INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

ProQuest Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600

The Ambiguities of the Intellectual European New Right, 1968-1999

Tamir Bar-On, Political Science, "McGill University, Montreal," June 2000.

"A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science."

The Ambiguities of the Intellectual European New Right, 1968-1999

Abstract/Résumé:

The subject of this dissertation is the intellectual European New Right (ENR), also known as the *nouvelle droite*. A cultural "school of thought" with origins in the revolutionary Right and neo-fascist milieus, the *nouvelle droite* was born in France in 1968, the year of the spectacular student and worker protests. In order to rid the Right of its negative connotations, the *nouvelle droite* borrowed from the New Left ideals of the 1968ers. In a Gramscian mould, it situated itself exclusively on the cultural terrain of political contestation in order to challenge what it considered the ideological hegemony of dominant liberal and leftist elites. This metapolitical focus differentiated the *nouvelle droite* from both the parliamentary and radical, extra-parliamentary forces on the Right.

This dissertation traces the cultural, philosophical, political, and historical trajectories of the French *nouvelle droite* in particular and the ENR in general. The dissertation argues that the ENR worldview is an ambiguous synthesis of the ideals of the revolutionary Right and New Left, and that it is neither a new form of cultural fascism, nor a completely novel political paradigm. In general, the ENR symbiotically fed off the cultural and political twists of the Left and New Left, thus giving it a degree of novelty. In the 1990s, the ENR has taken on a more left wing and ecological aura rather than a right-wing orientation. As a result, some critics view this development as the formulation of a radically new, post-modern and post-fascist

cultural and political paradigm. Yet, other critics contend that the ENR has created a repackaged form of cultural fascism.

The *nouvelle droite* has been able to challenge the main tenets of its "primary" enemy, namely, the neo-liberal Anglo-American New Right. Moreover, it has restored a measure of cultural respectability to a continental right-wing heritage battered by the burden of 20th century history. In an age of rising economic globalization and cultural homogenization, its anti-capitalist ideas embedded within the framework of cultural preservation might make some political inroads into the Europe of the future.

Les ambiguïtés de la *nouvelle droite* européenne (1968-1998)

La présente thèse se donne pour objet d'analyser la nouvelle droite européenne (NDE), également connue sous le nom de *nouvelle droite*. Puisant ses racines dans les milieux de la droite révolutionnaire et du néofascisme, cette « école de pensée » culturelle est née en France en 1968, année particulièrement marquée par les manifestations tumultueuses des étudiants et ouvriers. Afin d'affranchir la droite de ses connotations négatives, la *nouvelle droite* emprunte ses idéaux à la nouvelle gauche des soixante-huitards. Tout en se basant sur le gramscisme de droite, la *nouvelle droite* s'établit exclusivement sur le terrain culturel de la contestation politique pour défier ce qu'elle considère l'hégémonie idéologique des élites dominantes libérales et gauchistes. C'est cette orientation métapolitique qui différencie la *nouvelle droite* aussi bien de la droite parlementaire que de la droite radicale extraparlementaire.

Cette étude trace les trajectoires culturelles, philosophiques, politiques et historiques de la *nouvelle droite* française en particulier et de la NDE en général. La thèse soutient que la vision du monde selon la NDE est une synthèse ambiguë des idéaux de la droite révolutionnaire et de la nouvelle gauche – cette vision n'étant ni une nouvelle forme de fascisme culturel, ni un paradigme politique inédit. En général, la NDE s'alimente de façon symbiotique des fluctuations culturelles et politiques de la gauche et de la nouvelle gauche, ce qui la rend innovatrice. Au cours des années quatre-vingt-dix, la NDE embrasse des tendances plutôt « gauchistes » et écologiques. De ce fait, certains critiques estiment que cette évolution représente un paradigme

politico-culturel postmoderne et postfasciste tout à fait nouveau. D'autres soutiennent que la NDE a reformulé le fascisme culturel.

La *nouvelle droite* s'est montrée capable de lancer un défi aux doctrines fondamentales de son « grand » ennemi : la nouvelle droite néolibérale anglo-américaine. D'autre part, elle a restitué un certain degré de respectabilité culturelle au patrimoine continental de la droite, meurtri par le fardeau historique du vingtième siècle. À l'époque de la mondialisation économique et de l'homogénéisation culturelle, les idées anticapitalistes de la *nouvelle droite*, incrustées dans un cadre de conservation culturelle, pourraient faire une incursion politique en Europe.

Acknowledgements:

I would like to especially thank Hudson Meadwell, my supervisor at McGill University in Montreal, for his assistance and careful reading of earlier drafts of this dissertation. In addition, I wish to thank both Roger Griffin at Oxford Brookes University in England and Harvey Simmons from York University in Toronto for their useful electronic mail exchanges and insights. They have both been invaluable in helping me to get a better conceptual grasp of this difficult topic. Furthermore, I want to thank Paul Piccone and Marco Tarchi for answering a number of interview questions. Finally, I also extend my thanks to Alain de Benoist for providing me with a number of his books, articles, and interviews.

In my personal life, I want to express deep gratitude for my parents who taught me the importance of the ideals of education and tolerance as well as the meanings of perseverance and hope. I wish to thank my brother and dear friends who made all those years of thesis writing appear lighter and sweeter. In particular, I want to extend my affection to Kadima Lonji and his mother for my years in Montreal where I was treated like an authentic family member. The spirit of this work is also dedicated to two people in particular who have already helped me to dream of a better world.

Table of Contents

The Ambiguities of the Intellectual European New Right, 1968-1999

Introduction:

This dissertation is one of the rare English-language works dedicated to a culturally and politically important subject often largely ignored by Anglo-American scholars: the phenomenon of the continental European New Right (ENR) intellectuals, or *nouvelle droite*.[1] Born around the time of the May 1968 wave of political unrest sweeping industrialized countries, the ENR is composed of clusters of think tanks, cultural institutes, and journals formed initially in France. Its intellectuals are mainly editors, writers, liberal professionals, academics, and professors of various disciplines, such as politics, history, sociology, psychology, anthropology, socio-biology, literature, cinema, and art. Interestingly, ENR intellectuals now claim to be one of the few remaining cultural or political forces along with the Greens, which challenges liberal democracy and triumphalist global capitalism. Its contemporary theoreticians are heavily influenced by the ideals of the New Left and emulate the example of the 1968 revolutionaries who claimed they would create a more humane and spiritualized post-liberal social order. ENR intellectuals are currently scattered throughout most Western and numerous Central and East European nations. Furthermore, ENR intellectuals could even be found attempting to spread their ideas and cultural influence in the post-communist, post-Cold War confusion and chaos of Russia in the 1990s.

Despite the serious protestations of many journalists and academics about a new more subtle and sinister fascism dressed in new emperor's robes, the ENR is not necessarily a homogeneous body of thought,[2] but has meant different things according to differing contexts, time periods, countries, regions, ideological strands, and rival personalities. This heterogeneity on the Right correspondingly applies to the important distinctions which exist on the Left side of the political spectrum between social democrats, communists, Leninists, Trotskyites, Stalinists, Maoists, and various

anarchist tendencies. Historically, there have also been many "Rights," including the counterrevolutionary/monarchical, Catholic integralist, Nazi, fascist, Evolian, neo-liberal, and republican traditions, and they have meant different things in differing countries, contexts, and periods of time.[3] To this long list of "Rights," we should add the ENR intellectuals, the latest theoretical incarnation of a diverse, multi-faceted right-wing heritage which has been, historically speaking, less homogeneous than most people once assumed.

With the proliferation of new social issues such as immigration and the environment that transcend the traditional "Right" and "Left" political categories, the end of the Cold War, the fall of communist regimes in the East after 1989, and the historical movement of the Left in Europe towards an accommodation with liberal capitalism, the ENR has argued that the terms "Right" and "Left" have lost much of their meaning and significance.[4] In fact, contemporary ENR intellectuals such as Alain de Benoist and Charles Champetier of France insist that there is a general trend towards the implosion of right-wing ideologies and that there are now a whopping 36 different right-wing political groupings belonging to the general spiritual family of the Right![5] In any case, with the fall of the Right's traditional communist enemy, Europe does not have a political landscape based on a total, unanimous right-wing support for the neo-liberal, New World Order. Rather, the ENR represents one of those right-wing currents of thought that more often resembles the Left in terms of its radical anti-liberalism and anti-capitalism, and its rebellious and revolutionary stances vis-à-vis all the dominant ideologies of the age.

The ENR's main tasks for over thirty years have been the publication of serious intellectual journals on various ideas and subjects, and conducting cultural and political debates and conferences throughout the learned centres of opinion within Europe. Considering themselves to be the children of the multiple social, political, economic, intellectual, and spiritual crises of our age, the ENR thinkers have sought to offer a theoretical response to the main existential problems of the contemporary

period. In the process, the ENR thinkers have also attempted to rehabilitate the cultural and political legacies of the non-Nazi, revolutionary Right. The most prominent ENR journals include the following: *Nouvelle École*, *Éléments*, *Krisis* (France), *The Scorpion* (England), and *Trasgressioni* and *Diorama letterario* (Italy). Germany and Russia also have their respective ENR journals. Several ENR national branches, namely, the English, French, Italian, German, and Russian sections of the ENR, are well represented on the Internet.[6] In the current post-communist age of triumphant liberal capitalism, these ENR journals generally represent an eclectic and outwardly ambiguous synthesis of revolutionary Right and New Left ideals. This post-modern synthesis of right-wing and left-wing ideals unites the various ENR tendencies. At the same time, the ENR thinkers remain a loose, heterogeneous cultural "school of thought,"[7] to use Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol's phrase, rather than a larger, centrally co-ordinated movement.

What makes the ENR a relatively coherent cultural "school of thought"? In the first place, contemporary ENR intellectuals such as Alain de Benoist and Charles Champetier of France, Michael Walker of England, Marco Tarchi of Italy, Pierre Krebs of Germany, and Robert Steuckers of Belgium, generally share a long-term, right-wing metapolitical strategy akin to the Italian Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937). This right-wing Gramscianism is designed to awaken certain individuals, namely, intellectual, political, and economic elites, to new ways of seeing and being, to change hearts and minds, and to gain support for alternative, counter-hegemonic conceptions of the world.[8] For Gramsci, like the ENR, the precondition for all successful revolutions in history has first been a revolt against both the dominant spirit and cultural apparatus of the age. This non-violent, metapolitical stance is directed primarily at societal elites and intellectuals rather than the masses and has been a practical and tactical choice conditioned by the public's negative historical associations with the Right since World War II, particularly the legacies of fascism and Nazism. In the case of the French New Right, the choice of focusing on the cultural, metapolitical realm was also influenced by the bitter debacle of the

revolutionary Right's ill-fated attempt to maintain *Algérie française* and the eventual de-colonization of Algeria, which began in 1962.

A second factor also makes the ENR a cohesive cultural "school of thought." In short, ENR thinkers, sympathizers, or fellow travellers generally share a number of recurring anti-liberal, anti-egalitarian, and anti-capitalist themes, which gives them an aura of a cultural "school of thought." The ENR's intense valorization of both anti-egalitarianism and the *le droit à la différence*, or the "right to difference" of all local cultures and regions around the globe (what Martin Lee has dubbed "cultural ethnopluralism"),[9] is one such set of themes, which constantly finds its elucidation in ENR journals, books, articles, and conferences. Both anti-egalitarianism and the "right to difference" are seen by ENR thinkers as almost natural, God-given absolutes. For the ENR, the "right to difference" of individuals and communities must constantly be nourished and promoted in order to allow all world cultures to maintain their uniqueness and distinctiveness against what is viewed as the grey, drab, lifeless, and levelling materialism and egalitarianism of liberal and socialist doctrines. The latter two ideologies, seen as rooted in Judeo-Christian biblical monotheism, are viewed as "totalitarian" and "intolerant." For the ENR, liberalism and socialism are full of missionary-like zeal because they allegedly originate from a culturally insensitive and universalistic belief in one God, which respects neither Europe's polytheistic, pagan past, nor the differing values and cultural standards of other peoples around the world. In the post-communist Europe of the 1990s, liberalism and the United States, viewed as the liberal nation of the world *par excellence*, have become the ENR's dominant enemies. The ENR argues that both the United States and liberal ideology seek to accelerate an insidious, hyper-materialist, and "soft totalitarian" capitalist worldview and ignore the richness of the world's cultural diversity and organic principles of community and solidarity. The ENR insists that the liberal capitalist worldview is egoistic and essentially views the entire planet as one large, vulgar supermarket where all cultures and nations fall under the homogenizing prey of the profit principle and the spell of ethnocentric, cultural Westernization.

Centred around the intellectual mentor of the ENR, Alain de Benoist of France, *Groupement de recherche et d'étude pour la civilisation européenne* (GRECE – Group for Research and Studies on European Civilization) was founded in 1968 and is the leading *nouvelle droite* cultural institute and publishing house throughout continental Europe. If his 1978 prize from *l'Académie française* is an indication, de Benoist is undoubtedly the most sophisticated and lucid of the ENR intellectuals. Also, an impressive list of personalities generally in the mainstream of intellectual life have collaborated with GRECE either as members of the think tank, editors of its various journals, or as influential writers. These include the following: the neo-fascist political theorist Maurice Bardèche,[10] the writer Jean Cau, the university professor and philosopher Louis Rougier, Thierry Maulnier of *l'Académie française*, the sociologist Julien Freund, the German historian Armin Mohler (the former secretary of the "conservative revolutionary" idol Ernst Jünger), the journalist Jean Parvulesco, the writer and founder of French daily *Le Figaro* Louis Pauwels,[11] and the English novelist Anthony Burgess. *Nouvelle École*, a principal GRECE academic journal, has featured among its major writers and influences several towering intellectual figures of this century: the neo-Gnostic writer Raymond Abellio (a former French collaborator), Mircea Eliade (who flirted with the fascism of the Romanian Iron Guard), the psychologist Hans Eysenck, the former communist and visionary writer Arthur Koestler, and the ethnologist and Nobel Prize winner Konrad Lorenz.[12]

It must be stressed that the ENR is a coherent "cultural school of thought" with historical origins in ultra-nationalism, the extreme right or revolutionary Right, and fascism. Yet, ENR theorists consciously separate themselves from both the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary wings of the revolutionary Right milieu by working on a long-term project to win hearts and minds. Nonetheless, ENR intellectuals have influenced the style and discourse of extreme right-wing and neo-fascist political parties, such as France's *Front National* (FN), the German *Republikaner*, and the Italian *Movimento Sociale Italiano-Alleanze Nazionale* (MSI-

AN), although many of its principal theorists have distanced themselves from what they view as the "vulgar," populist extreme-right and neo-fascist political outfits.[13] In the early 1980s, a number of prominent ENR theorists, including the former GRECE secretary-general Pierre Vial, joined Jean-Marie Le Pen's anti-immigrant FN. Despite internal divisions between the ENR and extreme right-wing political parties, most contemporary extreme right-wing political or neo-fascist political parties have mirrored the ENR's metapolitical orientation, or focus on the cultural terrain of political contestation. This metapolitical fixation was heavily influenced by the rise of the New Left and the events of May 1968. The Right, the ENR believed, had to outflank the Left on the cultural terrain in order to gain political respectability and success. Like the ENR, the political parties on the far Right also deny any association with the extreme-right or fascist labels, but instead focus on the so-called "novelty" of the New Right. In addition, like ENR thinkers, the extreme-right and neo-fascist political outfits attempt to distance themselves from overt forms of anti-Semitism and affinity for the symbolism of the discredited fascist and Nazi past. Finally, the ENR's formulation of the ambiguous notion of the cultural "right to difference" has been picked up by the extreme-right and neo-fascist political parties in order to legitimize their ultra-nationalist, chauvinist, and anti-immigrant stances.

The ENR reached its intellectual and cultural apogee in the late 1970s by penetrating various European universities, mass media outlets, and publishing houses. The prestigious French daily *Le Figaro* even opened its pages to Alain de Benoist and other ENR thinkers in the late 1970s. The year 1979 is considered its "hot summer" of widespread press attention in France and French political scientist Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol and others have shown how its ideas influenced the French mainstream political Right in the mid-1970s. In 1993, it received important media attention once again in France with some sustained coverage in the prestigious daily *Le Monde*. On both occasions, numerous ENR critics, especially prominent liberal and socialist thinkers, movements, and political parties, raised the spectre of fascism and

Nazism, thus alienating and marginalizing the ENR's most profound theorists and possibly missing the "novel" features of the ENR ideological synthesis.

The ENR, then, is not a political party or new social movement, but rather a collection of varied European cultural organizations, study groups, and intellectual networks. Its real originality might lie in its right-wing Gramscian ideological message and the cultural strategy of attempting to capture what it views as the "real" power centres of civil society and the cultural apparatus. For the ENR thinkers, the cultural realm is the main vector of political contestation because it seeks to displace the dominant societal consensus through the creation of a coherent counter-hegemonic conception of the world. This ENR counter-hegemonic ideology is intended to undermine the hegemonic legitimization and rationalization of the existing liberal capitalist order. The fact that the ENR is a pagan, anti-Christian, and anti-Western Right might be another example of its originality. Finally, born in 1968 at around the same period as the political rise of the New Left and the May-June student and worker protest movements in France, ENR intellectuals have co-opted and synthesized a number of New Left ideas in combination with their older, revolutionary Right worldview. A number of critics see this New Left-New Right synthesis as a revival of the "neither Right, nor Left" fascist synthesis of the inter-war era, while others contend that it represents a break with the revolutionary Right view of the past and fascism, and even constitutes a new political paradigm. It is this outwardly ambiguous synthesis of the ideals of the revolutionary Right and the New Left that actually cuts to the heart of the ENR worldview.

While ENR thinkers themselves have vehemently denied the association and label of fascism, they simultaneously continue to pay homage to a pantheon of "conservative revolutionary"[14] authors (e.g., Oswald Spengler[15] and Ernst Jünger[16]) and other writers, including revolutionary leftists and syndicalists, which theoretically inspired Italian fascism or German Nazism. These include the following: Vilfredo Pareto, Julius Evola, Georges Sorel, Gustave Le Bon, and Vladimir Lenin. It must be

pointed out that these major contemporary ENR intellectuals, particularly Alain de Benoist, Michael Walker, and Marco Tarchi, all began their careers as figures connected with right-wing extremism or even neo-fascism. In France, de Benoist was involved in extreme nationalist and pan-European, revolutionary Right student politics in the 1960s; Michael Walker was a former British National Front (BNF) organizer for central London; and Marco Tarchi became disillusioned with the Italian neo-fascist political party named the MSI (the Italian Social Movement – MSI – recently renamed the *Alleanza Nazionale* or National Alliance).[17]

In order to counter the perception of an outright revival of revolutionary Right or quasi-fascist ideals, the ENR has tended to cultivate an aura of what can be termed "constructive ambiguity" and a stance of intellectual victimization (a "New Inquisition" is the common ENR cry) vis-à-vis what it views as a "hegemonic" European liberal-Left cultural establishment. One strategy of the ENR might be to maintain its core of revolutionary right intellectual support, while also enhancing its levels of acceptance and support among liberal and left-wing intellectuals and professionals. Some intellectuals on the Left, including those associated with the American academic journal of critical theory *Telos*, are now completely free of the stable ideological and analytical anchor of Marxism after the shock of 1989. Consequently, these former leftists from the United States have found the ENR ideological synthesis appealing, have actually been published in ENR journals, and, in turn, ENR intellectuals have increasingly published their works in *Telos*. At the same time, France's Alain de Benoist initiated a sort of opening to the Left when he began the publication of his limited-circulation intellectual journal *Krisis* in 1988. The debates in *Telos* and *Krisis* resemble each other in that both journals tend to pursue a double critique of Marxist and liberal democratic ideologies as well as publish decidedly "leftist" and anti-liberal authors. Moreover, the two journals focus on similar anti-capitalist themes and offer a scathing critique of Western notions of "progress." Both the former New Left-influenced journal and the French *nouvelle droite* seek to re-invigorate cultural, regional, and ecological bonds of communal

solidarity as a reply to what they view as the homogenizing logic of capitalism, nationalism, bureaucratic life, and "New Class" forms of domination.

Aware of the Right's historical lessons from the experiences of fascism and de-colonization, these ENR thinkers have attempted to gradually rehabilitate the cultural and political legacies of the non-Nazi, revolutionary Right. In the mid-1970s and again in the early 1990s, the ENR gained some support among the *haute intelligentsia* in continental Europe. A number of cultural and political trends tended to give the ENR intellectuals more public exposure and credibility. In the first place, the star of the Left rose so high after World War II because fascism and Nazism were thoroughly discredited and associated with the Right. However, the Left's Stalinist-like excesses in the East and the far Left's perceived intellectual and cultural hegemony and dogmatism in continental Europe (e.g., the slavish pro-Soviet, Stalinist historical record of the French Communist Party and many prominent European intellectuals) made the cultural and political revival of the Right almost inevitable. Second, the crumbling of communist states in Eastern Europe after 1989 left an ideological vacuum which the ENR intellectuals could tap into with their distinct New Left-like influences. Finally, unlike the Anglo-American world, continental Europe has deep ideological and historical affinities for a peculiar anti-liberal, anti-capitalist Right. The ENR is seriously indebted to this revolutionary right-wing intellectual tradition, whether it is the writings of the 19th century French counter-revolutionary Joseph de Maistre, the German jurist Carl Schmitt, or the "Marcuse" of the Italian post-war radical Right Julius Evola.[18]

In spite of new opportunities presented by the changing political landscape, there has been a constant attempt to publicly marginalize the ENR intellectuals, especially in France. The prevailing journalistic view was that ENR intellectuals were re-hashing pernicious fascist and Nazi ideas from the past. Furthermore, the ENR's own post-modern denunciation of most intellectual and political cliques and fads of the age likely frightened the existing cultural and intellectual authorities. Its

appropriation of quasi-leftist ideas and anti-Western, anti-Christian pagan orientation tended to threaten liberal and socialist cultural and political elites, the ultra-nationalist, Catholic Right, and the neo-liberal Right. The ENR's ideological synthesis of revolutionary right-wing and New Left ideas and traditions gave the ENR a sense of constant intellectual vigour and energy, which could not be fully ignored by even its harshest critics. Could it be that as existing cultural and political elites were marginalizing ENR ideals in order to score political points, they were simultaneously accepting this school of thought's valorization of cultural particularism within Europe's social and political system?

In both 1979 and again 1993, particularly in France, the ENR intellectuals received some important media coverage for a brief period of time, but only to be largely dismissed as closet fascists by most of its intellectual opponents.[19] French scholars willing to engage in dialogue with the ENR, including the late French philosopher Raymond Aron and the renowned contemporary political scientist Pierre André Taguieff, have been criticized by some sectors of the Left for giving the ENR an aura of legitimacy and credibility. Also, this dialogue with the ENR has unleashed polemical guilt-by-association tactics against "lax" liberals and leftists from a dogmatic wing of the hard Left intelligentsia nostalgic for the clear and unambiguous Left-Right Maginot line. In 1993, forty European intellectuals signed "An Appeal to Vigilance" in the prestigious daily *Le Monde* as a result of a supposedly "alarming" ENR dialogue with former communist theorists, what Roger-Pol Droit called a revival of "national Bolshevism."[20] A year later the *Appeal* was republished and signed by 1500 additional intellectuals. Some critics, like those from *Telos*, have suggested that the entire affair was staged by a defeated cultural Left in order to maintain outdated Left/Right boundaries in the post-communist era.[21] The *Appeal* was curious and McCarthy-like since it failed to even name its opponents. Jean-Marie Le Pen's FN, a greater political threat for many critics than the ENR, is not even mentioned in the *Appeal.* Thus, one scholar has even concluded that the aim of the *Appeal* was to keep liberal and left-wing scholars who study or engage in dialogue with the ENR on a sort

of hard Left dogma leash: A Europeanized variant of the North American Political Correctness "thought police."[22]

In contrast to what they considered the "dinosaurs" on the Old Right and Old Left, the ENR thinkers denied the fascist label of their opponents and flaunted an aura of intellectual, cultural, and political tolerance based on a supposedly eclectic, heterogeneous body of thought without a common platform or dogmatic interpretation of the world.[23] ENR political thought has been influenced by radically different sources from the "conservative revolution" to ecologism, from the New Left to federalism, and from paganism and feminism to scientism.[24] These diverse influences and their "novel" positions such as feminism, paganism, federalism, pro-Third World solidarity, anti-imperialism, anti-totalitarianism, anti-racism, and the valorization of "difference" have been the product of several facelifts between the late 1960s and 1990s.[25] The ENR's "open" attitude towards issues once dominated by the Left and use of authors concerned with deep existential and spiritual questions, including Friedrich Nietzsche, Julius Evola, Arthur Koestler, and J. R. R. Tolkien, even appealed to the subjective aspirations of a particular segment of European youth in the early 1980s and 1990s. In the 1990s, many of the ENR's primary concerns now reflect those of the New Left, born in the wake of the American anti-Vietnam war movement in the 1960s. This ENR intellectual overhaul and opening to the Left has led the most reputable scholar of the ENR phenomenon, Pierre-André Taguieff, to suggest that the French *nouvelle droite* journal *Krisis* now falls outside the orbit of right-wing extremism or neo-fascist taxonomic categories.[26] In response to Taguieff, this author would suggest that even *Krisis*, the ENR's most avowedly leftist journal, is itself a mixture of revolutionary Right and New Left influences and themes. In reality, the entire ENR *Weltanschauung* is an ideological synthesis of the revolutionary Right and New Left positions.

The ENR's harshest critics argue that its esoteric, aristocratic elitism and violent revolt against Enlightenment-driven reason and progress, positivism,

materialism, capitalism, communism, egalitarianism, universalism, and liberal parliamentarism were all menacingly echoed in this century by many fascist ideologues. These critics also point out that the ENR's attempt to transcend categories like Left and Right was also common to European fascist theoreticians of the past, whether George Valois in France, Giovanni Gentile in Italy, or Primo De Rivera in Spain. This is not intended to indict the ENR intellectuals as fascists, but simply to point out that their radical and violent anti-liberalism resembles the anti-liberal thinking of the following anti-bourgeois forces: Latin inter-war anarcho-syndicalists, the "non-conformists" of the 1920s and 1930s that oscillated between Right and Left, the "conservative revolutionaries," the revolutionary Right, and the various fascist theoreticians. One must also remember that during the inter-war years both the revolutionary Right and the revolutionary Left resembled each other as mirror, polar opposites in their radical anti-bourgeois, anti-liberal, anti-parliamentary, and anti-materialist worldviews. In a sense, then, the ENR is still indebted to both of these right-wing and left-wing revolutionary poles, but from a cultural rather than explicitly political perspective. As Professor Stephen Holmes elegantly explained, the cultural curiosity of the post-communist 1990s is that anti-liberalism has become a common pole of attraction for the ENR as well as numerous American leftist and communitarian critics of Western liberal democracies, such as Alasdair MacIntyre, Christopher Lasch, Roberto Unger, and the editors of the American critical theory journal *Telos*. These American communitarians, contends Holmes, resemble both the classical fascists and the ENR intellectuals in their radical, anti-liberal modes of thought.[27] In fact, the French New Right under de Benoist has devoted an entire journal issue to the thought of North American communitarian thinkers, including Alasdair MacIntyre, Christopher Lasch, Amitai Etzioni, and Charles Taylor.[28]

Using these aforementioned examples as the models for a new synthesis between Right and Left against bourgeois liberalism and also deflecting the claims of a revival of cultural fascism, the ENR theoreticians, in a manner somewhat reminiscent of the New Left, argue that they seek to spiritually rejuvenate European

societies with more refined and humane values. That is, the ENR thinkers contend that they want to reverse the trances of Americanization, rampant capitalist egoism, the notion of unlimited economic growth as the ultimate standard of "progress," the dominant reign of materialism, techno-utopianism, and the scientific "religion." In a Schmittian tone, the ENR also wants to restore the political rather than economic or moral realms to its ascendant role in European societies. In the ENR's view, ancient, pagan, hierarchical, and organic European societies would serve as models for the creation of a social order where the political and military realms are sovereign entities which supersede the economic realm in the chain of social imperatives. Finally, the ENR calls for a plurality of significant political opinions and conflicts internally, and several great power blocs on the world stage rather than what they consider is the current homogenizing, unipolar, and dangerous world order dominated by the United States. During the Cold War era, the ENR called for a "spiritual" European-Third World alliance as one such power bloc against the "materialism" of the Russian and American superpowers.[29] This last point has even more resonance for the ENR today in a world under what it views as the "decadent" spell of Pax Americana.

The goal of this dissertation is to examine the emergence of this intellectual New Right, particularly in France, but in Europe more generally, from the late 1960s until the late 1990s. Its basic assumption is that the cultural and political activity of this group of intellectuals must be taken seriously. In the first place, the ENR represents the most theoretically coherent right-wing current of thought in continental Europe in the post-World War II period. While the ENR ideological synthesis between revolutionary Right and New Left worldviews appears contradictory, it is both intellectually and politically cultivated for our changing times. As we approach the dawn of the 21st century, could it be that the Right rather than the Left has produced the most intellectually coherent and challenging worldview of the post-World War II era? Second, since we live in an age when socialist ideology has been seriously discredited after the fall of communist regimes in the East in 1989 and the rise of the neo-liberal capitalist ideology in the West, the ENR ideological synthesis could

conceivably fill a contemporary ideological void within European societies. Finally, the ENR's ideas have helped to directly and indirectly influence the discourse, nature, and shape of European cultural and political life, particularly the increasing salience of cultural questions, immigration, and the critique of the dominant liberal democratic political model.

This dissertation is especially a history of ideas, in this case, the ideas and ideological programs of the New Right in France between the late 1960s and late 1990s. We must also understand why the ENR arose in the late 1960s, why it achieved public notoriety in France in 1979 and 1993, and why it appeals to a cross-section of intellectuals. Furthermore, we will also briefly examine the ENR's ideological programs, rhetorical strategies, organizational activity in civil society (and linkages across Europe), and relations with conventional actors in state structures, party systems, and social movement sectors. The dissertation will attempt to address these important questions by tracing the historical, political, and intellectual trajectory of the ENR theorists. The dissertation will be both descriptive and analytical in character.

Since the major French New Right organization GRECE was formed in 1968, the year of the May-June student protests in France and similar demonstrations of idealistic, post-materialist revolt around the industrialized countries, this date will form the starting point of our analysis. For both the French New Right and American New Left intellectuals, the year 1968 can be viewed as a critical turning point; a death-blow to their most cherished hopes and ideals for a post-liberal, revolutionary order; a period which provoked intense personal and societal reflection; and also a reference point of reconciliation for the two anti-liberal "enemies" in the post-communist period of the 1990s. By the 1990s, ENR intellectuals had appropriated many of the major concerns and themes of the American New Left from the 1960s. This reconciliation between sectors of the New Left and New Right was clearly apparent in the *nouvelle droite*'s "Manifesto for the Year 2000" published in the French New Right journal *Éléments* in February 1999. In a sense, both the French New Right and certain

remnants of the American New Left were attempting to re-kindle the idealistic flames of the student radicals in the 1960s. Both the French New Right and American New Left lamented that these New Left ideals were either co-opted by the cultural and political establishment, or shattered as a result of the more institutionalized and conservative climate of the post-1968 era. An important dimension of the ENR's "newness" or novelty resides with this pronounced New Left influence, its exclusively Gramscian metapolitical orientation, and its anti-Western and anti-Christian paganism. In essence, the ENR is, in part, a "new" right-wing cultural movement, deeply indebted to the cultural ideas of the Left and New Left, which hitherto had not existed before the late 1960s and 1970s. The thesis of this dissertation, then, will attempt to demonstrate that the ENR worldview draws on two dominant yet outwardly contradictory political traditions, namely, the revolutionary Right and the New Left.

The most fundamental aspect of the thesis will be an investigation of the primary ENR sources, including the books, articles, journals, interviews, and histories of principal ENR intellectuals, such as de Benoist, Champetier, Tarchi, and Walker. This type of careful reading of ENR sources has generally been absent from the Anglo-American literature on the subject and, aside from Pierre-André Taguieff and Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, even from its French-language counterparts in the 1990s. Since Alain de Benoist is the most brilliant and prolific of the ENR intellectuals, we will especially focus on his journals, writings, and interviews. The question of whether the ENR thinkers belongs to a refined and more subtle form of cultural fascism, what Umberto Eco has dubbed "Ur-fascism,"[30] will not be the focus of this study for a few reasons. In the first place, the issue of what constitutes fascism is a messy one because there are so many competing and contradictory definitions and interpretations of the term. One has only to think of the diversity of contemporary interpretations of the fascist phenomenon, whether Ernst Nolte, Ze'ev Sternhell, Roger Griffin, or Stanley Payne.[31] Second, the fascist label carries an intense historical stigma and polemical ring, which could prevent any investigation of ENR texts and may be a shameless affront to the historical victims of fascism and Nazism. Third, in

an age when both nationalism and socialism, the two pillars of the fascist ideological synthesis,[32] are in serious decline as a result of an attack from forces both above and below, one wonders whether the term fascism has lost some of its precise analytical value. So, for example, the fascist label might be inaccurate for the ENR theorists in the 1990s because they have generally criticized the homogenizing thrust of all modern ideologies, including fascism, nationalism (and the concept of the nation-state), socialism, and liberalism. Finally, the ENR itself works from a particular cultural tradition that has been historically more attached to the values of the Nietzschean-like "conservative revolution" rather than official variants of fascism.

