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'National revolutionary' groupuscules and the resurgence of 'left-wing' fascism: the case of France's Nouvelle Résistance

ABSTRACT Nouvelle Résistance (NR) was a left-leaning national revolutionary groupuscule founded by long-time French activist Christian Bouchet in 1991. In contrast to the generally 'nostalgic' neo-fascist grouplets of the 1960s (such as Occident), which tended to adopt intransigent pro-western, anti-communist and pro-colonial platforms during the height of the Cold War, NR adopted a much more radical political programme characterized by pan-Europeanism, anti-Americanism and Third Worldism, the proclaimed goal of which was the unification of all 'anti-system' forces, rightist and leftist, in a common struggle against the globalist New World Order. In that sense, it was in certain ways representative of the ongoing radicalization of younger generations of European neo-fascists, who increasingly sought to jettison the parochial nationalism, vulgar racism and cultural conservatism of the past and forge a new, 'hipper' rightist youth (counter-)culture. A detailed examination of NR's history, organization, ideology and political tactics therefore serves to illuminate many broader topics, including the nature and significance of the 'groupuscular' form of organization, the cultural transformation of the post-war radical right, the increasingly close interaction between certain types of right- and left-wing extremists, and the complex ideological bases of fascism itself.

KEYWORDS *anti-Americanism, anti-globalization, Christian Bouchet, fascism, groupuscule, left and right, neo-fascism, occultism, radical right, rock music, satanism*

The five years I spent in Troisième Voie were formative. A youth in a groupuscule can learn one hundred times more than one who remains in the youth organization of a large party.¹

We must begin with thousands of tiny revolutions so that one day the great revolution which will change the face of the world will come.²

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1 André-Yves Beck, former Nouvelle Résistance leader and current Front National official, quoted in Christian Bouchet (ed.), *Les Nouveaux Nationalistes* (Paris: Déterna 2001), 24. Foreign-language translations, unless otherwise stated, are by the author.

The French word 'groupuscule', like its closest English counterpart 'grouplet', is generally used to refer to organizations of different types whose most obvious characteristic is their small size. Since small size is in turn all too often equated with insignificance, scholars have tended to ignore the study of political groupuscules, which they view as unpopular fringe elements within the overall constellation of a given nation's political forces, and to focus their attention instead on larger and higher-profile organizations such as electoral parties.³ While perhaps understandable, this widespread neglect of groupuscules operating on the margins of conventional politics is not always warranted, especially in the case of self-styled revolutionary vanguards. Although outright seizures of power by such vanguard groups appear to be increasingly unlikely in both Western Europe and North America, groupuscules that are nowadays being overlooked may nonetheless turn out to be very important in other ways. One need only mention 'Usamah ibn Ladin's diffuse terrorist network, al-Qa'idah (The Base), to illustrate this crucial point. Moreover, since the overwhelming majority of European neo-fascist organizations—including the most important clandestine terrorist cells, ideological 'think tanks', counter-cultural youth groups and transnational networks—fall into this 'groupuscular' category, ignoring such groupuscules can only result in a total failure to appreciate the historical significance of the post-war radical right.

A few preliminary theoretical observations are therefore in order. There exist several means by which apparently weak political groupuscules may, given the right circumstances, become much more historically significant. First, the formation of groupuscules not only enables fringe groups to maintain internal social solidarity and sustain ideological purity in a hostile social environment but, once created, such structures can become important incubators

2 Christian Bouchet, former Nouvelle Résistance leader, quoted in Jean-Paul Bourre, *Les Profanateurs: La Nébuleuse de tous les périls. Nouvelle Droite, skinheads, rock metal, néonazis* (n.p.: Le Comptoir 1997), 68, citing Philippe Hertens, *Le Nationalisme radicale en France: Enquête* (Paris: Magrie 1994).

3 A large and ever-growing number of academic studies dealing with 'neo-fascist' electoral parties such as the Front National, the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, Alleanza Nazionale, Fuerza Nueva and the Republikaner have been published in recent years, whereas only a handful have been devoted to individual neo-fascist groupuscules, even when the latter have had considerable operational and/or ideological significance. Among the rare exceptions are Roger Griffin, 'Net gains and GUD reactions: patterns of prejudice in a neo-fascist groupuscule', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 33, no. 2, April 1999, 31–50; Jeffrey M. Bale, 'Jean Thiriart's Jeune Europe: a neo-fascist international between East and West', in preparation for the *Journal of Contemporary History*; Xavier Casals, *Neonazis en España: De los audiciones wagnerianas a los skinheads* (Barcelona: Grijalbo 1995), 37–194, which focuses on the neo-Nazi Círculo Español de Amigos de Europa (CEDADE); and those appearing in this special issue of *Patterns of Prejudice*. Perhaps not surprisingly, neo-fascists themselves have published the bulk of the serious works on lesser-known groupuscules within their own milieu: see e.g. Colectivo 'Karl-Otto Paetel', *Fascismo rojo* (Valencia: Colectivo 'Karl-Otto Paetel' 1998); Gabriele Adinolfi and Roberto Fiore, *Noi, Terza posizione* (Rome: Settimo Segillo 2000); and Yannick Sauveur, 'Jean Thiriart et le national communautarisme européen', unpublished thesis, Université de Paris, 1978, later reprinted and distributed by Thiriart's supporters.

of, and transmission belts for, unconventional political ideas that eventually spread beyond their own boundaries. This is all the more likely with the advent of the Internet, which today makes it possible for any computer-literate person to disseminate political messages, no matter how unpopular, to a much larger audience. Second, there is often a greater degree of overlap between the personnel of fringe groupuscules and more respectable cultural circles or political institutions than is visible to the untutored eye, a sort of 'grey zone' where extremists and moderates, knowingly or not, rub shoulders with one another.⁴ This is generally the product of two distinct but interrelated processes. On the one hand, members of groupuscules often seek to infiltrate and covertly influence the attitudes and actions of larger, more conventional political parties and other relatively mainstream socio-cultural bodies. On the other, elements from the so-called 'establishment' periodically seek to make use of fringe groupuscules in various ways. To mention only two of many possible examples, factions of the secret services have often infiltrated, manipulated and made instrumental use of political groupuscules in order to carry out covert, 'plausibly deniable' operations,⁵ and more mainstream political parties have at times intentionally recruited members of such groupuscules for various purposes, ranging from low-level campaigning and bodyguard duties to serving as intellectual spokespersons or even political candidates. Third, like-minded groupuscules very often join together to form much more extensive transnational networks, both in the real world and, increasingly, in cyberspace. Fourth, in times of acute social, political or economic crisis, such groupuscules, even if previously perceived as extremist, can rapidly attract a larger base of disenfranchised supporters who now suddenly find their radical perspectives appealing. Finally, if necessary groupuscules can, given their small and often secretive organizational structure, more easily be transformed into fully clandestine and highly compartmentalized terrorist cells than can larger, more public organizations.

The (changing) nature of neo-fascist groupuscules

There are two salient characteristics of post-war fascism that at first glance may seem paradoxical. On the one hand, there has been an extraordinary proliferation of small neo-fascist groups—that is, groupuscules—within every country of Western and Southern Europe since the end of the Second World War. On the national level, however, the omnipresence of divisive ideological conflicts, profound differences over political tactics, and contentious personal

4 The term 'grey zone' has sometimes been employed by German left-wing commentators to refer to the allegedly cosy, behind-the-scenes relationships between the conservative right and neo-Nazis: see e.g. Michael Venner, *Nationale Identität: Die neue Rechte und die Grauzone zwischen Konservatismus und Rechtsextremismus* (Cologne: PapyRossa 1994).

5 See e.g. Jeffrey M. Bale, *The Secret Cold War and European Right-wing Terrorism* (forthcoming); Gianni Flamini, *Il partito del golpe: Le strategie della tensione e del terrore dal primo centrosinistra organico al sequestro Moro, 1964–1978*, 4 vols in 6 parts (Ferrara: Bovolenta 1981–5); and Frédéric Laurent, *L'Orchestre noir* (Paris: Stock 1978).

disputes between competing would-be *Führerin* has made it very difficult for these sectarian and often insular groups to co-ordinate their activities in any meaningful way. The history of neo-fascism is therefore replete with a kaleidoscopic array and bewildering variety of organizations, personalities and doctrines, many of which have been the direct or indirect outgrowths of a complex process of fission and fusion precipitated by bitter internal struggles and rivalries.⁶ On the other hand, some of the very same groups that could not manage to find a basis for co-operation with similarly minded organizations inside their own countries have made strenuous efforts to 'internationalize' and link up with their counterparts in other nations, both throughout Europe and elsewhere in the world.⁷ In spite of all the transformations that have taken place within this milieu, both ideological and organizational, this peculiar combination of fragmentation within national boundaries and transnational alliance formation has remained a constant pattern between 1945 and the present day.

Groupuscules, neo-fascist or otherwise, can be analysed in both functional and historical terms. From a functional standpoint, one of the most acute observers of the radical-right youth subculture in France during the 1980s and 1990s has characterized recent neo-fascist groupuscules as hybrid organizations incorporating some of the traits associated with four different types of groups: mass parties (in terms of their emphasis on ideology, their use of militants, their concern for the popular factor and their claim to represent excluded political and social elements); pressure groups (as regards their overt and covert lobbying activities, their infiltration of other organizations and exploitation of dual membership and their application of pressure by means of violence); terrorist organizations (with respect to their insularity and their semi-clandestine and sectarian nature); and armies (in terms of their emphasis on discipline, maintenance of hierarchies and their penchant for training and paramilitary activities).⁸ Although the suggestion that all neo-fascist groupuscules share every one of these characteristics is problematic, if not erroneous, there is no doubt that such groupuscules often are hybrid formations that do not fall neatly within standard, well-delimited political or organizational categories. Moreover, despite displaying certain common traits by virtue of their participation in the same political milieu and their small size, all neo-fascist groupuscules develop a number of unique features that serve, on closer inspection, to distinguish them from their temporal counterparts. Furthermore these features are not frozen in time.

