europeanist ideas. The fifth and final chapter discusses the extent of rupture and continuity in the two intellectuals' thoughts about neoliberalism during the same period.