Notwithstanding these points, the literature review chapter of this dissertation will highlight the positions of cultural critics that claim the ENR intellectuals represent a new form of subtle cultural fascism, those critics that insist that the ENR theorists have moulded a novel political paradigm, and other critics that urge caution rather than the reflex desire to hastily classify the ENR intellectuals. This author would concur with this last claim and the dissertation will seek to show both the residues of the ENR's revolutionary Right past and also the divergences from this particular tradition, especially its New Left influences. In short, this writer will argue that the ENR is neither a new form of cultural fascism, nor an entirely new political paradigm. On the one hand, the astute Italian political scientist Marco Revelli argues that the ENR has been unable to "invent forms of articulation at the level of practical politics either nationally or internationally, or even, when all is said and done, of producing really original culture (the intellectual Pantheon it fields are almost all located between the beginning of the century and the early 1930s)."[33] On the other hand, born in the wake of the rise of the New Left and May 1968 events, the ENR was firmly positioned to differentiate itself from all the historical Right's previous stances.

In essence, as the title of this dissertation makes clear, the ENR is an ambiguous and heterogeneous cultural project which combines two radically different ideological schools of thought. The ENR theorists still have cultural ties to the right-

wing conservative revolutionary heritage of the past as well as a number of left-wing, syncretic, and post-modern influences, especially the dominant influence of the New Left. In ENR journals of the 1990s, the revolutionary Right themes of the past, namely, the aristocratic conception of life, the military ethic of honour and courage, the "internal empire of the spirit," the search for primordial, common cultural origins, and the powerful attachment to myths mingle in uneasy coexistence with more recent New Left, federalist, ecological, and democratizing impulses. In short, the ENR maintains a continuity with certain aspects of the revolutionary Right traditions of the past and yet has a post-modern affinity for the ideals of the New Left. The ENR is a right-wing movement that would not have been possible without a post-World War II reflection about the nature of historical fascism and the revolutionary Right, on the one hand, and the events of May 1968, the phenomenon of the New Left, and the influence of the Left in general, on the other hand.

The plan of this dissertation will be the following. While the first part of the dissertation will more generally focus on the ENR's historical trajectory and its ideological universe, the second part will examine the ENR's relationship to the real world of culture and politics (i.e., its relationship to political forces, the connection of ENR intellectuals to centres of power, and its cultural connections throughout Europe, North America, and the world in general). The first chapter will trace the ENR's right-wing historical and ideological origins, birth, and development in France. The second chapter will trace the ENR's left-wing roots both in the past and particularly in the contemporary period with the key influences of Gramscian cultural theories, the ideals of the New Left from the 1960s, and its affinity and flirtation with the old, revolutionary Left. The third chapter will examine the ENR's major influences and basic worldview. We will argue that from the late 1960s until the 1990s the primacy of cultural metapolitics and the valorization of the "right to difference" have been the main pillars of the ENR *Weltanschauung*. The fourth chapter will consist of an analysis of the ambiguities and tensions within the ENR's worldview. The fifth chapter will be an interpretation of the academic literature surrounding the ENR

phenomenon. The sixth chapter will focus on the French *nouvelle droite*'s relationship with other ENR branches throughout Europe and its interesting yet limited cultural impact in North America. The seventh or final chapter will grapple with the ENR's uneasy relationship with the extreme right, revolutionary Right, and neo-fascist camps.

Notes

[1] The major exception is the excellent monograph by Tomislav Sunic, *Against Democracy and Equality: The European New Right* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990).

[2] This point has been clearly made by Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol in her unpublished doctoral dissertation on the most significant branch of the ENR entitled "Le G.R.E.C.E. de 1968-1984" (Université de Paris X-Nanterre, 1984). Also, see her *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1988).

[3] Anthony Giddens, *Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 8-9.

[4] For the opposite point of view supporting the maintenance of the traditional Left/Right dichotomy around the issues of egalitarianism/ anti-egalitarianism and liberty/ authoritarianism, see Norberto Bobbio, *Right and Left: The Significance of A Political Distinction* (London: Polity Press, 1996).

[5] Alain de Benoist and Charles Champetier, "La nouvelle droite de l'an 2000," *Éléments* 94 (February 1999).

[6] See, for example, the website of the English-based ENR journal edited by Michael Walker: http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/2125/scorpion.html. Also, see the websites of two Italian ENR journals, *Diorama letterario* and *Trasgressioni*, by typing their respective titles. For other Internet addresses of various ENR national branches, see Roger Griffin, "Plus ça change! The Fascist Mindset behind the Nouvelle droite's Struggle for Cultural Renewal," Oxford Brookes University, paper delivered at conference in Dublin, Ireland on "The Extreme Right in France 1890-1997," (26-28 March 1998).

[7] This is a translation of Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol's characterization of the ENR as an "école de pensée" (i.e., cultural "school of thought") rather than a political party. See Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1988).

[8] In famous texts such as *The Modern Prince* and *The Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci challenged Karl Marx's basic notions of base and superstructure to argue that societal change was not simply a material phenomenon, but largely involved the metapolitical and cultural wars of intellectual opinion-forming groups in influencing the worldviews, ethos, and psychic support of the masses. In short, political and state powers are intricately dependent on a cultural power and civil consensus diffused and reinforced within the masses. More precisely, it was impossible, Gramsci believed, to overthrow the political apparatus of "bourgeois" democracies without previously having gained control of cultural power and the assent of the masses. Only when people feel the need for change as a self-evident necessity will the existing power structure, now divorced from the general consensus, start crumbling. For Gramsci, this metapolitical strategy of counter-colonization can be viewed as the revolutionary cultural "war" fought out on the level of worldviews, ways of thinking and feeling, and attitudes towards life. In the 1970s, Alain de Benoist saw this Gramscian concept of civil society as the terrain of contestation within which to win cultural hegemony for the ENR's ideas. De Benoist has frequently said that the Right is Gramscian and Leninist without having consciously read the texts of these two elite-oriented, revolutionary giants of the Left. For the ENR, the role of intellectuals is decisive in this broad metapolitical strategy, but especially as catalysts in the long-term project of overcoming liberal democracy's imposition of a "disguised" universalism and vindicating the cultural particularity of local and regional communities throughout Europe. The ENR intellectuals assume the role of Gramsci's

"traditional intellectuals" articulating and transmitting particularistic cultures from one generation to the next. In this way, the ENR seeks to avoid the traps of "ethnocentric" liberal universalism and "New Class" enforcement of this "totalitarian" worldview. For an elaboration of the ENR's appropriation of Gramsci, see the following works: Roger Griffin, *Fascism* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 348-349; Gill Seidel, "Culture, Nation, and 'Race' in the British and French New Right," in Ruth Levitas, (ed.), *The Ideology of the New Right* (Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 1986), pp. 107-109; and Pierre-André Taguieff, "La stratégie culturelle de la nouvelle droite," in Robert Badinter, (ed.), *Vous avez dit fascismes ?* (Paris: Montalba, 1985), pp. 72-87. Also, see Antonio Gramsci, *The Modern Prince and Other Writings* (New York: International, 1959).

[9] Martin Lee, *The Beast Reawakens* (Toronto: Little, Brown, and Company, 1997), pp. 168-183.

[10] Maurice Bardèche (1907-) is the brother-in-law of the former French fascist writer Robert Brasillach and was involved in ultra-nationalist circles during World War II. He wrote several works after the liberation of France defending the Vichy regime's collusion with the Nazis and even produced an early text of Holocaust denial. At the pan-European fascist congress of Malmo in 1951, he called for a fascist United States of Europe to counter the American and Russian superpowers. Probably the most important fascist ideologue in the post-war era, he wrote his famous treatise *Qu'est-ce que le fascisme?* (Paris: Les Sept Couleurs, 1961) against the background of the Algerian War and the revival of ultra-nationalist sentiments in France. He also praised the ENR for its "curiosity" and ability to achieve a fair degree of intellectual respectability. Finally, he called for the constant revision of fascist methods. See Roger Griffin, (ed.), *Fascism*, pp. 319-321.

[11] According to York University professor Harvey Simmons, Louis Pauwels coined the term "New Right" in 1977, near the height of the ENR's mass media exposure in France. Pauwels sought to distinguish between Old and New Right, and to rid the Right of its "irrational" anti-Semitism. Personal conversation with the author in September 1991.

[12] For a more thorough list of founding members and figures connected to the ENR, GRECE, and its academic journals, see Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire*, pp. 251-258.

[13] See, for example, Harvey Simmons, *The French National Front: The Extremist Challenge to Democracy* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1996), pp. 207-236, for a thoughtful discussion of the similarities and new political discourse of both the extreme-right and intellectual ENR.

[14] The term "conservative revolution" was first explored and popularized by German scholar Armin Mohler in the 1940s in order to classify a vast and complex catalogue of non-Nazi variants of fascism and cultural pessimism in German cultural history, especially between 1918 and 1933. See Roger Griffin, (ed.), *Fascism*, pp. 351-354.

[15] Oswald Spengler's (1880-1936) most famous work is *The Decline of the West* (1923). His cultural pessimism and gloomy prophecies about the West have influenced intellectuals world-wide. The humiliating German defeat in World War I, the terrible human destruction of the war, the terror of global technologies of mass annihilation, and the increasing devaluation of human life in this century contributed to Spengler's outlook of cultural pessimism. In *Decline of the West,* Spengler posited the idea of the human species as that of eight different, opposing civilizations each experiencing its own cultural blossoming and decay. For Spengler, the world historical pattern of cultural "spring" and "winter" of civilization is cyclical: The inevitable predicament of all cultures in differing epochs and geographical locations. In addition, Spengler was an opponent of Western-driven, "abstract," and "universal" human rights, and the "goals of humanity" as envisioned by modern, "Faustian," and homogenizing philosophies of "progress" such as liberalism and Marxism.

[16] The principal works of Ernst Jünger (1895-1998) are *The Storm of Steel* (1920), his hymn to soldierly virtues, and *The Worker* (1932), in which he outlines the political implications of his philosophy of "heroic realism." Jünger captured the real sense of nearly mystic communion created by the "community of the trenches" which he saw as the model for a new order under a heroic, warrior elite. He was repeatedly used by the Nazi regime for political purposes, but his esoteric, individualistic, and spiritual path clashed with the more vulgar mass populism of the Nazis. For many observers, Jünger's ideas are tarnished because he helped nourish Nazi-like themes. See Roger Griffin, (ed.), *Fascism*, pp. 108-109.

[17] Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *L'Europe de l'extrême droite: de 1945 à nos jours* (Brussels: Editions Complexe, 1991), pp. 68-72; 113-114.

[18] In a memorable and often repeated remark, Giorgio Almirante, the longest serving Italian leader of the neo-fascist MSI, once dubbed Julius Evola as "our Marcuse, only better."

[19] For a detailed account and documentation of both periods, see the special double issue on the ENR entitled "The French New Right: New Right – New Left – New Paradigm?," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994).

[20] For a copy of the *Appeal* and the comments of Roger-Pol Droit, see *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994), pp. 145-146; 157-158.

[21] Frank Adler, "Left Vigilance in France," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994), pp. 23-33.

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] See, for example, the 1986 manifesto of a German branch of the ENR in Tomislav Sunic, *Against Democracy and Equality: The European New Right*, pp. 159-160. Here are two key extracts: "Our concept of the world does not refer to one theorist" and the ENR reject's "a dogmatic deciphering of the world," namely, the idea of a single truth, monotheism, and universalism -- called the "roots of totalitarianism."

[24] It should be pointed out that paganism and ecologism can also have some negative connotations. In terms of the former, Tomislav Sunic cites the scope of political repression and religious intolerance in ancient Greece, bloody wars and persecutions under the Roman Empire, and the chilling racial "paganism" of Nazi Germany. Janet Biehl and Peter Staudenmaier point out the aims of "ecological dictatorship" and "ecological purity" of contemporary extreme-right and neo-fascist political outfits. For Biehl, only an ecology in the service of universal humanism and mutual respect for the diversity of nature and human life is worthy of the ecological label. In Biehl's view, the narrow ecologism of German philosophical Romanticism and the Third Reich, and the "ecological" modernism of extreme-right and neo-fascist parties all mask sinister, undemocratic longings for racial, cultural, or regional purity and domination. See Tomislav Sunic, *Against Democracy and Equality: The European New Right*, pp. 154-155; Janet Biehl and Peter Staudenmaier, *Ecofascism: Lessons from the German Experience* (Edinburgh, Scotland: AK Press, 1995).

[25] Pierre-André Taguieff has meticulously traced the old and new positions of the leading ENR theorist Alain de Benoist from the 1960s to 1990s. See Pierre-André Taguieff, "Discussion or Inquisition? – The Case of Alain de Benoist," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994), pp. 34-54.

[26] In Pierre-André Taguieff's *Sur la nouvelle droite* (Paris: Descartes and Cie, 1994), p. 313, the author unambiguously states that "Alain de Benoist and his review *Krisis* no longer belong to extreme right-wing space."

[27] Stephen Holmes, *The Anatomy of Antiliberalism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996).

[28] See the 16th issue of the journal *Krisis* entitled "Communauté" (June 1994).

[29] See, for example, Alain de Benoist, *Europe, Tiers monde, même combat* (Paris: R. Laffont, 1986).

[30] Umberto Eco, *New York Review of Books* (June 22, 1995).

[31] See, for example, Ernst Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965); Roger Griffin, *Fascism* (ed.), pp. 1-12; Ze'ev Sternhell, *The Birth of the Fascist Ideology* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994); and Stanley Payne, *Fascism: Comparison and Definition* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980).

[32] For Israeli historian Ze'ev Sternhell, the synthesis between ultra-nationalism and an anti-Marxist revision of socialism is the central tenet of the fascist ideology. See Ze'ev Sternhell, *Neither Right, Nor Left* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1986).

[33] Marco Revelli, "La nuova destra," *Iride* 18 (May-August 1996), pp. 361-365.

The Ambiguities of the Intellectual European New Right, 1968-1999

Chapter 1:
The ENR's Historical and Ideological Origins, Birth, and Development in France: The Right-Wing Roots

Although France is the birthplace of the monumental 1789 Revolution, of the universal declaration of the Rights of Man, of "*Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*," it is simultaneously the nation with one of the most historically potent and sophisticated revolutionary right-wing traditions in Europe. Most of these revolutionary Right traditions are united by a vehement counter-revolutionary ethic, a sort of anti-1789 stance, in relation to the most basic principles of the French Revolution and Enlightenment-based ideals, such as science, reason, personal and societal moral betterment, universalism, and linear visions of "progress."

Many of the leading French New Right thinkers, including its head Alain de Benoist, have their definite personal origins in the revolutionary Right and ultra-nationalist milieu of the 1950s and 1960s, especially the struggle for French Algeria. In this period, some French New Right thinkers were filled with sympathy or lingering nostalgia for the Vichy collaborationists of the 1940s, the French and German "non-conformists" of the 1920s and 1930s, and even certain aspects of Italian fascism and German Nazism. A number of contemporary French New Right thinkers continue to look for revolutionary inspiration from a number of these right-wing sources and traditions. As Tomislav Sunic has neatly explained, although the ENR does not explicitly profess any of these aforementioned currents of thought, or any other of the diverse right-wing traditions found throughout continental Europe, it in reality remains indebted to all of them.[1] While many ENR thinkers do not officially cite as a source of primary influence a number of nativist, French currents of right-wing thought, their

intellectual circles of influence and origins on the revolutionary Right meant a familiarity and, at times, even sympathy for these right-wing strains of thought.

This chapter will first highlight the most important right-wing strains of thought within France and Europe generally in order to better understand one side of the historical and ideological origins of the ENR itself. This will be followed by examining the French New Right's birth in 1968 and tracing its development, which tended to symbiotically feed off the changing cultural and political fortunes of the French and European Left. The French New Right's other intellectual and political legacy can be traced to the New Left, the events of 1968, the year of the Left's great revolutionary hopes, and the eventual crushing of the ideals of the New Left. Thus, while the first chapter generally examines the right-wing origins of the French New Right, the second chapter tackles its relationship to the events of May 1968 and affinity for the New Left. It is this ambiguous synthesis of the ideas of the continental, European revolutionary Right and New Left that forms the heart of the ENR's worldview, its political choices, and metapolitical orientation.

The main argument of the first two chapters and the thesis more generally, then, is that the French New Right has been shaped by an ambiguous set of intellectual and political legacies. On the one hand, the French New Right has been influenced by the political and intellectual heritages of both French and other continental European right-wing traditions. This will be discussed in the first chapter. Yet, on the other hand, formed in 1968 shortly before the time of the student and worker revolts, the French New Right has also been deeply shaped by the cultural, intellectual, and political trajectory and fortunes of the French Left and New Left during and after 1968. This left-wing heritage of the French New Right will be discussed and analyzed in the second chapter. In addition, in this chapter and throughout the dissertation, it will become apparent that the French New Right has also displayed a measure of sympathy for the revolutionary Left because it shares with it a common anti-liberal,

anti-capitalist, and radical stance vis-à-vis the liberal democratic system. It is our argument that the interaction and dynamic relationship between Right and Left in France has seriously shaped the evolution of the French New Right. The years of left-wing and anarchist student and worker agitation in 1968 and the year of the "earthquake" Socialist electoral victory of François Mitterrand in France in 1981 loom particularly large in our analysis. These two dates are critical for the evolution of the French New Right. In short, the years 1968 and, to a lesser extent, 1981, have radically shaped the intellectual, cultural, and political choices of the French New Right.

1. Ideological Origins: The Counter-Revolution Against 1789

The Frenchman Joseph de Maistre (1753-1821) was the earliest and leading theoretician of the traditionalist, anti-Enlightenment counter-revolutionary heritage, which waged a metapolitical "war" on the entire metaphysical edifice of the liberal French Revolution and what he viewed as the "abstract" notion of individual or human rights. Exiled to Switzerland by the French Revolution and later a member of the Russian court in St. Petersburg for 14 years, his best work called *Les Soirées de Saint-Petersbourg* (1821) acclaimed the public executioner as the ultimate guardian of the social order. He remained convinced of the need for the conservation of tradition, the supremacy of Christianity, and the absolute rule of both sovereign and pope. Attacking the ideas of the liberal-minded *philosophes* such as Francis Bacon, Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and John Locke, De Maistre rallied all his life against their Enlightenment-driven notions, especially their faith in science, empiricism, humanity, and progress.

One of the most prominent philosophers of the 20th century, Isaiah Berlin, has even argued that Joseph de Maistre was an early precursor of fascism[2]: The shared pessimistic and apocalyptic vision of life, the gloomy world of an eternal graveyard of executioners and executionees (or friends and foes), the violent revolutionary ethos tinged with traditionalism, complete individual self-abnegation to a higher reality (i.e.,

God or nation), the intense anti-egalitarianism and anti-humanism, and the complete hatred of the "decadent," materialist "disorders" of liberalism and democracy. Despite the fervent Catholicism of De Maistre, Paul Gottfried explains how ENR publications abound with praise for Catholic counter-revolutionaries such as De Maistre and the Spaniard Juan Donoso Cortés: They are essentially like-minded critics of the French Revolution, its "debilitating" egalitarianism, "abstract" individualism, and "intolerant, revolutionary universalism."[3]

In addition, France rather than Germany is generally cited as the theoretical birthplace of "scientific racism."[4] The French thinker Joseph-Arthur Gobineau (1816-1882) is the most representative figure of this school of "scientific racism" and is most renowned for the publication of his *Essay on the Inequality of Human Races* (1853-1855). In this four-volume text, Gobineau asserted that the fate of civilizations is determined by racial composition and that Aryan societies flourish as long as they remain free of yellow and black racial strains. Gobineau also claimed that the more a civilization's racial character is diluted through miscegenation the more likely it is to lose its creativity and vitality and sink into the wilderness of corruption, immorality, and decadence. His racial thinking had a wide influence on hyper-nationalist, *völkisch* German circles, including Adolf Hitler who turned to Gobineau for inspiration. While Gobineau was largely concerned with a scholarly examination of human social life rather than racial political programs, he did influence the racialist thinking of Richard Wagner, the English racist politician Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and Adolf Hitler.

A number of French New Right thinkers, including Alain de Benoist, embraced this racialist and colonialist thinking in the 1950s and 1960s through ultra-nationalist, pro-Western, and pan-European publications such as *Défense de l'Occident* and *Europe Action*. In his major work *Vu de droite*, Alain de Benoist actually devotes several pages to Arthur de Gobineau; claims that he is "the victim of a double prejudice", which only sees him as the author of *The Inequality of Human*

Races and this work as "the bible of a perverse racism;" and neglects to explain that the French writer was one of the "fathers" of federalism, the theory of elites, and "the first important visionary of racial conflict."[5]

In this century, the prominent French writers Maurice Barrès (1862-1923) and Charles Maurras (1868-1952) both gave French ultra-nationalist ideology its theoretical foundations and aura of respectability. Ze'ev Sternhell, one of the most prominent historians of fascism, has argued that both thinkers helped to pave the ideological groundwork for the fascist synthesis between ultra-nationalism and socialism.[6] Barrès nurtured an entire generation on the mythic solidarity of the national community; the quasi-mystical legend of the eternal unity of the "Blood, Soil, and Dead." Barrès had his roots in the short-lived revanchist movement of General Georges Boulanger (1837-1891), the former French Minister of War between 1886 and 1887, and the leading figure of a right-wing protest movement, which firmly rejected the notion of parliamentarism in favour of direct populism. Maurras was the leader of the influential neo-royalist, anti-Semitic, and ultra-nationalist inter-war movement founded in 1898 called the *Action française*. Like his predecessor Edouard Drumont (1844-1917) who published the infamous anti-Semitic, conspiracy tract entitled *La France juive* (1886) and was elected a deputy of Algiers in 1898, Maurras was deeply committed to Catholicism and royalism in order to safeguard the "honour" of the French nation and save it from "decadent" materialism, liberalism, and parliamentarism.

Barrès and Maurras were firmly rooted in the anti-liberal, anti-democratic, anti-individualist, and anti-Dreyfusard camp, which attempted to completely sabotage and transform the entire revolutionary heritage of 1789. For the German scholar of fascism Ernst Nolte, the *Action française* is even viewed as a precursor of German Nazism and the full-scale embodiment of fascism, or what he views as a deeply reactionary, anti-emancipatory movement whose fundamental aim was the

annihilation of Marxism.[7] In the tumult of the inter-war years, this school of thought provided the intellectual ammunition for a constellation of France's extreme right-wing political forces, including numerous ultra-nationalist and fascist leagues (e.g., François de La Rocque's immensely popular and "legalist" *Croix-de-Feu*). These ultra-nationalist leagues would constantly threaten the future of French parliamentary democracy. Ultimately, it could be argued that these ultra-nationalist leagues helped to derail French liberal democracy and the entire heritage of 1789. In the end, the French defeat in 1940 and the emergence of the anti-liberal, anti-democratic Vichy collaborationist régime helped to fulfil the revolutionary aspirations of the ultra-nationalist leagues.

Both French scholars René Rémond and Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol have observed a close resemblance between the role of Charles Maurras in the *Action française* and Alain de Benoist with the *nouvelle droite*: the similar method of intellectual work, the idea of the primacy of the "cultural war," and the vision of an elite-based cultural group in hostile conflict with the dominant political and intellectual establishment.[8] The major difference between Maurras and de Benoist, however, was that the latter rejected the rigid Catholic clericalism and assimilationist nationalism of the former in favour of an anti-religious, pagan Nietzscheanism. While Maurras was an agnostic officially ostracized by the Catholic Church in Rome, he thought that it was imperative to stress the royalist and Catholic roots of France because they remained an integral part of the French nation's cultural identity and created a vast reservoir of potential for popular, ultra-nationalist agitation against French parliamentarism and the entire liberal democratic heritage of 1789. De Benoist, on the other hand, totally rejected Christianity in both its religious and secular manifestations.

Moreover, it should be added that recent French historiography has shown that, contrary to the mainstream thesis of René Rémond,[9] French fascism was not a minor,

imported ideology. Numerous scholars such as Ze'ev Sternhell and William Irvine have challenged this prevalent French academic view of fascism as a minor force in French history and politics. For Sternhell, in the period between 1885 and the eve of World War I in 1914, France was itself the birthplace of the "neither Right, nor Left" fascist ideological synthesis: a union of the constant revision of Marxism and organic, ultra-nationalism.[10] Irvine and other scholars, on the other hand, claim that fascism was both widespread in France during the inter-war years and clearly on the political Right rather than among dissident French leftists attempting to revise Marxism.[11] On the first point, Irvine and Sternhell stand united against Rémond's traditionalist thesis of French fascism as a minor, imported ideology, although the two scholars part on Sternhell's insistence that French fascism has predominantly left-wing roots. In any case, both Sternhell and Irvine have increasingly triggered a new wave of scholarship documenting the mainstream nature of nativist manifestations of extreme-right and fascist ideology in France during the turbulent inter-war years, especially the influential phenomenon of the extra-parliamentary *ligues* such as the *Croix-de-Feu*, *Action française*, and *Jeunesses Patriotes*. For these scholars, then, the French Right also includes a native French strain of fascism or ultra-nationalism to go along with Rémond's traditional classification of the three different right-wing traditions within the country: Monarchist, liberal Orleanist, and Bonapartist.[12]

Originating from the political Right, the French New Right was naturally well-placed to borrow from the thought of French inter-war era political fascists such as Georges Valois (founder of *Le Faisceau*, the first Fascist Party in France in 1925), Jacques Doriot (head of the *Parti Populaire Français*; promoter of the French legions against Bolshevism; and an active collaborator), and Marcel Déat; cultural fascists such as Henri Montherlant, Robert Brasillach, and Drieu de la Rochelle; or other French "non-conformists" of the 1920s or 1930s like Georges Sorel, which could express sympathy for either revolutionary Right or Left as a result of their common anti-materialist, idealism, hatred of liberal democracy and capitalism, and

revolutionary longings. The examination of cultural fascists was an integral part of de Benoist's progression as a Paris university student writing in the early 1960s for the ultra-nationalist journal *Cahiers universitaires*, an intellectual precursor of several GRECE journals founded in the late 1960s and 1970s.[13] Despite his profound resonance within the "national-revolutionary" and "national-communist" milieu in Germany, with Italian syndicalist thinkers such as Arturo Labriola and Enrico Leone, the Italian fascists Giovanni Gentile and Benito Mussolini, and even the Soviet Bolshevik régime, the French "non-conformist" thinker Georges Sorel, (a man who praised collective action, violence, myth, and idealism above thought), continued to influence de Benoist's thought into the 1970s and beyond.[14]

Furthermore, modern academic research has also pointed out that the World War II French collaborationist Vichy régime under Marshal Pétain was more than simply a short parenthesis in that nation's history. A number of reputable scholars since the 1980s, beginning with the joint works of historians Michael Marrus and Robert Paxton,[15] have highlighted how this nativist authoritarian régime was more mainstream in intellectual and popular circles than once suspected and how it smashed the entire edifice of 1789 within a period of less than one year during the Nazi occupation of France in 1940. More precisely, the most sacred principles of 1789 were destroyed free of Nazi exhortations by the French Vichy régime itself when it implemented the infamous *statut des juifs* and later wilfully participated in the genocide of 75,000 French Jews by handing them to the Nazi authorities. The scope of French Vichy collaboration was made more evident when former French Socialist President François Mitterrand shocked the nation when he admitted to a short flirtation with the Vichy régime. Numerous allegedly liberal or leftist French intellectuals, including Emmanuel Mounier, Thierry Maulnier, and Bertrand de Jouvenel, were also accused of collaborating with the Vichy régime. The myth of a massive French resistance to Nazi Germany slowly began to crumble under the weight of historical evidence. In short, a long intellectual assault on the principles of 1789, which began in

the late 19th century and was rooted in the revolt against the "established disorder" and the "materialist decadence" of positivism, liberalism, democracy, and parliamentarism prepared the groundwork for the France's Vichy turn in 1940. For many Vichyites or their numerous fellow travellers, almost any new post-liberal, anti-materialist order was preferable to the hated evils of liberal parliamentarism and capitalist materialism.

While Vichy's inherent conservatism, authoritarianism, and clericalism embodied in the régime's slogan "*Patrie, Famille, Travail*" (Fatherland, Family, Work) does not exactly suit the more revolutionary worldview of the ENR thinkers, the ENR shared with it a common disdain for the principles of 1789 and many colleagues were attracted to Vichy's marked elitism, or hierarchical and organic vision of existence. In short, the historical memory of Vichy could serve as a model for GRECE elites wishing to radically overturn liberal democracy and capitalism. Vichy provided the perfect metapolitical scenario that GRECE would remember: internal "decay" and crisis, an external enemy, and the elite-driven crushing of the hated liberal and parliamentary order.

Another source of inspiration for the French revolutionary Right came from the partisans of *Algérie française*, especially active in the 1950s and early 1960s; the radical *pieds noirs* colonialists in favour of imposing the supposedly superior French civilization on the Muslim Arab and Berber civilizations of Algeria; the anti-Gaullists of the clandestine, paramilitary, and revolutionary *Organisation de l'armée secrète* (OAS- Secret Army Organization), which sought to overthrow the French government in order to "save" the West and stem the tide of de-colonization; all those French Algerians who claimed to remain faithful to the military ethic of honour and loyalty, or what they saw as the cause of the fatherland against the "treason" of bourgeois compromise and materialism. Working on these aforementioned themes and the anxiety of the newly exiled *pieds noirs* after the loss of Algeria in 1962, Jean-Louis Tixier-Vignancourt, a lawyer and radical supporter of *Algérie française*, actually

received about six per cent of the national vote during the French Presidential elections of 1965. Aside from the anti-tax, anti-state, and populist Poujadist "flash in the pan" (i.e., a mixture of anti-Semitism and an appeal to the "little guys" fearful of capitalist modernization) in the 1956 legislative elections, which garnered 52 seats and 2.5 million national votes, this was the best electoral result for an explicitly revolutionary Right political candidate in post-World War II France until the meteoric rise of Jean-Marie Le Pen's *Front National* in the early 1980s.

Whether operating under the influence of a French, ultra-nationalist or pan-European, revolutionary perspective, a number of future French New Right thinkers, including its leader Alain de Benoist, played an active role in attempting to maintain support for a French Algeria. His early works, including *Le courage est leur patrie* (1965) and *Rhodésie, terre des lions fidèles* (1967), are firmly embedded within this ultra-nationalist or pan-European, pro-colonialist, and militaristic tone calling for the revival of elite, chivalric warrior societies where honour and courage superseded material considerations.

Thus, it was these varied home-grown currents of the anti-1789 counter-revolutionary heritage, whether monarchical, Catholic integralist, ultra-nationalist, fascist, Vichyite, or the national, revolutionary partisans of *Algérie française*, which would continue to sustain the post-World War II generation of revolutionary Right "losers." Yet, the revolutionary Right faded as it was swept by the strong wave of Gaullism in the 1950s and 1960s with its emphasis on French nationalism, independence, anti-parliamentarism, and its quasi-authoritarian, populist strain. Nonetheless, these right-wing traditions in both France and abroad provided crucial reference points and an element of continuity for what became known as the ENR intellectuals. As late as the 1990s, French political scientist Pierre-André Taguieff still clearly traced the ideological origins of the ENR thinkers to the "classical French far Right."[16]

Although this anti-1789 revolutionary Right heritage was clearly defeated after the war, it did continue its transmission, within limited circles, from one generation to the next, and also represented a coherent body of thought, which could be recuperated at another critical time in the future when some intellectuals began to again argue that the fruits of 1789 principles such as progress, liberty, equality, and fraternity, seemed to ring hollow. Furthermore, unlike Germany which was burdened by the horrors of Nazism and the Holocaust, the resurgence of a revolutionary Right was perhaps more likely in France since it had a healthy dosage of well-established, nativist right-wing strains of thought and yet never maintained an outright taboo of these very same traditions. While France's legacy of 1789 has been historically dominant, the revolutionary Right was often more influential than acknowledged and always waiting for its chance to upturn the hated "disorder" of 1789. In the post-World War II period, this revolutionary Right heritage would continue to haunt the French political scene in both older and newer guises. One manifestation of this revolutionary Right current of thought was the ENR thinkers, which first emerged in France in the mid-1960s.