On the contrary, groupuscules with some degree of longevity almost invariably evolve over time in response to new conditions and circumstances.

6 Compare the astute observations of fascist theorist Maurice Bardèche, *Qu'est-ce que le fascisme?* (Paris: Sept Couleurs 1961), 97–8, 101.

7 For the seeming paradox between these two characteristics of European neo-fascism, see Joseph Algazy, *La tentation néo-fasciste en France, 1944–1965* (Paris: Fayard 1984), 289–91.

8 See Eric Rossi, *Jeunesse française des années 80–90: La tentation néo-fasciste* (Paris: Université Pantheon-Arras 1995), 157.

Even the animators of more ephemeral groups—those that fail to survive the aforementioned processes of fission and fusion—often try to make up for their prior mistakes by organizing new formations capable of overcoming the perceived shortcomings of earlier and still-existing groups. It would therefore be a serious mistake to adopt an overly schematic, ahistorical model, as social scientists are wont to do, since neo-fascist groupuscules of, say, the 1990s are by no means identical to those of the 1960s. Very significant ideological, organizational and cultural shifts occurred during that tumultuous thirty-year period, shifts that not only reflected broader historical trends but also internal processes of evolution within the neo-fascist milieu. Indeed, by comparing and contrasting characteristic features of the more recent organizations discussed below with those of representative groupuscules operating in the 1960s, one can learn a great deal about the historical evolution of neo-fascism.

Occident: a typical 1960s neo-fascist groupuscule

One of the most representative French neo-fascist groupuscules during the 1960s was the Mouvement Occident, which was officially founded in April 1964 by former Jeune Nation leader Pierre Sidos and others after their rival Dominique Venner assumed control of Europe-Action. Occident was a sectarian, semi-clandestine vanguard organization with a hierarchical structure, based on the leadership principle; it provided ideological and paramilitary training to its members, infiltrated other (mainly student) organizations and soon became notorious for carrying out extremely violent commando actions against its left-wing counterparts. Occident's leaders promoted a 'nationalist revolution' against the Gaullist regime, a cult of youth, intransigent anti-communism, the all-out defence of Western Civilization and its colonial outposts, a corporatist regime, anti-capitalism, anti-materialism and antisemitism.⁹ In short, Occident was in most respects a characteristic mid-1960s neo-fascist groupuscule.

For our purposes, Occident's geopolitical and cultural predilections are of particular importance. It should first be pointed out that, in the period between the onset of the Cold War and the collapse of Communism, the European radical right adopted three distinct—and in many ways incompatible—geopolitical perspectives, one western-oriented, one Eurocentric and one Russophilic. Double-breasted-suit-wearing 'fascist' moderates and elements of numerous non-fascist far-right currents, including Catholic integralists, monarchists and certain ultranationalists, were politically wedded to the Atlantic Alliance and its major sponsor, the United States. This was because these latter entities, despite their manifest shortcomings, were viewed as the bulwarks of a western civilization that was locked in a life-or-death struggle with an implacable communist adversary. In contrast to the relatively

⁹ For Occident, see Joseph Algazy, *L'Extrême-Droite en France de 1965 à 1984* (Paris: Harmattan 1989), 45–64; François Duprat, *Les Mouvements d'extrême droite en France depuis 1944* (Paris: Albatros 1972), especially 126–79; Francis Bergeron and Philippe Vilgier, *De Le Pen à Le Pen: Une Histoire des nationaux et des nationalistes sous la Vème république* (Bouère: Dominique Martin Morin 1985), especially 70–5. The last two sources are of far-right provenance.

pro-American orientation of this numerically dominant 'Atlanticist' faction, several revolutionary neo-fascist elements advocated the establishment of a unified, militarized Europe, a Nation Europa, that would constitute a 'third force' capable of 'liberating' Europe and resisting the twin 'imperialisms' of international communism and US-controlled international capitalism, both of which were perceived as being anti-national, anti-European, materialistic, exploitative, dehumanizing and—according to pro-Nazi elements—controlled by parasitic Jews. An even smaller number of fascist radicals, such as the European Liberation Front, the 'nationalist neutralists' in Germany, some 'national communists' and the national Bolsheviks, instead promoted a *de facto* alliance with the Soviet bloc in order to rid Europe of its American 'occupiers'.¹⁰

During the height of the Cold War, however, even most neo-fascist radicals were reluctantly compelled, despite their incessant rhetorical attacks on capitalism and their genuine hostility to US cultural hegemony, to make common cause with pro-American elements within their own countries in order to fight communism. After all, the intransigent defence of western civilization was a strategy whose success ultimately rested on American military and economic power. In this sense, too, Occident was rather typical of mid-1960s neo-fascist groupuscules. Having adopted the Manichaean worldview of their Organisation de l'Armée Secrète (OAS) heroes—that all anti-colonial struggles in the Third World were secretly sponsored and directed by the communists—it should come as no surprise to find that Occident openly lauded the reactionary, authoritarian regimes in South Vietnam, Portugal and Greece (after 1967) simply because they were virulently anti-communist, that the organization joined Roger Holeindre's Front Uni de Soutien au Sud-Vietnam in early 1968, that it urged the US military to attack North Vietnam and that one of its principle slogans was 'defend the West wherever it is attacked'.¹¹

A second characteristic of Occident was its cultural 'squareness'. Precisely because its members viewed all domestic leftists as witting or unwitting communist agents, they were not particularly open to new counter-cultural trends in art, fashion or protest-oriented rock music, since these developments were increasingly associated with 'pacifist' hippies and the 'anti-national' New Left. Thus, positive commentaries on contemporary youth culture and music do not appear in the group's flyers or its chief publication, *Occident Université*. In that sense, despite their never-ending paeans to the dynamism and vitality of youth, their publicly displayed attitudes towards this profusion of new cultural trends tended to mirror those of reactionary social conservatives and their own 'square' parents.

10 On the pro-western v. pan-European geopolitical orientations, see Giorgio Galli, *La crisi italiana e la destra internazionale* (Milan: Mondadori 1974), 60. For the pro-Soviet (or pro-Russian) groups, see especially Kurt P. Tauber, *Beyond Eagle and Swastika: German Nationalism since 1945* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press 1967), vol. 1, 147–203. See also Kevin Coogan, *Dreamer of the Day: Francis Parker Yockey and the Postwar Fascist International* (New York: Autonomedia 1999).

11 See Algazy, *L'Extrême-Droite*, 45, 60; Duprat, 150, 152–8; and Bergeron and Vilgier, 70–1, 76.

It was largely due to these peculiar geopolitical and cultural factors that, following the dramatic outbreak in France of an open student and workers' revolt in May 1968, Occident ended up aligning itself and actively collaborating with the hated Gaullist forces of law and order and reactionary conservatives in an effort to suppress the radical left. Only such a traumatic series of violent events, which seemingly threatened to precipitate a civil war in France, could have led to the rapid burying of hatchets between the Gaullist regime and its bitter OAS enemies or between fascist radicals and reformist 'bourgeois' conservatives. That is precisely what occurred. Although Occident's leaders were at first divided over how to respond, and a few of its youthful militants actually chose to join left-wing student protesters on the barricades because of their hatred for the Gaullists and feelings of generational solidarity, when push came to shove the overwhelming majority ended up marching under Cross of Lorraine banners at the huge Gaullist-sponsored rally on 30 May, alongside those with whom they had previously been at odds. It was symptomatic of this newly formed marriage of convenience that representatives of the secret services soon after made discreet overtures to Occident's leaders and offered to support covertly their efforts to wrest control of the University of Paris law school on rue Assas from student protesters, an offer that was accepted.¹² Once the crisis was over, however, the government forcibly dissolved Occident along with dozens of radical-left groupuscules, which were now all depicted as threats to public order. The differences between earlier, 'nostalgic' neo-fascist groups such as Occident and the more radical, left-leaning formations that proliferated from the mid-1970s on should therefore become obvious as soon as the chief characteristics of Nouvelle Résistance (NR) are highlighted. Before turning to its organizational history, however, the background of its founder Christian Bouchet needs to be elucidated.

Who is Christian Bouchet?

Christian Bouchet was born in Angers in 1955 into what he himself has described as a 'petit-bourgeois' provincial family. All of his close family members were associated with the political right in the pre-war, war-time and post-war eras, which created severe hardships for them in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War; he freely admits that growing up in this milieu had a profound effect on his own political worldview.¹³ Bouchet initiated his long

12 Compare Philippe Vilgier and Pascal Gauchon, *La Droite en mouvements, nationaux et nationalistes, 1962-1981* (Paris: Vastra 1981), 48, and Duprat, 158-63. Many other European neo-fascist groupuscules collaborated covertly but tangibly with elements of various state security forces, including Ordine Nuovo and Avanguardia Nazionale in Italy, the Mouvement Jeune Révolution and Ordre Nouveau in France, Jovem Portugal, the Kinema tes 4 Augoustou (4th of August Movement) in Greece, Westland New Post in Belgium, and the Milliyetçilik Hareket Partisi (Nationalist Action Party) in Turkey.

13 This biographical information was provided by Christian Bouchet himself, both in questionnaires that I sent to him (hereafter Bouchet Questionnaire I and II) and in a series of interviews he gave to others: in the recently published book *Nouveaux Nationalistes* (see note 1); to Kerry Bolton for the New Zealand magazine *The Nexus*; and to Troy Southgate for *The*

career as a political activist by briefly joining the Action Française's successor organization, Restauration Nationale, and in 1969 he formed a small anti-leftist group while attending Catholic high school. In 1970 he rejoined Restauration Nationale, but a year later he moved on to a breakaway group known as the Nouvelle Action Française.¹⁴ In 1973 he abandoned the monarchist movement altogether and joined a left-fascist national revolutionary group known as the Organisation Lutte du Peuple (OLP), which among other things advocated solidarity with revolutionary nationalist movements in the Third World, especially radical Arab regimes that openly opposed both 'Zionism' and 'American imperialism'.¹⁵ At first glance this may appear to be a rather strange political itinerary, since intransigent monarchism scarcely seems compatible with left-wing currents of fascism. But it should be recalled that Action Française 'study groups' such as the Cercle Proudhon originally brought pro-royalist ultranationalists, anarchists and revolutionary syndicalists together in the early twentieth century to discuss both 'national' and 'social' questions, and that as such it constituted one of the very first proto-fascist groups. This same point has likewise been emphasized by Bouchet, and when viewed in this light it is not at all hard to see how a dissident, non-conformist Action Française supporter could end up in a left-leaning national revolutionary group such as Lutte du Peuple.¹⁶ From that point on, Bouchet developed into an increasingly important leader within this particular political current of the French far right.¹⁷ Although he has at times left the fold and,

English Alternative (no. 9, summer 1998), the British National Revolutionary Faction's chief publication. According to Bouchet, one of his uncles was a member of the Camelots du Roi (the shock troops of the royalist, proto-fascist Action Française) and a Vichy Milicien who was later killed by rebels in Algeria; his maternal grandfather was a collaborator who was condemned to death by the Resistance, and who only escaped being executed when a jeep full of GIs placed him under arrest; and most other members of his mother's family were imprisoned after the Second World War. All of his family members and their close friends later supported the violent OAS campaigns to maintain French control over Algeria.

- 14 For more on Restauration Nationale and the Nouvelle Action Française splinter group, see François-Marin Fleutot and Patrick Louis, *Les Royalistes: Enquête sur les amis du roi aujourd'hui* (Paris: Albin Michel 1989), 19–20, and Patrick Louis, *Histoire des royalistes: De la Libération à nos jours* (Paris: Grancher 1994).
- 15 Lutte du Peuple was the French counterpart of a left-fascist organization originally founded in Italy in May 1969 by Ugo Gaudenzi and others, the Organizzazione Lotta di Popolo. Among the activists who later became associated with the latter were Enzo Maria Dantini (whose name later appeared on a list of 'Gladio' members) and two notorious 'Nazi-Maoists', Claudio Mutti and Franco Freda. For the French branch, see Algazy, *L'Extrême-Droite*, 150–1, and Bergeron and Vilgier, 97–8.
- 16 For more on Action Française, 'royalist syndicalism' and the Cercle Proudhon, see especially Zeev Sternhell, *La Droite révolutionnaire, 1885–1914: Les Origines françaises du fascisme* (Paris: Seuil 1978), 364–72, 385–400; and Paul Mazgaj, *The Action Française and Revolutionary Syndicalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 1979), 170–93 and *passim*. For Bouchet's own analysis of this transition, see Bouchet interview in Boucher (ed.), *Nouveaux Nationalistes*, 50–1.
- 17 A brief description of the 'national revolutionary' current within the French radical right can be found in Christophe Bourseiller, *Extrême Droite: L'Enquête* (Paris: François Bourin 1991), 107–11.

for ideological or tactical reasons, joined more mainstream rightist organizations—such as the *nouvelle droite's* Groupement de Recherches et d'Études pour la Civilisation Européenne (GRECE) in the early 1980s, Bruno Mégret's Comité d'Action Républicaine (CAR) in 1982, and Mégret's later Front National breakaway group, the Mouvement National Républicain in 1999—he has nonetheless continued to play a leading role in a succession of national revolutionary groupuscules, including the Mouvement Nationaliste Révolutionnaire, Troisième Voie (TV), Nouvelle Résistance and Unité Radicale (UR). During the past two decades he has also been more or less active in the occult and counter-cultural undergrounds, although as will soon become clear the precise nature and extent of his involvement in these spheres remains a matter of controversy.

The organizational history and ideology of Nouvelle Résistance

In February 1979 elements from Lutte du Peuple (including Bouchet), the Groupe Action-Jeunesse (GAJ) and the Groupes Nationalistes Révolutionnaires de Base (GNR) joined together to form the Mouvement Nationaliste Révolutionnaire (MNR) under the leadership of ex-GAJ chief Jean-Gilles Malliarakis, one of the most prominent and interesting of French neo-fascist militants. Ideologically speaking, the MNR was a left-leaning neo-fascist group which promoted a second French Revolution, a 'Europe independent of the blocs', the struggle against 'American imperialism', the 'expropriation' of multinational corporations, the nationalization of big monopolies, the 'abolition of bourgeois privileges', the taxation of capital, and syndicalism, as well as the defence of French and European civilization, a Mediterranean-based foreign policy, economic corporatism, the termination of unskilled immigration, and the establishment of a strong but decentralized state.¹⁸ Given its self-proclaimed revolutionary agenda, the MNR originally avoided any participation in electoral politics, focusing instead on disseminating propaganda, engaging in high-profile street actions, and recruiting, training and organizing youth cadres for political action, which in turn provoked ongoing government surveillance and several police interrogations of Malliarakis. However, it remained a numerically small vanguard group whose attempts to forge alliances with other groupuscules and establish broader umbrella organizations (like the Regroupement Nationaliste) met with failure.¹⁹

In 1985, however, the cadres of the MNR were suddenly reinforced by elements from the Parti des Forces Nouvelles (PFN) and its student group at the time, the Groupe Union Défense (GUD). To attract additional new

18 See the MNR's 'platform' and nineteen-point programme, reprinted in Jean-Gilles Malliarakis, *Ni trusts, ni soviets* (Paris: Trident 1985), 63–74. This ideological agenda, marked as it was by revolutionary romanticism, has been justly characterized by Algazy as 'half-fascist, half-Communist' (*L'Extrême-Droite*, 176).

19 See Alain Rollat, *Les Hommes de l'extrême droite: Le Pen, Marie, Ortiz et les autres* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy 1985), 176–9.

members and systematize its organization, the group decided to change its name to Troisième Voie (TV), although its ideological tenets remained the same. In a 1988 tract prepared by Bouchet, at that time the group's secretary-general, TV claimed to be the 'only national revolutionary movement in France' and set forth a political programme outlining its primary objectives: the independence and unity of Europe, which required the eradication of 'Yankee imperialism' in all of its forms; the replacement of the existing US-dominated system with a direct or semi-direct 'organic democracy', which entailed the nationalization of multinational corporations and the 'abolition of bourgeois privileges'; the 'rediscovery of our doctrinal roots', which meant breaking once and for all with the folkloric and reactionary features of the traditional radical right (both electoral and groupuscular) and reaffirming their ideological debt to non-conformist revolutionary romantics, ranging from French 'socialists' like Auguste Blanqui and Pierre Proudhon to national Bolsheviks like Ernst Niekisch and Karl-Otto Paetel to left-wing fascists like Ramiro Ledesmas Ramos; and, finally, the forging of operational alliances with Third World revolutionaries, radical ecologists and anti-superpower neutralists.²⁰ Although TV's syncretic ideology, which borrowed from both radical-right and radical-left sources, was far from unique in national revolutionary circles, the group also launched various practical initiatives designed to appeal to youthful elements of various counter-cultural undergrounds. To this end TV, a small cadre organization with only a few hundred militants, created a number of satellite formations (and publications) aimed not only at students (Jeune Garde) and workers (the Colectif Syndical Nationaliste), which was standard practice for neo-fascist groups, but also at activist circles of skinheads, such as the Jeunesses Nationalistes-Révolutionnaires (JNR), headed by the infamous 'bootboy' Serge Ayoub, better known as 'Batskin', and other rock 'n' roll and industrial music fans.²¹ Although TV has justly been characterized as 'one of the most active and dynamic' of French radical-right movements of the 1980s, bitter internal debates about whether its militants should join (that is, infiltrate) rightist political parties and/or participate in electoral campaigns led to increasing dissension and factionalism.²²

It was just such a dispute over strategy and tactics that, in August 1991, caused Christian Bouchet—who was at that time the leader of TV's most left-leaning faction, the Tercéristes Radicaux—to break with the parent body and

20 Cited by Christophe Bourseiller, *Les Ennemis du système: Enquête sur les mouvements extrémistes en France* (Paris: Robert Laffont 1989), 189–91.

21 *Ibid.*, 192. Bouchet himself claims to have played a key role in transforming TV from an informal group into a structured cadre organization (see Bouchet (ed.), *Nouveaux Nationalistes*, 54). Aside from the creation of the JNR, another sign of TV's 'opening to youth counter-cultures' was the appearance of underground music reviews in *Révolution européenne*, the organization's monthly journal (see note 45 below). As for 'Batskin', he broke with TV in 1990 and formed a series of new organizations to rally skins and 'hooligans' for political action (e.g. see Jean-Yves Camus and René Monzat, *Les Droites nationales et radicales en France: Répertoire critique* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon 1992), 324–5).

22 Quoted in Bourseiller, *Les ennemis du système*, 193.

form Nouvelle Résistance.²³ Bouchet had been advocating a ‘Trotskyist’ strategy whereby TV would enter the ‘bourgeois’ Front National (FN) as an organized faction, obtain positions on the party’s national council, and thence begin subverting and transforming it from within. Malliarakis initially opposed any sort of entrism strategy, but later changed his mind and urged TV’s activists to join the FN on an individual basis. In the end, these tactical differences could not be reconciled. Bouchet had also begun promoting the creation of a ‘united anti-system front’ composed of disparate revolutionary forces, domestic and foreign, that were uncompromisingly opposed to American imperialism and global capitalism, a task that he felt would be better served by forming a new combat organization. These factors led directly to the establishment of his own groupuscule, NR, to which most of the members of TV’s provincial sections and even some leading figures from its central committee immediately adhered. The new formation quickly set up ‘base groups’ and ‘contact points’ in several French towns and began publishing its own journal, which was originally entitled *Lutte du peuple*. NR subsequently founded a cadre training school and developed a more elaborate organizational structure consisting of an executive council, the movement’s ‘parliament’ and strategic directorate, and an executive bureau divided into four sections, each with nine subsections.²⁴ Despite Bouchet’s own emphasis on the quasi-democratic features of NR, such as consensual decision-making and the election of subsection chiefs, there can be little doubt that as secretary-general he and the other members of the group’s political bureau effectively determined its ideological orientation, political strategy and operational tactics. In the final analysis, NR militants who refused to support the group’s evolving ‘line’ seem to have had few options other than to break away and join or form other groupuscules.²⁵

23 Very little has so far been published on NR, other than a handful of hard-to-obtain academic theses, one scholarly article on NR’s ideological concepts and scattered references in journalistic sources. The following brief account of the schism within TV and the establishment and organization of NR is based on the following materials: Camus and Monzat, 336, 341; the interview with Bouchet in Bouchet (ed.), *Nouveaux Nationalistes*, especially 54–7; and Bouchet Questionnaires I and II.