2. The Post-War Years: Residues of the Past and the Gradual Metapolitical Turn of the French Revolutionary Right in the Early 1960s

In the post-World War II era, the French revolutionary Right continued its survival in tiny pockets of rather fragmented monarchists, radical counter-revolutionaries, ex-Vichyites, Catholic integralists, extreme nationalists, Third Way political soldiers, neo-fascists, and neo-Nazis. In general, however, the French revolutionary Right languished in a vegetative state: A sort of loose collection of minute *groupuscules*, various ideological tendencies, quarrelsome personalities, and national differences.[17]

Nonetheless, there were more revolutionary Right traditions in other parts of Europe, including the thought of the inter-war era German conservative

revolutionaries (CR) and the cult-like status of philosopher Julius Evola among radical Right circles in Italy, which could be used as a point of reference in the age after the "defeat." Despite an isolated, alienated, and discredited affinity to the fascist culture of the past, Evola's rejection of the liberal order's "vulgar," quantitative economism, anti-Americanism, and image of a qualitative warrior elite "riding the tiger" amid the ruins was reassuring for the generation of fascists, which tasted the war's bitter defeat. Indeed, Evola became a crucial reference point for several generations within the European revolutionary Right milieu between the 1950s and 1970s, especially for the parliamentary neo-fascists in the MSI and radical Right terrorist groups such as *Ordine Nuovo* in Italy, which sought to break the "sickness" of bourgeois materialism and lifestyles with an esoteric warrior ethic and Eastern-influenced mysticism.[18]

In terms of the philosophy of Julius Evola and CR thinkers, including Oswald Spengler and Ernst Jünger, they had the advantage of being imbued with a revolutionary ethos and yet they were not supposedly tainted by their relationship to the Nazi or fascist régimes as a result of their distant, esoteric elitism. While Evola was an inspiration to the milieu of the revolutionary Right in Italy and other European countries, it would be the CR philosophers, what Armin Mohler dubbed the "healthy Trotskyites" of the German Revolution (1918-1933) in contrast to the Hitlerian "travesty" (and also a veritable treasure-trove of ideas for the Nazi régime),[19] which would be more explicitly rehabilitated by the French *nouvelle droite* in the 1970s. Alain de Benoist has listed the CR thinkers as one of his primary influences, wrote a positive essay about its leading figure Ernst Jünger, and is indebted to the latter through his radical Nietzschean nominalism, spherical view of history, warrior ethic, the belief in a particular spirit for each culture, the support for a hierarchical organic community, and a more violent anti-materialist, anti-liberalism than anti-Marxism.[20]

It was this type of cultural recuperation of what many view as "proto-fascist" thought, which would eventually allow the revolutionary Right to escape the "burden

of history" and its self-inflicted "ghetto" status. For the revolutionary Right in France, the long march through the political wilderness would begin neither through the intimidation and fear of violent street action, nor in the "compromise chamber" of the parliamentary realm. For some, the return to political respectability necessitated a questioning of these traditional methods used by the revolutionary Right to attain and maintain power. Besides, aside from the modest electoral results of the Italian MSI and the clerical authoritarian régimes of Franco and Salazar in Spain and Portugal, was not the revolutionary Right throughout Europe condemned to marginality and in need of new paths of exploration? While others continued the routes of violent confrontation or parliamentary politics, a new generation of thinkers from the revolutionary Right milieu began to steer a third path: The primacy of cultural metapolitics. It would first begin in the early 1960s with its own small press outlets, relatively unknown publishing houses, obscure journals, tireless editors, and radical nationalist student organizations. Thus, the anti-conservative Right would begin its slow ascent to normalcy and respectability. Were these early metapolitical efforts a form of self-critique, a type of reflection about "quasi-fascist" ideas, or an obvious continuity with the discredited fascist heritage of the past?

One of the most significant of these metapolitical endeavours was the work of the French neo-fascist author Maurice Bardèche. A literary critic and brother-in-law of the French fascist author Robert Brasillach, who was executed for treason in 1945, Bardèche frequented Vichyite and revolutionary Right circles during World War II. As pointed out earlier, he took the fascist label as a badge of honour rather than one of shame and defeat. Bardèche founded the explicitly pro-Western, Europeanist, and racialist journal *Défense de l'Occident* in 1952, which included future members of the principal French ENR think-tank GRECE. Among these former GRECE collaborators with Bardèche's journal was Fabrice Laroche, one pseudonym of the ENR's leading figure Alain de Benoist. The latter would especially remember the lesson of the journal's anti-communism and anti-Sovietism, which never slavishly celebrated the

merits of the opposite liberal capitalist American camp. More importantly, it was against the backdrop of the Algerian War in 1961 that Bardèche published his infamous text called *Qu'est-ce que le fascisme?* (*What is fascism?*).[21] Bardèche's text was considered a classical work for the entire revolutionary Right and neo-fascist milieu in the post-World War II era.[22]

Another important metapolitical effort, *Pour une critique positive*, was published by revolutionary Right militant Dominique Venner a year later in 1962 and is considered the "fascist equivalent" of Vladimir Lenin's revision of Marxism in *What is to be done?*[23] It is important to understand that 1962 was a crushing turning point for revolutionary Right circles, the year of France's de-colonization exit from the bitter debacle of the Algerian War. The Algerian War had convinced Venner that it was through a new ideological orientation, a pan-European framework and not a weakened France, that the battle must continue against the "subversion" and materialist "decadence" of the liberal capitalist United States and communist USSR. Like Bardèche, Venner was firmly rooted in revolutionary Right circles. Venner was the son of an ardent supporter of Jacques Doriot's fascist *Parti populaire français* during the 1930s and 1940s and belonged to the neo-fascist *Jeune nation* and *Jeune Europe* groups in the 1950s. In the 1950s and 1960s, *Jeune Europe* was based in thirteen European countries, guided by the Belgian pan-European revolutionary Jean Thiriart, and was really a precursor of Alain de Benoist's ideas related to a "spiritual European empire" against both Washington and Moscow, pro-Third World anti-Americanism, and his philo-Soviet tendencies.[24] A combatant during the Algerian War, Venner served in prison from 1961-1962 as a result of his membership in the French OAS. Venner was also a founder of the *Fédération des étudiants nationalistes* (FEN), the ultra-nationalist union of French university students, and editor of the revolutionary Right journal of the "white man" *Europe Action* in the early 1960s. Alain de Benoist, the doyen of the ENR, also belonged to FEN and was a member of *Europe Action*, for which he wrote articles and served as editor-in-chief of its weekly

publication called *Europe-Action Hebdomadaire*. He has publicly admitted his intellectual roots in these revolutionary Right circles.[25]

The early metapolitical initiatives of Bardèche and Venner within *Europe Action* and *Défense de l'Occident*, and others, including the student-based FEN organization and journal *Cahiers universitaires*, were filled with future GRECE members. These efforts were based on the realization that in order to politically survive they must adapt the excessive tactics of the revolutionary Right and fascism such as extreme chauvinism, excessive militarism, quasi-mystical leader cult, the totalitarian one party state, and police brutality.[26] The discredited revolutionary Right ideas of the inter-war years had to be made more palatable to French and European public opinion. This adaptation process which seriously began around the time of the Algerian War, would entail the transformation of fascist and Nazi discourse, and the avoidance of making any conspicuous links with the discredited fascist culture of the past.

Among the changes made by *Europe Action*, Harvey Simmons cites several important ones which would later condition the *nouvelle droite* founders of the late 1960s: the dumping of the *Führer-prinzip* or the hyper-veneration of the charismatic leader, a "scientific" doctrine of racism, and conditional support of the liberal parliamentary system.[27] Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol has pointed out other *Europe Action* themes later borrowed by the *nouvelle droite*: the anti-Christian stance, a marked elitism, the racial notion of a unified Europe, the beginning of a change from biological to cultural definitions of "difference," and the sophisticated inversion of terms like racism and anti-racism.[28]

This early metapolitical turn of certain sections of the revolutionary Right in the late 1950s and early 1960s clearly sought to rejuvenate fascism through new tactical and ideological disguises. This point can be corroborated by the warnings of

neo-fascist author and GRECE sympathiser Maurice Bardèche speaking about the eventual return of a new, revised, subtle, and mysterious type of fascism:

> The single party, the secret police, the public displays of Caesarism, even the presence of a Führer are not necessarily attributes of fascism. ... The famous fascist methods are constantly revised and will continue to be revised. More important than the mechanism is the idea which fascism has created for itself of man and freedom. ... With another name, another face, and with nothing which betrays the projection from the past, with the form of a child we do not recognize and the head of a young Medusa, the Order of Sparta will be reborn: and paradoxically it will, without doubt, be the last bastion of Freedom and the sweetness of living.[29]

Like its 1968 leftist counterparts, the New Right would eventually support the proliferation of new post-materialist issues, whether youth questions, feminism, the environment, regional and cultural autonomy, and pro-Third World solidarity. Was this strategy a type of revised cultural fascism in the mould of Bardèche, or an authentic search for a new political alternative? Like the New Left, the New Right was critical of the harmful effects of capitalist modernization, the de-spiritualized vision of Western "progress," and questioned the merits of the colonialist project. The French New Right began to see the New Left as a spiritually and politically allied movement and common idealistic partner in their battle to destroy liberal democracy, capitalism, and what they viewed as the gradual Westernization of the world. Besides, these new issues tended to be transversal; they transcended the traditional categories of Right and Left; and they offered hope for a reconciliation between the revolutionary poles on the far Right and Left.

The other lesson the French New Right learned from the 1968 leftist radicals was that the opposition's ideas could one day enter the mainstream of political life in terms of co-opting both ideals and key cultural and political personnel within the state, administration, mass media, and universities. The ENR never tired of lamenting that it was the New Left generation of the 1968ers, which completely controlled the cultural apparatus of French social life in the 1970s. The leftist generation of 1968, then, acted as the ENR's model in the battle to reclaim cultural hegemony, viewed as the key for

any lasting political power. In a sense, the year 1968 saw the birth of the French New Right at almost the exact period as the leftist-inspired, May demonstrations, but could also be interpreted as the starting point of an analysis for the ENR intellectuals. The New Left revolutionaries would continue to seriously imprint the thinking of New Right revolutionaries thirty years later in the late 1990s. This pervasive New Left influence was one major sign of the ENR's novelty.

3. The Birth of GRECE and the French New Right: The Other Revolutionaries of 1968

The *Groupement de recherche et d'étude pour la civilisation européenne* (GRECE – Group for Research and Studies on European Civilization) was officially established in the southern port city of Nice, France, in January 1968 by forty members, including Alain de Benoist and two prominent future secretary generals, Pierre Vial and Jean-Claude Valla. Nice provided a particularly favourable atmosphere for GRECE as a result of the large presence of French *pieds noirs* ex-colonists returning from Algeria and the avowedly right-wing views of its long-serving mayor Jacques Médecin. The GRECE members were largely reputable bourgeois professionals and intellectuals: teachers, university professors, writers, journalists, doctors, and engineers. GRECE modelled itself on left-wing thinks-tanks seeking to re-invigorate socialist doctrines such as the French *Club Jean Moulin* of the 1960s: a collection of like-minded intellectuals, civil servants, and politicians.[30] At the same time, they also claimed to aspire towards a more objective, detached style of research reminiscent of the prestigious Paris-based scientific institute called the *Centre nationale de la recherche scientifique* (CNRS).[31] Its purpose was the formation of a "community of work and thought" and the establishment of a coherent ideological corpus for the revolutionary Right.[32]

Harvey Simmons has traced the intellectual roots of GRECE directly to the racist and anti-Semitic *Europe Action* group and the journal of the same name, which

only existed between 1963-1966.[33] Alain de Benoist was an influential figure in the creation of both projects. The GRECE project was itself a union of three different revolutionary Right youth generations: the inter-war era, World War II, and the Algerian War. It would increasingly become dominated by a new generation geared towards the metapolitical terrain and new social issues in the mould of the New Left. De Benoist, a product of this dominant third youth generation, would endorse the aphorism that the French Right was the "dumbest in the world"[34] and argued beginning with *Europe Action* and later GRECE that the revolutionary Right must abandon the naked violence, petty infighting, and sterile doctrinal disputes of the 1940s and 1950s in order to return to political respectability.

Simmons also stresses how two traumatic events for the revolutionary Right, the debacle of the Algerian War or the loss of *Algérie française* and the spectacular student-inspired revolution of May 1968, which began as a simple protest against university conditions, would indelibly leave their imprint on the future thinking of GRECE members.[35] While many GRECE figures were loyal to the cause of French Algeria and some even had ties to the outlawed OAS, in the late 1960s some of its members realized the futility of the *Algérie française* project and the fallacy of colonialism. In this context, Alain de Benoist wrote the following: "The OAS enterprise revealed itself to be enormously sterile. ... The independence of the Third World produced neither the miracles the left hoped for, nor the catastrophes the right predicted."[36] For de Benoist, the de-colonization process and the ascent to international power of the Third World was clear evidence of the irreconcilable differences between world cultures. This cultural argument for the preservation of "difference" and its potential for confronting American imperialism would sustain de Benoist's thinking well into the 1990s.

The events of May 1968 imbued many GRECE members with a strange cocktail of shock and envy for the leftist student radicals. They were especially

impressed by the sophistication of Marxist cultural theories and the idealistic fervour of the students battling in the barricades. The New Left ideas of the 1968 generation would become central to the worldview of ENR intellectuals. In the 1990s, some bold political commentators like the Italian Ernesto Galli Della Loggia would later claim that the ENR thinkers had recuperated so many of the themes and ideas of the 1968 leftist radicals that they constituted one of the few remaining left-wing cultural movements in the post-communist age and were definitely no longer part of the world of neo-fascism or the Right as it is historically understood.[37] The ENR thinkers were essentially the other, right-wing revolutionary children of the May 1968 generation. They were composed largely of professionals rather than the 1968 New Left protest alliance of workers, left-wing activists, student radicals, and professionals.

Formed in 1968, the French New Right was deeply shaped by the political events and political dynamics of French politics in 1968 and the politics of the French Left: the fatigue with the Centre-Right and De Gaulle, the May waves of protest and emergence of new social issues, the idealistic calls for radical social transformation, and their instantaneous mass media reverberations and impact throughout the world (e.g., the Czechoslovak "Prague Spring" in 1968). Like the New Left, the New Right would claim to rally against the inorganic, bureaucratization of social and political life, institutional paralysis, and President Charles de Gaulle's quasi-authoritarian rule under the revamped Fifth Republic.

Pierre Vial, an original founder of GRECE and former secretary-general, expressed his affinity for the leftist student revolutionaries of 1968 in November 1984:

> Twenty years ago I laughed at my fellow students who used to pin up Che Guevara's photograph in their rooms. I was wrong. Che Guevara symbolically represented for them and represents today for me, the only worthwhile hope. The only chance of fighting to attempt to change an intolerable world. I mean a world of petty mediocre pleasures, of old-boy networks and fixers, of fiddling and money grabbing.[38]

4. GRECE's "Cultural War" Begins

Hoping to emulate the political and especially cultural successes of the Left in 1968, the revolutionary Right milieu under GRECE began to adapt Antonio Gramsci's Marxism for their own partisan ends: A truncated Gramsci free of its class-based, materialist dimension.[39] Like Gramsci, GRECE argued that the most important route to political power was not elections or violent street combat, but in thoroughly changing the dominant *Zeitgeist* and people's acceptable ideas and worldviews. The cultural terrain, whether print press, television, radio, film, theatre, painting, literature, or education, was seen as the most potent tool of shaping a social consensus, achieving ideological hegemony, determining acceptable "taken for granted" notions, and ultimately controlling society itself.

This cultural power, deemed GRECE, was more fundamental to the capture and maintenance of state power than traditional sectors of power such as the army, police, judiciary, administration, and government. For GRECE, the cultural realm conditions and determines firmly the political terrain. All revolutionary movements, GRECE believed, must therefore focus their collective energy on the cultural, metapolitical realm in order to achieve a durable political triumph of its specific ideals. In his *magnum opus* named *Vu de droite*, Alain de Benoist explains the prime importance of the revolutionary-like "cultural war" in de-stabilizing the existing state apparatus:

> Without a precise theory, there is no effective action. ... All the revolutions of history have only transposed into facts an evolution that had already occurred in spirit. One can't have a Lenin before having had Marx. ... The French right is Leninist without having read Lenin. It hasn't realized the importance of Gramsci. It hasn't seen that cultural power threatens the apparatus of the state.[40]

It was no accident, then, that GRECE's first official seminar between November 11-12, 1968 was entitled "What is Metapolitics?": A preparation for the long-term struggle of "cultural war" against what was seen as the hegemonic liberal and Left cultural and political establishment. "Cultural War" was also the title of the 31st issue of the French New Right journal *Éléments*. GRECE's metapolitics borrowed

from Gramsci, but was also indebted to Charles Maurras and the *Action française*, which once remarked that "It was necessary to first 'monarchize' the nation before considering the restoration of the monarch."[41] This metapolitical framework was also markedly elitist as GRECE urged its members to mix with the most powerful decision-makers and to create a capable revolutionary elite force for the future. According to an important 1969 GRECE bulletin, this concentrated strategy sought to unify the thought and action of France's 1000 brightest and most powerful people in order to create the possibility of an anti-liberal revolution.[42]

Another critical aspect of GRECE's focus on the metapolitical realm was the launching of the first ENR journal *Nouvelle École* by Alain de Benoist in February 1968. *Nouvelle École* circulated its first printed issue to a wider audience than the coterie of 40 GRECE founders in January 1969. In that same year, as a result of the revolutionary Right political militancy of many of its members in the past, GRECE circulated a confidential internal bulletin to be later destroyed, which contained a warning against the use of outmoded fascist or proto-fascist language: "It is necessary to be very prudent in the conclusions which are drawn in *Nouvelle École*. It is equally necessary to be prudent in the vocabulary used. It is necessary to abandon an outdated vocabulary."[43] GRECE was to clearly understand that even language and words were an integral part of the cultural struggle and critical to the return of the revolutionary Right to political respectability. Nonetheless, the early issues of *Nouvelle École* between 1969-1971 differed little in their preoccupations from those of the racist *Europe Action* of the past, which contained future GRECE members: the themes of "biological realism," heredity, race, mixing of races and "selection," and eugenics.[44] The one point of departure between the two journals was that, unlike *Europe Action*, *Nouvelle École* remained fixated on cultural metapolitics and abandoned the immediate quest for political power.

The early years of GRECE were particularly difficult for its founders. At the end of 1969, the editorial team of GRECE already feared for the extinction of the think-tank. Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol writes that in late 1969 the "horizon of GRECE is particularly dark."[45] Were the old combatants for *Algérie française* and the young ultra-nationalists growing impatient with the slow metapolitical route and thirsty for the taste of direct, revolutionary political action? Was it a function of the inevitable anarchy resulting from the clash of distinct revolutionary Right strains coming together? Or, was it simply the early growing pains born of a lack of funding and organizational capacity? In reading the few accounts of this phenomenon, one suspects that it was a combination of these three factors, which made the early years of GRECE appear black and sombre. It would take another decade before the fruits of GRECE's "cultural war" would become more apparent to the cultural and political landscape of France and Europe.

5. The French New Right in the 1970s: From Dark Days to Mass Media Lights

While the late 1960s were dark days for GRECE in terms of the slow emergence of a French New Right, there were signs in the early 1970s that the *nouvelle droite* was slowly coming to life. In 1970, twenty names were published as members of the first patronage committee for the journal *Nouvelle École*. These figures included some reputable intellectuals from various European countries. The most prominent figures included the following: university rector and future FN mayor Jacques Bompaire, the writer and journalist Jean Cau, GRECE's voice for regionalism and a "Europe of a Hundred Flags" Jean Maibre, *Académie française* member and distinguished French writer Thierry Maulnier, the German New Right's Armin Mohler, the sociologist Jules Monnerot, the history of religions expert and inspiration for GRECE's anti-Judeo-Christian stance Louis Rougier, and the writer Paul Sérant. The ability to pull together intellectuals of this stature into a permanent committee and organize numerous regional and national conferences meant that the *nouvelle droite* was beginning to make some progress.

In 1972, GRECE began to receive some rather limited press coverage. The most scathing attack in the press came on December 20, 1972, from the pen of *Le Canard enchaîné* journalist Dominique Durand who wondered whether GRECE's Paris-based office was a Nazi sanctuary.[46] In that same year, GRECE and the journal *Nouvelle École* were harshly denounced by a young organization and journal called *La Nouvelle action française* for what it viewed as the former's new materialist, "barbaric racism," anti-humanism, and anti-Christian positions.[47] These violent critiques against GRECE foreshadowed others which came during the "hot summer" in 1979 from Catholics, Protestants, Jews, liberals, and socialists. This was also the year of the founding of the *Front National*, France's strongest extreme right-wing political party, which would eventually co-opt a number of prominent GRECE ideas and personnel.

By 1973, GRECE was well-established and a second *nouvelle droite* journal, *Éléments (pour la civilisation européenne)*, began its circulation to the larger public in September. While *Nouvelle École* is distributed in France and abroad (including Europe, South America, and South Africa), *Éléments* is largely circulated in France. Both audiences are mainly composed of well-educated and culturally cultivated bourgeois elites, although *Éléments* probably has a higher number of university students. According to Pierre-André Taguieff, *Éléments* has a larger annual subscription rate than *Nouvelle École*.[48] *Éléments* generally appeals to GRECE's younger, more militant audience. *Éléments* might also be more populist and nationalist than the more aristocratic *Nouvelle École*. A 1993 poll would reveal that 35 per cent of *Éléments* subscribers feel close to the French *Front National*.[49] In contrast, Alain de Benoist, the founder of *Nouvelle École*, has often expressed a good measure of disdain for FN leader Jean-Marie Le Pen's "vulgar," ultra-nationalist populism. *Éléments*, too, is read by people belonging to radically different right-wing currents, whether the national revolutionaries, federalists, ultra-nationalist racists, personalist communitarians, libertarians, neo-liberals, and Gaullists.

Between 1973 and 1974, there was a minor press campaign against GRECE's pro-eugenics orientation and idiosyncratic defence of abortion on non-religious grounds. While this press coverage was rather limited, it did create the foundation for an organization called *Groupement d'action et de recherche pour l'avenir de l'homme* (GARAH) and its brochure *Morituri* in order to fight GRECE's eugenics-based support for the new law on abortion.[50] The name GARAH was clearly intended to be a word-play and intellectual response to GRECE. All the large French newspapers received GARAH's brochure, which mentions numerous GRECE and *Nouvelle École* articles between 1972-1974, but GRECE was still largely ignored by the mainstream press.

Yet, GARAH, with close ties to the anti-abortion, conservative, and Catholic integralist Right, insisted that GRECE's fascination with Indo-European roots and paganism, and its anti-Judeo-Christian stance were signs of a profound racism, a hate for the Christian religion, and the initial symptoms of Nazism. The short-lived GARAH phenomenon had three important lessons. In the first place, it began to alert some sectors of the majority Catholic community, Protestants, Jews, and a number of different anti-racist organizations about the anti-Christian, anti-Jewish, and possibly racist orientation of GRECE. Second, it pointed out that the Right in France was divided and could be deeply republican, devoutly Catholic, or even irreligious and pagan. Finally, GARAH's relatively small press skirmish with GRECE served as a sort of awakening for both the mass media and political forces about the arrival of the *nouvelle droite*. It was essentially a precursor to GRECE's entrance into the mainstream of mass media debate during the "hot summer" in 1979.

The splits within the Right were made even more conspicuous in 1974 when ex-members of GRECE created another metapolitical think-tank called the *Club de l'horloge* (Clock Club). The *Club de l'horloge* was composed of well-educated *École*

nationale d'administration (ENA, France's most prestigious school of civil administration) graduates, intellectuals, civil servants, and politicians. Unlike GRECE which adopted a long-term metapolitical plan to slowly spiritually re-capture hearts and minds, the *Club de l'horloge* opted for a more short-term strategy called "entryism" which attempted to subtly infiltrate all French political parties on the Right and influential politicians and civil servants. However, the irreconcilable schism between GRECE and the *Club de l'horloge* was obviously ideological. GRECE's anti-Western, anti-Christian, anti-American, anti-capitalist positions were diametrically opposed to those of the *Club de l'horloge*. In fact, the neo-liberal, hyper-capitalism espoused by the *Club de l'horloge* is reminiscent of intellectuals Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman, and Anglo-American New Right (AANR) political forces such as Thatcherism and Reaganism. The AANR's neo-liberalism has often been called the ENR's "principal enemy" and is the source of vitriolic attacks against the USA, seen as the major representative of this materialistic worldview.[51]

With roots in an older continental European counterrevolutionary, communitarian, and anti-capitalist tradition largely absent in the Anglo-American world, the ENR has been sharply critical of the AANR's defence of unfettered free market forces largely indifferent to tradition, religion, community, nation, nature, and slower organic rhythms of life in the past. Unlike the pro-capitalist, AANR-influenced *Club de l'horloge*, GRECE and the ENR attack what they view are the evils of an egoistic global capitalism, the rapid Westernization of the world, the steady erosion of cultural differences and diversity, and a de-spiritualized humanity devoid of tragedy, mystery, and beauty.

GRECE and the ENR are especially critical of the *Club de l'horloge* and AANR for holding what it considers contradictory positions: Its simultaneous espousal of economic neo-liberalism and a social, cultural, and political conservatism. The older orders of religion, tradition, morality, family values, state, and nation are usually

ruptured by the de-traditionalizing forces of capitalist markets so often praised by the AANR. In addition, the AANR's other logical fallacy, some critics contend, is to call for government cuts in the realms of education and social welfare, but simultaneously expand the budget for law, order, police, and army functions – presumably in order to preserve the harshness of the so-called "free market."[52] In the eyes of renowned sociologist Anthony Giddens, the AANR has now become a kind of right-wing radicalism preaching the universal application of unfettered market capitalism above all other principles, while the Left has become conservative and defensive in its desperate attempt to maintain the post-World War II gains of the besieged welfare state compromise.[53]

While a clear ideological chasm separates the AANR-driven *Club de l'horloge* and GRECE of the ENR, political scientist Harvey Simmons has neatly summarized the influential role of think-tanks GRECE and especially the *Club de l'horloge* on the French political scene of the 1970s and 1980s:

> Two clubs played key roles in renovating right-wing doctrine and in establishing links with the National Front and with the mainstream right: GRECE and the *Club de l'horloge*. From the early 1970s to the early 1980s, the doctrine of GRECE had a major impact on the ideology of the entire right. In recent years the club has declined, and its leaders have gone their separate ways. But the NF was particularly influenced by GRECE's ideas on race and immigration, although the club's idiosyncratic ideas on religion (it vehemently attacked the Judeo-Christian heritage of the West and supported neopaganism) led the NF as well as the mainstream right to keep its distance. By contrast, the *Club de l'horloge*, an offshoot of GRECE established in 1974 by ex-members of GRECE, continues to play an extremely important part in the National Front and, to a certain extent, in Giscard d'Estaing's Republican Party. Although the *Club de l'horloge* follows the same line as GRECE on race, immigration, and equality, its more orthodox views on religion and its pro-American attitude helped it assume a role similar to that played by American or British think-tanks as a testing ground for unusual or new ideas, an intellectual powerhouse, and an elite pressure group within the right.[54]

Despite the split between GRECE and the *Club de l'horloge* in 1974, GRECE continued its slow metapolitical route by attempting to expand its audience within elite, influential decision-making sectors of the French state. In one of its few direct metapolitical interventions, GRECE called for the French population to support the

mainstream Right's candidate Valéry Giscard d'Estaing in the presidential elections of 1974. Reeling from some negative press coverage mostly from the pro-Christian GARAH organization in April of that same year, an internal GRECE bulletin urged its members to respond to "virulent" press articles against the organization.[55] In a trend later followed by the FN in the 1980s and 1990s in order to enhance its public acceptance by denying it possessed a racist or fascist worldview, GRECE members were told to denounce false or truncated citations, cite the influential intellectuals connected to the organization, list their own professional credentials and university affiliations, and always speak of the "respectability" of the think-tank.

Between 1975-1976, GRECE sought to enlarge its influence within the national military and teaching sectors. As part of this strategy, GRECE created a group called *Comité de liaison des officiers et sous-officiers* (CLOSOR) for France's high-ranking military personnel and another, *Groupe d'études pour une nouvelle éducation* (GENE), for teaching professionals.[56] Both the military and university teaching milieus were well organized and included regional circles across the country and their respective bulletins. The *nouvelle droite* even began to publish a special bulletin called *Nation armée* in order to influence the military and intelligence services of the state. GENE even made some contacts with the National Education Ministry and had its own journal, *Nouvelle Éducation*. It mainly tried to influence university students, teachers, and professors. GENE's most important points of influence were the universities of Paris, Lyon III, and Aix-Marseille.

The education and military sectors were key targets for GRECE because they were highly sensitive vectors of political influence and were part of a larger metapolitical strategy designed to subvert what they viewed as the "decadent," egalitarian "Marxification" of the schools and universities. GRECE's goal was to restore France to its hierarchical and organic Indo-European roots; its pre-Christian, pagan warrior ethic of courage, heroism, and honour. Under the spell of Carl Schmitt's

decisionism, GRECE lamented the purely mercantilist ethos of liberal capitalism and sought to make the political and military functions once again sovereign vis-à-vis the economic domain. For GRECE, like Schmitt, the essence of politics is neither economics nor morality, but the crucial differentiation between political friends and enemies both internally and externally.[57]

It should be pointed out that a similar strategy of infiltration within the military milieu by Italian radical Right terrorist groups and clandestine elite pressure groups such as *Propaganda-Due* (P-2) was part of a larger "strategy of tension" to highjack Italian democracy in the mid-1970s. The right-wing "strategy of tension" has revealed serious charges of collusion with the highest state authorities, including the military, police, intelligence services, judiciary, and civil service.[58] While GRECE's long-term metapolitical orientation diverged from what it believed was the Old Right, direct revolutionary position of radical Right Italian terrorist groups, both sought to implant an anti-liberal régime on European soil.

By the late 1970s, it appeared that GRECE began to bear some of the fruits of its long-term metapolitical combat. In 1976, GRECE founded its own publishing house, Copernic, in order to propagate its view of the world to a larger European public. Keen to rest France's cultural balance of power from what it called the "hegemonic" 1968 generation of leftists, GRECE's ambition was to be a sort of right-wing equivalent of the successful left-wing publisher Maspero.[59] The choice of names, Copernic (Copernicus), after the visionary Polish scientist crucified by the Church, was intended to highlight GRECE's creation of a new way of seeing the world; the dawn of a new age; a brand new political paradigm; and the creation of a *nouvelle droite* as distinct from the Old Right. GRECE argued that it had created a novel political paradigm which contrasted with the "intellectual terrorism" and "new Inquisition" of its "dogmatic" and dominant liberal and left-wing opponents.[60] The implicit message of using the name Copernic was that GRECE's worldview, much

maligned by the cultural and political establishment of the day as was Copernicus, would triumph and dominate the thinking of another epoch.

In 1977, Copernic published Alain de Benoist's *Vu de droite* (*Seen from the Right*), an anthology of essays, which essentially traces his major influences and ideological roots, and de-legitimizes the major tenets of liberal democracy. In that year, it also published the works of other thinkers in the revolutionary Right milieu: an anti-Christian text by Louis Rougier, a book on man's inequality by world-renowned psychologist Hans Eysenck, a work on race and intelligence by J.-P. Hébert, a title by Julius Evola, and one by Jean Cau on decadence. Using the term "Right" as a badge of honour, de Benoist had learned that the political terrain was slowly shifting towards a greater acceptance of the Right's ideas. De Benoist recognized that the key was to discharge the term Right of any affinity with its old negative connotations such as fascism and Nazism. His impressive encyclopaedic-like knowledge and intellectualism had returned a much needed aura of respectability to the Right. In 1978, de Benoist was soundly rewarded for his efforts when he received the Essay Prize of the prestigious *Académie française* for *Vu de droite*. The *nouvelle droite* leader was now hailed as one of the most brilliant intellectuals in France and was said to possess the finest personal library in Paris.[61] In addition, 1978 was a breakthrough year for GRECE in terms of receiving larger access to the mainstream public. A number of important GRECE figures, including Alain de Benoist, began to write regular articles that year in the right-wing mass media paper *Le Figaro Magazine*. The editor of the paper, Louis Pauwels, had written in the revolutionary Right's *Cahiers universitaires* in the 1960s. He displayed definite sympathy for the ENR and perhaps originated the term *nouvelle droite* to distinguish himself from the old bourgeois, reactionary Catholic, and conservative Right.[62]

Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol has shown the fairly important impact of GRECE, Copernic, and Alain de Benoist's ideas on the books of diverse circles within

both the mainstream and revolutionary Right written between 1975-1979.[63] These have included the following: former French cabinet ministers M. Poniatowski and J. Médecin, the theses of the *Club de l'horloge*, the renowned scientist P. Debray-Ritzen, the journalist Louis Pauwels, Olivier Giscard d'Estaing (son of the former President of the French Republic), political scientists A. Harris and A. de Sédouy, the regionalist O. Mordrel, the historian P. Chaunu, the economist J. Fourastié, and R. Chauvin in the pedagogical realm.[64] If Duranton-Crabol's claim is accurate, it does point out that GRECE's metapolitical stance was beginning to touch influential thinkers and an enlarged audience. Moreover, GRECE's theses were starting to penetrate all realms of cultural life according to its desired theoretical metapolitical plan. For GRECE, an authentic form of metapolitics must leave no domain of study and knowledge free of its anti-liberal, anti-democratic, and anti-egalitarian doctrinal formula. Did GRECE's metapolitical research, whether on race, culture, education or socio-biology, then not essentially discover what it was already looking for?