24 For the group’s organizational structure, see NR’s manifesto, *Pour la cause du peuple* (Nantes: Ars 1992), 25–6. Within the executive bureau, section I was responsible for administration and finance, section II for press and media relations, section III for agitation and propaganda, and section IV for security, intelligence, counter-intelligence (*contre-infiltration*) and ‘infiltration’. In this context, ‘infiltration’ can only refer to the penetration and manipulation of other parties and groups. NR’s cadre school was named after Blanqui. It should also be noted that NR’s principal publication, *Lutte du peuple*, was later renamed *La Voix du peuple*, and subsequently rechristened *Résistance*.

25 NR’s ostensibly democratic features are highlighted in *Pour la cause du peuple*, 25–6, and by Bouchet personally in a 1 July 2001 e-mail to the author, in which he claimed that he was often out-voted by other members of the political bureau. In a subsequent (7 July 2001) e-mail, Bouchet identified the members of NR’s original political bureau as himself, André-Yves Beck (an ex-TV leader and future member of the FN’s central committee), Jean-Marc Vivenza (an ex-TV militant, experimental musician and expert on René Guénon and Buddhism) and Thierry Mudry (an ex-member of GRECE and the Thiriart-inspired Partisans Européens group); later, a new bureau was formed consisting of Bouchet, Beck, Laurent Baudoux (an ex-

Although astute observers have alternately characterized it as ‘national leftist’, ‘national Bolshevik’ or ‘national communist’, and its enemies on the left and right have falsely branded it as a ‘neo-Nazi’ or ‘communist’ group, NR in fact promoted a left-fascist national revolutionary ideology with a Eurasian ‘Nation Europa’ and Third World solidarity orientation. Like all left-wing fascists, NR’s leaders strongly emphasized socialist, anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist themes along with revolutionary nationalism—in this case in the form of pan-European ethnic nationalism (‘from Galway to Vladivostok’) and micro-nationalist self-determination rather than that based on the traditional nation-state—and identified an eclectic array of unconventional radical-right and radical-left personages and groups as their ideological forebears, the most important of whom were a trio of deceased but increasingly influential ‘anti-Western Europeanists’: Ernst Niekisch, Francis Parker Yockey and Jean Thiriart.²⁶ Since Soviet-style Communism was then in the process of collapsing in Eastern Europe, NR purposely abandoned the ‘third position’ designation used by previous left-fascist groups opposed to both superpowers; in these new geopolitical conditions, its sole remaining enemy was the liberal capitalist system of the West, which NR believed was on the verge of attaining political, military, economic and cultural hegemony over the entire planet, in the process mercilessly exploiting people, ravaging the environment, eradicating historic ethno-cultural groups and defusing potential resistance by means of economic co-optation and the propagation of a debilitating bourgeois consumer ethos. The principal animator and chief beneficiary of this homogenizing, totalitarian New World Order was said to be the United States, whose power allegedly rested not only on its own military and economic might, but also on various instruments of ‘neo-colonial’ control, including international organizations, subordinate foreign governments, multinational corporations and the mainstream media.²⁷

TV member who later fell out with Bouchet and joined a ‘national communist’ groupuscule headed by Thiriart enthusiast Luc Michel), Bruno Gayot (a former member of the GAJ, MNR and TV who also later broke with Bouchet and joined Michel), and Fabrice Robert (an ex-TV militant and future member of Unité Radical).

26 See *Pour la cause du peuple*, 10–16. Among the other figures and movements listed as sources of ideological inspiration in NR’s manifesto are revolutionary *putschist* Blanqui; anarchist Proudhon; integral nationalist Maurice Barrès; French fascist Georges Valois; left-leaning Spanish Falangists Ledesmas and Manuel Hedilla; the Futurists; radical Italian ‘fascists of the first hour’; inter-war German national Bolsheviks; anti-Nazi Strasserites; and revolutionary nationalist Third World dictators like Juan Perón of Argentina and Jamal ‘Abd-al Nasir of Egypt. The symbols adopted by NR were likewise borrowed from disparate political sources: the five-pointed star used by post-war left-wing guerrillas and terrorists; the black-and-red flags employed by Ledesmas’s movement; the eagle associated with the national-Bolshevik group Widerstand; and the sword and hammer employed by Otto Strasser’s Schwarze Front. An excellent analysis of certain features of NR’s ideology can be found in Jean-Yves Camus, ‘Une avant-garde populiste: *peuple* et *nation* dans le discours de Nouvelle Résistance’, *Mots*, no. 55, June 1998, 128–38.

27 For NR’s virulent critique of ‘Yankee imperialism’ in all of its alleged guises, see *Pour la cause du peuple*, 9–10, 13–14, 16–21. For its shift of focus from a previously ‘double’ enemy to a present ‘single’ enemy, see Camus and Monzat, 341.

The political strategy and tactics of Nouvelle Résistance

What, then, was to be done? NR believed that it was necessary to lay the organizational and cultural groundwork for an anti-system revolution, both in Europe and elsewhere. Given the unfavourable nature of the existing balance of power, however, it was premature to try to organize and launch a 'protracted people's war', much less a violent *putsch* against the political establishment. The initiation of armed struggle depended on the existence of what Bouchet referred to as an 'external lung' (a non-European country that could provide assistance) or a 'Piedmont' (a European region that could serve as a logistical and operational base). In the meantime, the task of revolutionary groups like NR was to pursue an arduous, long-term 'counter-power' strategy designed, slowly but surely, to undermine the authority and legitimacy of the system. To help accomplish this, NR advocated the creation of 'liberated zones' and 'concrete utopias' inside the belly of the beast: a veritable 'counter-society' consisting of a decentralized network of alternative institutions operating within the interstices of mainstream society (small businesses, co-operatives, agricultural communes, media outlets, artisanal enterprises etc.) that would not only contribute to economic self-sufficiency but also showcase NR's anti-establishment values.²⁸ NR claimed that there was already widespread popular dissatisfaction with the bourgeois system and that many other oppositional groups, whether or not they realized it, held views close to its own. Even so, such an ambitious strategic objective appears rather grandiose for an 'ultra-minoritarian' groupuscule with perhaps 150–300 committed activists—and the ability to mobilize a few hundred more on special occasions—and a press that at most reached a few thousand.²⁹ This seemingly insurmountable problem of numerical weakness, together with NR's own ideological proclivities, caused the organization to lay special emphasis on, first, the provision of 'active support to all anti-system resistances abroad' and, second, the utilization of a complex infiltration/entrism strategy *vis-à-vis* other political, social and cultural groups. Both require further clarification.

Since the threat posed by the American-dominated capitalist New World Order was perceived as global, resistance to this system also had to be organized on a global scale. As a result, NR sought to forge a 'united anti-system front' on a quadri-continental level. This could not be accomplished until the 'false' right/left dichotomy and other 'sterile' ideological cleavages, which had long divided revolutionaries into rival camps and thereby only benefitted the system, were abandoned and replaced by a new and supposedly more apt pro-system 'centre'/anti-system 'periphery' dichotomy. Since the traditional

28 *Pour la cause du peuple*, 22–4. See also Troy Southgate's interview with Bouchet in *The English Alternative*.

29 *Pour la cause du peuple*, 8, 13, 23. For estimates of NR's numerical strength, see Jean-Yves Camus (ed.), *Extrémismes en Europe* (Paris: L'Aube/Luc Pire/Centre Européen de Recherche et d'Action sur le Racisme et l'Antisémitisme (CERA) 1997), 181; Jean-Yves Camus (ed.), *Les Extrémismes en Europe: État des lieux en 1998* (Paris: L'Aube/Luc Pire/CERA 1998), 185; and especially the 3 August 1994 Bouchet letter reproduced in Rossi, 345.

extreme right and orthodox far left had allegedly been co-opted and integrated into the system, it was necessary to rally all of the marginalized, non-conformist, 'peripheral' forces that remained steadfastly opposed to the *status quo*, wherever they could be found.³⁰ In order to achieve this objective, NR committed itself to providing active (though not necessarily uncritical) support to all the movements, organizations and regimes that were openly resisting American imperialism and globalization, ranging from left-wing guerrillas to the extra-parliamentary right, from radical ecologists to ethno-cultural separatists, from 'patriotic socialists' to non-reactionary nationalists, from indigenous peoples struggling for self-determination to Muslim fundamentalists resisting modernization, from anti-bourgeois youth movements to protesting workers and students, and from anti-western Third World regimes to the fossilized remnants of Stalinism. Such support was manifested in several ways.