6. The *nouvelle droite*'s "Hot Summer" in 1979

It was in 1979 that GRECE's slow metapolitical orientation would finally allow the *nouvelle droite* to reach a larger mass audience beyond its own specialized journals, conferences, and debates. The inclusion of several GRECE writers into the mainstream right-wing press, particularly *Le Figaro Magazine* in 1978, paved the way for the *nouvelle droite*'s "hot summer" of press coverage in 1979. The year 1979 began well for the *nouvelle droite* when the publishing house Libres-Hallier put out Alain de Benoist's second major, *Les idées à l'endroit*. Moreover, between June and September 1979 the *nouvelle droite* was situated at the heart of a bitterly contested mass media debate about its own ideas largely conducted by the French intelligentsia. The *nouvelle droite* debate and the fierce polemics surrounding its worldview was officially launched during the early summer of 1979 by *Le Monde* journalist Thierry Pfister in an article entitled "La nouvelle droite s'installe."[65] This was followed ten days later by an article in *le Nouvel Observateur* called "Les habits neufs de la droite

française."[66] The two articles implied that the *nouvelle droite* was a new cultural and political force to be reckoned with for the entire political landscape of France and that it was largely dressed in new guises in order to keep its distance from its revolutionary Right origins.

Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, a specialist on the ENR, has pointed out that the *nouvelle droite* was the topic of approximately 500 written articles in the mainstream French press during the "hot summer" in 1979.[67] Another French political scientist, Michel Kretzschmar, has argued that the "hot summer" in 1979 marked the acceptance of the *nouvelle droite* within the larger intellectual landscape and calculated that the press campaign surrounding the *nouvelle droite* generated a whopping 2,267 articles between 1979 and December 1984.[68] These included some articles by the most respected and gifted French intellectuals of the day: the political scientist Maurice Duverger, journalist Alain Rollat in *Le Monde*, the sociologist Alain Touraine and former prime minister Michel Debré in *Le Matin*, and philosopher Raymond Aron in *L'Express*. The *nouvelle droite* also received some important national television coverage, especially when Alain de Benoist presented his book *Les idées à l'endroit* on "Apostrophes," the highly rated and popular cultural and literary program.

While some scholars such as Raymond Aron attempted to offer a more nuanced reading of the *nouvelle droite* phenomenon by pointing out that it was a largely anti-liberal, but syncretic school of thought mostly devoid of anti-Semitism,[69] many journalists furnished an image of the French New Right as a counterrevolutionary, fascist, or Nazi force bent on destroying egalitarianism, the Judeo-Christian heritage of the West, the foundations of liberal democracy, and the legacy of 1789. Numerous left-wing intellectuals, Christian and Jewish groups, and anti-racist organizations such as *Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l'amitié entre les peuples* (MRAP), *Ligue internationale contre le racisme et l'antisémitisme* (LICRA), and GARAH refused all dialogue with what they argued was the "new

racism" bordering on Nazism of the *nouvelle droite*. The *nouvelle droite*, on the other hand, protested its innocence as an honest and purely cultural, metapolitical force not connected to any one political force, or the vulgar "politics of politicians." It insisted that the dominant liberal and left-wing cultural establishment was waging a "new Inquisition" and naked "intellectual terrorism" against the "new" political paradigm of the *nouvelle droite*. In the view of the *nouvelle droite*, the fact that there were fierce polemics surrounding it and few intellectuals bothered to read their actual texts suggested that the hegemony of liberal-Left cultural and political elites was crumbling rapidly.

Officially in existence since the late 1960s, why was the *nouvelle droite* suddenly making such huge waves on the French cultural and political scenes in the late 1970s? Is it not the nature of long-term metapolitical combat to operate on a delayed reaction principle? In essence, there were a number of intervening cultural and political factors which contributed to the rise of the *nouvelle droite* during the "hot summer" in 1979. Douglas Johnson has offered two major hypotheses on the reasons for the ascent of the *nouvelle droite* in the summer of 1979: a cultural and political vacuum as a result of the perceived outmoded nature of all received intellectual ideologies of the period, and the invention of established French political forces, particularly on the French Left. Johnson elaborates on these two highly plausible hypotheses:

> It was suggested that all this (the rise of the *nouvelle droite*) stemmed from the discrediting of old creeds. No one believed in Marxism or in the Soviet Union anymore. The churches had little appeal. Since 1968, revolution seemed impossible. De Gaulle had no successor as the leader of the nation. Liberalism and capitalism were both uninspiring and unsuccessful. Since intellectuals detest a vacuum, something had to take the place of what was missing. ... Embarrassed by the revelations of the Soviet gulag and the supposed discrediting of Marxism, disappointed by the failure to bring about a union of the Socialists, Communists and Radicals and to win the 1978 elections, the left was quick to seize upon the opportunity of creating a scare. What *France-Soir* called 'la basse police intellectuelle' of the left brandished the old monster of Fascism in order to give life to what was a strategy in shambles and a cause which many thought of as lost. The Giscardiens, then in power, were also believed to have an interest in magnifying the

> importance of the *nouvelle droite* (ND). They constantly sought to enlarge their support in the centre and they were only too pleased to suggest that they were liberals who had nothing in common with the right as exemplified by the ND and which they too viewed with hostility and apprehension.[70]

Duranton-Crabol confirms Johnson's two aforementioned hypotheses when she writes the following: "The *nouvelle droite* was therefore sometimes the pretext for discussions more than its central point."[71] She cites a number of political themes which echo the explanations of Douglas Johnson for the rise of the *nouvelle droite* in 1979 such as the political rivalry between Right and Left, the political rivalries within both Right and Left exacerbated by the difficult electoral victory of the Right in 1978, and ideological tension between a Right seeking a modernized image and a Left often rooted to its outdated Marxism. Duranton-Crabol also adds a concrete business factor to her list of explanations for the rise of the *nouvelle droite* in 1979: the rivalry for readership and profits between *Le Figaro* on the Right and *Le Monde* on the Left with the emergence of the right-wing Hersant press empire.[72]

It can also be said that the *nouvelle droite* rose to mass media prominence in 1979 because of an intellectual curiosity "domino effect" surrounding its idiosyncratic Left-like anti-Judeo-Christian, anti-Western, anti-nationalist, and anti-colonialist ideas, unique "anti-racist" discourse, and intellectually brilliant leader Alain de Benoist. Could it be that some elements within the New Left generation of 1968 recognized in the *nouvelle droite* an exotic cultural movement with a kindred spirit? At about the same time as the rise of the *nouvelle droite*, France witnessed the cultural trend towards other so-called "new" phenomena: the *nouveaux philosophes* like Bernard-Henri Lévy and Jean-Marie Benoît, *nouveaux historiens* such as Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie and Jacques Le Goff, new economists, and even *nouvelle cuisine*.

It has often been suggested that the *nouvelle droite* was the fickle Parisian intelligentsia's latest exaggerated trend and was bound to be a temporary reality which is dropped after a short time.[73] The *nouvelle droite*'s widespread denunciation in the

mainstream press as racist, fascist, or a looming danger for democracy was bound to create some intellectual scepticism and even support in an age riddled with ideological uncertainty or mass conformity. Alain de Benoist's breathtaking knowledge, fascination for both Right and Left intellectuals, and the ability to present complicated authors and ideas in a simple manner was appealing to many and a respite from the hyper-intellectualism of the French structuralists. The fact that the *nouvelle droite* was the first post-World War II movement to openly display the right-wing label as a badge of pride was also a source of curiosity for some people. Its emphasis on the "new" rather than "right" was also appealing to "New Class" intellectuals looking to transcend the received ideologies of the past and present, individualistic and hedonistic fellow travellers, or sympathisers searching for a new ideological way.

The mass media lights during 1979's "hot summer" made the *nouvelle droite* itself somewhat uneasy for a number of reasons. First, its essential ideas, especially their potential novelty, seemed to be lost in the acrimonious atmosphere of the debates during the summer of 1979. Second, the *nouvelle droite* had made a long-term pledge to conquer hearts, minds, and spirits in a slow, subtle metapolitical fashion which was the antithesis of the incessant newspaper and television coverage of 1979. Third, the esoteric elitism of major *nouvelle droite* ideologues was light years divorced from the more populist, mainstream press coverage they received in 1979. The *nouvelle droite* was clearly more comfortable with a sort of ivory-tower intellectualism and the pagan world of ancient Indo-European festivals and initiation rites than the "vulgar," herd-like populism of the mass media. As an indication of this trend, the most gifted *nouvelle droite* intellectual sympathisers connected with its journal *Nouvelle École* left its editorial committee in 1979. These included the following prominent intellectuals: Mircea Eliade, Julien Freund, Arthur Koestler, and Konrad Lorenz. In the end, the initial delight of stardom for the *nouvelle droite* intellectual elite in 1979 was, in retrospect, a slow "poison" which ushered in its declining influence in the early 1980s.[74]

7. The Decline and New Directions of the *nouvelle droite* in the 1980s: Opening to the Left

If the late 1970s were the zenith of the *nouvelle droite* as a French cultural and political force, the early 1980s witnessed its declining influence and the exploration of new themes and directions. The political context for the crisis in its own ranks and decline of the *nouvelle droite* in the early 1980s was the earthquake presidential electoral victory of the Socialists in 1981 after numerous decades of right-wing rule. Another important factor was the rise of the extreme right-wing FN as a political force in the early 1980s. In short, with the rise of the FN and the shocking electoral victory of the Left in 1981, GRECE was divided by those thirsty for direct politics within the FN or the mainstream Right and the more esoteric and elitist metapolitical wing of the organization.

GRECE also began to explore some new themes and directions, including an increased anti-Western, anti-American, and anti-liberal stance based on a radical anti-totalitarian and anti-racist ethnopluralist defence of all peoples against what they saw as the "ethnocidal" and materialist "world beast" directed by American civilization. GRECE's anti-liberalism and anti-capitalist, anti-materialism were so dominant in the 1980s that it even led to a brief flirtation with the ancient enemies of the Old Right, the Soviet Union and communism. This philo-communism certainly alienated many on the Right and even led to defections from GRECE itself. GRECE's anti-Western, anti-Christian, and anti-capitalist stances in the 1970s had previously alienated other GRECE members or sympathisers. Its philo-communism of the early 1980s, however, was consistent with its envy for the leftist radicals of 1968. For certain elements of GRECE, fascination with left-wing revolutionaries and the ideas of the New Left was bound to breed emulation.

As the bright mass media lights of 1979 receded, there were some clear signs of GRECE's declining influence in the early 1980s. In 1981, for example, the participation of GRECE members in *Figaro Magazine* was sharply reduced. This was the "sombre" year of the Left's ascent to power in France; the cultural fruits of 1968 had finally began to be felt politically. Furthermore, GRECE's publishing house, *Copernic*, disappeared in 1981. In 1982, GRECE actually cancelled its national colloquium. There were even financial difficulties and rumours circulating in *Le Monde* that the *nouvelle droite* was seeking financial backing from the Islamic fundamentalist régime in Iran.[75]

Against the dark backdrop of the Left's rise to power, schisms in the ranks, financial worries, and a declining role as a cultural force, GRECE maintained a loyalty to its slow, oblique metapolitical route to power. GRECE's 16th national colloquium was entitled *"Pour un gramscisme de droite"* ("For a right-wing Gramscianism"). Its 17th national colloquium in November 1983 called for "fifteen years of uninterrupted work in the domains of theoretical reflection,"[76] whether cultural, philosophical, or scientific. For GRECE, ideas lead and will always lead the world and shape history. In this respect, GRECE continued to argue that the Right must continue to rest cultural power from the hands of the "hegemonic" liberal and Left establishment. It even insisted that in the 1970s, when the mainstream Right was in power politically, the Left retained its weapon as the dominant cultural force in the country.[77] For GRECE, the political alternation of Left and Right are empty vessels without the more indispensable cultural revolution against the dominant spirit of the age.

It should be mentioned that 1983 saw the publication of a significant work by GRECE member Guillaume Faye called *Contre l'économisme* (*Against Economism*) based on an anti-liberal, anti-capitalist, anti-American mantra mixed with the decisionist ideas of his mentors, the German legal scholar Carl Schmitt and French philosopher Julien Freund.[78] These themes were to dominate the thinking of the

nouvelle droite in the 1980s as anti-liberal, anti-materialism became more central than anti-Communist, anti-materialism. As a result, the liberal capitalist materialism of the USA was seen as a greater world danger than the communist materialism of the USSR. In the early 1980s, therefore, GRECE's rejection of what it considered the "totalitarian" economistic logic of liberal capitalism and its principal proponent, the USA, led it to undertake a brief flirtation with the Soviet Union and communism.

GRECE began to call for an "organic economy" in order to replace liberal capitalism's economic penetration of life into all spheres of existence (i.e., "economism") and the shattering of the three basic functions of ancient, hierarchical European societies (i.e., the political/sovereign, military, and social/economic realms). It called for a Europe where the "will to power" and the primacy of the political dominated. GRECE's anti-economistic solutions, the attacks on the "universal religion" of human rights, and the "ethnocidal" nature of immigration (thus necessitating a repatriation of immigrants to their host country for the mutual benefit of both French and immigrant cultures) often resembled the stances of the extreme-right's *Front National*. Like Faye, the *Front National* essentially believed that French culture was being annihilated by a liberal capitalist ethos which used the pseudo-tolerance of global multiculturalism and pro-immigrant policies, but was nothing more than the political manifestation of dark, cosmopolitan market forces bent on killing French culture and its people.

While GRECE's anti-capitalist, anti-Americanism had in reality existed since 1975 after the split with the pro-capitalist, pro-American *Club de l'horloge*, its philo-communism and affinity for the USSR in the 1980s was seen as new for the revolutionary Right because communist "subversion" was usually its major enemy in the past, whether during the inter-war years or the Cold War period. In the Soviet Union and communism, GRECE discovered the revolutionary virtues of the socialist movement, a revolutionary fervour which the New Right sought to emulate and the

Old Right, they claimed, never really possessed. In contrast to the vulgarity of liberal economism and its main representative, the USA, GRECE praised communism and the USSR for its collectivism, revolutionary hopes, and unity of purpose. Pierre Vial spoke of the Soviet Union as holding "the key to the future of the world"[79] and Alain de Benoist claimed that it was more Russian than Marxist, and a positive force of resistance against the naked materialistic, egalitarian, and cosmopolitan order of the USA.[80]

Also, Pierre Vial went beyond sympathy for the New Left generation of 1968 to express adoration for the Old Left. Vial expressed intense praise for revolutionary Left "heroes," including Che Guevara, the German Baader-Meinhof gang, and the Italian Red Brigades. For Vial, the hope of these revolutionaries was that they were all willing to fight and die for a higher cause in a "petty" and "intolerable" materialistic world; to die for the "beauty" of a sacred myth which he argued gives life its meaning and glory.[81] De Benoist even shocked those within GRECE and the Right generally when he declared that it was preferable to wear the helmet of the Red Army than to live under the yoke of American cultural imperialism by eating a steady diet of hamburgers in Brooklyn.[82] During the 1984 campaign for the European elections, de Benoist stirred the pot again when he declared his intentions to vote for what he viewed as the only credible anti-liberal, anti-capitalist, anti-USA force in French politics, namely, the Communist Party. The USA was dubbed as GRECE's "principal enemy" number one.[83] As the French Socialists turned social democratic, bourgeois, and towards the free-market after 1983, the French New Right now carried the torch of radicalism.

The other right-wing, revolutionary children born in the wake of the May 1968 were simply trying to outduel their leftist opponents on their own cultural terrain. This affinity with the 1968ers led GRECE to develop a unique form of anti-liberalism which no longer saw the Left or communism as its main enemy. While for GRECE

Marxism and liberalism derived from the same materialist and egalitarian essence, liberalism is more dangerous because in its extreme egalitarianism it realizes theoretical Marxism more than the socialist countries themselves. In addition, the communitarian nature of the Left appealed to GRECE's own "organic," communitarian societal project in contrast to what it argued was the hyper-individualism and lack of social bonds in a liberal capitalist society. For de Benoist, GRECE's anti-communism was not primary, but really secondary, a natural derivative of its anti-egalitarianism. Borrowing the distinction made by Charles Maurras between "organic," socialist nationalism versus "decadent," Marxist internationalism, GRECE also began to re-read key early French socialists such as Joseph Proudhon, Etienne Cabet, Louis Blanc, and Pierre Leroux.

Could Alain de Benoist and elements within GRECE embrace communism and still remain loyal to their revolutionary Right roots? Was GRECE's philo-Sovietism and pro-communism something profoundly novel? We can definitely find earlier historical echoes of GRECE's flirtation with proto-communism during the early 1980s. We have already mentioned the influence of Maurras in terms of the valorization of "socialist nationalism," a term likely borrowed from the ultra-nationalist Maurice Barrès and part of the legacy of the inter-war era's revolutionary "non-conformists" on both the Right and Left, which longed for a socialism within one country. Furthermore, the influence of the "conservative revolution," the many references to Ernst Jünger, and the primordial hatred of the bourgeois rationalist against the Worker's "heroic realism" (Jünger) all suggested that GRECE was more anti-capitalist and anti-liberal than anti-Communist.

In his heyday during the 1930s, Ernst Jünger, like de Benoist, was often accused of crypto-communist sympathies. The Nazi-Soviet pact of 1940 even found its circles of support within a current of German thought known as "National Bolshevism" led by Ernst Niekisch (1889-1967): the call for a German-Russian

rapprochement against the "decadent materialism" of the USA. Niekisch was the leading exponent of "National Bolshevism" during the inter-war era. This "National Bolshevism" argued for a radical anti-capitalism and close relationship between the "nationalist" revival Niekisch interpreted into the nature of Communist Russia and a German renaissance in order to save the West from the "decadent" rule of the masses and anti-spiritual materialism. This is not to suggest that de Benoist is a "National Bolshevist," but to point to one revolutionary Right historical strain of thought based on a more primary and vehement anti-liberal, anti-capitalist, anti-materialism than a crude Cold War-like anti-communism. In the early 1980s, de Benoist's thesis of a Germany released from the materialist yoke of the two superpowers, or an anti-American German-Soviet rapprochement, mirrored the views of German New Right nationalist revolutionaries such as Hennig Eichberg and Armin Mohler. Both Eichberg and Mohler, a conservative revolutionary-influenced thinker and personal friend of de Benoist, were affiliated with GRECE's *Nouvelle École.*

GRECE's short-lived philo-Sovietism and proto-communism, a product of its radicalization after the Left's triumph of 1981, did not endear the organization to neither the mainstream Right, nor the traditionalist, ultra-nationalist, and Catholic Right. Numerous GRECE members were themselves uneasy with de Benoist's overt proto-communist positions. Between 1983 and 1984, influential GRECE members Claude Bardet and former secretary Pierre Vial took the plunge towards Jean-Marie Le Pen's *Front National* and isolated de Benoist from his own generation of revolutionary Right militants descended from the quasi-fascist *Jeune Nation* or *Europe Action* organizations of the 1950s and 1960s. Christopher Flood lists other former GRECE intellectuals who joined the *Front National* in the 1980s: Pierre de Meuse, Jean Haudry, and Jean Varenne.[84] This followed a trend in which GRECE provided the theoretical ammunition and some intellectual personnel for the revolutionary Right's minor party formed in 1974, the *Parti des forces nouvelles* (PFN), the mainstream Right's Giscardiens in the 1970s, and the RPR in the 1980s.

The old taste for political action had been too great for some GRECE militants who saw new opportunities for the Right in the late 1970s and early 1980s and grew weary of its long-term metapolitical strategy. Despite the critical defections, GRECE and Alain de Benoist especially continued to reject this "vulgar" path of the "politics of politicians"; remained committed to metapolitics in order to restore a plurality of values to what they viewed as a grey, homogenized world dominated by mass, reductionist egalitarianism; and argued that it differed from the *Front National* in its primarily ideological plan, the different audience it addressed, and its rejection of the party's key themes: pro-Western Atlanticism, the anti-immigrant campaign, and Old Right holdovers such as pro-capitalism, liberalism, moralism, and ultra-nationalism. In the 1990s, de Benoist would publicly declare that he was a "stranger" to the FN's ideas and "sickened" and "disheartened" by the party's crude immigration proposals and simplistic populist logic.[85]

In the mid-1980s, however, GRECE moved beyond its idiosyncratic proto-communism and returned to its more typical "third way" positions against both the conservative Right and socialist Left. GRECE's worldview was again similar to many revolutionary Right political outfits of the past: neither liberalism, nor communism, and neither an Anglo-American-dominated Atlanticism, nor pro-Sovietism. It attacked the diabolical egalitarian trinity of a world controlled by "Jesus, Marx, and Coca-Cola,"[86] where Christian values, socialism, and American-style consumerism strangled Europe's search for its anti-egalitarian, organic roots. In this respect, there was a sort of rapprochement in 1985 between the ideas of GRECE and those of French nationalist revolutionary Jean-Gilles Malliarakis and other older PFN militants.[87] This "nationalist revolutionary" strand, argues Pierre-André Taguieff, was designed to act as a counter-weight to the more populist, "national liberal" pole increasingly dominant within the ranks of the *Front National*.[88]

In addition, while the Left's rise to power in 1981 and the meteoric rise of the *Front National* in the early 1980s was followed by GRECE's years of crisis, general decline, and a dispersion of personnel as different strains of thought and sensibilities clashed, in the mid-1980s there was a slow return to normalcy. In this period, GRECE looked to expand its worldview beyond the European continent in order to compensate for its decline at home when it launched its bilingual (i.e., English and Afrikaans) journal in South Africa called *Ideas for a Cultural Revolution* and even increased its activity in the remote French Indian Ocean island *département* of Réunion.[89] Alain de Benoist, Guilllaume Faye, and Pierre Vial of GRECE all sharply increased their conferences, interviews, reunions, and even pagan ritual celebrations. In 1984, *Études et recherches*, a limited circulation GRECE journal, began publication again after a prolonged seven-year hiatus. In that same year, Labyrinthe was established as GRECE's official publisher as a replacement for the loss of Copernic in 1981. Labyrinthe promised to situate itself against the dominant prevailing ideologies of the age. In March 1985, *Éléments*, a principal GRECE journal, began publication of a monthly supplement, *Panorama des idées actuelles*, which analyzed the ideas of a number of journalists and intellectuals with *nouvelle droite* affinities.

In 1986, GRECE once again returned to public notoriety, but not nearly on the same massive scale as the "hot summer" in 1979. In the "Roques Affair" of that year, a few *nouvelle droite* thinkers were linked to the pernicious theories of Holocaust negationists. The "Notin Affair" in 1990 was based on similar accusations against some *nouvelle droite* figures. In the "Roques Affair," Henri Roques, a man with clear connections to GRECE journal *Nouvelle École*, wrote a successfully defended thesis questioning the Nazi gas chambers. In fact, Jean-Claude Rivière of the University of Nantes, a GRECE founder and member of the *Nouvelle École* editorial committee since 1968, sat on Roques' thesis jury committee. Other committee members included an ex-GRECE member, Jean-Paul Allard, and Pierre Zind, author of a text with GRECE publisher Copernic, which lamented the lack of free expression during the

"hot summer" in 1979. Rumours circulated that the University of Nantes, Lyon-III University, and the *nouvelle droite* were impregnated with proto-fascist and Nazi sympathisers. After a public outcry, Roques' thesis was itself annulled by French Education Minister Alain Devaquet and his thesis director, Jean-Claude Rivière, was suspended for one year.

By 1987, GRECE hit a new crisis as its influence began to seriously wane. Once again, GRECE faced financial problems and had to declare a temporary halt of its journal *Éléments* after the fall of 1987. In 1987, GRECE was stung with a new defection as influential intellectual Guillaume Faye left the organization. In the following year, Alain de Benoist would declare that he was no longer a member of GRECE. While GRECE might have been gaining in homogeneity, it was terribly crippled by the constant losses of key intellectual personnel. These two losses added to the defections of GRECE members such as the film critic Michel Marmin after de Benoist's controversial Red Army remark; Louis Pauwels for the group's intense anti-Christian polemics; Raymond Bourgigne and François d'Orcival for the organization's anti-American and anti-Christian stances; and Jean d'Ormesson for its intensely anti-Western and anti-Christian attack on "our civilization."[90] The anti-Western position of GRECE became especially pronounced with the 1986 publication of Alain de Benoist's *Europe, Tiers monde, même combat*, a call for a European-Third World political and spiritual alliance against the USA's "cultural imperialism" and glorification of the universal *homo oeconomicus*.[91] For most people both within and outside ENR circles, this radical anti-Westernism went far beyond the revolutionary Right's standard de-legitimization of liberal democracy as exemplified by de Benoist's 1985 work *Démocratie: le problème*.[92]

GRECE was slowly dying in the late 1980s, but it had already penetrated a wide range of influential contemporary debates, authors, political parties, and some key decision-makers. Although the *nouvelle droite* was seeing the end of its

concentrated influence and glorious heyday, fragments of its doctrine continued to survive through ex-GRECE figures, sympathisers, and its general influence on people in culturally and politically prestigious positions. This was in sharp contrast to the days of *nouvelle droite* notoriety in the late 1970s and early 1980s when GRECE journals *Éléments* had upwards of 20,000 subscribers per issue and *Nouvelle École* about 10,000.[93] Moreover, in this period, the *nouvelle droite* worldview reached a large-scale French audience through the regular columns of its philosophers within mainstream newspapers such as *Spectacle du monde*, *Valeurs actuelles*, and *Figaro Magazine*. The former two had a daily circulation of about 100,000 subscribers each, while the latter could draw 500,000 daily readers.[94]

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, GRECE also influenced key personnel within the mainstream political Right; generated the ideological ammunition for the discourse and basic theses of the extreme right-wing *Front National*; penetrated centres of learned opinion within universities; influenced the themes of writers on the Left and Right as diverse as Régis Debray and Pascal Bruckner; provided the intellectual arguments for ultra-regionalists from both Left and Right; contributed to making the themes of inequality and "difference" *à la mode*; and restored the credibility of an older revolutionary Right heritage. After this period of mass media lights, GRECE was constantly under scrutiny for what many viewed as a "proto-fascist" image and an ossified organizational framework fixated on old biological positions and exotic neo-pagan rituals.

In 1988, former GRECE members led by Alain de Benoist launched the new journal *Krisis*. A limited circulation journal published three times each year for an elite, university-educated audience of about 600 subscribers, *Krisis* is a journal of contemporary ideas and debates. Each issue takes a precise theme (e.g., ecology, community, federalism, etc.), while attempting to provide questions and answers through the clash of divergent ideas and personalities. The journal views itself as a

reaction to the mainstream and shallow journalism of the age, including its own "hot summer" in 1979, as well as a political, social, and spiritual reply to the multiple crises of our time. It claims to attack the standard political dogmas of our epoch and to offer a free spirit of academic investigation. *Krisis* argued that it sought an authentic dialogue between Right and Left and did tend to attract a transversal, atypical audience. The journal wanted to be a model for the shifting cultural and political alliances of the future. In starting *Krisis*, Alain de Benoist saw new intellectual and political opportunities. He also recognized that the capture of the cultural realm must be the task of an even smaller, ultra-elitist force eternally fighting against the "established disorder."

This elitist view was also shared by Charles Champetier of the French New Right's youth wing *Nouvelle Droite Jeneusse* (NDJ). Champetier was the editor of the short-lived metapolitical journal founded in 1989 called *Métapo*. Champetier's praise for the New Left, Guy Debord, and the Situationists also mirrors de Benoist's appropriation of explicitly leftist authors.[95] Once again, the influence of the New Left and the 1968 generation on the *nouvelle droite* appears indubitable. Yet, the new window of opportunity that de Benoist could probably see was the increasing fatigue of Western leftist intellectuals with Marxism and the greater realization of the horrors of "real existing socialism" in the East. As a result, *Krisis* explicitly targeted leftist French intellectuals and claimed to transcend the "fictitious" Left/Right political dichotomy. As Douglas Johnson writes, *Krisis* claimed that "it would be on the left, on the right, at the heart of matters and in the middle of the world."[96] *Krisis* was renowned for its collaboration with prominent left-wing intellectuals such as the sociologist Jean Baudrillard, the former director of the prestigious Christian-Left review *Esprit* Oliver Mongin, and Jean-Pierre Vernant. In a sense, de Benoist and the ENR were continuing their intense affinity with the ideas of the New Left and the generation of 1968. Did this type of transversal collaboration between what appeared to be remnants of the New Left and New Right against capitalist materialism and the

threat of global Americanization strike fear into the hearts of liberal and Old Left intellectuals? The media return of the French *nouvelle droite* in the summer of 1993 would reveal the real trepidation of some mainstream intellectuals against this possible synthesis of both Right and Left ideas.

When the Berlin Wall, the Cold War, and communism in the East all shattered into scattered pieces in 1989, Alain de Benoist's launching of *Krisis* must have seemed extremely prophetic. An entire generation of Western intellectuals nourished on the gods of Marxism and socialism were left in a state of shock and disarray. The old intellectual certainties had been finally crushed under the heavy weight of reality. Was de Benoist not correct to realize that certain leftist intellectual would not stomach this new ideological vacuum or intellectual black hole? In his extreme anti-Americanism, idiosyncratic anti-Westernism, vitriolic anti-capitalist polemics, and disdain for the "pettiness" and materialism of liberal democracy, de Benoist clearly resembled those leftist intellectuals reeling after the "nightmare" of 1989. He would even appeal to American leftist intellectuals within the prestigious New York-based journal of critical theory *Telos* in the mid-1990s.

The problem is that a common Left-Right anti-liberal, anti-materialism did not necessarily mean that de Benoist and the leftist intellectuals he sought to "convert" to a new ideological synthesis would remain on the same side of the political fence. Writing about the ENR, the American thinker Paul Gottfried made this important point: "It will have to recognize that not all who are against something are necessarily on the same side."[97] Despite oscillations between Right and Left, it is unlikely that most intellectuals abandon their core ideological convictions and flee *en masse* to another political ideology. In short, fragments of de Benoist's revolutionary Right heritage survives, while the same must be said of the leftist intellectuals fleeing from the stable ideological anchor of analytical Marxism. New directions and an opening to

the Left did not entail the complete abandonment of de Benoist's entire revolutionary Right *Weltanschauung*, but did signal an important departure from past positions.

8. The *Nouvelle Droite* in the 1990s: Fascism Revisited or Mere Cultural Criticism?

According to Pierre-André Taguieff, the most reputable scholar of the *nouvelle droite* phenomenon, the ENR label in the 1990s is empty and deceptive; a name without a clear reference.[98] Historically, Taguieff points out that the *nouvelle droite* designation was more clear: the attempt to ideologically re-evaluate and re-create the pan-European, ultra-nationalism GRECE began in the late 1960s.[99] While the heady days of the late 1970s and early 1980s vanished for the *nouvelle droite* in the 1990s, major ENR thinkers such as Alain de Benoist continued their exclusively metapolitical campaign in order to dislodge liberal democracy. A conflict continues to brew among academics whether Alain de Benoist and the *nouvelle droite*'s radical form of cultural criticism contains basic "proto-fascist" themes (Roger Griffin), or is a non-violent form of cultural criticism divorced from its revolutionary Right milieu of the past (Pierre-André Taguieff). Others have taken Taguieff's lead to further suggest that the *nouvelle droite* has created a radically new political paradigm akin to the New Left thinkers (e.g., Paul Piccone). This conflict erupted in France in 1993 when the *nouvelle droite* made its short-lived mass media return in prestigious dailies such as *Le Monde*. Its tremors were felt as far away as North America, especially with the major intellectual debates conducted about the ENR within the highly esteemed journal *Telos* in 1993 and 1994.

9. The Second "Hot Summer" in 1993

In the summer of 1993, the *nouvelle droite* returned to mass media notoriety. Its mass media comeback in 1993 was reminiscent of the "hot summer" in 1979 for its highly polemical atmosphere. On July 13, 1993, the most reputable French daily *Le Monde* published "The Appeal to Vigilance by Forty Intellectuals" in order to fight the

"resurgence of anti-democratic currents of far Right thought in French and European intellectual life."[100] The *Appeal* wanted to counter "the far Right's current strategy of legitimation" and encourage all media and cultural outlets to adopt the "necessary opposition" and "vigilance" against this deceptive strategy called "involuntary complicity". The *Appeal* was especially concerned with what it called "a big seduction campaign targeting democratic personalities, some of whom are known as leftists." It raised alarm bells at the far Right's "seduction campaign" which included debates about the end of ideology, the abolishing of the gap between Left and Right, and the revival of ideas concerning nation, cultural identity, and a "clever" racist, anti-racism. The *Appeal* stated that it would categorically refuse all cultural collaboration "organized by people whose connections with the far Right have been demonstrated." It argued that this stance was imperative throughout Europe because "the ideas of the far Right are not like those espoused by others; they incite exclusion, violence, and crime."

The *Appeal* was signed by forty influential European intellectuals including the following: Rosanna Rossanda, Arlette Farge, Nadine Fresco, Lydia Flem, Pierre Bourdieu, Jacques Derrida, Umberto Eco, Léon Poliakov, Jacques Revel, Paul Virilio. Exactly one year after the original *Appeal*, *Le Monde* published another advertisement entitled "Appeal to Vigilance."[101] It called for a "perpetual vigilance" against a sinister and insidious "new fascism" aided by the far Right's clever "strategy of legitimation". The second *Appeal* was signed by more than 1500 intellectuals throughout Europe.

Other important intellectuals wrote articles in the French press about the *nouvelle droite* between 1993 and 1994. On July 13, 1993, the same day that the first *Appeal* was published, Roger-Pol Droit wrote an article called "The Confusion of Ideas" in which the *nouvelle droite* and especially Alain de Benoist are accused of creating a "National Bolshevist" alliance between militant communists and their neo-fascist supporters.[102] Droit argues that these "National Bolshevist" alliances should be

taken seriously even today. He contends that de Benoist creates confusion within the Left by appropriating many of its most cherished themes and presenting a liberal face, while still operating esoteric connections to the far Right cultural milieu. de Benoist's launching of *Krisis* in 1988 with the co-operation of many leftist authors had begun to trouble many intellectuals. On that same day within *Le Monde*, Pierre Vidal-Naquet, an important French philosopher, accused the scholar Pierre-André Taguieff of playing a "dangerous game" by entering into dialogue with ENR thinkers, which completely "trapped" him.[103]

In separate articles, both Taguieff and de Benoist responded to the accusations a few weeks later also within *Le Monde*.[104] In the ENR press itself, Charles Champetier wrote an article in *Éléments* entitled "The Summer of the Dinosaurs: Violent Press Campaign Against the New Right."[105] He accused the mainstream French press of "lacking balance," "settling scores" with political foes, and launching a "delirious campaign" with conspiratorial, McCarthyite overtones against the ENR during the summer of 1993. Furthermore, Champetier slams the *Appeal* for its failure to name its defined enemies on the far Right, while attempting to indict ENR intellectuals such as Alain de Benoist who has publicly criticized the *Front National*'s populist, ultra-nationalism. Champetier ends by denouncing the 1993 mass media campaign against the ENR as the work of an Old Left McCarthyism designed to assure the continued existence of the established ideological powers. Moreover, he attacks the *Appeal* and the "vigilants" for "sadly" and even "farcically" being more concerned with outdated Left-Right divisions and their own intellectual careers rather than proclaiming an authentic vigilance against the racism of the *Front National*, or the more ominous racist crimes of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia.

While most observers believed that the *nouvelle droite* was a dying force in the 1990s, why did it return to mass media notoriety in the summer of 1993? A number of

scholars, including both Frank Adler and Paul Piccone, have suggested that the answer to the entire affair does not lie with the ascendancy of the Right, but with the terrible decline of the Left after the fall of the Berlin Wall and communism in the East in 1989.[106] Seeking to maintain the purity of the Left-Right Maginot Line as the defining barrier of all political conflict, these scholars argue that a defeated Old Left staged the entire affair in order to discredit the Right and revive the fading fortunes of the Left. Using McCarthyite-like tactics of silence, the end of dialogue with "suspects" connected to the Right, and guilt-by-association techniques, they contend that the *Appeal* was more likely aimed at ENR intellectuals such as Alain de Benoist rather than more menacing and anti-democratic far Right political forces such as Le Pen's *Front National*. In addition, Taguieff claims that the *Appeal* was designed to keep "lax" liberal and leftist scholars like himself within the traditional Left-Right orbit and to discredit his more nuanced, historical, and academic approach to the phenomenon. The constant attacks of the "vigilants" directed at Taguieff for "legitimating" far Right forces without any names or proofs showed how far the Left was prepared to travel in order to restore its shattered credibility. We must remember that Taguieff is undoubtedly the most accomplished expert on the ENR phenomenon. In this context, attempts to derail his meticulous research on the subject was bound to be seen by some thinkers as the machinations of an Old Left, Political Correctness "thought police."

To reiterate, this chapter has attempted to trace the French New Right's historical antecedents on the Right, its birth in 1968, and its cultural and political development after the death of the New Left in 1968. We have noted that the French New Right's apogee was the "hot summer" in 1979, its decline in the early 1980s after the French Socialists' triumph in 1981, and its short-lived mass media return was in 1993. While this chapter was generally devoted to the right-wing cultural and political origins of the French New Right, we saw that it was not averse to flirting with the Left and New Left. This left-wing heritage included the choice of the Gramscian metapolitical struggle, its praise of revolutionary figures on the Left, and its ability to

co-opt some of the ideas and themes of the New Left. In the next chapter, we turn to a deeper examination of the French New Right's relationship to the events of May 1968 and the New Left.

Notes

[1] Tomislav Sunic, *Against Democracy and Equality: The European New Right* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990), p.6.

[2] Isaiah Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity* (London: Pinter, 1991).

[3] Paul Gottfried, "Preface" in Tomislav Sunic, *Against Democracy and Equality: The European New Right*, p. ix-x.

[4] See, for example, Henry Weinberg, *The Myth of the Jew in France 1967-1982* (Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 1987).

[5] Alain de Benoist, *Vu de droite* (Paris: Copernic, 1979), pp. 261-264.

[6] Ze'ev Sternhell, *La droite révolutionnaire: 1885-1914* (Paris: Seuil, 1978).

[7] Ernst Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965).

[8] René Rémond, *Les droites en France* (Paris: Aubier, 1982), pp. 283-289; Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1988), pp. 22-23.

[9] René Rémond, *Les droites en France* (Paris: Aubier, 1982).

[10] Ze'ev Sternhell, *Ni droite ni gauche* (Paris: Seuil, 1985).

[11] See, for example, Richard Wohl, "French Fascism, Both Right and Left: Reflections on the Sternhell Controversy," *Journal of Modern History* 63 (March 1991).

[12] René Rémond, *Les droites en France* (Paris: Aubier, 1982).

[13] Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire*, pp. 23-25.

[14] For several pages devoted to Georges Sorel, see Alain de Benoist, *Vu de droite*, pp. 275-278.

[15] Michael Marrus and Robert Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews* (New York: Basic, 1981); A. Cohen, *Persécutions et sauvetage: juifs et français sous l'occupation et sous Vichy* (Paris: Maspero, 1993).

[16] Pierre-André Taguieff, "Origines et métamorposes de la nouvelle droite," *Vingtième Siècle* 40 (October-December, 1993), pp. 3-22.

[17] Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire*, p. 244.

[18] Franco Ferraresi, *Threats to Democracy: The Radical Right in Italy After the War* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 30-50.

[19] Roger Griffin, *Fascism* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 351-354.

[20] For his Nietzschean nominalism, see Alain de Benoist, *Les idées à l'endroit* (Paris: Libres-Hallier, 1979), pp. 31-48; For a translation of an Alain de Benoist essay about Ernst Jünger, which first appeared in *Nouvelle École* (40), see Alain de Benoist, "Between the Gods and the Titans," *The Scorpion* 15 (1994).

[21] Maurice Bardèche, *Qu'est-ce que le fascisme?* (Paris: Les Sept Couleurs, 1961).

[22] Roger Griffin, "Plus ça change! The Fascist Pedigree of the Nouvelle Droite," conference paper for "The Extreme Right in France 1880 to the Present," Dublin, Ireland (26-28 March 1998), p. 4.

[23] *Ibid.*

[24] Martin Lee, *The Beast Reawakens* (Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1997), pp. 168-183.

[25] See, for example, Alain de Benoist, "Three Interviews with Alain de Benoist," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994), p. 189.

[26] Roger Griffin, "Plus ça change! The Fascist Pedigree of the Nouvelle Droite," pp. 3-7.

[27] Harvey Simmons, *The French National Front: The Extremist Challenge to Democracy* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1996), p. 209.

[28] Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire*, p. 28.

[29] Maurice Bardèche, *Qu'est-ce que le fascisme?*, pp. 175-176.

[30] Harvey Simmons, *The French National Front: The Extremist Challenge to Democracy*, p. 208.

[31] Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire*, p. 32.

[32] See, for example, GRECE's bulletin in the January 1969 issue of *Éléments*. Also, see Ariane Chebel d'Appolonia, *L'extrême droite en France: de Maurras à Le Pen* (Brussels: Complexe, 1987), p. 320.

[33] Harvey Simmons, *The French National Front: The Extremist Challenge to Democracy*, pp. 209-210.

[34] See, for example, Alain de Benoist's scathing indictment of the Right's internal quarrels and lack of theoretical sophistication in *Vu de droite*, pp. 15-26.

[35] Harvey Simmons, *The French National Front: The Extremist Challenge to Democracy*, p. 209.

[36] Alain de Benoist, *Vu de droite*, p. 71.

[37] Franco Sacchi, "The Italian New Right," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994), p. 80.

[38] Pierre Vial quoted in Gerald Cohen et al. *The New Right: Image and Reality* (London: Runnymede Trust, 1986), p. 52.

[39] Rob Van Craenenburg, "Whose Gramsci? Right-Wing Gramscism," *Undercurrent* 6 (Spring 1998), pp. 1-4.

[40] Alain de Benoist, *Vu de droite*, p. 19.

[41] Quoted in Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire*, p. 141.

[42] GRECE bulletin, *Éléments*, May 1969, p. 16.

[43] *Ibid.*

[44] See, for example, issue 14 (1971) of *Nouvelle École*.

[45] Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire*, p. 31.

[46] Dominique Durand, "Une officine nazie à Paris," *le Canard Enchainé* (20 December 1972).

[47] Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire*, pp. 172-186.

[48] Pierre-André Taguieff has estimated that *Éléments* has about 5000 subscribers and *Nouvelle École* about 2000 subscribers. See Pierre-André Taguieff, "An Interview with Pierre-André Taguieff," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994), p. 159.

[49] Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, "Les néo-païens de la nouvelle droite," *L'Histoire* 219 (March 1998), p. 51.

[50] Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire*, pp. 181-182.

[51] See, for example, Alain de Benoist, "L'ennemi principal," *Éléments* 41 (March-April 1982).

[52] One collection of essays on the New Right makes this point explicitly. See Ruth Levitas, ed., *The Ideology of the New Right* (Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 1990).

[53] Anthony Giddens, *Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1994), p. 9.

[54] Harvey Simmons, *The French National Front: The Extremist Challenge to Democracy*, p. 208.

[55] Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire*, pp. 180-182

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 47.

[57] See, for example, Alain de Benoist's several pages devoted to Carl Schmitt in *Vu de droite*, pp. 216-219.

[58] Franco Ferraresi, *Threats to Democracy: The Radical Right in Italy After the War*, "Introduction."

[59] Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire*, p. 188.

[60] These two terms are frequently used by the ENR in order to describe what they view as their "hegemonic" liberal and left-wing cultural and political opponents. See, for example, Alain de Benoist, *Vu de droite*, pp. 403-411. A more recent example is from the Italian New Right's journal *Diorama Letterario* 210 (January 1998). In this particular issue, the cover shows a police officer burning books as the crowd looks on approvingly in the background. The lead article is by Alain de Benoist and is called "I Metodi Della Nuova Inquisizione," or "The Method of the New Inquisition."

[61] Douglas Johnson, "The New Right in France," in Luciano Cheles et al., *The Far Right in Western and Eastern Europe* (London: Longman, 1991), p. 236.

[62] Louis Pauwels, *France Soir* (29 March 1979).

[63] Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire*, pp. 186-189.

[64] *Ibid.*

[65] Thierry Pfister, "La nouvelle droite s'installe," *Le Monde* (22 June 1979).

[66] *Le Nouvel Observateur* (1 July 1979).

[67] Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire*, p. 243.

[68] Michel Kretzschmar, *La campagne de presse autour de la nouvelle droite* (Paris: Institut d'études politiques, 1985), p. 5.

[69] Raymond Aron, "La nouvelle droite," *L'Express* (21 July 1979).

[70] Douglas Johnson, "The New Right in France," pp. 236-237.

[71] Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire*, p. 202.

[72] *Ibid.*

[73] Douglas Johnson, "The New Right in France," p. 240.

[74] Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire*, pp. 197-203.

[75] *Ibid.*, p. 225.

[76] These are Alain de Benoist's words from his lecture entitled "*Une troisième voie*" at GRECE's 17th national colloquium on November 27, 1983. See Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire*, p. 206.

[77] See, for example, Alain de Benoist, *Vu de droite*, pp. 15-26.

[78] Guillaume Faye, *Contre l'économisme* (Paris: Labyrinthe, 1983).

[79] Pierre Vial, "Objectif Sakhaline," *Éléments* 39 (Summer 1981), p. 22.

[80] Alain de Benoist, "L'ennemi principal," *Éléments* 41 (March-April 1982), p. 46.

[81] Alain Rollat, "Où est donc passée la nouvelle droite?," *Le Monde* (17 November 1984).

[82] Alain de Benoist, "L'ennemi principal," p. 48.

[83] *Ibid.*

[84] Christopher Flood, "National Populism," in Christopher Flood and Laurence Bell, (eds.), *Political Ideologies in Contemporary France* (London: Pinter, 1997), p. 105.

[85] For these comments, see two interviews with Alain de Benoist in *Le choc du mois* 31 (July-August 1990) and *Les dossiers de l'histoire* 82 (July 1992).

[86] See, for example, Jean Cau, "Marx et Coca-Cola," *Éléments* 8-9 (November 1974-February 1975).

[87] Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire*, p. 218.

[88] *Ibid.*

[89] Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire*, p. 224.

[90] *Ibid.*, p. 227-229.

[91] Alain de Benoist, *Europe, Tiers monde, même combat* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1986).

[92] Alain de Benoist, *Démocratie: le problème* (Paris: Labyrinthe, 1985).

[93] Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire*, p. 227.

[94] *Ibid.*

[95] See, for example, Charles Champetier, "The Summer of the Dinosaurs: Violent Press Campaign Against the New Right," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994), pp. 149-156.

[96] Douglas Johnson, "The New Right in France," p. 241.

[97] Paul Gottfried in Tomislav Sunic, *Against Democracy and Equality: The European New Right*, "Preface."

[98] Pierre-André Taguieff, "An Interview with Pierre André Taguieff," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994), p. 171.

[99] *Ibid.*

[100] "The Appeal to Vigilance by Forty Intellectuals," *Le Monde* (13 July 1993).

[101] "The Appeal to Vigilance," *Le Monde* (13 July 1994).

[102] Roger Pol-Droit, "The Confusion of Ideas," *Le Monde* (13 July 1993).

[103] Pierre-Vidal Naquet, "A Dangerous Game," *Le Monde* (27 July 1993).

[104] Pierre-André Taguieff, "A Serious Error in Analysis" *Le Monde* (27 July 1993); Alain de Benoist, "Quarrels of the Ancien Régime," *Le Monde* (27 July 1993).

[105] Charles Champetier, "The Summer of the Dinosaurs: Violent Press Campaign Against the New Right," pp. 149-156.

[106] See, for example, Frank Adler, "Left Vigilance in France," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter1993-Fall 1994), pp. 23-33; Paul Piccone, "Old Prejudices or a New Political Paradigm?," pp. 3-22.

Chapter 2:

The French *nouvelle droite* and the Legacy of May 1968 – A Critical Turning Point and its New Left Influences

The crux of our argument is that French *nouvelle droite* has been the product of two basic influences. On the one hand, the *nouvelle droite* has been indelibly marked by both the intellectual and political legacies of the French and continental European Right, particularly the anti-liberal, revolutionary right. On the other hand, the *nouvelle droite* has been seriously affected by the changing fortunes and politics of the Left during the events of May 1968 and after (e.g., the Socialist victory of François Mitterrand in 1981 and the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the demise of the communist Soviet Union, and the decline of the socialist ideology). We already pointed out in the first chapter that both the alleged cultural power of the Left and the revolutionary Left fascinated the French *nouvelle droite*'s major intellectual figures. It is, then, the interaction of the intellectual and political legacies of both the Right and Left that have created the outwardly ambiguous synthesis of thought and coherent worldview known as the French *nouvelle droite*.

In this chapter, we seek to examine the French *nouvelle droite* and its highly influential left-wing legacy connected to the spectacular events of May 1968. While during the period of the New Left-inspired student and worker uprisings in May 1968 most of the French *nouvelle droite* intellectuals were firmly rooted in the opposite ultra-nationalist, anticommunist camp, the events of May 1968 still represented a critical turning point in the school of thought's cultural and political evolution and appraisal of modernity. We will demonstrate this aforementioned point by examining the events of May 1968 and the ENR thinkers perceptions' of those events. These perceptions generally show that, on the one hand, there was an affinity for the student radicals and the revolutionary potential of the May 1968 events and, on the other hand,

a violent criticism of the New Left generation of 1968 for its excessive hedonism, and the political and cultural co-optation of former New Left figures into the liberal capitalist system they once heavily criticized. In the 1990s, the continental New Right intellectuals, then, see themselves as the true revolutionary heirs of the New Left ideals of the mid-1960s that have been largely abandoned by the New Left itself. We will also show how the French New Right was particularly influenced by the New Left's focus on the cultural terrain, the proliferation of New Left social issues, and especially the revolutionary potential of the events of May 1968. In the contemporary age, the New Right continues to claim the New Left as one of its ideological descendants. Moreover, the ENR theorists now seek a cultural and political synthesis between the radicals of the New Left and New Right against what they view as the worldwide hegemony of capitalist materialism and liberal democracy. This New Left-New Right reconciliation has been attempted within Europe as well as between certain remaining sectors of the American New Left and the French New Right.

Although GRECE and the French *nouvelle droite*'s first major theoretical journal *Nouvelle École* were formed in the early months of 1968 (i.e., February-March 1968 saw the emergence of the first issue of *Nouvelle École*) before the outbreak of radical student protests in May 1968, the events of May-June 1968 were undoubtedly a critical turning point in the development of the French *nouvelle droite*. The events of May 1968 and the New Left ideas of the student radicals from the period continue to radically inform the worldview of the ENR theorists in the 1990s. So, for example, the French *nouvelle droite*'s Manifesto for the year 2000, "*Le manifeste de la nouvelle droite de l'an 2000,*" is undoubtedly a synthesis of older right-wing European traditions combined with standard New Left-like themes. These New Left themes include the following: the critique of modernity, liberalism, and global capitalism; the valorization of regionalism, federalism, and local communities; quality of life and ecological concerns; feminist themes; the critique of the liberal and socialist "New Class"; pro-Third World solidarity; the incessant attacks on capitalist materialism, technological utopianism, and bureaucratic gigantism; and the call for more humane,

spiritual, and free-thinking European societies that are not governed by a Political Correctness "thought police."[1] With the *nouvelle droite*, we have the unique phenomenon of a Right that is as much spiritually on the Left as it is on the Right. On the other hand, the ENR's belief in the explicit separation of the economic and political realms and the sovereignty of the latter as the "essence" of politics, view of man as a "rooted" being, vision of society as a "body of communities," its pagan and spherical conception of time, critique of immigration as a loss of cultural identity for both the "host" and "home" cultures, valorization of strong cultural identities and the "cause of peoples," and quest for a new, post-liberal revolutionary order appear more closer to its revolutionary right-wing traditions.[2] As the European Left has largely made its peace with the liberal capitalist order and generally abandoned its anti-capitalist, revolutionary thrust, this vacuum is now filled by the ENR intellectuals that combine the ideals of the revolutionary Right and New Left.

Alain de Benoist, the intellectual doyen of the French *nouvelle droite*, argues that the fact that the French *nouvelle droite* was born at about the same time as the New Left was dying in 1968 is not merely "coincidental," but is part of a major generational shift in values.[3] In fact, the ENR has published an important collection of eighteen personal accounts and analytical reflections about the events of May 1968 called *Le Mai 68 de la nouvelle droite* (*The New Right's May 1968*). The very title of the edited collection of works combined with the red and black lettering of the work's cover (an allusion to the banners of the "red" communists and the "black" anarchists that were both central to the social and political unrest of May 1968) might suggest a truly symbiotic relationship between the ideas of the New Left and those of the French New Right. This work also tells us that it was not the Left alone that was beginning to challenge the dominant liberal intellectual and political landscape. The French *nouvelle droite* had already begun to radically re-evaluate its positions, values, and ideas just slightly before May 1968. The debacle of the loss of *Algérie française* had already led to a period of soul-searching for the French ultra-nationalist and revolutionary Right. The continuing stigma of being on the Right, often associated

with the fascist and Nazi "losers" of World War II, further ensured the exploration of new pathways and possibilities to escape the "ghetto" status of the Right. This would eventually lead to the creation of the *nouvelle droite* in 1968.

It is with the events of May 1968 that the sudden emergence of the New Left influenced the intellectual and political evolution of the French New Right. The *nouvelle droite* was especially fascinated by the cultural theories of the New Left that challenged the hegemony of liberal democracy and capitalist consumerism, particularly the works of Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, Herbert Marcuse, Theodor Adorno, and Max Horkheimer. In addition, they were also attracted to the revolutionary and heretical orientation of the 1968 generation because they seemed to challenge all the received ideologies of the age. The *nouvelle droite*'s choice of the metapolitical terrain was itself based on emulating liberal and leftist cultural elites that had allegedly understood the fundamental importance of cultural power above both parliamentary power and the monopoly control of the police and army powers of the state. For the *nouvelle droite*, the Left and New Left had learned the key lesson on which all power is based, namely, cultural power and gaining popular adherence to a particular set of deeply ingrained values, habits, and ways of thinking. Besides, the revolutionary Right of the 1960s needed a change because it languished in political isolation and continued its "infantile" adherence to the old, violent, and extra-parliamentary right-wing tactics of the past. The events of May 1968, then, would strengthen the *nouvelle droite*'s commitment to a metapolitical turn since the New Left was itself, it claimed, rather successful at engaging in a long-term re-education of hearts and minds that ultimately proved central to unleashing the radical events of May 1968 and also led to long-term societal value changes after 1968.

1. The ENR's Perceptions of May 1968: Only We Alone Still Carry The Flame

As mentioned earlier, the ENR's perceptions of the events of May 1968 are found in a collection of essays, *Le Mai 68 de la nouvelle droite*, published by its own intellectuals in 1998, the 30th anniversary of the May 1968 events. The collection of

ENR-influenced writings includes the most prominent contemporary ENR figures: Alain de Benoist (the leading brainchild of the ENR project), Charles Champetier (the current editor of the French *nouvelle droite* journal *Éléments*), Marco Tarchi (the leading figure of the Italian New Right), Tomislav Sunic (the Croatian author of a rare English-language study on the ENR), Gunter Maschke (a German specialist and translator of Carl Schmitt and Donoso Cortés), Pierre Bérard (a founding member of GRECE), Jean Jouven (a former French-born member of GRECE), Maurice Rollet (a French medical doctor, writer, and founding member of GRECE), Michel Marmin (the renowned journalist, editor, and film critic formerly connected to *Le Figaro* and *Valeurs Actuelles*, and also a regular contributor to *Éléments*), Pierre Le Vigan (a regular contributor to French *nouvelle droite* journals *Éléments* and *Krisis*), Gregory Pons (a frequent contributor to French New Right journal *Éléments*), and others.

The authors ranged in age from 12 to 30 during the critical turning point of the May 1968 events. Almost all the writers have been at one time or another connected to the ENR as either committed intellectual activists, former GRECE members, or "fellow-travellers." In addition, a number of the authors recognize the singular importance of May 1968 in terms of their subjective political experiences, the revolutionary spirit of those days, and its fundamental impact on the future of French and European societies. The accounts of the authors, however, offer us a complex, diverse, plural, and, at times, contradictory evaluation of the events of May 1968 and the birth of the *nouvelle droite* itself. One senses that the majority of the writers are especially critical of the student radicals of 1968 for engaging in "treason," or "selling-out" its basic anti-liberal, anti-capitalist, anti-materialist revolutionary principles. The former New Left student radicals, many ENR thinkers contend, have neatly made the transition from the revolutionary fervour of the student barricades of May 1968 to become the comfortable "New Class" administrators of the global, neo-liberal and multicultural New World Order dominated by the reign of capital and the hijacking of the world's rooted cultural differences. As an example, Tomislav Sunic has argued that these universalist, leftist and liberal "New Class" intellectuals made a

pain-free transition from an adherence to the ideals of Maoism to the luxurious comforts of the "Rotary Club": from radical leftist agitation to smug official positions within cultural, academic, political, or business sectors.[4] Examples of former 1968ers with important official political posts today are numerous. Bernard Kouchner is the major United Nations' official responsible for "crimes against humanity," Lionel Jospin is France's prime minister, and Gerhard Schroeder is Germany's Chancellor.

The French New Right argues that it now alone carries the banner and the faith of burning fidelity to the anti-materialist, revolutionary spirit of May 1968, while liberals, socialists, and the New Left have become bourgeois socialists that have joined the status quo they once claimed to vehemently reject. Maurice Rollet, a founding member of GRECE with roots in the far Right activism of *Jeune Nation*, *Europe Action*, and the OAS, has clearly expressed this pro-1968 sentiment in a mythical and mystical manner which is a traditional staple of the revolutionary Right:

> Mai 68 ne sera plus qu'un petit événement dans les manuels scolaires (et encore est-ce bien sûr?) que nous serons toujours là: pour l'Europe et pour nos dieux...Nous sommes toujours là trente ans après ! Nous seuls qui n'avons pas trahi...Nous seuls qui n'avons pas renoncé à notre idéal juvénile...Nous seuls qui savons qu'un autre Mai reste a faire...Nous seuls.[5]

In essence, Rollet thought that in May 1968 the world changed; that nothing would be the same again.[6] Rollet explains how the French New Right had its own 1968 four months before the barricades in which they formed the *nouvelle droite*; longed for a changed world; and hoped for a world based on the European, pagan ideal.[7] In a measure of fidelity to his revolutionary Right ideals of the past, Rollet rejected the "nihilist" and "hedonist" conception of the 1968ers, the world where it was "forbidden to forbid." To this conception of the world, Rollet opposed another revolutionary view of the world; a heroic one forged by the "hard laws of life"; of life lived as a "permanent combat"; of an "organic" Europe of the regions.[8] In a manner consistent with the revolutionary Right ethos of the past, Rollet argues that history has a meaning through the European paganism espoused by the *nouvelle droite*. Rollet insists that the ENR will always continue to wage an "eternal" war for Europe and its gods. After thirty years, Rollet believes that it was only GRECE and the ENR that did

not commit treason; only they that did not renounce their youthful ideals; only the *nouvelle droite* that knows that another revolutionary May is still to be accomplished.[9] For Rollet, the revolutionary spirit and idealism of May 1968 cannot die, but eternally returns through its spiritual propagation to the next generation.

Rollet's words also found their echoes in the ideas of *nouvelle droite* guru Alain de Benoist. In an interview given to the German New Right journal *Junge Freiheit* in 1995, de Benoist sardonically summed up his view of the contemporary New Left: "What is left of the New Left? Perhaps the New Right!"[10] Nonetheless, de Benoist expressed a high degree of romantic, mythical affinity towards the events of May 1968 and the ideals of the New Left. De Benoist writes: "It was three weeks of a happening which gave birth to a myth, and in another sense, marked a generation."[11] What especially attracted de Benoist and the other ENR thinkers towards the leftist and anarchist radicals of May 1968 was their revolutionary ethos or spirit; the desire to overturn the hated world of the bourgeoisie, of liberalism, of the capitalist consumer society, of alienated daily existence, and of what Guy Debord called the "society of the spectacle." De Benoist explains his ambiguous evaluation of the student radicals: "My ideas, however, were not those of the demonstrators, or were perhaps only at the margins. But still, there was something there which warmed the heart."[12] As a deeply committed revolutionary, de Benoist continues even more nostalgically for the taste of revolution: "How can one forget that forest of red flags, its inflamed discourse, this exaltation? Yes, May 68 was an exalted moment, a hope for revolution."[13] These aforementioned sentiments were simultaneously expressed by romantic, revolutionary leftists such as Angelo Quattrocchi and Tom Nairn (the former a Sicilian anarchist and the latter a Scottish socialist) while the barricades of May 1968 were still on fire: "We would like to convince the incredulous, to encourage those daring to hope, and to aggravate the uneasy dreams of those still asleep."[14]

De Benoist chastises many members of the New Left that today espouse a neo-liberal philosophy and populate the world of French politics, culture, mass media,

academia, and the business sector. He especially praises Daniel Cohn-Bendit (France's current leader of *les Verts*), the New Left student leader of May 1968, for remaining faithful to his ideals, and to a few other radicals who remained loyal and poor in continuing to struggle on behalf of their cherished ideals. As an astute cultural and political figure with a penchant for revolutionary change, de Benoist followed with a rare intensity all the various factions of the hard, revolutionary Left: Maoist, Stalinist, Trotskyite, and New Left. Furthermore, de Benoist, like the New Left radicals of 1968, contends that the New Left's counter-culture guru Herbert Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man* deeply affected him.[15]

While de Benoist has fond memories for the events of May 1968, it did not "really represent a strong moment of my existence. The strong moment, of the age, was more the creation of the journal *Nouvelle École*. The act of the birth of the New Right."[16] Yet, de Benoist was attracted to the revolutionary potential of 1968: "To return to May 1968. I did not share the ideas of the 'children of May', but I had sympathy for them."[17] In short, de Benoist shared with the radicals of May 1968 a revolutionary search for an anti-liberal, anti-materialist new order and the hatred for the existing liberal capitalist and parliamentary systems. De Benoist's prevailing view is that the radicals on either extremes should fight together against the system because this division benefits the existing liberal, capitalist order. He argues that the old battles between the leftist radicals and the radical Right were tantamount to defending the status quo. He cites the example of Weimar Germany shortly before the 1920s, when Ernst Von Salomon and the other *Freikorps* (Free Corps) of the ultra-nationalist, extra-parliamentary Right battled against the Communist Spartacists in Berlin.[18] The implicit argument is that the remnants of the New Left and New Right should unite to fight the existing neo-liberal New World Order in order to create a new, post-liberal revolutionary order. For de Benoist, the "principal enemy," like the New Left, is not communism, but the bourgeois, liberal, capitalist order. de Benoist essentially saw the communists as competitors rather than enemies. Marxism, for de Benoist, was a false idea, but he was never a "primary anticommunist."[19] Again, we have another example

of de Benoist's relationship to revolution and anti-bourgeois liberalism which he shares with the radicals of May 1968: "My conviction is that all who want to destroy the bourgeois society are objectively allies, if not in solidarity."[20] Today, de Benoist claims, the capitalist world can sleep as its adversaries destroy each other, whether Left or Right, fascist or anti-fascist.[21] The clear message for the contemporary age is the need to unite all anti-liberal and anti-capitalist forces in a common revolutionary front: communists, anarchists, fascists, national revolutionaries, ecologists, traditionalists, regionalists, New Left, New Right, etc.

De Benoist reproached the student radicals for not contesting the system enough, for their hedonistic orientation was completely consistent with market values. Besides, the political contestation of the New Left, contends de Benoist, was not radical in the realm of ideas. This is something that the ENR would rectify with its singular attention to ideas and metapolitics. Or, even more forcefully attacking the revolutionary thrust of the New Left student radicals, de Benoist writes: "The revolts of May 1968 put nothing into question fundamentally: they provoked troubles, but a disorder is not a revolution. More precisely, they contested the society in place in the name of its own principles, by reproaching it for having committed treason against them."[22] De Benoist laments that the effects of May 1968 were rather short in France where people quietly forgot the events and returned home or to work. Ultimately, while the revolutionary potential of May 1968 fizzled, they taught de Benoist that theoretically it could be possible to "have a rupture without violence and blood."[23] This is the ultimate long-term aim and hope of the ENR's cultural, metapolitical framework. Perhaps this was the critical legacy of May 1968: the origins of a new consciousness and novel societal trends that marked the next generation, whether new social movements, feminism, a liberalization of values, ecologism, union power-sharing, and regionalism. It is these long-term effects on both individuals and the larger society that the ENR sought to emulate with its metapolitical framework and its adoption of some of these aforementioned New Left ideals and practices.