First of all, NR lauded an extraordinary assortment of revolutionary groups and anti-American regimes in its various publications, and sometimes even organized public demonstrations in support of their causes. To provide only a few examples, one can find paeans to fascist intellectuals, the Zapatistas in Mexico, Che Guevara, Earth First!, former left-wing Euroterrorists, Mu'ammarr al-Qadhafi's Libya, neo-Peronist Argentina, North Korea, Fidel Castro's Cuba, contemporary Russian Communists, Palestinian groups of both the Marxist and Islamist persuasions, Basque and Corsican separatists, pan-African organizations, and fallen nineteenth-century Communards, all within the pages of *Lutte du peuple*.³¹ Second, leading NR militants have

30 *Pour la cause du peuple*, 17–18, 21–2. NR's scheme for forging an anti-system operational alliance between right- and left-wing revolutionaries was heavily indebted to the provocative ideas first expounded by 'Nazi-Maoist' Franco Freda in *La disintegrazione del sistema* (Padua: Ar 1969), whereas the 'centre/periphery' division was borrowed from *nouvelle droite* theorist Alain de Benoist. Obviously, NR would have found it impossible to embark on an 'opening to the left' and 'solidarity with the Third World' strategy had it not explicitly defended all struggles for national self-determination, including those within former European and French colonies. Needless to say, such a view was diametrically opposed to the rabidly pro-colonial attitudes of 1960s neo-fascist groups like Occident. Even NR's anti-immigration views were couched in pseudo-leftist, non-racist terms.

31 It would take up too much space to document this fully. Representative examples from *Lutte du peuple* include: '25 anniversaire du Front populaire pour la libération de la Palestine', no. 13, February–March 1993, 8–11; 'Dossier panafricanisme', no. 22, May–June 1994, 4–7; 'Verts et régionalistes, l'espoir du renouveau', no. 23, September–October 1994, 12–15; 'Kim Il Sung, 15 avril 1912–8 juillet 1994', no. 24, November–December 1994, 9; 'Chiapas, un an après', no. 25, January–February 1995, 5–7; 'Entretien avec un militant d'Earth First!', no. 28, September–October 1995, 8; and 'Che, un héros nationaliste révolutionnaire', no. 30, February–March 1996, 5. As Bouchet himself later put it, when asked where he located himself on the political spectrum: 'I am much closer to a Carlos [the Jackal] or a Horst Mahler [ex-Rote Armee Fraktion], both of whom are from the extreme left, than I am to a Romain Marie [né Bernard Anthony, head of the Catholic integralist wing of the FN]' (quoted in Bouchet (ed.), *Nouveaux Nationalistes*, 88). Indeed, one finds laudatory articles and/or interviews with both Carlos and Mahler in NR's publications: Daniel Milan, 'Notre ami Carlos', *Résistance*, no. 3, March 1998, 25; Kai-Uwe Zwetschke, 'Nouvelles convergences en Allemagne: Horst Mahler, un itinéraire rouge-brun', *Résistance*, no. 8, date illegible, which was followed by an interview with the former left-wing terrorist, who (along with several other German New Leftists) has since moved far to the right.

repeatedly initiated contacts with their counterparts in other radical groups in order to foster mutual co-operation, if not to form outright alliances, and have likewise travelled overseas to meet with representatives of several anti-American regimes, including Libya, Iraq, Iran and North Korea, as well as politicians in post-Communist Russia.³² Finally, NR was one of the driving forces in the creation of a new Front Européen de Libération (FEL), an international umbrella organization inspired by Yockey's original version and modelled after Thiriart's Jeune Europe network, which was intended to strengthen the collaboration between left-fascist, ecology, regionalist and unorthodox left movements in different parts of the world. Its founders sought to emulate the Comintern by laying the basis for a European party with a national directorate on the continental level and regional directorates in each nation. The FEL's membership has fluctuated somewhat since its establishment in the autumn of 1991, but it has so far been confined almost exclusively to left-fascist and national-Bolshevik groups. Among these have been Juan Llopart's Alternativa Europea from Spain, Patrick Harrington's Third Way (initially) and then Troy Southgate's National Revolutionary Faction from Britain, Eduard Limonov and Aleksandr Dugin's Natsionalno-Bolshevistskaia Partiiia from Russia, and—in the extra-European, FEL-sponsored Liaison Committee for Revolutionary Nationalists—the Arkansas-based American Front from the United States and Kerry Bolton's National Destiny from New Zealand.³³ In short, NR assiduously sought to compensate for its own numerical weakness by linking up with anti-system forces throughout the world.

In France, the group instead endeavoured to augment its influence by pursuing an elaborate and perhaps incompatible coalition and entrism strategy. On the one hand, it sought to link up with a diverse array of radical extra-parliamentary groups, join the coalitions they had formed and participate in their anti-system agitation and propaganda activities. For example, NR was actively involved in the campaigns against McDonald's and Eurodisney, the protests against NATO intervention in the Balkans and the World Trade Organization, demonstrations in support of the renewal of the Palestinian *intifada* and the lifting of sanctions on Iraq, and local ecological

32 Bouchet interview in Bouchet (ed.), *Nouveaux Nationalistes*, 58–9. For actual examples, see 'Le Front européen de libération à Teheran', *Lutte du peuple*, no. 22, May–June 1994, 11; '15 jours en Libye', *Lutte du peuple*, no. 25, January–February 1995, 8–12; and 'Quand Guenadi Zaganov soutenait la Front européen de libération', *Lutte du peuple*, no. 31, April–May 1996, 8.

33 For the FEL, see Georges Kergon, 'Le Front européen de Libération', in *Rapport 1995: Panorama des actes racistes et de l'extrémisme de droite en Europe* (Paris: Centre de Recherche d'Information et de Documentation Antiraciste 1996), 219–26. See also Bouchet's interview in *The English Alternative*. For the group's own manifesto, see Troy Southgate, 'The manifesto of the European Liberation Front', 1999, www.obsidian-blade.com/synthesis/articles/elf.htm (as of 29 May 2002). According to Bouchet, the FEL was designed in part to replace the Groupe du 12 Mars, an earlier international co-ordinating body that TV, the Italian group Terza Posizione, and Belgian *nouvelle droite* activist Robert Steuckers had founded in March 1988 (compare Bouchet (ed.), *Nouveaux Nationalistes*, 57, and Camus and Monzat, 91). Note that the FEL was named after an earlier transnational fascist network called the European Liberation Front, the brainchild of one of NR's mentors, Francis Parker Yockey (see Coogan).

activism.³⁴ On the other hand, it periodically collaborated with ‘national populist’ political parties and participated in electoral campaigns. Although the group’s manifesto went to great trouble to provide a theoretical justification for future interaction with both anti-system forces and rightist electoral parties, in actual practice this seemingly contradictory course of action was viewed with great suspicion by militants within NR itself.³⁵ Inevitably, such overtures to ‘reactionaries’ provoked dissension and organizational schisms. One such instance occurred in the latter half of 1996—after Bouchet’s adoption of a policy encouraging NR activists also to become members of the Front National—when the self-proclaimed ‘progressive wing’ openly broke with Bouchet, sought to expel his faction from NR and thence adhered to Luc Michel’s Belgian-based Parti Communautaire National-Européen, a group of ‘national communist’ ultras who considered themselves the true heirs of Jean Thiriart.³⁶

34 Some NR activists had earlier gone to Croatia and Bosnia to resist Serb aggression but, after NATO got militarily involved in Balkan affairs, NR began portraying Serbia as a victim of western imperialism (see Bouchet (ed.), *Nouveaux Nationalistes*, 58–9, 87; and Emma Patissier, ‘Aggression contre la Serbie: Crapuscule de l’Occident’, *Résistance*, no. 8, date illegible).

35 NR’s manifesto stressed that revolutionary organizations could not afford to adopt a rigid structure, since they had to remain flexible enough to adapt quickly to sudden changes in the political environment. According to the circumstances, then, NR sometimes needed to act under its own name, whereas on other occasions it was necessary for it to carry out actions using the cover provided by a wide array of specialized structures or publications whose links with NR may or may not have been apparent. If the situation warranted it, NR must even be able to ‘dissolve’ inside larger and more influential political organizations. Moreover, NR actively encouraged its militants to join a multiplicity of other groups and parties and, once they had become members, to attain positions of responsibility inside those entities. At no time, however, were NR militants to abandon their core values or lose sight of their political objectives (see *Pour la cause du peuple*, 24–5). This clearly provided a theoretical rationale for the launching of penetration and infiltration operations against other groups, which could then, depending upon the situation, enable NR to recruit members of other groups, openly advocate certain ‘lines’ from inside their ranks or—in Trojan Horse fashion—covertly undermine and subvert their agendas. This last possibility must be taken seriously given the existence of a special NR section responsible for ‘infiltration’ and Bouchet’s own later admissions: ‘In order to give [the united anti-system front] substance, we were reduced to infiltrating anarchistic, ecological and regionalist groups or creating them ourselves.’ As examples of NR’s exercise of covert control over infiltrated organizations, he has cited the French section of Earth First!, Ecolo-J (the youth organization of the French Greens) and the French section of the Trotskyist Socialist Worker’s Party (see Bouchet (ed.), *Nouveaux Nationalistes*, 61, and Bouchet’s interview in *The English Alternative*). It is difficult for an outsider to determine just how successful this infiltration strategy actually was.

36 For this schism, see ‘Néo-nazisme: Les Militants nationaux-révolutionnaires rejoignent les nationaux-bolshéviques’, *Réseau Voltaire*, 11 November 1996; and various materials prepared by the ‘progressive wing’ itself, including a 10 August 2001 e-mail sent to the author, to which were appended two documents: Bruno Gayot, ‘Right of reply of the Nouvelle Résistance Association (Law of 1901) to the magazine “Résistances” (Brussels), 5 February 1999’, and Laurent Baudoux, ‘Right of reply of the “Front Européen de Liberation” Association (Law of 1910) to the magazine “Résistances” (Brussels), 5 February 1999’. These latter sources reveal that there is an ongoing dispute between Bouchet and his rivals concerning who is legally entitled to use the names NR and FEL, even though most outside observers associate both monikers exclusively with the organizations created by Bouchet and his faction. The ‘progressives’ confirm, however, that their break with Bouchet was motivated primarily by his decision to join the ‘fascists’ in the FN, but also note their opposition to his ‘sectarian’ and ‘anti-Christian’ activities, i.e. ‘underground music, satanism and so on’.