In the end, however, May 1968 only leaves de Benoist with "a vague nostalgia," but what is left, above all, is an immense sense of nausea from what he views as the artificiality and "treason" of the French New Left generation.[24] De Benoist praises those who remained faithful to the flame of their youthful New Left ideals and those who stayed loyal to an alternative lifestyle and politics, whether in the pro-Third World or ecology movements. The implication is that these "authentic" New Left elements can join the French New Right in fighting the New World Order and the hegemonic reign of global capitalism. Yet, in de Benoist's eyes, the ideals of the New Left and the spirit of May 1968 have been betrayed and attacked as the French Communist Party has become social-democratic and the Socialists are now converted to the logic of the market.[25] A final dimension of de Benoist's appraisal of the events of May 1968 is the contention that critical thought has been abandoned in favour of the logic of the market. Furthermore, the breaking of boundaries and taboos, an outgrowth of the spirit of 1968, has been replaced with an intolerant and politically correct anti-fascism, liberalism, or leftism.[26] De Benoist contends that the events of May 1968 provided the world with some colour and hope, in contrast to the homogenizing logic of the routines of everyday life in the West.[27] De Benoist has empathy for the New Left radicals of May 1968 because there were numerous "rebel hearts"; because he claims that there will always be "rebel hearts"; and there will always be "hearts that dream of another world; hearts that desire to leave the old world behind them."[28] It is, then, principally the revolutionary spirit of May 1968, the rebellious spirit of the 1968 generation, that energizes de Benoist and the ENR's own revolutionary project. The ENR alone claims to follow the revolutionary spirit, if not even many ideals, of the May 1968 student and worker radicals.

Other ENR thinkers, too, offer us a complex portrayal of the events of May 1968 and the New Left generation. Pierre Bérard, a former French ultra-nationalist, chastizes this New Left generation for their switch from leftist revolutionaries to complete support for free trade, the Rights of Man, and what he calls "king" of money.[29] In Bérard's view, the New Left and May 1968 were simply ruses on behalf

of capitalism and marked the emergence of a neo-liberal world the leftist radicals ultimately craved. For Bérard, the 1968ers have helped to consolidate the domination of global capitalism through "free sex" and the suffocating dominance of Marxism-Leninism on the cultural plane.[30] While 1968 ended up accelerating the logic of market society, what remains for Bérard from 1968 is a magical rupture with the banality of daily life, or what French philosopher Raymond Aron saw as a type of "carnival" spirit.[31]

For Philippe Conrad, a former revolutionary Right activist, the 1968ers and the New Left generation are viewed as a ridiculous expression of feeble, uninspiring leftism. While The Old Left had the revolutionary heroism of the October Revolution, the International Brigades, and the mythical combat against Nazism and colonialism, the 1968ers are seen as simple, naive caricatures which looked for inspiration to the "deceptions" of Soviet Marxism and Chinese Maoism.[32] In the end, Conrad argues that the events of May 1968 led to the long-term acceleration of consumer society and cultural Americanization, and a heightened sense of individualism, hedonism, and materialism. In contrast, Conrad longs for the revival of the spiritual life and the vision of the "eternal return."[33]

In contrast, the former ultra-nationalist Jean Jouven saw the events of 1968 as an expression of "the good wind; the beautiful wind of May."[34] In his fidelity to life as a "temperament," flux, change, insecurity, and the "God" of revolt, Jouven expresses affinity for the 1968ers.[35] For Jouven, the "spirit of '68" was akin to his own: a rejection of "soft totalitarianism," a revolt against a uniform and homogenized world, and an attack on a world impregnated with the "stench" of money.[36] In what can be read as an ENR intellectual's rejection of all contemporary political ideologies, Jouven approvingly quotes the situationist Raoul Vaneigem: "We must seize and realize the project of individual liberty perverted by liberalism: the project of collective liberty perverted by socialism, the project of re-discovering nature, perverted by fascism, the project of the total man, perverted by the Marxist ideologues."[37]

The crux of the ENR's affinity for the student radicals of May 1968 is essentially their common belief in an anti-liberal, anti-materialist revolution. As a result of the common pro-revolutionary sentiments, ENR thinkers such as Jouven even admired the revolutionary fervour of the Old Left, or Lenin's Soviet Union and Maoist China. Jouven also explains how the liberal-leftist French daily *Le Monde* called de Benoist the last descendant of the 1968 generation due to his anti-American, anti-capitalist, pro-ecological, pro-Third World, and pro-immigrant stances.[38] In contrast, Jouven argues, the New Left 1968ers became the neo-liberals of the 1990s. Consequently, Jouven contends that we now live in the time of an "anti-1968" ideology; an epoch of generalized violence without hope.[39] In Jouven's eyes, 1968 was at least redeeming because it was all about hope; the romantic hope for a better world.[40] For Jouven, this "eternal" hope of a revolution is a strike against the indifference or hate of the world today. 1968 told us, Jouven insists, that the world could transform both spiritually and physically. In the end, Jouven enlists the memory of the old pagan gods to make both man and the world divine; to make the spontaneous spirit of May 1968 return forever.[41] In Jouven, the revolutionary Right's and New Left's idealism mingle in an ambiguous, uneasy political synthesis.

Quoting the French fascist writer Drieu de la Rochelle, the *Éléments* writer Pierre Le Vigan argues that we are more faithful to an attitude than ideas, and also praises those who did not abandon their New Left ideals of 1968.[42] At the same time, Le Vigan also questions the old partisans of the revolutionary Right "Third Way" by expressing a pro-1968 sentiment: "Yes, there was something beautiful and good to change in 1968. Yes, the question of the limits of progress, of the impostors of progress was raised. From this point of view, we are always the descendants of 68."[43] As a new advocate of the ecological critique of capitalist "progress," Le Vigan continues to support a revolutionary anti-materialist philosophy that saw its apogee in the events of May 1968. For the ENR, like the New Left, "progress" is not merely material, but about a greater quality of life, substantive democratic participation, a

communitarian political vision, and a political as well as existential destiny stamped with meaning.

Gunter Maschke, a disillusioned former German communist, claims to be a perpetual renegade and found them hard to find in 1968 among the so-called student radicals of 1968.[44] For Maschke, the 1968 heritage is largely a form of self-liberation about money, fun, or vulgar hedonism. In a tone reminiscent of the revolutionary Right, Maschke claims that there was already a slide towards "decadence" in the key German state institutions, which has been reinforced by the arrival of the 1968ers into official political positions.[45] In Maschke's eyes, the New Left leads the contemporary drive towards a vulgar "McDonaldization" of the world and support for the imperialist policies of the United States. Ultimately, Maschke claims that 1968 became a "New Inquisition" of thought and conformism, and a movement that was firmly installed in the major institutions of the German Republic in 1970s.[46]

For Jean-Jacques Mourreau (like Jean Jouven), an early *Nouvelle École* writer, it is a nostalgia for elsewhere, for the impossible, for another world that attracted him to the radicals of May 1968.[47] As one of those ultra-nationalist partisans that could not forget the loss of French Algeria, Mourreau is pulled towards the 1968ers because they represent a similar form of nostalgia for a better, more spiritual world.[48] While avidly reading revolutionary Right authors such as Ernst Von Salomon and the French fascist Drieu de la Rochelle, Mourreau simultaneously expresses his affinity for the students radicals of 1968: "The red flag did not make us fearful; the black flag did not debilitate us. We were libertarians, in our own way."[49] Also, as a heretical revolutionary able to criss-cross between Right and Left, Mourreau argues that "May '68 gave us the taste for transgressions."[50] Yet, Mourreau shows the explicit ambiguity of the ENR's synthesis of thought between the revolutionary Right and the New Left ideals. In a vein that would make many internationalist, anarchist, or left-wing ecologists uncomfortable, Mourreau claims that the ecological battle cannot be disconnected from defending rooted cultural identities.[51] Citing Yann Fouéré, the

author of *L'Europe aux cents drapeaux* (*A Europe of A Hundred Flags*), Mourreau favours the acceleration of Alsatian regionalism against Jacobinism combined within an ecological perspective. Like a number of other ENR thinkers, Mourreau ends his piece in a Nietzschean tone: "The living is made of eternal renaissances. From the worst can spring the unexpected."[52] Once again, the older conservative revolutionary perspective mingles side-by-side with the influence of more modern New Left ideals.

In a revolutionary Right key, Jean-Charles Personne, a Paris lawyer, favours a world of honour and courage, of duty combined with passion for liberty, and of austerity mingled with sovereignty.[53] Personne explains that his ultra-nationalist camp in 1968 consisted of "soldiers of honour," but the 1968 generation committed "treason" against them.[54] For Personne, in May 1968 nothing really happened; it was a game of roles; the Communist Party's head Georges Marchais even denounced the student radicals as "pseudo-revolutionaries"; and, in reality, the Revolution went "nowhere."[55] In a Schmittian "decisionist" tone, Personne claims that he knew that the State under De Gaulle would return to its tradition where it alone makes decisive political decisions; it alone sanctions rights and duties; and it alone could forcefully crush the events of May 1968.[56]

In discussing the events of May 1968, the ideals of the revolutionary Right are clearly conspicuous in Grégory Pons's attraction for a new, heroic, and elite chivalric order.[57] For Pons, a regular *Éléments* contributor, his anti-communism during May 1968 was a type of rejection of intellectual "absurdity." Pons belonged to a sort of dissident, non-aligned Right. Yet, Pons's dissident style, vehement anti-materialism, and taste for revolutionary action enamoured him to the "hard" Left: "I remained rather at ease with my leftist friends; a generational phenomenon of the same friends, music, the same taste for violence, and the same reflex of revolt against the world. The Maoists were really in their style authentic neo-fascists with the same confidence in the future; when they spoke of a unidimensional man I understood these Bolsheviks."[58] For Pons, then, there was no major rupture in 1968, but rather 1968

produced a "scent" of decadence, of treason, and the total reign of high-technology and late capitalism.[59]

As the architect and sculptor Michel de Sablet notes, the events of 1968 were mythical, but cannot compare to the anticommunist revolutions of 1989, the European revolts of 1830 and 1848, or the Paris Commune of 1871.[60] In short, 1968 was not really imbued with the same authentic revolutionary aura as these other critical events in French history. The implication is that the ENR is attracted to the idea of revolution; the idea that people fight and die for their non-negotiable values and ideals. In a sense, de Sablet and other ENR thinkers criticize the 1968ers because they were not revolutionary enough in fighting permanently against the liberal capitalist order. In short, the ENR wishes to use the New Left's ideals as well as the legacy of the failed revolution of 1968 in order to forge a new, post-liberal revolutionary order.

The views about the 1968ers presented by Tomislav Sunic, Marco Tarchi, and Charles Champetier are rather interesting because they belong to the latest, youngest generation of ENR thinkers and sympathisers. Tarchi, the former head of the Italian MSI's youth wing, is part of this ENR youth generation born well after the memories of World War II and fascism. Charles Champetier, the former head of the *Nouvelle Droite Jeunesse* and editor of *Éléments*, also belongs to this new generation of ENR thinkers. Finally, Sunic has written a scholarly work on the ENR intellectuals and currently sits on the editorial board of French *nouvelle droite* journal *Éléments*. It is this generation that is likely the most receptive to the ideals of the New Left and least attached to the most traditionalist, anti-modern aspects of the revolutionary Right milieu. They are, therefore, well positioned to attempt a synthesis between the ideals of the New Left and those of the revolutionary Right (or conservative revolutionary) milieu.

For Tomislav Sunic, while he rejected what he saw as the "vulgar" Marxism of the 1968ers, he appreciated that they had the spirit of rebellion, or of non-

conformism "which pleased me and seduced me."[61] Sunic found it difficult to classify himself as a Croatian youth living in Zagreb during the events of May 1968: "I couldn't really classify myself as a rightist since my rebel character came close to a leftist type."[62] Again, the ideas of the revolutionary Right and Left are fused; and the hope of revolution unites the New Left 1968ers and ENR intellectuals. At the same time, however, Sunic was also an anti-Communist who rejected what he viewed as the hypocrisy of Tito and the sentimental romanticism of the 1968ers.[63] In a tone that was to imbue the ENR with a critical spirit for all received ideologies, Sunic tells us that the French writer Céline taught him to obey nowhere and no one; taught him the fundamental importance of the total critical spirit.[64] Like many of the ENR thinkers, Sunic is disillusioned with the New Left generation of 1968. So, for example, Sunic wonders why the 1968ers did not say much about communist "barbarism," the gulags, and about the numerous political camps which imprisoned its dissidents?[65] Furthermore, Sunic rejects what he considers the political correctness of the 1968 generation. Finally, he laments that the 1968 generation has lapsed into a pure materialism it once so radically claimed to reject. This 1968 generation, Sunic claims, is today largely concerned with designer labels and the nicest cars. Sunic writes this about the New Left generation of 1968: "All passes like nothing ever happened."[66] In the eyes of Sunic, the 1968 generation cannot be pardoned for its full-scale "treason" against its own anti-materialist and revolutionary ideals.

Marco Tarchi, the Italian head of the New Right, has no regrets for the events of May 1968 and the world of before.[67] A youngster during the events of 1968, Tarchi was actually more affected by the killing in Kent State of four anti-war protesters by the United States' National Guard in 1971. His old revolutionary worldview was evident during this period. Tarchi insists that while the revolutionary Left and Right differed on means, they still had the same passion for the absolute, the same refusal to compromise, the same rejection of traditional politics, the same hatred of the power of multinational corporations, and the same utopian ambition to create a totally new and more just world.[68] This revolutionary desire to merge the extreme poles of Left and

Right continues to mould Tarchi's worldview and would lead the ENR intellectuals to seek a synthesis with the remnants of the New Left in the 1990s. In a vein that was to guide the ENR's own cultural project from the Right, Tarchi expresses a degree of affinity for the New Left's cultural impact on European societies. Tarchi argues that while the events of 1968 did not alter the strictly political realm in a profound manner, its effects on culture were more important and had a great impact on the collective, cultural mentality of the age that was "not always negative."[69] While Tarchi was not immediately affected by the events of May 1968, the revolt of the 1968ers made him more receptive to the angst of this generation, its main concerns, and did not allow him to be seduced by what he viewed as the reign of bourgeois comfort. Thus, Tarchi began to appropriate some of the ideas of the New Left generation. Attacking what he considered the psychological conformism of an entire generation, Tarchi allowed himself to be "contaminated" by the aspects of 1968, which best suited his subjective aspirations.[70]

Like the New Left, the example of 1968 led Tarchi to a critique of existing ideologies; to search for a model of a better world. Whereas the ENR insists that many of the 1968ers have abandoned this hope for a more humane world, Tarchi claims that he has not renounced this hope. Moreover, Tarchi argues that the ideals of the 1968ers allowed him to abandon the sterile traditionalism of the past and a number of incapacitating myths that had been the lifeblood of the ultra-nationalist and neo-fascist milieus. In this respect, a reflection about the events of May 1968 drove Tarchi towards a more communitarian mode of thought, increased his ecological sensibility, and even modified his use of language.[71] While Tarchi rejected what he saw as some of the "infantile" traits of the 1968ers, he appears grateful to them because they sought to destroy the old world's formalism, rigid moral order, and its devotion for whatever constituted order.[72] In addition, Tarchi supports the 1968ers for their rejection of the social and political orthodoxies of the day, particularly the Marxist-Leninist ideology. Without the events of 1968, Tarchi argues that the world would entail an even greater domination of the "worst" liberal and bourgeois values: individualism, the quantitative

and materialist life, cultural, political, and mental homogenization, utilitarianism, and a general destruction of our quality of life.[73] In a spirit that now guides the ENR's search for a "novel" synthesis with the ideals of the New Left, Tarchi expresses a measure of generosity for the 1968 generation since they broke the traditional societal taboos of the past. Tarchi even goes further in his desire to seek a reconciliation between the ideals of the New Right and New Left: He insists that the ENR must re-read Frankfurt School theorists such as Adorno and Horkheimer, and return to an examination of Marcuse's notion of "one-dimensional man."[74] In a ringing endorsement of the New Right-New Left synthesis, Tarchi argues that 1968 gives him a hope that in the future all "heretical" cultures, or all those schools of thought that reject the tyranny of "*la pensée unique*," (hegemonic, "totalitarian" thought) can join in defeating a world impregnated with a neo-liberal, materialist ethic.[75]

For Champetier, the youngest of the ENR figures in the collected essays about the events of 1968, 1968 is important because it was the last time France experienced a generational revolt.[76] Champetier captures the angst of his generation: They are the children of the crises of our age, whether political, economic, social, intellectual, moral, or civilizational.[77] Like most of the ENR figures, Champetier is revolted by what he sees as the travesty of the 1968ers in terms of their betrayal of their own anti-materialist ideals; what he views as the petty search for petit bourgeois jobs and comfort. For Champetier, the destiny of the most loyal figures of the 1968 generation is sombre and dark.[78] Champetier insists that the most utopian aspects of 1968 are dead and the new generation has seen the rapid acceleration of individualism, utilitarianism, and the "law of money."[79] In Champetier's view, his world has seen the vulgar commodification of the 1968 personalities and ideals, including the mass marketing of Che Guevara shirts. In this scenario where even the mainstream appropriates the heroic revolutionaries, Champetier asks, how can our generation transgress the old boundaries like the 1968ers did in the past? Despite what Champetier envisioned as the hopes of the Situationists, he vehemently attacks the 1968ers by claiming that "the political contestation of the Spectacle has become the

Spectacle of political contestation."[80] It is in the mass media and the world of advertisement, adds Champetier, that we find many of the 1968ers. In the contemporary age, Champetier writes, "Power is everywhere and nowhere."[81] For Champetier, the events of 1968 did not prevent, or perhaps even accelerated, the domination of our world by the trinity of the "megamachine" of the market, mass technology, and the "circus" of consumption and the mass media. In today's world completely devoid of the redeeming hope of the 1968ers for a better world, adds Champetier, today's graffiti walls should read "Consume or disappear" rather than the 1968 slogan "Consume more, you will live less."[82]

Like the ENR in general, Champetier attacks what he considers the general conformism of the Left that still views the world in terms of an "unimaginative," shrill, and intolerant anti-fascism.[83] Furthermore, like his ENR colleagues, Champetier indicts what he views as the "treason" of the 1968 generation; a New Left generation of the "converted" or "repentant"; a "caviar Left" that continues to make easy money; and a generation that once attacked the de-humanization of capitalism and the Vietnam war's imperialist thrust, but has now converted to the neo-liberal positions of Reaganism and Thatcherism and support for the Western massacres of Iraqi civilians during and after the Gulf War.[84] Champetier is especially critical of the lack of a critical perspective in both the cultural and political domains. The alleged domination of liberal and left-wing values obviously makes it difficult for the ENR to engage in a successful metapolitical project and prevents the arrival of the future revolutionary order longed for by its adherents. For Champetier, the old 1968ers now dominate the cultural landscape, and liberty of thought in France has never been more endangered than under the reign of this "Inquisitorial-like" generation. Champetier asserts that the 1968ers are the new "watchdogs" of the liberal capitalist system.[85] These "watchdogs," claims Champetier, use ideals such as cultural tolerance and relativism in order to mask a more profound closure of debate, while actual racism multiplies throughout Europe. This rejection of the Left's critical faculties, argues Champetier,

led him to embrace the ideals of French *nouvelle droite* and to begin the project of the NDJ, the youth-wing of the New Right.

In a classical *nouvelle droite* position, Champetier claims that the best of 1968 was in "us."[86] From Champetier's perspective, the ENR's creation in 1968 has led to real support for the ideals of the New Left generation: a deep liberty of thought; a rejection of capitalism and a negation of orthodox Marxism; and the attack on the "cadavers" of fascism and Nazism. In what appears to be an ambiguous love/hate relationship with the radicals of May 1968, Champetier ends his reflection on 1968 by insisting that on his right-wing side of the barricades "utopia is married to reality, the dream to action, and myth to reason."[87] In this aforementioned quote, Champetier is grateful to the 1968ers for providing the world with a utopia, a dream, a myth, an alternative world vision, and a "higher" reality. Yet, he is simultaneously critical of the 1968ers for not marrying this search for a new, romantic order with the harsh realistic lessons of politics and life. In short, Champetier has married the Left's vision of "progress" with the Right's attachment to hierarchy and political realism; the voluntarist, *mythopeic* thrust of the revolutionary Right with the radical search of the New Left for a better world; and the *logos* of the liberal worldview with the *mythos* of the revolutionary perspective. The implication is that, given the hindsight of experience, both the remnants of the New Left and the ENR can fight for a new, more revolutionary 1968 in the future.

Mirroring the New Left's own valorization of creativity, autonomy, and free expression and thought, Champetier contends that the future will be based on a combat for autonomy, diversity, and beauty played out on all levels: the local, planetary, social, intellectual, political and religious.[88] For Champetier, the future world will likely implode into a multitude of sovereign realms, thus destroying the "soft totalitarianism" of our current age. In a revolutionary perspective, Champetier explains that as modern thinking begins to deconstruct, the world it holds decomposes.[89] In a revolutionary tone akin to both the revolutionary Right of the past

and the New Left 1968ers, Champetier argues that in the shadow of progress will germinate the revolts of the future.[90] His taste for revolution is unambiguous; a revolution that will pay its special debt to both the old revolutionary Right fighters of the past as well as the New Left revolutionaries of the pre-1968 era: "Slowly needing a big cleaning of our brain, a love of a long memory and the innocent becoming, a silence to the shouts of the stupid and the attacks of the powers, we will spring the first flowers of this spring that will not just last a month, but an eternity."[91] The difference, of course, is that Champetier claims that the ENR's future revolution, unlike the aborted one of the New Left in 1968, will be long-term, truly mythical, and "eternal."

2. The Context of French Domestic and International Politics In 1968

While it is clear that the members or sympathisers of GRECE and the *nouvelle droite* were deeply affected by the critical turning point of the events of May 1968 and the revolutionary anti-capitalist, anti-materialist ideals of the New Left, it is also important to understand the formation of GRECE in relation to the context of French politics in the period around 1968. What were the most salient features of the French political landscape of this epoch? How did this larger French political context influence the decision of former ultra-nationalist and revolutionary Right militants to create the *nouvelle droite*? Finally, what was the main thrust of the events of May 1968 and how did it influence the French New Right?

It is a reality of academic analysis that no historical event can be isolated from its social, cultural, economic, and political contexts. This especially applies to the important events of May 1968 where both domestic and international factors contributed to a student revolt throughout Europe in 1967 and 1968. As Tarik Ali and Susan Watkin explain, the events of May 1968 had such a profound global impact that they even led to one inconspicuous success, namely, a generalized revolt which ousted the US-backed military dictatorship in Pakistan led by Field-Marshal Ayub Khan.[92] Yet, as John Gretton writes, "it is only in France that there occurred a gigantic social upheaval which at times took on the airs of a revolution and left many Frenchmen

afterwards feeling that civil war had only been averted by a hair's breadth."[93] Moreover, as Arthur Hirsh contends, it is also in France that "the intellectual origins of New Left social theory are most obvious in the work of Jean-Paul Sartre and others. And it is also in France that the clearest expression of the New Left occurred – the May 1968 upheaval."[94] Thus, it is no accident that it was also in France that the intellectual *nouvelle droite* was also born in 1968.

Like the battle over Algeria, May 1968 divided French men and women into two hostile, antagonistic camps for and against the student and worker radicals. May 1968 represented the hopes and aspirations of an entire generation for a new, revolutionary, and more spiritual social order. As the French writer J.-J. Servan-Schreiber saw it, the "spirit of May" encompassed the "magnificent dreams of our young people and the constraining imperatives of economic development."[95] Servan-Schreiber continues by adding that May 1968 embodied the authentic search for "an original model of industrial society that would be more human than the models being offered us and eventually will be imposed upon us."[96] May 1968, insists Servan-Schreiber, was not "a movement primarily designed to win material benefits."[97] Or, as Hirsh claims, 1968 represented not simply a material phenomenon, but a cultural and civilizational clash against industrial society and material "progress" as well as "something perhaps intangible."[98] Most of all, Hirsh argues that since the "new working class" (Andre Gorz) no longer had starvation wages and was shielded by the welfare state, 1968 was really a strike against traditional politics. It was an attack against the alienation and boredom of mass, industrial societies as well as against the rigid, bureaucratic chain and command of power and authority. It was a rejection of the lack of delegating authority and democratic discussions. It was a revolt against the alienation of modern, mass consumption and what the Situationists saw as the "totalitarian management" of society which conditions and manipulates individuals to seek fulfilment in material consumption and "spectacle" rather than creativity, authenticity, autonomy, or the quality of life.[99]

Whether one agrees or disagrees with Servan-Schreiber's or Hirsh's analyses of the events of May 1968, it is clear that the events of May and June 1968 mark "the turning point in the history of the Fifth Republic, so much so that during the next decade France would undergo a process of irreversible change that constitutes a watershed in modern French history."[100] Opinion polls consistently demonstrate that it is the events of May 1968 that are the most frequently recalled by the French in the post-World War II era.[101] Given the importance of the events of May 1968 within France and Europe in general, the *nouvelle droite* found that it was a cultural and political necessity to integrate the ideals of the 1968ers into their new ideological synthesis.

The events of May 1968 are fascinating because they were paradoxical in nature. That is, on the one hand, no one could foresee the sheer magnitude of the crisis and, on the other hand, the events of May 1968 are usually said to constitute a "failed" or a "non-revolution" which ended up transforming both France and its peoples in a fundamental way.[102] Interpretations of May 1968 are often blinded by political, partisan allegiances, but one thing is certain: "After May 1968, France would not be the same again."[103] For the New Left itself, however, the hopes for radical social transformation were dashed and they were not able to "formulate viable conceptions of how such a transformation could take place."[104] The French New Right now insists that it alone continues to carry the flame in the name of the failed 1968 revolution and the ideals of the New Left. Whereas the ENR saw the aborted May 1968 revolution as a politically manipulated fiasco, it longs for an allegedly more pure and mythical May 1968 revolution in the future.

Robert Gildea, on the other hand, claims that the events of May 1968 "may be considered France's last great revolution."[105] Yet, it is probably incorrect to view the events of May 1968 as a revolution in the traditional political sense of the term. In the first place, the so-called "revolution" of 1968 was likely more a "revolution" in terms of changes in social consciousness, habits, ways of thinking, and lifestyles. In the

second place, the French regime was "neither overturned nor replaced – if anything, in the immediate turn, it was reinforced."[106] In short, many scholars have argued that the revolutionary dimension of May 1968 lies in its "long-term" impact on contemporary French and European attitudes, values, cultural trends, and the importance of youth culture, music, drugs, and fashion. The "long-term" consequences of 1968 were also discernible in the 1970s and 1980s in terms of the development of "progressive" working practices, left-wing politics, feminism, ecology, decentralization, and movements of regional autonomy or separatism.[107] As Laurent Joffrin succinctly writes, "May 1968 changed France. The failed revolution ended up revolutionizing society, and the French do not always realize it."[108] It was this long-term impact of the 1968ers on the European cultural and political landscapes that especially fascinated de Benoist and other ENR intellectuals. Like the 1968ers, the French New Right wished to operate a long-term transformation of values in order to prepare the groundwork for the emergence of an elitist, revolutionary, and post-liberal social order in the future.

The lesson that the French New Right would learn from the 1968 generation was that a long-term change of societal values required plenty of patience, but was ultimately the most fruitful route in the quest for a revolutionary, post-liberal order. So, for example, the 1968 revolution in values had already begun in the 1950s with the rise of the "beat" generation and later the emergence of the hippie movement in the 1960s in both the United States and Europe.[109] A large minority of bourgeois youth began to abandon many conventional norms and adopted a number of values diametrically opposed to the dominant, materialistic ethos of Western culture. It was this "counter-culture" that suddenly emerged at the university campus at Berkeley, California in 1964 to challenge the relationship of the school to the military-industrial complex as well as question American involvement in the Vietnam War. This "counter-culture" created greater support for the civil rights struggle and rejected the hegemonic values of the capitalist, consumer society. Its adherents searched for the creation of a new libertarian order where both the powers of the state and multinational corporations would be weakened by more decentralized, communal

forms of solidarity. These libertarian, socialist, and anarchist ideals would then spread throughout Europe and around the globe: the Free University of Berlin's student protests in 1965 to mark the 20th anniversary of the end of Hitlerian Nazism; various European-wide student protests in 1967 and 1968; the Czech Prague Spring of 1968; the spectacular student and worker revolts in France between May and June 1968; and the world-wide student and worker denunciations of American "imperialism," pro-Third World solidarity, and support for radical independence movements.

While few could anticipate the scale of the revolt in France in May-June 1968, there were warning signs that academics had spoken about for a period of time well before the actual events. In this regard, the French sociologist Michel Crozier has said that the France of the period was essentially a "stalemate society" that was stuck in the outmoded hierarchical, quasi-authoritarian institutional structures that typified Gaullist France.[110] In this type of society, students and workers were completely abandoned in the democratic consultation process and individual autonomy and expression were clearly lacking. Traditional values and institutions, state bureaucratic, business, and political elites, and the quasi-mystical President Charles de Gaulle exclusively decided the fate of the French nation. In a sense, the French New Right was also revolting against this "stalemate society," the traditional ideologies of the period, and the sterility of right-wing ideologies. French society was especially centralized and regimented as a result of its liberal, universal Jacobin model inherited from the French Revolution and heavy bureaucratic framework imposed by the state on its various regions, cultures, and civil society in general. As John Gretton clearly writes, "The trouble started with the French Revolution and the idea that there should be no intermediary between the citizen and the state."[111] While the French New Left, would reject this highly centralist Jacobin model, it was the French intellectual New Right that would later follow the lead and also critique what it viewed as the homogenizing, assimilationist, and ethnocentric orientation of the nation-state and the nationalist project. While the *Front National* and Le Pen continue to support this ultra-nationalist, Jacobin model of political integration, the French New Right appears closer to the

New Left in terms of its support for a plurality of decentralized, federal communities within a pan-European framework.

The intellectual trends anticipating the events of 1968 were also built between the late 1940s and 1960s. From this fact, the French New Right took heart for its own patient, oblique metapolitical strategy. In this respect, the leftist critique of Marxism especially contributed to the ideals of the New Left and the student radicals in 1968. Three such critiques are especially conspicuous: Sartre's existentialist critique of a lack of Marxist subjectivity; Henri Lefebvre's French "revisionism" of Marxism that sought to account for contemporary changes in social structure and the critique of the alienating nature of everyday life; and the *gauchiste* critique of Cornelius Castoriadis, which insisted that Marxism had lost its revolutionary status and transformed itself into a bureaucratic ideology.[112] Already in October 1966, the International Situationist group (influenced by Debord and Lefebvre) had put out its pamphlet in Strasbourg, which analyzed student and alienation, modern consumer culture, and called for the overthrow of capitalist, communist, and industrial societies by stressing "real life," creativity, play, and the disruption of the typical bourgeois rhythms of life.[113] They would be credited with most of the wall writings of May 1968 against consumer society and the banality of everyday life: "Demand the impossible" or "Consumer society must die a violent death. Alienated society must die a violent death. We want a new and original world. We reject a world where security against starvation is brought for the risk of death by boredom." Or, another slogan was "power to the imagination."[114] Thus, in the eyes of the ENR intellectuals, an intellectual and cultural revolt against the dominant values and attitudes of the age was a vital precondition for the explosion of May 1968.

One only needed the trigger of an apparently trivial event like the University of Nanterre protest over university conditions (itself led by the current French Green leader Daniel Cohn-Bendit and known as the March 22nd Movement since the central administrative building of the university was occupied by students on that day), to

release a more widespread sentiment of anger and revolt that culminated in the May 1968 events. Nanterre University, located west of Paris and opened in 1963, was a sort of half-hearted state education measure designed to deal with overcrowding at the prestigious Sorbonne in central Paris. Nanterre was an impersonal, outwardly soulless concrete structure situated in a *bidonville*, a kind of urban wasteland.[115] Thus, it was no accident that the radical protests of May 1968 had their French origins in student dissatisfaction with the university conditions, the nature of the curriculum, and the authoritarian delivery of its teachers. Despite political differences within the student body and French society more generally, the largely leftist and anarchist militants of Nanterre struck a responsive chord with the larger French student body.[116] By May 2, 1968, student disruption of classes had reached such heights that the university and state authorities closed down the university. This only served to move the protests to the heart of central Paris. On May 3, 1968, students and their leaders occupied the Sorbonne. Barricades were later erected in the Latin Quarter of Paris; the police moved in and violently retaliated against the students between May 10-11. This simply escalated the May 1968 troubles and added greater sympathy for the cause of students within the larger French society. Unrest had by now spread to other French regions and provinces. Already on May 13, 1968, the second social phase of the crisis began as workers and trade unionists reacted to police repression against the students and now marched in unity with the students. In the middle of May, factories stopped work in Nantes; large car factories halted production in the Paris region; and coal and steel production in the Lorraine was disrupted. As the week passed, workers stopped working; occupied numerous workplaces; and were now joined by teachers, public service employees, and banking, transport, and broadcasting sectors.

Estimates of the number of people involved in the May 1968 strikes range from 3-6 million on May 18 to a whopping 10 million people on May 22. As Martyn Cornick correctly points out, in the third week of May 1968 "France was facing almost total paralysis."[117] The strikes differed from other periods of social strife in France, particularly in 1936 and 1947, since not only the traditional working class sectors

(e.g., the car and coal and steel industries) were involved, but also white-collar workers in both the private and public sectors were extensively affiliated with the strikes and protests.[118] The political crisis began around May 29, 1968, when Prime Minister Pompidou's Grenelle negotiations package, including salary increases and more union rights within companies, was rejected by the trade unions and workers. At this juncture, the revolutionary potential of the Left reached its crescendo and there were even rumours that a United Left would be led by the veteran politician Pierre Mendès-France.

In the meantime, President de Gaulle remained suspiciously silent as he left Paris to meet General Massu, France's army commander stationed in Baden-Baden, Germany. De Gaulle returned to France and once again turned a political disaster into a triumph. On May 30, 1968, de Gaulle made an especially harsh speech against the student and worker protests; raised the ominous spectre of "totalitarian communism" and a new Paris Commune supposedly threatening public order and liberty; declared that he would even use "exceptional methods" to reign in the student leftists and anarchists; and unilaterally postponed the referendum, dissolved the National Assembly, and announced general elections for the month of June. In that same evening, a massive crowd of 400,000 marched down the famous Champs-Élysées in support of the general. Over the next few days, work began slowly in the factories and the students' worst fears about the authoritarian nature of Gaullism were realized when the government banned all demonstrations and dissolved 11 student revolutionary groups on June 12, 1968.[119] The Gaullists gained a spectacular victory in the elections in late June by gaining an outright majority of 46 per cent of the popular vote in the first round. For the first time in a century, a single party was able to form the government without the support of any other party.

The "silent majority" had dashed the revolutionary hopes of the students and workers; it had taken its revenge on those social forces militating for a new, revolutionary, post-liberal social order. The Communist Party was the big loser in the

elections and the events of May 1968: It even essentially gave up pretending that it was a credible revolutionary force.[120] It did not support the student protesters because it feared the demise of its own organization and institutional privileges as a result of the New Left critiques of orthodox variants of Marxism. In the post-1968 era, the Communists and old 1968ers no longer quixotically dreamed about revolution. They could only gain some minor reforms and limited inclusion in the educational, state, and business sectors such as the overhaul of the university sector with the *loi Edgar Faure*, salary increases, better working conditions, and worker participation councils within employer organizations.

In essence, May 1968 was also a protest against the authoritarian, hierarchical character of Gaullism, itself a mixture of historical Bonapartism and Orleanism. John Gretton goes so far as to claim that "there is something inherently totalitarian about Gaullism."[121] While this claim seems to be a wild exaggeration for the decorated leader of the French Resistance during World War II, it does express the deep antipathy that the 1968ers felt for what they viewed as the hierarchical, suffocating leadership of de Gaulle. For a brief moment during what Hirsh called the "New Left apocalypse" in May-June 1968 the student radicals superseded the Gaullist leadership and "tasted life beyond alienation."[122] While de Gaulle often displayed a master stroke of political intuition as with his support for the ideas of Algerian decolonization and belief in an independent defence policy for both France and Europe (i.e., free of its dependency on the military and security power of the United States), the generation of May 1968 called for greater dialogue with his regime, a sharing of political responsibility, more democratization reforms within the state, and a general redistribution of political and economic power.[123] For Servan-Schreiber, "the essence of Gaullism is monologue and what is condemned by the spirit of May is the idea that modern society can be governed by monologue."[124] While the French New Right has a measure of admiration for the charismatic, independent-minded, and far-sighted leadership of de Gaulle, there is a fundamental chasm between the Gaullists who remain loyal to the institutions of the Fifth Republic and the revolutionary Right which

displays total disdain towards those liberal institutions and values. The ENR sees itself as supporting a number of the Gaullists' old domestic and foreign policies, but criticizes the modern-day Gaullists for their pro-liberal, pro-capitalist, and anti-revolutionary orientation. Certain elements of the revolutionary Right also cannot forgive de Gaulle for abandoning French Algeria, but the ENR itself supports the idea of self-determination for Algeria and all other national, cultural, and regional communities around the world.

Yet, the events of May 1968 had to do with more than just the centralist, hierarchical nature of the French Jacobin system and the quasi-authoritarian legacy of Gaullism. It must be remembered that France was undergoing deep socio-economic, technological, and demographic changes that would ultimately challenge its long-established traditions and institutions. France was moving towards a more industrial-technological society and away from its agrarian roots; the "baby-boom" generation attained university age as the number of university students rapidly proliferated in the period from 250,000 in 1963 to over 500,000 in 1968 without adequate schools and condition;[125] and the French education system was seen as outdated, elitist, and sought "to separate those who will be in possession of knowledge and will govern, and those who will be ignorant and obey."[126] The 1968ers argued that the French education system, to use the words of French philosopher Alain, allows the ruling elites to "lend an air of justice to the inequality."[127] In addition, there existed a "profound malaise in French higher education."[128] In a society that was also moving towards a more information-based or knowledge-driven economy, the educational realm would become especially important in the future in terms of attaining employment. The students were themselves directly affected by the hierarchical nature of a French educational system that proved indifferent and resistant to changes. The student radicals had correctly recognized that in the future, world education would be the key to the power of creation, intellectual capacity, invention and innovation, and the source of wealth, "progress," and development.[129] The French New Right, too, would

learn from the 1968ers about the vital importance of the schools and universities in creating the intellectual climate for the arrival of a new, post-liberal social order.

The education system was seen as the microcosm of all the ills of the old, hierarchical France. Like a range of other institutions in France, the 1968ers viewed the education system as distant, centralized, and the preserve of "economic and professional oligarchies."[130] The British writer Robert Gildea has made this point succinctly:

> The university world reflected in microcosm the authoritarianism, hierarchy, and bureaucracy of the Gaullist state: no representation of students, little dialogue between teachers and students, the dead hand of structuralism that allowed no place for individual creativity, and strict separation of the sexes in the accommodation blocks.[131]

Until the student explosion of rage in May 1968, "French society was strikingly resistant to change."[132] May 1968 saw the collision between a rigid social and political order and accelerating technological, scientific, and intellectual transformations.[133] The May 1968ers attacked the unlimited notions of materialist progress accelerated by the aforementioned trends, while they began to seriously attack the power and authority of the old social and political order. In the face of such vast societal changes, the 1968 generation questioned all forms of authority since they did not want to be impotent subjects driven by impersonal social, economic, and historical forces in what they considered a harsh, inhumane, conservative, and inorganic society.[134] The old castes and class barriers were falling rapidly and the 1968ers searched for a new collective consensus based on multiple centres of power, more local structures of decision-making, and a general turn towards democratization and the redistribution of traditional power relations. It is for this aforementioned reason that the student radicals attacked "barbaric patriotic wars" based on the "absolute respect for death by command."[135] The old order of things based on the hierarchical society, command, and obedience gave way to new experiments with decentralized modes of thought and institutions. The new industrial society, feared the 1968ers, would corrupt human relations and endanger the creation of more democratic social institutions.

The hallmarks of the 1968 generation, then, were a desire for self-determination and personal autonomy, freedom from physical oppression and social restraint, and the rejection of state and private sector oppression and authority. May 1968 called for the involvement of all social elements in the social and political decision-making process of the nation. The 1968ers expressed deep disillusionment with liberal capitalist societies and attempted to humanize our dominant materialist, technological civilization. They questioned Jacobin centralism and the myth of the Gaullist "One and Indivisible Republic" by attempting to build localized, regional forms of communal solidarity. They paved the way for the explosion of a new range of social issues from feminism and regionalism to ecology and multiculturalism. If one examines the worldview of the contemporary ENR intellectuals, its thinkers have co-opted mostly all of these New Left ideals save its rejection of what it considers the "homogenizing" logic of the Westernized multicultural, multiracial society.

Thus, as the 1968 generation was radically questioning the dominant values of French society and its institutions, the French *nouvelle droite* was also undergoing its own kind of May 1968, but based on the re-evaluation of the entire culture of the Right. France and the world were rapidly changing, thus necessitating an examination of the basic ideas of the Right that were already politically battered by the weight of recent historical experiences. To cite one such example, nationalism, the very *raison d'être* and lifeblood of the French Right, was itself undergoing transformation as the French nation was threatened from above by the growing influence of multinational corporations, non-governmental organizations, the United Nations, and the supranational orientation of the European Common Market. Nationalism was also now threatened from below by the demands of the 1968 generation for an abolition of Jacobin centralism and the vindication of regional and local communities. Therefore, the French New Right adapted itself to the changing times by calling for a common, united Europe within the pluralistic context of a "Europe of a Hundred Flags." Like the anti-liberal, revolutionary "non-conformists" of the 1920s and 1930s,[136] the

contemporary French New Right was seriously affected by the ideals and changing fortunes of the Left. In fact, like these older historical political forces, the French New Right tried to unite and synthesize the most positive and redeeming features of both Left and Right. It also claimed that the revolutionary Right and Left should cease their internecine wars that ultimately benefited the liberal capitalist system. Instead, the French *nouvelle droite* argued that the New Right and New Left must collectively combat the upholders of mainstream liberal democracy and global capitalism since they were committing cultural "ethnocide" on a vast planetary scale. In short, the New Right remained deeply indebted to the events of May 1968 and the legacy of the New Left.

The French *nouvelle droite*, then, was shaped by the internal intellectual and political legacies of the Right, the ideals and changing fortunes of the Left, and the larger social developments within French society. By the late 1980s and 1990s, the main ENR intellectuals had become impregnated with a decidedly New Left-like critique of liberal democracy, capitalist modernity, and Western notions of "progress." This leftist orientation was clearly apparent in ENR journals such as *Krisis* in France as well as the publication of ENR authors in *Telos*, the American journal of critical theory. From the May 1968ers, the ENR gained an appreciation for a number of politically ascendant ideas from federalism and regionalism to ecology and feminism. With the May 1968ers, the ENR shared an anti-capitalist, revolutionary ethos as well as a fascination with the cultural terrain of political contestation. The ENR contends that it was the 1968ers who would go on to dominate France's "laboratories of thought." In the 1970s, the ENR insisted that it was its turn to re-capture the cultural terrain from the 1968ers. In order to accomplish this task, it recognized that political formations must adapt to changing social, economic, and political circumstances. As a result, its major theorists have co-opted a number of New Left influences and themes. Like the New Left and 1968ers, the ENR desires the erection of a new post-liberal social order. 1968 was one of the French New Right's critical turning points in terms of both its intellectual and political trajectories. We now turn towards an examination

of the ENR's major intellectual influences as well as its basic worldview, a unique combination of New Left and revolutionary Right ideals.

Notes

[1] See Alain de Benoist and Charles Champetier, "La nouvelle droite de l'an 2000," *Éléments* 94 (February 1999), pp. 10-23.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp., 10-19.

[3] Alain de Benoist, "La France aurait mieux fait de garder Daniel Cohn-Bendit," *Le Mai 68 de la nouvelle droite* (Paris: Le Labyrinthe, 1998), p. 13.

[4] Tomislav Sunic, "1968: l'année incisive," *Le Mai 68 de la nouvelle droite*, pp. 151-156.

[5] Maurice Rollet, "Nous étions douze," *Le Mai 68 de la nouvelle droite*, p. 139.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 135.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 136.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 138.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 139.

[10] Alain de Benoist, "La nouvelle droite hier, aujourd'hui et demain," *Jünge Freiheit* (18 August 1995) in "Horizon 2000: Trois entretiens avec Alain de Benoist," *Point de vue* (Paris: GRECE, 1996), p. 30.

[11] Alain de Benoist, "La France aurait mieux fait de garder Daniel Cohn-Bendit," p. 10.

[12] *Ibid.*

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

[14] Angelo Quattrocchi and Tom Nairn, *The Beginning of the End, France, May 1968* (London: Verso: 1968/1998), "Foreword."

[15] Alain de Benoist, "La France aurait mieux de garder Daniel Cohn-Bendit," p. 12.

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

[18] *Ibid.*

[19] *Ibid.*

[20] *Ibid.*

[21] *Ibid.*

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] *Ibid.*, p., 16.

[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

[26] *Ibid.*

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

[28] *Ibid.*

[29] Pierre Bérard, "Cours camarade, le Nouveau Monde est devant toi!," *Le Mai 68 de la nouvelle droite*, pp. 22-23.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

[32] Philippe Conrad, "Réflexions sur la 'révolution' de mai 68," *Le Mai 68 de la nouvelle droite*, p. 54.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 55-56.

[34] Jean Jouven, "Le bon vent, le joli vent de mai," *Le Mai 68 de la nouvelle droite*, p. 63.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

[36] *Ibid.*

[37] *Ibid.*

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 81.

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 82.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 85.

[42] Pierre Le Vigan, "Une décennie 68," *Le Mai 68 de la nouvelle droite*, pp. 91-92.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 92.

[44] Gunter Maschke, "Confessions d'un renégat (rapport très provisoire)," *Le Mai 68 de la nouvelle droite*, p. 101.

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 103.

[46] *Ibid.*, pp. 111-112.

[47] Jean-Jacques Mourreau, "Souvenirs, souvenirs," *Le Mai 68 de la nouvelle droite*, p. 113.

[48] *Ibid.*, pp. 113-114.

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 114.

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 117.

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 118.

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 119.

[53] Jean-Charles Personne, "Les bienheureux nous recevront debout," *Le Mai 68 de la nouvelle droite*, p. 121.

[54] *Ibid.*, pp. 122-123.

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 123.

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 124.

[57] Grégory Pons, "Quand il tonne en mai, les vaches ont du lait," *Le Mai 68 de la nouvelle droite*, p. 125.

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 131.

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 132.

[60] Michel de Sablet, "Soixante – soixante-dix, les années paradoxales," *Le Mai 68 de la nouvelle droite*, p. 141.

[61] Tomislav Sunic, "1968: l'année décisive," *Le Mai 68 de la nouvelle droite*, p. 152.

[62] *Ibid.*

[63] *Ibid.*, p. 153.

[64] *Ibid.*

[65] *Ibid.*, p. 156.

[66] *Ibid.*

[67] Marco Tarchi, "Aucun regret pour le monde d'avant," *Le Mai 68 de la nouvelle droite*, p. 157.

[68] *Ibid.*, p. 160.

[69] *Ibid.*, p. 161.

[70] *Ibid.*

[71] *Ibid.*

[72] *Ibid.*, p. 162.

[73] *Ibid.*

[74] *Ibid.*

[75] *Ibid.*

[76] Charles Champetier, "Mai 68, connais pas...," *Le Mai 68 de la nouvelle droite*, p. 166.

[77] *Ibid.*

[78] *Ibid.*, p. 167.

[79] *Ibid.*, p. 168.

[80] *Ibid.*, p. 169.

[81] *Ibid.*

[82] *Ibid.*, p. 170.

[83] *Ibid.*, p. 171.

[84] *Ibid.*

[85] *Ibid.*, pp. 169-172.

[86] *Ibid.*, p. 172.

[87] *Ibid.*

[88] *Ibid.*, pp. 172-173.

[89] *Ibid.*, p. 173.

[90] *Ibid.*

[91] *Ibid.*

[92] Tarik Ali and Susan Watkin, *Marching in the Streets* (London: Verso, 1998).

[93] John Gretton, *Students and Workers: An Analytical Account of Dissent in France May-June 1968* (London: Unwin Brothers, 1969), p. 15.

[94] *Ibid.*, "Preface," xi.

[95] J.-J. Servan-Schreiber, *The Spirit of May* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), p. ix.

[96] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

[97] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

[98] Arthur Hirsh, *The French New Left: An Intellectual History From Sartre to Gorz* (Boston: South End Press, 1981), p. 142.

[99] *Ibid.*, pp. 142-146.

[100] Martyn Cornick, "May 1968," in Alex Hughes and Keith Reader, (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Contemporary French Culture* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 364.

[101] *Ibid.*

[102] *Ibid.*

[103] *Ibid.*

[104] Arthur Hirsh, *The French New Left: An Intellectual History From Sartre to Gorz*, p. 6.

[105] Robert Gildea, *France Since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 1.

[106] Martyn Cornick, "May 1968," p. 368.

[107] *Ibid.*

[108] *Ibid.*

[109] John Gretton, *Students and Workers: An Analytical Account of Dissent in France May-June 1968*, pp. 15-16.

[110] Michael Crozier, *La société bloquée* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1975).

[111] John Gretton, *Students and Workers: An Analytical Account of Dissent in France May-June 1968*, p. 155.

[112] Arthur Hirsh, *The French New Left: An Intellectual History from Sartre to Gorz*, "Preface," p. xi.

[113] *Ibid.*, pp. 144-145.

[114] *Ibid.*, p. 140.

[115] Martyn Cornick, "May 1968," p. 365.

[116] *Ibid.*

[117] *Ibid.*, p. 366.

[118] *Ibid.*

[119] *Ibid.*, p. 367.

[120] John Gretton, *Students and Workers: An Analytical Account of Dissent in France May-June 1968*, p. 260.

[121] *Ibid.*, p. 239.

[122] Arthur Hirsh, *The French New Left: An Intellectual History From Sartre to Gorz*, pp. 139; 142.

[123] J.-J. Servan-Schreiber, *The Spirit of May*, p. 104.

[124] *Ibid.*

[125] Martyn Cornick, "May 1968," p. 365.

[126] These are the words of French philosopher Alain (1 July 1910) in John Gretton, *Students and Workers: An Analytical account of Dissent in France May-June 1968*, p. 63.

[127] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

[128] Martyn Cornick, "May 1968," p. 365.

[129] J.-J. Servan-Schreiber, *The Spirit of May*, p. 70.

[130] *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

[131] Robert Gildea, *France Since 1945*, p. 52.

[132] J.-J. Servan-Schreiber, *The Spirit of May*, p. 22.

[133] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

[134] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

[135] *Ibid.*, p. 74.

[136] See, for example, J.-L. Loubet del Bayle, *Les non-conformistes des années 30* (Paris: 1969).

The Ambiguities of the Intellectual European New Right, 1968-1999

Chapter 3:
The ENR's Influences and Worldview: The Primacy of Metapolitics and the "Right to Difference"

This chapter intends to highlight the major influences and fundamental worldview of the ENR intellectuals. We begin with a general overview of the ENR's ideals and influences. This will be followed by an examination of the ENR's metapolitical orientation and an appraisal of the ENR's valorization of the "right to difference," its other vital theme besides cultural metapolitics. Finally, we conclude the chapter with an examination of the type of world the ENR intellectuals fear and how these fears were reflected in the works of a number of diverse cultural critics in the past.

Although the ENR's major theorists originate from the revolutionary Right political family, its influences represent a sort of eclectic, post-modern collection of ideas. We saw how in the last two chapters the ENR's major intellectuals have attempted to create a unique synthesis between the ideas of the revolutionary Right and those of the Left and, particularly, New Left. In this chapter, we attempt to demonstrate that the writings of the ENR's principal theoreticians, whether Alain de Benoist of France, Marco Tarchi of Italy, Pierre Krebs of Germany, or Michael Walker of England, reveal two constant themes from the *nouvelle droite*'s birth in 1968 until 1999. These two themes are the following: The stress on the cultural or metapolitical realm as the most fundamental terrain of political contestation and the incessant valorization of the "right to difference" of communities and individuals. In spite of variations across time within ENR thought, these two principles have generally remained sacrosanct for all its major thinkers for approximately thirty years.

Stressing the ENR's heterogeneity, Pierre-André Taguieff has listed three ideological traditions within GRECE itself (i.e., traditional counter-revolutionaries, Europeanist conservative revolutionaries, and neo-conservatives of a neo-liberal orientation), each of which, in turn, are divided into "schools of thought" or intellectual orientations, and four doctrinal phases taking the organization from a focus on "difference" between races in the 1960s to biology in the 1970s, and finally culture in the 1980s and 1990s.[1] However, two recurring ENR themes, metapolitical struggle and the idea that cultural "difference" enhances the richness, diversity, and beauty of the world, continue to structure the ENR's worldview in the 1990s. In fact, these two ENR constants are inextricably linked because, as the ENR contends, cultural metapolitics acts as the principal form of political action in order to displace liberal democracy and restore cultural diversity and pluralism to the world.

The ENR's appropriation of the Gramscian terrain of "cultural war" as the fundamental avenue towards revolutionary political change is intended to shatter what it sees as the intellectual hegemony of both the Old Right and Old Left. For the ENR, the sterile Manicheanism between Old Right and Old Left could possibly be replaced by a New Right-New Left political synthesis for the new millennium.[2] In the process, the ENR seeks to prepare the cultural groundwork for the triumph of a new, revolutionary cultural elite in a post-liberal order. The ENR vehemently criticizes the Old Right for its lack of theoretical sophistication, its neglect of the vital cultural realm, and its obsessions with capturing power. Old Right tactics, whether violent street politics, the so-called "strategy of tension," or parliamentary politics, are viewed by the ENR as thoroughly outmoded and incapable of radically transforming the mentalities and spirit of the age. For the ENR, this cultural transformation of mentalities is more critical to the maintenance of a long-term, revolutionary society than the combined "hard" powers of the army, police, intelligence services, or any other "repressive" arm of the state apparatus. While the ENR offers an internal critique of the Old Right, it also launches a scathing indictment of Old Left Marxism,

liberalism, and what it views as their combined dogmatic cultural hegemony over Europe's cultural milieu.[3]

Although the ENR wages a "cultural battle" against the combined forces of liberal, Old Left, and Old Right intellectual elites, it praises some elements of the New Left and the 1968ers as potential allies of the future as well as certain leftists, such as Antonio Gramsci, Che Guevara, and Régis Debray. The latter leftists are praised because, like the ENR theorists themselves, they allegedly remained eternally faithful to the flickering flame of their ideals all their lives. The ENR has a fair measure of envy for the Left in general, what it considers as the Left's fundamental understanding of the primary importance of the cultural realm as the ultimate threat to state power, and the Left's apparent ability to dominate the cultural landscape of post-World War II and especially post-1968 West European societies. The aforementioned "eternal" leftists are also highly esteemed models of emulation for former revolutionary Right activists now under the ENR banner attempting to stay loyal to what they claim are their own sacred ideals. These ideals, especially the martial virtues of heroism, honour, and courage against the commercial ethic of liberal capitalism, are already neatly spelled out in Alain de Benoist's earliest works, such as *Le courage est leur patrie* (1965), *Les Indo-Européens* (1966), and *Rhodésie, terre des lions fidèles* (1967).[4] They find their greatest expression in de Benoist's classic text *Vu de droite* (1979). De Benoist has often expressed a strong attachment to the proud ethic of chivalry and honour espoused during the Hundred Years War by the French horseman Louis d'Estouteville: "Where honour is, where loyalty is, there lies my country."[5]

Under the influence of a sort of Nietzschean nominalism, the ENR uses the metapolitical terrain in order to uncover what they consider the roots of Europe's fin-de-siècle malaise. They locate these roots in the universal imposition on diverse societies of a vulgar egalitarian, reductionist, and assimilationist Judeo-Christian monotheism (viewed as a form of "racism" and "totalitarianism" for its belief in a single truth) and its various secular, materialistic offshoots, such as liberalism, social

democracy, and socialism.[6] In contrast to the polytheistic pluralism of ancient Indo-European societies, the latter three ideologies are seen as pseudo-universalist and "ethnocidal," or against the "cause of peoples." Furthermore, they are viewed as the carriers of an inorganic, foreign, "abstract," and intolerant "religion" called "human rights", which is viewed as devoid of political duty and citizen participation.[7] The ENR has even dubbed the Judeo-Christian tradition as the "Bolshevism of Antiquity."[8] In contrast, the ENR has called for the revival of Europe's pre-Christian and pagan roots in ancient Greece, and the return of the old Indo-European deities of Celtic, Germanic, and Scandinavian ancestry. Alain de Benoist has devoted several works to his anti-Christian, pagan ideals such as *Comment être païen?* (1980), *L'éclipse du sacré* (1986), and *L'empire intérieur* (1996).[9]

Borrowing from the works of conservative revolutionary thinkers and the French Indo-Europeanist Georges Dumézil, the ENR has called for the rejuvenation of ancient, organic, and hierarchical European societies where diversity reigned and the political-military and spiritual functions were supposedly sovereign, or free of contamination from the economic realm.[10] The ENR laments the current age of liberal European societies because they argue that a myopic and jungle-like global capitalism dictated only by the reign of profits has obscured the old "tripartite" (i.e., sovereign political, war, and production functions) destiny of Europeans and has insidiously penetrated the considerations of once separate entities such as the political-military or spiritual-philosophical domains. For the ENR, the vulgar economic realm must be naturally subordinated to the Schmittian-like "decisionism" of the political and military realms. In addition, the ENR believed that Europe had the duty to remain true to its philosophical roots by politically and spiritually challenging what it considered were the globalist and homogenizing tendencies of the two materialist superpowers, the USA and USSR, during the Cold War era.[11] In the post-1989 era, the ENR increasingly turned its venom to the remaining world superpower, the United States, seen as the ultimate embodiment of the most homogenizing, demonic, and profit-hungry machine in world history.[12] GRECE's annual colloquium in 1991 was fittingly

called "Danger: United States."[13] The ENR's stance in the post-communist era was to support all sorts of pro-Third World and anti-American alliances, including flirtations with Islamic traditionalists and the Russian New Right. For the ENR, the ultimate goals of these informal alliances were to restore plurality to world politics through reviving a plethora of world cultural communities adamantly opposed to liberal capitalism.

Besides the ENR's right-wing conservative revolutionary influences, the New Left, and Antonio Gramsci, the ENR has enlisted an eclectic array of political references, philosophical influences, and authors for its metapolitical "war" against the primary enemies of liberalism and global capitalism. This has allowed the ENR to claim that it was attempting to search for a new synthesis between Right and Left while transcending its revolutionary Right roots. Stressing Arthur Koestler's arguments against any sort of intellectual reductionism and claiming that the "French New Right has never been committed to any kind of dogmatic catechism, but was a real intellectual effort with no preconceived ideas,"[14] Alain de Benoist's lengthy career has included a diverse set of philosophical and political influences in his metapolitical "war" against the dominant ideologies of the age. De Benoist's wide range of influences include the following: the Prussian military specialist Karl von Clausewitz (1780-1831), the 19th century French thinkers Arthur de Gobineau, Alexis de Tocqueville and Ernest Renan, the towering influence of Friedrich Nietzsche, the conservative revolutionary thinkers, the Italian revolutionary syndicalists, the "non-conformists" of the inter-war era, French socialists such as Georges Sorel and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, neo-Machiavellians such as Vilfredo Pareto, Gustave Le Bon, the Marxists thinkers Vladimir Lenin, Mao, and Antonio Gramsci, New Left writers like Herbert Marcuse, Louis Althusser, Theodor Adorno, and Marx Horkheimer, the post-war radical Right's guru from Italy Julius Evola, pro-Third World anti-Americanism and anti-Westernism, the ecological, regionalist, and feminist movements, federalism, paganism, scientism and biology, contemporary anti-utilitarians, French post-modernism, and the contemporary North American communitarians. This long list of

influences reveals a unique synthesis between the older revolutionary Right legacy and newer New Left traditions.

The ENR's wide range of influences gives it an air of intellectual openness and tolerance. This combines well with the ENR's non-linear view of history as chaos where all received dogmas are open to question and investigation; the future is written no where; man is always a malleable being; and a perpetual creator of his destiny.[15] In a 1997 interview with the self-described "politically incorrect" and "patriotic" British magazine *Right Now!*, Alain de Benoist added to his extensive set of eclectic influences when he highlighted his major philosophical influences:

> I have never been the disciple of just one man. Rather my way of thinking is built on a systematic study of great many different authors. It would be difficult to say which have influenced me the most. At a philosophical level, Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, but also the great theoreticians of philosophical anthropology, Arnold Gehlen and Helmut Plessner, have been the principal influences upon me. At an epistemological level, authors who have attacked scientific reductionism have influenced me above all others. I am thinking in particular of Arthur Koestler, whom I had the good fortune to meet in London many times before his death, but also of Ludwig Bertalanffy and Stephane Lupasco. I am also greatly indebted to the sociologists of the German school (Georg Simmel, Ferdinand Tönnies, Max Weber, Werner Sombart) and to those of the French school from Marcel Mauss to Louis Dumont, Edgar Morin and Michel Maffesoli. With regard to the study of religious myths, I would mention Walter F. Otto, Mircea Eliade, Carl Gustav Jung, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Gilbert Durand, David Miller, etc. As for political doctrine, I would begin with the work of Johann Gottfried Herder and the German Romantics, as well as the French socialists, chiefly Georges Sorel and PJ Proudhon. I would continue with the "non-conformists" of the thirties (Alexandre Marc, Thierry Maulnier, Bernard Charbonneau, Georges Battaille), the Italian revolutionary syndicalists, certain German conservative revolutionary authors (Moeller van den Bruck, Oswald Spengler, Ernst Jünger) down to the "situationists" of the 1960s (Guy Debord) and the "post-modernists" of the 1970s. In recent times, I attach the greatest importance to the anti-utilitarian school (Alain Caille, Serge Latouche), who carry on and bring up to date the ground breaking work of Marcel Mauss and Karl Polanyi (*The Great Transformation*), as well as the innovative views of the North American neo-populist theoreticians such as Christopher Lasch, or the communitarians such as Alasdair MacIntyre, Charles Taylor and Michael Sandel.[16]

1. The Consistent Metapolitical Thread of ENR Theorists: A Break with the Old Right?

From the ENR's beginnings with the foundation of French think-tank GRECE in 1968, ENR thinkers have consistently repeated their primary commitment to the cultural realm and what they view as metapolitical "combat" against the dominant egalitarian ideologies of post-World War II Europe, namely, liberal democracy and

socialism. For the ENR, metapolitics simply denotes the Gramscian idea that the social consensus created within the cultural world conditions the political realm. A basic aim of the ENR's metapolitical struggle was to restore respectability to a revolutionary Right heritage battered by its twentieth century history. In short, the ENR used the more sophisticated terrain of "cultural war" and an eclectic array of post-modern influences in order to clandestinely revive a part of this revolutionary Right heritage, although distancing itself from its most horrendous historical manifestations. A number of analysts claimed that the ENR would ultimately create a more ominous form of fascism because its principal theorists harboured "proto-fascist" tendencies, while simultaneously denying these allegations. In the process, they claimed the ENR had resurrected a new form of "ideal-type" fascism which now breathed life under new names and innocent disguises.[17] If this claim was correct, then how was anti-fascism to survive and fight against "proto-fascists" who refused to loudly and proudly display the fascist banner?