Despite these costly defections, Bouchet was now determined to expand his organization's influence far beyond what was typical for an insular, sectarian groupuscule, and as such he continued to advocate an entrism strategy in the group's meetings and publications, as well as to woo elements of the electoral right that he felt could be further radicalized.

In the summer of 1997, having taken cognizance of the increasingly blue-collar social composition of the FN and the growing influence of *nouvelle droite* thinkers within its ranks, Bouchet 'decided to dissolve NR and work as a fraction both in and out of the FN using the names Résistance and Jeune Résistance'. As he later put it, 'we now try to have an influence on [the FN's] youth group and on its more radical wing . . . [and] work as *Militant* has done in the [British] Labour Party'.³⁷ Since then, Bouchet claims that his group has continued to gain adherents and influence in nationalist circles. In NR's place, the Union des Cercles Résistance (UCR) and Jeune Résistance (JR) were created. Unité Radicale was officially founded in June 1998, when the GUD formed an alliance with the UCR and JR, and it has since become the main vehicle for Bouchet's political activism.³⁸ According to its own statement of purpose, UR's aim was to serve as a pole or pivot for rallying and organizing the radical, extra-parliamentary elements of the 'national movement' in France so that they could exert a much greater ideological influence and thereby counter the attempts by rightist moderates and careerists to compromise with the system. As NR had ended up doing, UR urged its members and sympathizers to join rightist electoral parties, help strengthen the influence of their radical rank-and-file members, attain positions of responsibility within the host organizations, and work to get its preferred candidates elected to political office. The aim was not to seize political power on its own, but to create a national revolutionary organization capable of conditioning the entire national movement, in the same way that the Gauche Socialiste group was able to condition the French Socialist Party. Such an aggressive entrism strategy would thus allow UR to become 'more than a groupuscule'.³⁹

Within UR, the UCR was the section made up of working professionals, Jeune Résistance of high school students and young workers, and the GUD of university students. Like NR, UR formed 'base groups' everywhere it was active. These groups were in turn linked to the organization's Collectif National de Coordination, the body responsible for co-ordinating and directing UR's political activities, campaigns and press by means of regular

37 Bouchet interview in *The English Alternative*, and Bouchet Questionnaire II.

38 This account is based on Bouchet Questionnaire II and several key UR publications, including: *Questions et réponses: Qu'est-ce qu'Unité Radicale* (Nantes: Ars Magna n.d.); *Notre programme* (n.d.); *Front politique* (n.d.); and *Front international* (n.d.), all of which can be found on UR's website (www.unite-radicale.com) (as of 14 May 2002).

39 See especially *Questions et réponses*, 2–6. The rest of this document discusses UR's ideological sources and international orientation, which are very similar to those of TV and NR (7–14). For UR's programme, see *Notre programme*. The group constituted, like its predecessor NR, the French section of the FEL (see *Front international*, 2).

national conferences and internal bulletins.⁴⁰ In 1999, when Bruno Mégret abandoned the FN and formed the Mouvement National Républicain, UR hastened to offer the latter its 'total' support. Although UR has retained full organizational autonomy to this day, in accordance with their proclaimed strategy Bouchet and many of his organization's members at once joined Mégret's new group, 'deeply penetrated' it, obtained positions on its national council, and actively participated in its electoral campaigns. UR's support for Mégret was neither uncritical nor unconditional, though, since it was to be immediately withdrawn if the new party softened its anti-immigration stance. Furthermore, the immigration issue was not the only potential bone of contention between the two organizations, as Bouchet recently criticized Mégret's 'Islamists out of France' platform for being too pro-American.⁴¹

Nor did its links to Mégret's party mean that electoral politics had become an end in itself for UR. On the contrary, in September 2000 Bouchet was among the signatories of a petition in which the formation of a 'trans-movement organization' called La CoordiNation was announced: 'For us the important thing is not [one's] party membership card', but one's willingness to take action in defence of nationalist principles. At this juncture, the petition continued, the most pressing need was to reverse the nation's growing social fragmentation, itself fuelled primarily by state-sanctioned ethnic integration.⁴²

Combat on the (counter-)cultural front

Bouchet's various groupuscules, however, did not confine their actions exclusively to political matters. Indeed, one of the most noteworthy features of NR (and later UR) was its efforts to operate and exert influence in the cultural sphere, particularly in various counter-cultural youth undergrounds. As Bouchet himself put it: 'I think that the cultural fight must be as important as the political fight . . . [a] grassroots cultural fight and not one of the university variety', a sentiment echoed in UR's own statement of purpose:

[Cultural combat] is indispensable for us. We are aware that one can gain more sympathizers with a CD than with a newspaper, with a song or a comic book than with a tract . . . For us it's not a matter of influencing the culture of the elite but the culture of the people. Thus our cultural combat is being conducted on the level of record labels, comic book publishing houses and the promotion of musical groups. We have a weakness for thinking that a good CD that is listened to by working-class youth [*la jeunesse populaire*] and that can spread our ideas to them has more importance than a GRECE colloquium that does nothing but reinforce the ideas of those already convinced.⁴³

⁴⁰ *Questions et réponses*, 6–7; *Front politique*, 1.

⁴¹ *Questions et réponses*, 2–4; Bouchet 16 July 2001 e-mail. Bouchet himself obtained nearly 7 per cent of the vote in the most recent French district elections. For his open criticism of Mégret's anti-Islamist stance after 11 September 2001, see Esbé, 'French fascists declare war on the enemy within', *Searchlight*, no. 317, November 2001, 11.

⁴² See *Appel aux militants des forces nationales* (Paris: CoordiNation 2000).

⁴³ Compare Bouchet interview in *The English Alternative* (first quote), and *Questions et réponses*, 12 (second quote).

Elsewhere in *Questions et réponses*, the importance of targetting and ‘re-nationalizing’ young people was likewise clearly emphasized.⁴⁴ This recognition of the importance of cultural struggle helps to explain the extensive coverage of underground music in NR and UR publications, as well as the publication of underground music fanzines by circles close to Bouchet.

As has been noted, *Troisième Voie* (TV) had previously pursued an ‘opening to youth counter-cultures’ strategy by creating a skinhead front group and giving some coverage to underground rock ‘n’ roll and industrial music. At first glance the musical coverage in *Révolution européenne* does not seem altogether atypical of that found in ‘hip’ alternative culture publications—Johnny Cash rated a good review, whereas US corporate pop acts like Madonna and Michael Jackson did not—but a closer perusal clearly reveals TV’s political biases. For example, the increasingly commercial left-wing punk band *Bérurier Noir* was criticized, among other things, for displaying a phony, hypocritical anti-system stance, given that some of its concerts were sponsored by government cultural agencies, whereas pile-driving 1977-era French synth punk group *Métal Urbaine* was praised for exhibiting a nihilistic and allegedly Nietzschean worldview.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, *Batskin*’s skinhead followers established close links with certain neo-fascist Oi labels, such as ex-TV militant Gaël Bodilis’s *Rebelles Européennes* record label and distribution company in Brest. Coverage of underground music was also quite common in NR’s succession of publications, although in this case the blatantly political nature of the articles and interviews was impossible to miss. In their ‘*Bruits Européens*’ section, one can find promotional pieces on a host of far-right musical groups that span the stylistic spectrum, including Britain’s *Death in June* (industrial) and *Sol Invictus* (‘apocalyptic folk’), Italy’s *Londinium SPQR* (Oi), Austria’s *Allerseelen* (experimental), North America’s *RAHOWA* (metallic hardcore), Sweden’s *Unleashed* (death metal), and France’s *Frakass* (Oi), *Animae Mortalitas* (black metal), *Kayserbund* (electronic) and *Brixia* (Celtic pop). Even more astonishingly, the sort of techno music favoured by ravers was lauded as ‘European’ and anti-liberal, and Breton rap band *Basic Celtos* was enthusiastically promoted despite the black American origins of the particular style of music they embraced. Other articles exhibited naiveté regarding the ‘spirituality’ of heavy metal, foolishness concerning the cultural rootedness of the Turbo-Folk music peddled by right-wing Serbian paramilitary leader ‘Arkan’ and his gangster associates, and wishful thinking about the growing ‘fascist’ character of contemporary music.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ *Questions et réponses*, 5.

⁴⁵ See e.g. Christian Villa, ‘The long black man’, *Révolution européenne*, no. 15–16, June 1989, 10; ‘Michael Jackson: made in USA’, *Révolution européenne*, no. 7, June–July 1988, 9; Cédric Martin, ‘Bérurier Noir: Assis à la gauche de Goldman’, *Révolution européenne*, no. 17–18, July–August 1989, 8; and Pierre Dénghien, ‘Métal Urbaine: Les Nietzscheans du No Future’, *Révolution européenne*, no. 19, September 1989, 9.

⁴⁶ See e.g. ‘Revolte contre le monde musique: Entretien avec Tony Wakeford de Sol Invictus’, *Résistance*, no. 2, December 1997–January 1998, 31–3; Fabrice Robert, ‘Londinium SPQR:

Perhaps more importantly, Bouchet and other NR leaders also tacitly supported—or possibly even secretly sponsored—the publication of several counter-cultural fanzines that had no official links to his various political groupuscules. According to French journalists, anti-fascist ‘watchdog’ groups and his political enemies inside the nationalist camp, NR had close connections to the Rouge et Noir distribution company and underground music magazines such as *Raven’s Chat*, *Requiem gothique* and above all *Napalm Rock*, the successor to an earlier hard rock magazine called *Métal Assaut*. These claims have been confirmed by Bouchet himself and by Michael Moynihan, a source friendly to Bouchet and co-author of *Lords of Chaos*, the most detailed work that has yet appeared on the violent, right-wing fringes of the black metal counter-culture, who quoted the remarks of ‘Gungnir’, the editor of *Napalm Rock*, to the effect that the magazine was ‘issued regularly under the auspices of Nouvelle Résistance’.⁴⁷ This is rather illuminating, not only because the contents of *Napalm Rock* were very extreme in their support for anti-Christian violence, but also because a scandal erupted when copies of

Un Groupe au service de l’idéal NR’, *Résistance*, no. 3, March 1998, 33–4; ‘Rencontre avec Kadmon du groupe Allerseeelen’, *Lutte du peuple*, no. 31, April–May 1996, 15; ‘Entretien avec Anima Mortalitas, groupe de black metal nationaliste’, *Jeune Résistance*, no. 10, April–May 1998, 10–11; ‘Entretien avec le groupe Frakass’, *Jeune Résistance*, no. 11, June–July 1998, 10; ‘Entretien avec Basic Celtos’, *Jeune Résistance*, no. 15, date illegible; ‘Raves et techno: Un phénomène néo-européen?’, *Lutte du peuple*, no. 29, November–December 1995, 11–14; and Karl Hauffen, ‘Nous vivons une époque formidable: La Musique est-elle fasciste?’, *Jeune Résistance*, no. 14, December 1998. Note, however, that, in his 3 August 1994 letter cited above, Bouchet emphasized that NR was linked much more closely, culturally speaking, with ‘post-industrial and industrial music’ circles than with skinhead Oi music fans, who ‘are incapable of being organized according to Leninist principles’ (reproduced in Rossi, 345).

47 For the links between NR and these underground music fanzines, see especially Bouchet Questionnaire II, wherein he reveals that *Napalm Rock* was an unofficial publication put out by a member of NR; that *Raven’s Chat* was published by a NR sympathizer; and that *Requiem gothique* was published by another NR member; on the other hand, that NR had no connection at all to *Combat* (a fanzine put out by students in Aix-en-Provence who were mostly FN members) or *Deo Occidi* (a music zine published by neo-Nazis). Compare the journalistic accounts of Romain Rosso, ‘Les Profanations sont d’extrême droite’, *L’Express*, no. 2350, 18 June 1996, 43 (which conveniently displays a reproduction of the ‘Wanted for Crimes against Humanity’ poster about Jesus Christ from *Napalm Rock*, no. 4); Bourre, 49–50, 57–8, 64–9, 185–8; Paul Ariés, *Le Retour du diable: Satanisme, exorcisme, extrême droite* (Brussels: Golias 1997), 8, 86–7, 235–6; and Michael Moynihan and Didrik Søderlind, *Lords of Chaos: The Bloody Rise of the Satanic Metal Underground* (Venice, CA: Feral House 1998), 274, 309 (‘Gungnir’ quote). Moynihan’s own involvement in the counter-cultural right-wing underground has been documented by Kevin Coogan in ‘How “black” is black metal?’, *Hit List*, vol. 1, no. 1, February–March 1999, 32–53. Not surprisingly, Moynihan’s experimental band Blood Axis has frequently been promoted in Bouchet’s publications (see e.g. ‘Rencontre avec Michael Moynihan du groupe Blood Axis’, *Lutte du peuple*, no. 32, spring 1996, 15). The most hostile accounts can be found in far-left and far-right sources, e.g. [International Third Position (ITP)], *Satanism and Its Allies: The Nationalist Movement under Attack* (London: Final Conflict 1998), 61–4, 73–5. The ITP was a new groupuscule created by former third-positionist Irish fascist Derek Holland after he converted to Catholic traditionalism. The aforementioned pamphlet, though chock full of vulgar Jew-baiting and gay-baiting, not to mention acute paranoia about real and imagined manifestations of satanism, nonetheless contains lots of ‘inside’ information that helps to shed light on important factional rifts within the radical-right milieu.

this black metal fanzine and NR's internal bulletin *Rune* were later found by police in the possession of the four youths who had desecrated the Toulon cemetery on the evening of 8–9 June 1996. As examples of *Napalm Rock's* anti-mainstream views, one can cite the 'wanted poster' accusing Jesus Christ of 'crimes against humanity' that appeared in issue number 4, as well as the thirty-page dossier in issue 3 devoted to black metal that described convicted Swedish church-burner and murderer Varg Vikernes as a 'proud and valiant Viking warrior' who was imprisoned after committing acts of violence 'for the political and spiritual liberation of his country'.⁴⁸ Although subsequent left-wing media campaigns linking rightist political organizations like NR, the neo-pagan GRECE and the FN (through NR leader Beck, at the time an assistant to the FN mayor of Orange) to the wave of cemetery 'profanations' then being carried out in southern France appear to be politically motivated 'guilt-by-association' polemics, there is no doubt that publications like *Napalm Rock* openly applauded the extreme actions of black metal musicians like Burzum's Vikernes, thereby indirectly encouraging other disaffected youths to emulate them. It may be, then, that for a time these semi-independent fanzines played an integral role in NR's strategy of rallying and mobilizing 'anti-system' forces, in this instance those on the cultural fringes.⁴⁹

48 For a brief account of the so-called 'profanation of Toulon', see Ariés, 7–9. For an illuminating overview of various occult dimensions of the post-war radical right, see Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism and the Politics of Identity* (New York: New York University Press 2002).

49 Jean-Paul Bourre has argued that both NR's leaders and black metal extremists detested the Judaeo-Christian ethos and shared a mutual desire to 'destabilize the system, in noise and fury, like the pagan bands of ancient times' (62). This raises the thorny issue of Bouchet's longstanding personal interest in paganism, esotericism and occultism, as well as his previous association with practising occultist organizations like the Crowleyite Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO) and occult 'study groups' like the Groupe de Thèbes. Note that his doctoral thesis in ethnology (from the University of Paris VII) concerned the 'scandalous' English hedonist and magician Aleister Crowley, and was later self-published as *Aleister Crowley et le mouvement Thélémite* (Château-Thébaud: Chaos n.d.). Bouchet has always insisted that NR and its predecessors and successors were completely secular and included Christians, Muslims, pagans, atheists and agnostics, and that his occult and political activities were completely distinct. This does not seem to have always been true, however. While giving a lecture in Moscow to the Russian branch of the OTO, e.g., he reportedly stressed the close links between Nazism and secret societies and downplayed accounts of Nazi atrocities: see Frater Marsyas, 'Mega Therion and his books in the Russian tradition', accessible on the Pan's Asylum Camp OTO website, <http://oto.ru/cgi/texteng.pl/article/texts/2> (as of 14 May 2002). While this claim cannot be independently confirmed, and has in fact been denied outright by Bouchet in a 4 September 2001 e-mail to the author, there are indications that Bouchet sometimes used his political formations as a vehicle to promote neo-pagan and anti-Christian themes. One can, e.g., find anti-Catholic attitudes in NR's publications, and not only in the music section: 'Non à la secte papale! Exigeons notre retrait des registres de baptêmes!', *Lutte du peuple*, no. 28, September–October 1995, 7; 'Dehors Popaul!', *Lutte du peuple*, no. 31, April–May 1996, 10. In the same 4 September e-mail, Bouchet claimed that his harsh criticisms of Catholic traditionalist penetration of the 'national movement' were attributable not to neo-pagan animus, but rather to the longstanding French tradition of political secularism. He added that it would have been politically counterproductive for NR to have promoted neo-paganism; domestically, it would have cut the movement off from the popular masses, consigned it to a political ghetto and turned it into a political-religious sect, and, internationally,

The crucial question here is whether Bouchet's extensive efforts to penetrate and influence various youth counter-cultures were basically manipulative political ploys or whether certain youthful militants within his succession of movements had a genuine counter-cultural sensibility and were thus true fans of the different types of underground music they promoted. Although this question is perhaps impossible for an outsider to answer, there is some evidence to suggest that both processes were at work simultaneously. It seems clear, for example, that despite his political non-conformity and interest in the occult, Bouchet himself is something of a 'square', at least in the context of youth counter-cultures. After all, in a 1998 article, one of his principle complaints about the '68 generation' was that they had institutionalized 'slovenly dress'. On the other hand, a certain Bertrand, an activist in *Troisième Voie* who was interviewed by journalist Christophe Bourseiller, was clearly a 'hip' character with a real love for, and knowledge of, fringe culture and alternative rock.⁵⁰ Even if one adopts the most cynical interpretation possible, namely that Bouchet and his comrades were feigning interest in youth counter-cultures in order to manipulate and exploit them for their own partisan purposes, the fact remains that they at least recognized the importance of these movements in the ongoing struggle for cultural hegemony, whereas the most nostalgic, reactionary and 'square' elements within the firmament of the radical right have until very recently tended to remain unambiguously hostile to them.⁵¹

Fascism: beyond right and left

The above case-study of *Nouvelle Résistance* helps to illustrate many of the characteristic features of neo-fascist groupuscules in the post-war era. First, it demonstrates that such grouplets were flexible, hybrid formations capable of serving a wide variety of purposes depending on the specific political and ideological context. Among other things, for example, NR served as an activist cadre organization, a publishing house, a radical current inside more

it would have interfered with NR's efforts to establish useful contacts with Arab and other Muslim groups. Yet, even though it may have been unwise for NR to promote radical neo-paganism openly or officially, this does not rule out the possibility that the organization's leaders secretly sought to make use of other, seemingly unaffiliated, groups and publications—including counter-cultural fanzines—to disseminate neo-pagan, anti-Christian themes.

50 Compare and contrast the attitudes expressed by Christian Bouchet in 'Mai 68 et après', *Résistance*, no. 5, July–August 1998, 6–7, and those of Bertrand, quoted in Bourseiller, *Les ennemis du système*, 187–9.

51 Note the complaints by the founder of the Spanish national revolutionary rock 'n' roll label Ra-Ta-Ta-Ta, who bemoaned the fact that 'petit-bourgeois' Francoists, such as the members of Blas Piñar's party *Fuerza Nueva*, still condemned rock (see 'Entretien avec la label Ra-Ta-Ta-Ta', *Résistance*, no. 8, date illegible). This lament was echoed by Gregory Ombrouck (alias 'Gungnir'), the editor of *Napalm Rock*: 'In France nationalist movements (with the exception of *Nouvelle Résistance*) ignore rock music and culture in general' (quoted in Moynihan and Söderlind, 310). (This statement was not entirely true, since long before the mid-1990s various neo-fascist groupuscules were seeking to promote and exploit Oi music for their own political purposes, and it is even less true today, now that elements within the 'bourgeois' FN are busily promoting *Rock Identitaire Français*.)

mainstream political parties, a liaison organization between other national revolutionary and national-Bolshevik groups, a transmission belt for anti-American and anti-Israeli propaganda, a mechanism for covert infiltration, and a bridge into the counter-cultural underground. Second, its organizational history was marked throughout by the complex fission and fusion processes typical of the groupuscular milieu, in which contentious activists come together for a time before breaking away from one another and moving off in new directions, much like unstable particles on the molecular and subatomic levels. One of the chief reasons for this was that NR's infiltration/entrism strategy was inherently contradictory: how, after all, can one simultaneously appeal both to nationalist moderates *and* anti-system revolutionaries, to 'bourgeois squares' *and* counter-cultural rebels? Third, it suggests that such groupuscules may at times exert a degree of political or intellectual influence out of proportion to their limited numerical strength, in the sense that NR militants, in order to achieve their goal of forging a united front of anti-system forces, simultaneously operated and disseminated their radical notions in diverse spheres, both inside France and beyond, ranging from rightist political parties to other far-right groupuscules to circles of radical ecologists to non-conformist ultra-leftists to key figures within the occult, neo-pagan and music undergrounds. Finally, NR is in certain respects emblematic of the crucially important ideological and cultural shifts that have taken place within the neo-fascist milieu between the early 1970s and the present, particularly its increasing openness to left-wing ideological conceptions and unconventional counter-cultural lifestyles.

Indeed, NR was itself a product, directly or indirectly, of the dramatic post-1968 resurgence of left-fascist intellectual currents. As noted above, the bulk of the European right, whether moderate or extreme, responded to the traumatic worker and student revolts that broke out in the late 1960s with undisguised fear and hostility, and hence many right-wing ultras ended up actively colluding with the forces of order to repress the left. As early as 1968, however, certain small groups of neo-fascist radicals began expressing open sympathy for the student protesters, to the point where a few even joined them on the barricades in an effort to bring down the hated 'bourgeois' system. Most of these fascist radicals were either members of left-fascist groupuscules inspired by Thiriart's geopolitical conceptions or individual fascist non-conformists who were seduced by diverse aspects of the 1960s youth counter-culture, such as Hartwig Singer and Ugo Gaudenzi. By the mid-1970s, several new left-leaning 'national revolutionary' groups had appeared on the scene, including the Nationalrevolutionäre Aufbauorganisation in Germany, the Organisation Lutte du Peuple in France, and Terza Posizione in Italy, and a new rightist youth counter-culture began to be forged, a process exemplified by the sudden appearance of the youth-oriented 'Hobbit Camps' in Italy.⁵²

52 For the (sometimes violent) disputes between minority pro-protester and majority anti-protester elements within the neo-fascist milieu following the outbreak of left-wing student

Since then, this fledgling underground radical-right youth culture has rapidly evolved and increasingly adopted counter-cultural trappings previously associated with the student left (including the wearing of long or spikey hair, earrings and jeans). For some time it has been in the process of building its own transnational infrastructure, to the point where, despite periodic government censorship, scores of Oi, metal, experimental and industrial bands nowadays have the opportunity to release records thanks to the existence of a chameleon-like network of small independent labels and distributors. At the same time, more and more left-fascist groupuscules have appeared, both in Western and in Eastern Europe. In short, despite the continued existence of a handful of small, nostalgic, Hitler-worshipping cult groups in Western Europe, the 'Nazification' of significant portions of the skinhead counter-culture, and the post-Communist resurgence of neo-Nazism in Eastern Europe, the stereotypical media image of fascists as uniform-wearing, goose-stepping thugs with buzzcuts who listen to Wagner and oppose all cultural innovation has not been applicable to influential segments of the neo-fascist milieu for decades. Once these dramatic ideological and cultural transformations have been fully appreciated, one is prompted to question many other conventional interpretations of fascism.

During the past three decades, an intense scholarly debate about the nature of fascism has been raging. Thanks to the pioneering work of a number of leading scholars—most notably Eugen Weber, Renzo De Felice and Zeev Sternhell—older characterizations of fascism as an inherently conservative, wholly reactionary and entirely right-wing political phenomenon have given way to much more sophisticated and nuanced understandings. It now seems evident, as Sternhell especially has argued, that fascism was originally the product of *fin-de-siècle* attempts by dissidents from diverse intellectual traditions to conjoin currents of radical, 'anti-bourgeois' nationalism and 'anti-materialist', non-Marxist variants of socialism. In practice, these previously distinct and

protests in 1968, see note 12 above and the accounts of Adalberto Baldoni, *La destra in Italia, 1945–1969* (Rome: Pantheon 2000), 587–602, and Nicola Rao, *Neofascisti! La destra italiana da Salò a Fiuggi nel ricordo dei protagonisti* (Rome: Settimo Segillo 1999), 115–26. These same sources also discuss the emergence of early left-fascist groupuscules in the 1960s and/or 1970s, as do Orazio Ferrara, *Il mito negato da Giovane Europa ad Avanguardia di popolo: La destra eretica negli anni settanta* (Sarno: Centro Studi I Diòscuri 1996); Giorgio Cingolani, *La destra in armi: Neofascisti italiani tra ribellismo ed eversione, 1977–1982* (Rome: Riuniti 1996); Günter Bartsch, *Revolution von rechts? Ideologie und Organisation der Neuen Rechten* (Freiburg: Herder 1975); Karl-Heinz Pröhuber, *Die nationalrevolutionäre Bewegung in Westdeutschland* (Hamburg: Deutsch-Europäischer Studien 1980); and Marco Revelli, 'La nuova destra', in Franco Ferraresi (ed.), *La destra radicale* (Milan: Feltrinelli 1984), 119–214. For the 'Hobbit Camps' in Italy, see 'Giuseppe Bessarione' [pseud.] (ed.), *Lambro/Hobbit: La cultura giovanile di destra in Italia e in Europa* (Rome: Arcana 1979), and Apiù Mani, *Hobbit/Hobbit* (Rome: LEDE 1982). In Spain, this cultural shift began somewhat later, in the 1980s (see Colectivo Karl-Otto Paetel). Ironically, Bouchet was rather atypical for a left fascist in as much as he was politically and culturally hostile to the New Left from the outset and has remained so until the present day. This antithetical attitude was also reflected in NR's publications (e.g. see M.A., 'Un contre mai 68', *Jeune Résistance*, no. 12, [between July and December 1998], wherein the events of that era are characterized as 'a vast buffoonery led by overly spoiled rich kids').

seemingly antithetical political currents proved difficult to integrate, and for this very reason all proto-fascist and fascist movements consisted of a myriad of competing right- and left-wing factions—namely those that emphasized the importance of the ‘national question’ (or, in the case of the Nazis, the ‘racial question’) and those that emphasized the importance of the ‘social question’—that struggled fiercely with one another for dominance and control. Given the peculiar constellation of political forces characteristic of inter-war Europe, where there was little or no ‘political space’ available on the left side of the spectrum for the growth of a new revolutionary movement, the rightist elements within European fascist movements were almost invariably able to outmanoeuvre and then marginalize, suppress or exterminate their left-leaning rivals. This does not rule out the possibility, however, that in other political circumstances, left-fascist currents might come to the fore and fascist-style movements might end up moving to the left instead of the right. In Argentina, for example, the Peronist movement, which may have created the only post-Second World War regime with a genuinely fascist ideological stamp, lurched sharply to the left, established a strong social base within the workers’ movement, and promoted a radical third-positionist ‘line’ *vis-à-vis* the two superpower blocs.⁵³

Similar shifts to the left are also frequently observable among neo-fascists in post-war Europe. The earliest left-fascist groupuscules, most notably Jeune Europe, were established even before the student and worker revolts of 1968. In the wake of those dramatic events, newer, ‘hipper’ generations of left fascists emerged during the 1970s and have since continued to expand their intellectual and cultural influence. Since the collapse of the ‘really existing’ Communist states in Eastern Europe and the further discrediting of the entire Marxist revolutionary project, conditions have become even more propitious for the proliferation of left-fascist groupuscules. After all, there is now only one remaining ‘imperialist’ superpower, the United States, and ‘capitalist globalization’ has largely replaced ‘international communism’ as the chief ‘threat’ to European independence. Under these circumstances, it is hardly surprising to discover that new generations of fascist radicals are actively participating in the ‘anti-globalization’ campaign, supporting all sorts of anti-American regimes and movements in the Third World, retrospectively praising the causes and actions of left-wing Euroterrorist groups and making

53 For the thesis that fascism was a political ‘latecomer’ in a European context in which the ‘political space’ on the left side of the spectrum had already been ‘pre-empted’ by other movements and parties, see Juan J. Linz, ‘Some notes toward a comparative study of fascism in sociological-historical perspective’, in Walter Laqueur (ed.), *Fascism: A Reader’s Guide* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1978), especially 4–8. In post-war Argentina, on the other hand, there was no ‘political space’ available on the right side of the spectrum, so Perón moved to the left. Although he never sought to establish a regime of the fascist type, his *justicialismo* doctrine closely resembled fascism from a purely ideological standpoint. A. James Gregor has gone further and argued that many post-war Third World regimes were more akin to fascism than communism, despite their leftist veneer: see his provocative work, *The Fascist Persuasion in Radical Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1974).

'red-brown' political alliances with ex-Communists, ecologists and anti-western left-wing nationalists. In that sense, case-studies of left-leaning neo-fascist groupuscules like Nouvelle Résistance not only help to shed light on the nature of fascism as a political phenomenon, but also lend further to Sternhell's provocative thesis that fascism brought together diffuse currents of cultural criticism from both the extreme right and the far left in order to forge a new revolutionary ideology that would go 'beyond right and left'.

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