The ENR denied these charges of fascism and argued that the exclusive focus on the metapolitical terrain was a danger for the Left because it represented an intelligent break with the theoretical "stupidity," violent recklessness, and addiction to nearly extinct dinosaur-like, lost causes of the Old Right.[18] The ENR argued that the main thrust of its long-term metapolitical combat was the creation of a new political paradigm, likely with sectors of the New Left, as well as the creation of a novel political synthesis that was well-divorced from the stifling sterility of the Old Right. Louis Pauwels, the former editor of *Figaro Magazine* and an ENR sympathiser, took his distance from the Old Right when he explained in a 1979 *France-Soir* article that "my positions are those of what we can call the 'new right' and which have nothing to do with the bourgeois, conservative, and reactionary right."[19] In a similar vein, Michael Walker, the editor of the English ENR journal *The Scorpion*, made this scathing indictment of the Old Right:

> The baggage of the old right, were it the nationalist right, the Nazi right, the Christian right, the imperialist right, the liberal right, with its simplistic slick solutions to the issues of the day, left

> young people profoundly unsatisfied. The far right, shrill, monotonous and wholly predictable was an insult to the intelligence.[20]

Marco Tarchi, an Italian New Right ideologue, called for a stress on the novelty of the "New Right" in order to revive the Right's battered credibility and transcend the ideas of the "Old Right":

> What we must do today is illuminate the fundamental novelty of the New Right, to put the emphasis on the 'new' and no longer on the term 'Right'. Otherwise we will still be clinging to the heritage of the decrepit and worm-eaten currents of thought of the 1950s and 1960s which, in the face of all opposition, are still churning out the same old slogans with their whole perception of reality built around bygone political divisions. The desire to restore chauvinistic nationalisms is part of this archaic way of thinking.... It is up to us, to our generation, to definitively surpass these outworn ideas.[21]

Alain de Benoist, the doyen of the ENR, has rejected the French historian René Rémond's classification of the French Right into three categories: a revolutionary Right with roots from the Ultras of the Restoration period, an Orleanist, liberal Right, and a nationalist, Bonapartist Right.[22] For de Benoist, Rémond's traditional categorization of the different right-wing currents in France fails to account for the novelty of the ENR itself. As de Benoist writes, "I do not identify with any of René Rémond's 'rights'."[23] In a 1985 interview, de Benoist said that he belonged to a Right which was "neither traditionalist, neither fascist, neither Christian."[24] In fact, this would suggest that Rémond must further update his classical work on the subject in order to account for the relative novelty and hybridity of the ENR worldview. Meanwhile, de Benoist himself lamented the confusing polemical storm surrounding ENR ideas and called for a new, "authentic" political paradigm. De Benoist writes that he has never been satisfied with the term "New Right" because his basic project is devoted to the cultural realm, the ENR transcends traditional Right-Left political divisions, and it should not be confused with the pro-capitalist American New Right:

> First, the name smacks of politics, while the New Right is in no sense a political movement, but a current of thought and cultural action, whose only activity in nearly thirty years of existence has been to publish books and magazines, to co-ordinate theoretical, intellectual and philosophical work, to organize conferences and debates, etc. Furthermore, while the term "right-wing" does not shock me, it does seem inappropriate to me to describe a school of thought which has from the beginning sought to rise above obsolete divisions. There have always been many Rights, just as there have always been many Lefts, and some of these Rights may have things in common with some of these Lefts. This term can, finally, lead to confusion

with the American New Right, a political tendency with which the French New Right feels that it has nothing in common.[25]

2. The Traditional Politics of the "Masses" Versus the Metapolitics of the "Philosopoher Kings"

For de Benoist, political parties and street protest represented traditional, outdated modes of political confrontation and are implicitly associated with the "vulgarity" and ephemeral fixations of the masses. In de Benoist's view, metapolitics is viewed as the most intelligent and evolved form of political combat. From his perspective, metapolitics did not entail an apolitical or anti-political orientation, but the most cerebral and advanced form of politics. Metapolitics was the preserve of an intellectual elite which GRECE and other ENR think tanks sought to cultivate and mould. Moreover, de Benoist argued that cultural metapolitics was the most revolutionary force in the movement of history. In short, de Benoist argued that it was ideas which moved the actions of the world and shaped its history. De Benoist reiterated this position as late as 1997:

> I might add that, like Herder, I believe firmly that the history of ideas is the key to the history of deeds. The great changes in the history of mankind are above all those that have affected our intellectual life. Aristotle's revolution, Copernicus' revolution and Kant's revolution were without doubt more important than the French Revolution of 1789 or the Russian Revolution of 1917, which were no more than the continuations of previous ideological transformations.[26]

De Benoist's disdain for traditional politics and faith in the importance of ideas as the key to the movement of history remained unwavering in the 1990s. De Benoist showed his continuing commitment to a patient, long-term metapolitical struggle in a 1994 interview with *Telos*:

> First of all, what can a political party do? Obviously, not a lot. None of the major changes during the last century have been brought about by party activities or by government policies. There are always people who claimed that theories are useless, only political forces are acceptable. However, these people forget that theories set powers in motion (often unnoticed). What, then, can a think tank do? It can contribute to the development of ideas and wait for their impact.[27]

As mentioned earlier, GRECE's first annual seminar in 1968 was entitled "What is Metapolitics?" and its 16th in 1981 was called "For a Right-Wing

Gramscianism." In late 1977, GRECE looked towards a rejuvenated, post-liberal age when it published its 10th anniversary collection of metapolitical essays and cultural influences called *Dix ans de combat culturel pour une renaissance*.[28] Thus, GRECE and Alain de Benoist had remained faithful to the metapolitical orientation for a thirty-year period. In the 1970s, de Benoist had begun his elaboration of the cultural ideas of the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, which he transmitted to GRECE and the ENR in general. In several of his texts in the period, including *Vu de droite* and *Les idées à l'endroit*, de Benoist pays tribute to the Italian Marxist with several essays.[29] Following Gramsci, de Benoist gives intellectuals a precise role in history: To win the "cultural war" and make the masses accept its conception of the world as self-evident and natural. Acting as the vanguard of what Gramsci called "organic intellectuals," the ENR intellectuals sought to displace what it saw as the hegemonic ideological control of "traditional intellectuals," or the liberal and leftist intellectual establishment. The ENR intellectuals attempted to alter what they viewed as the dominant egalitarian and materialistic spirit of the age.

De Benoist was confident about the metapolitical route he had chosen, like Gramsci, because he viewed as inherently weak liberal democratic political systems.[30] In the first place, the intelligentsia had a considerable role in shaping modern societies as a result of the democratization of the school system, the vast importance of the mass media, and the use of updated polls. Therefore, de Benoist argued that modern public opinion was especially vulnerable to the more subtle metapolitical messages of this expanded cultural realm. In the long run, de Benoist claimed that a novel, film, theatre piece, television program, or Internet article was more politically efficacious because it is not viewed in political terms, yet can still provoke a slow evolution of mentalities from one value system to another. The "open" nature of liberal democratic societies, argued de Benoist, would even lead to the system's self-inflicted demise. This openness makes liberal democratic societies especially vulnerable to the process of transforming mentalities in which the ENR specialized. In an "open," liberal, and pluralist order, even the subversive counter-hegemonic ideology of the ENR cannot be

eliminated since the system runs the risk of becoming tyrannical and contradicting its most sacred principles of free expression. The problem is that this pluralism of liberal democracies, claims de Benoist, is beneficial only when there is consensus of the majority of the masses. However, liberal democratic societies create a weak consensus because of the pluralism of political actors, institutions, and values, and the liberty of intellectuals to exercise their critical function. Thus, de Benoist argued that liberal democratic societies are highly vulnerable to a metapolitical project founded on a cohesive, alternative view of the world. The ENR's ultimate hope was for the gradual erosion of the social consensus and subsequent demand for new elites and intellectuals to fill the vacuum with a new sensibility and social order. For the ENR, it was only through the attainment of cultural power that they would achieve what they considered was the reversal of the dominant, liberal-Left ideological majority. GRECE and other ENR think tanks saw themselves as the new Leninist-like intellectual vanguard, but now the "war" was conducted on the cultural and mental landscape rather than the physical battlefront with revolutionary soldiers.

Other ENR intellectuals also shared de Benoist's elitist penchant for what they saw as a vital metapolitical "combat." Pierre Krebs, a prominent ideologue of Germany's New Right (*Neue Rechte*), was also keenly aware of the metapolitical lessons of Antonio Gramsci:

> An Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci, was the first to understand that the State is not confined to a political apparatus. In fact, he established that the political apparatus runs parallel to the so-called civil apparatus. In other words, each political apparatus is reinforced by a civil consensus, the psychological support of the masses. This psychological support expresses itself through a consensus on the level of culture, world-view, and ethos. In order to exist at all, political power is thus dependent on a cultural power diffused within the masses. On the basis of this analysis Gramsci understood why Marxists could not take over power in bourgeois democracies: they did not have cultural power. To be precise, it is impossible to overthrow a political apparatus without previously having gained control of cultural power. The assent of the people must be won first: their ideas, ethos, ways of thinking, the value-system, art, and education system have to be worked on and modified. Only when people feel the need for change as a self-evident necessity will the existing political power, now detached from the general consensus, start crumbling and be overthrown. Metapolitics can be seen as the revolutionary war fought out on the level of world-views, ways of thinking, and culture.[31]

Like de Benoist, Krebs firmly rejects mass-oriented politics and stresses the ENR's primary commitment to a revolutionary form of metapolitics:

> It is precisely the metapolitical level which is our starting point. We want to take over the laboratories of thinking. ... We are not interested in political factions but in attitudes to life. What motivates us cannot be accommodated within the framework of a political party, but—and we insist on this point—solely within the framework of a metapolitical, exclusively cultural project. ... In this way we aim to prepare the groundwork for what is to come.[32]

This notion of seizing cultural control over Europe's "laboratories of thinking," whether its libraries, schools, universities, mass media, or cultural institutes, was still prevalent within the German *Neue Rechte*'s thinking in the late 1990s. So, for example, in 1998 the slogan of one German New Right think tank, *Thule-Seminar*, was the following: "Nothing can stop the arrival of a Europe of study groups."[33] Describing itself as a "party of the mind," the German *Neue Rechte*'s *Thule-Seminar* was founded by Pierre Krebs in 1980 and its name was suspiciously reminiscent of a quasi-Masonic lodge founded in Munich in 1917, which provided the intellectual cadres for the Nazi secret police called the NSDAP, and Hitler's inner circle.[34]

In the 1998 issue of the English-based ENR journal *The Scorpion*, its editor Michael Walker also reiterated the primary importance of metapolitics. In the editorial to this 1998 issue, Walker wrote this clearly right-wing Gramscian perspective:

> We are not in the business of propaganda in the sense that it is commonly understood. We are doing something much more long-term, namely, helping to provide a comprehensive philosophical and cultural basis for an alternative worldview. ... If we are unable to educate, to convince, to lead into a new world, no other success of any kind, political or economic, will last. ... The originality of organizations like GRECE in France lay in the fact that they understood the importance of education before political change. It is a common error to believe that education follows political change.[35]

Furthermore, Walker's article entitled "For A New Education" can be seen as a neat encapsulation of the ENR's metapolitical positions and its continuing commitment to the cultural terrain.[36] While Walker's prescriptions for an alternative, "nationalist" British education system against what he considers are the egalitarian, materialist ideologies of liberalism and socialism does not sit well with all the ENR's differing tendencies, they share a common belief in right-wing metapolitics. Attacking

the "value free" teachings of liberal society, Walker has no qualms about stressing the ultimately political and elitist character of all education from the American and French revolutionary governments in the 18th century to Ivan Illich's "de-schooling" movement of the early 1970s:

> There is a "selfishness" to every theory of education. ... What use are any values if we do not wish to see them flourish? And if we wish to see them flourish then it is logical that we wish at the same time that competing values do not flourish. ... No revolutionary could hope to change society permanently unless the educational system which formerly existed has been replaced with one in accord with the new priorities of society. ... Education is political or it is nothing.[37]

3. The ENR's Focus on the "Culture Wars": A Stroke of Genius?

The ENR's fixation on the metapolitical terrain has been apparent from the mid-1960s to the late 1990s and it may have also been its stroke of genius for three principal reasons. In the first place, GRECE and other ENR think tanks had injected the Right with newly discovered intelligence and credibility which were badly battered by the dual heritages of fascism and Nazism, and which had been lacking until the 1970s. Before the 1970s, one had to go back to the inter-war era's conservative revolutionary thinkers from Germany or France's *Action française* to find an "intelligent" Right. Pierre-André Taguieff, the ENR's foremost scholar, has highlighted this point:

> GRECE's great innovation was to take cultural questions seriously from the standpoint of the Right. The political Right had abandoned the intellectual-cultural field to the Marxist Left, while the radical nationalist movements (the "extreme Right") were engaged in anti-intellectual activism, which bore resemblances to the anti-intellectualism of *poujadisme* and which was linked to a type of populist revolt. In this respect GRECE reestablished links with the tradition of historian-writers of the *Action française*.[38]

Second, the ENR's exclusive use of the metapolitical terrain would give its major theorists the opportunity in the future to absolve themselves of blame for potential crimes committed in the political or military realms. This was often the tactic of influential intellectuals who were temporarily tainted by their association or collaboration with fascism or Nazism, whether Ernst Jünger, Carl Schmitt, Martin Heidegger, or Julius Evola. They claimed to take their elitist-like, "spiritual" distance from the mass, "vulgar" populism of the fascists and Nazis. Or, they could even argue

that while their works were cynically appropriated by the fascists or Nazis, they had denounced the fascists or Nazis.

Third, the ENR was following a long lineage in European history which gave primary importance to culture and the "war" of ideas. So, for example, there was an old French saying which Alain de Benoist always followed: "Si c'était à refaire, je commencerais par la culture." Had not Napoleon said, "Three hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets." Did not Goebbels, the Nazi Propaganda Minister, utter the famous aphorism about the fundamental political importance of culture: "When I hear the word culture, I reach for my revolver." For de Benoist and the ENR theorists, culture was itself the revolver used to kill what they viewed as the universalist, egalitarian, and materialist "menaces" of liberalism and socialism in order to return Europe to its "authentic" pagan, Indo-European roots. A 1978 article by de Benoist in *Éléments* stated this position succinctly: "The principal danger remains, more than ever, uniformity, robotization: universalism."[39] For the ENR, even the manipulation of words, slogans, language, and ultimately historical memories was a crucial aspect of this "total war" conducted on the cultural and educational terrains. When the *Front National* stated in a 1990 pamphlet that "No word is innocent,"[40] they were merely following the lead taken by GRECE and other ENR think tanks. In the post-modern age, the ENR believed that the boundaries of war had become blurred and "information war" was the most effective form of political "combat." The ENR's strength was this focus on the "cultural war" which allowed it to simultaneously revive the heritage of the revolutionary Right and integrate new political and post-modern influences in order to distance itself from this same politically damaged heritage.

In his ground-breaking study on the ENR, Tomislav Sunic has also stressed the importance of cultural and intellectual figures in terms of their subtle and disproportionate influence on French and European political life:

> In Europe in general, and in France in particular, culture and politics seem to be interwoven and hardly discernible from each other. Great cultural figures often play quiet, yet prominent, roles in the political arena, and their influence has sometimes more bearing on the political

process than that of genuinely elected governmental dignitaries. From de Gaulle to Mitterrand, from Adenauer to Kohl, European leaders have frequently vied for the support of prominent intellectuals, and often the political survival of their governments has depended on the tacit support of their handpicked intellectuals. Cultural and artistic figures, although not politically visible, have an advantage to operate in governmental affairs in the capacity of "grey eminences"; they provide each decision-maker with a sense of political respectability; yet, they seldom take the blame in case a political decision goes sour.[41]

4. The ENR's Other Faith: Anti-Egalitarianism and the "Right to Difference"

Besides its metapolitical contestation over ideas, anti-egalitarianism and the "right to difference" have remained constant and sacrosanct ENR ideas from the mid-1960s to the late 1990s. As Alain de Benoist explained, "The desire to maintain a diversity of communities and cultures, which are the wealth of mankind, was a constant. The main problem today is to find the cultural and political means to resist the technological, economic, and mass-media-driven homogenization of the world."[133] These two interconnected notions, anti-egalitarianism and the "right to difference," were espoused in racial terms in the1960s, a biology-driven, non-racial perspective in the 1970s, and finally cultural manifestations such as "SOS-ROOTS" (a word-play against what GRECE considered the "pseudo-universalism" of the French anti-racist organization "SOS-RACISME") and the "right to difference" in the 1980s and 1990s.

For the ENR, the world of human affairs, like the biological world, only thrives and grows on "difference," "pluralism," and "diversity." This "difference" must be enhanced in cultural, political, and geopolitical realms. The ENR argues that the bio-diversity of different world cultures, each with their own unique conceptions of the world, enhances the pluralism, majesty, and mystery of the world. The incommensurability of cultures, the ENR contends, should not lead to the reductionist and assimilationist Western imposition of "our" cultural values upon other cultures. In this thinking, we can hear the echoes of Herder, Vico, Lévi-Strauss, and the conservative revolutionary Oswald Spengler all rolled into one. In the post-colonial era, the ENR argues that all cultures are inherently unique and different, and the old assimilationist logic of European colonialism is forcefully rejected. All "rooted" cultures in the post-communist age, argue the ENR intellectuals, should make

common cause against the American-led, global capitalist vision based on the domination of the *homo oeconomicus*.

Alain de Benoist, the ENR leader, has neatly outlined these twin notions of anti-egalitarianism and the "right to difference" in his fundamental 1977 work entitled *Vu de droite*. In this text, de Benoist declares himself on the Right because he contends that it is founded on the idea that the *diversity* of the world and the relative inequalities it produces is something "good" and the progressive homogenization of the world produced by the two thousand year old discourse of Judeo-Christian egalitarianism is an "evil."[43] De Benoist adds that this does not mean that he approves of all inequalities. In reality, de Benoist claims that the Judeo-Christian heritage of the West and the ideas derived from the French Revolution underpin numerous unjust inequalities. For de Benoist, to rally around an anti-egalitarian conception of life is to realize that diversity is the pre-eminent rule of the world. It entails the future creation of a post-liberal, organic, and hierarchical society where both intellectuals and warriors will play key roles.

In another crucial passage from *Vu de droite*, de Benoist argues that the steady erosion of diversity and difference on the planet as a result of the emergence of a materialist, egalitarian "global civilization" is the principal menace of the contemporary age. It is worth quoting de Benoist's passage at length:

> What is the greatest threat today? It is the progressive disappearance of diversity from the world. The levelling-down of people, the reduction of all *cultures* to a *world civilization* made up of what is the most common. It can be seen already how from one side of the planet to the other the same types of construction are being put up and the same mental habits are being ingrained. Holiday Inn and Howard Johnson are the templates for the transformation of the world into a grey uniformity. I have travelled widely, on several continents. The *joy* which is experienced during a journey derives from seeing differentiated ways of living which are still well rooted, in seeing different people live according to their own rhythm, with a different skin colour, another culture, another mentality—from recognizing they are proud of their *difference*. I believe that this diversity is the wealth of the world, and that egalitarianism is killing it. For this it is important not just to respect others but to keep alive everywhere the most legitimate desire there can be: the desire to affirm a personality which is unlike any other, to defend a heritage, to govern oneself in accordance with what one is. And this implies a head-on clash both with a pseudo-antiracism which denies differences and with a dangerous racism which is nothing less than the rejection of the Other, the rejection of diversity.[44]

It is interesting how de Benoist and other GRECE members who once could die for the colonialist and assimilationist idea of *Algérie française* now embraced the mantra of diversity and attacked both racist and anti-racist ideologies. While de Benoist has expressed solidarity with the immigrant detached from his unique cultural roots in what he calls a "heartless" capitalist system,[45] the difference in the 1980s was that the former immigrants from the French colonies were now on "our" soil in larger numbers and increasingly perceived as a cultural, economic, and political threat to the French Catholic majority. In the 1980s, the ideas of GRECE would be used by the *Front National* to argue for a "differential racism": the repatriation of even French citizens from Algeria and others of North African descent in order to "mutually benefit" the "right to difference" of the "foreigners" and host culture of the "French French." In contrast to the *Front National*, however, de Benoist claimed to support the "right to difference" of all individuals and communities, immigrant and non-immigrant alike, throughout France. Besides, argued de Benoist, the French would have the same problems without immigrants because they no longer had their own unique identity and internal strength to fight against the steamroller of cultural globalization and Americanization.[46] De Benoist has even gone so far as to embrace a defence of Jewish, Muslim, and Vietnamese particularism within France as a result of the strong family roots and sense of cohesion within these cultures, which allows them to resist cultural homogenization.[47]

In a 1997 interview, twenty years after the publication of *Vu de droite*, de Benoist pointed out the two major problems confronting the West. Once again the loss of planetary diversity was cited as one of the central problems of our age as well as the dissolution of social bonds.[48] Both problems were seen as consequences of the extension of a frenetic, global market-based society where individuals are increasingly isolated, vulnerable, and homogenized by capitalist materialism and mass media technologies. De Benoist goes on to call for a revival of "bottom up" social bonds in order to repair the damage of the "capitalist mentality" which corrodes these social

bonds, organic solidarity, and different cultural identities. The "mercantile mentality" based on egoistic individualism, a contractual theory of the state, and the reduction of society to the marketplace model is harshly attacked by de Benoist for its negation of diversity in the world and its lack of both societal destiny and spiritual purpose: "It has separated people and cultures from their roots, destroyed the environment, made life appear purposeless, reduced humanity to an anonymous mass, brought about an obsession with money making and profit, so leading to the world without points of reference in which we live today."[49]

For de Benoist, then, one of the main threats to the world is the dissolution of diversity in the world: "The future of the world is staked on the preservation of *diversity* in the world. In other words, the cause of peoples, of all peoples against the American *homo oeconomicus*."[50] The same themes about the loss of "diversity" and "difference" in the world haunt other ENR theorists. Pierre Krebs, the most prolific German *Neue Rechte* ideologue, has also made this same refrain: "The tragedy of the contemporary world is the tragedy of disloyalty: the uprooting of every culture, estrangement from our true natures, the atomization of man, the *levelling* of values, the *uniformity* of life."[51] Guillaume Faye, a member of GRECE, echoed the same theme in *Éléments*: "This is the hideous face of a civilization, which, with an implacable logic, has forced itself onto every culture, gradually *levelling* them, bringing all peoples into the gamut of a one-world system."[52] For the ENR, this egalitarian *levelling* towards an American-led capitalist, mass, and world civilization could only mean a vulgar world dominated by McDonald's, Coca-Cola, and Disneyland; a world where the rooted diversity of Europe's various peoples is destroyed; quality of life has been abandoned for the frenzy of the materialistic "rat race"; individuals are turned into mere units of consumption to be sold to the highest bidder; and the society is atomized by purely inward-directed egos with no "higher," spiritual purpose or common destiny.

5. The ENR's Nightmare: A Universal, Egalitarian World Society Of Happy Consumers

In its haunted visions of a universal, egalitarian, and pacified globe fixated by entertainment and other petty materialistic pleasures, the ENR theorists were elaborating the ideas of earlier cultural critics of the twentieth century, including the Spaniard Ortega y Gasset, the German jurist Carl Schmitt, and the English fiction writer Aldous Huxley. In this type of emerging world society, the ENR contended that the ancient pagan societies of Europe would be forever lost. In the ENR's worldview, both socialist and liberal democratic societies share this materialist-driven tendency towards a bleak global uniformity. Alain de Benoist approvingly quotes the conservative revolutionary Ernst Jünger about the imminent arrival of the "universal state," or fusion between the liberal West and socialist East: "The difference between the red and the white star is only the fluttering which accompanies the rising of a star on the horizon. Let it rise into the sky, and let unity be unveiled."[53] In the eyes of the ENR intellectuals, the only difference between the communist and liberal capitalist systems was about how to distribute their material goods. They remained in essence linked by the same drive towards a global conformity of life-styles, and a materialist, anti-spiritual ethos. The ENR claimed to reject both the "hard" totalitarianism of former socialist societies in Eastern Europe and the "soft" totalitarianism of liberal democratic societies.[54] In a controversial passage, Alain de Benoist has elaborated on his greater fear of "soft totalitarianism" rather than "hard totalitarianism":

> It is true that there are two forms of totalitarianism, different in causes and consequences, but both being dangerous. Totalitarianism in the East imprisons, persecutes and kills the body, but it leaves hope. Totalitarianism in the West creates happy robots. Such totalitarianism "air-conditions" hell and kills the soul.[55]

José Ortega y Gasset, a renowned Spanish conservative cultural critic and author of *The Revolt of the Masses* (1931), has expressed a similar aristocratic disdain for the mass "tyranny" of liberal democratic societies where materialism allegedly reigns and spiritual visions and duties are absent both individually and socially. De Benoist has even cited Gasset in *Telos* regarding a passage where the latter speaks of

the same "mental idiocy" and "moral paralysis" which plague both the Right and Left political camps.[56] Gasset has himself littered *The Revolt of the Masses* with references to Oswald Spengler, an elitist German conservative revolutionary author to which de Benoist is deeply indebted. [57] A celebrated passage from Gasset's *The Revolt of the Masses* could have easily been written by Alain de Benoist himself:

> The characteristic of the hour is that the commonplace mind, knowing itself to be commonplace, has the assurance to proclaim the rights of the commonplace and to impose them wherever it will. As they say in the United States: "to be different is to be indecent." The mass crushes beneath it everything that is different, everything that is excellent, individual, qualified and select. Anybody who is not like everybody, who does not think like everybody, runs the risk of being eliminated.[58]

For José Ortega y Gasset, like de Benoist, anti-egalitarianism and "difference" are almost inherently natural, God-given facts of individual, social, and political reality. For de Benoist, if a given society is to prevent the lapse into decadent, static, and egalitarian barbarism, "difference" must become a sort of embedded absolute of social existence. It is what Gasset calls the "directing minorities," or the "gifted" and "noble" elites of GRECE and other think tanks, which should rule European societies. In this valorization of the aristocratic, spiritual conception of life, the disdain of the masses, of non-conformist anti-liberalism, and of the necessity of sovereign elites blocking the "corporate rule" of the modern capitalist world, the French philosopher Raymond Aron argued that de Benoist's thinking resembled that of the "national socialists" or fascists.[59] De Benoist responded that he was "against all genocides"[60] and that all societies, of whatever political constitution, required authoritative, well-trained, and sophisticated elites driven by a life purpose, constant self-striving, and both a communitarian and spiritual vision of life.

Under the influence of Carl Schmitt's "decisionism" from his classical text *The Concept of the Political* (1928), de Benoist feared what Aldous Huxley described in his prophetic novel *Brave New World* (1932)[61]: A sort of soft totalitarianism; a world in which "neutral" liberal societies ruled through moralism and the cult of money; a totally administered society where people are unfree and yet regard themselves as free;

and a society without the essence of politics, the friend and foe. Carl Schmitt's fears of the liberal model of a de-politicized, universal globe in *The Concept of the Political* neatly dovetails with the ideas of Alain de Benoist. These are Schmitt's words from *The Concept of the Political*:

> A world in which the possibility of war is utterly eliminated, a completely pacified globe, would be a world without the distinction of friend and enemy and hence a world without politics. It is conceivable that such a world might contain very interesting antitheses and contrasts, competitions and intrigues of every kind, but there would not be a meaningful antitheses whereby men would be required to sacrifice life, authorized to shed blood, and kill other human beings.[62]

De Benoist has actually referred to Carl Schmitt's notion of the political in several interviews and devotes several pages to the German jurist in *Vu de droite*.[63] In a Schmittian tone, he has frequently attacked the hypocrisy of liberal democratic societies, whether what he viewed as its economically-motivated 1991 Gulf War masquerading as a war for "humanity," or what he called the "WASP hegemony" of the Americans "filled with morals and economics, while lacking consideration for minorities and the poor."[64] De Benoist could have enlisted this Carl Schmitt quote to condemn the 1991 Gulf War:

> To demand seriously of human beings that they kill others and be prepared to die themselves so that industry and trade flourish for the survivors or that purchasing power of grandchildren may grow is sinister and crazy. It is a manifest fraud to condemn war as homicide and then demand of men that they wage war, kill and be killed, so that there will never again be war.[65]

Praising Proudhon's famous dictum that "whoever invokes humanity wants to cheat," Schmitt argued that this deceptive tactic is used by liberal democratic societies with disastrous consequences: "To confiscate the word humanity, to invoke and monopolize such a term has certain incalculable effects, such as denying the enemy the quality of being human and declaring him to be an outlaw of humanity; and a war can thereby be driven to the most extreme inhumanity."[66] For Schmitt a liberal, pacifist-motivated "war to end all wars," to borrow the phrase of former American President Woodrow Wilson, would be particularly intense, cruel, and inhumane because the enemy is seen in explicitly moral terms as an evil monster that must be defeated and also destroyed. While liberals condemn war and trumpet the horn of

"humanity," Schmitt argues that they would then be forced to conduct punitive expeditions, pacification measures, and acts of war in order to defend the so-called "global peace." Schmitt was especially harsh on the tendency of liberal societies to use economics, entertainment, and morality to escape the essential, political friend-enemy distinction and ultimately the seriousness, drama, and tragedy of life itself.

De Benoist was indebted to Schmitt's anti-liberal, anti-egalitarian, and tragic conception of politics as a model for restoring a "rightful plurality" of different visions, societies, and power blocs in what he saw as a materialist, uniform world devoid of intellectual, cultural, and political diversity. Arguing as late as 1994 that the merits of the works of Carl Schmitt and Julius Evola transcended their respective flirtations with the Nazi and fascist régimes,[67] de Benoist used the German thinker, who appeals to both Right and Left, in order to highlight the contradictions of liberal democratic societies and dislodge both liberal and Left intellectual elites from their position of comfortable cultural dominance. Although de Benoist's "combat" of Gramscian counter-hegemony is a sort of "war of position" which does not entail the Schmittian commitment to physical violence, the ENR leader could still use the German thinker because they shared the same critique of liberalism and global capitalism.

Schmitt was simply one of the many thinkers used by de Benoist in order to wage the "cultural war" against the liberal-Left intelligentsia and prepare the intellectual and organizational groundwork for a post-liberal "organic" social order. In the long run, de Benoist longed to restore a pan-European "spiritual empire" of the regions where hierarchy, diversity, courage, and honour prevailed. This would be an "empire" which returned to its "common" Indo-European and pagan ancestry. In de Benoist's view, it would be an "empire" where the "tyranny of money" would be abated by the sovereignty and fidelity of political and military elites committed to a non-material principle of existence. For de Benoist, it would be a noble, aristocratic "empire" where culture, ideas, values, matters of the soul, strength of character, and

quality of life would count for more than the frenzy of corporate profits, the latest GNP figures, and the materialist "pleasure principle." While blatant manifestations of racialism and anti-Semitism were clearly absent from de Benoist's texts, his anti-materialist idealism and spiritualism were seen as mere window-dressing for ideas which, some argued, resembled those of the fascist and Nazi ideologues of the past.

In conclusion, we have attempted to show how the ENR worldview was always driven by two primary principles from 1968 until 1999: the commitment to an oblique, long-term cultural strategy of metapolitics and the valorization of the "right to difference." In the mid-1960s, this cultural "right to difference" was originally expressed by future GRECE members in racial terms, the defence of the West, and the colonialist sense of superiority about "eternal" racial differences between "us" and "them." GRECE attempted to overhaul this outdated racialist mode of thinking from the late 1960s, which was linked to the discredited memories of imperialism, fascism, and Nazism. In the 1970s, GRECE dropped its explicitly racial orientation and adopted a sort of biological and scientific perspective in order to keep alive the ideas of a "natural" anti-egalitarianism and of "differences" within and between cultures. It called for a "scientific order" where hierarchy was an "absolute" and there was a "predetermined" selection of elites. This sociobiological perspective which preached the value of anti-egalitarianism and the importance of "selected elites" was keen to enlist the works of famous European scientists, such as Alexis Carrel, Konrad Lorenz, and Hans Eysenck. It was accused of a "scientific racism" or an "intelligent racism" which sought to restore the Golden Age of Indo-European purity before the arrival of the "foreign" ideology of Judeo-Christian monotheism and egalitarianism. De Benoist claimed that the Judeo-Christian tradition had "transformed our house, causing us to lose in the darkness of passing time the very consciousness of who we are."[68] De Benoist replied that he merely used the arguments of science, although he remained firmly against all types of purely reductionist intellectual formulas.

By the early 1980s, the biological perspective of GRECE and the ENR had given way to a cultural discourse valorizing the "right to difference" of all cultures in a xenophile spirit. All cultures had the duty to search for their roots, to answer the questions of "Who Am I?"[69] and "Where Do I Come From?," and the right to protect and nourish their unique cultural differences. Claiming to be the heir of a late 19th century anti-colonialist tradition on the Right which preceded the Left anti-colonialism of the New Left in the 1960s,[70] de Benoist steered the ENR against both the assimilationist, colonialist racism of the past and what he saw as a fictitious anti-racist, liberal universalism which negated the "right to difference" of all cultural groups. Whereas in the past the Right was often associated with militarism, imperialism, and expansionism, here was a Right under the ENR label which was neither for colonialism, nor for the nation because they were seen as destructive of the "right to difference" of all cultures to live according to their own natural rhythms and traditions. This was a long way from GRECE's roots in the racialism and ultra-nationalist cause of *Algérie française* in the mid-1960s, but many critics were not convinced by the impressive theoretical changes. These critics often cited the new discourse of the rabidly anti-immigrant, anti-Arab, anti-Muslim, and anti-Jewish *Front National* in the mid-1980s, which closely resembled the ENR's hyper-valorization of the "anti-racist" concept of the "right to difference." In moving from discourses of race to biology to culture, the ENR had learned to keep alive its faithful flame to anti-egalitarianism and "difference." Thus, with the advent of the "hot summer" in 1979, it could also argue against the other forces on the Right, whether extra-parliamentary or parliamentary, that its fidelity to long-term cultural "combat" was also the right choice. While ENR themes changed as in the vital anti-Judeo-Christian turn in the mid-1970s or the shift away from a primary anti-communism to a primary anti-capitalism and anti-liberalism in the early 1980s, it was always within the framework of a constant cultural metapolitics and the anti-egalitarian ideal.

Notes

[1] Pierre-André Taguieff, "The New Right's View of European Identity," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994), pp. 99-125.

[2] See, for example, Robert de Herte, "Et voici la 'Nouvelle Droite'!," *Éléments* (August 1979), pp. 348-350.

[3] See, for example, Alain de Benoist, *Vu de droite* (Paris: Copernic, 1979), p. 26.

[4] See Alain de Benoist, *Le courage est leur patrie* (Paris: Action, 1965); *Les Indo-Européens* (Paris: G.E.D., 1966); and *Rhodésie, terre des lions fidèles* (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1967).

[5] See, for example, Alain de Benoist, *L'empire intérieur* (Paris: Labyrinthe, 1996).

[6] See, for example, Alain de Benoist, *Les idées à l'endroit* (Paris: Libres-Hallier, 1979), pp. 145-194.

[7] See, for example, Alain de Benoist, "Pour une déclaration du droit des peuples," in Alain de Benoist et al., *La cause des peuples* (Paris: Labyrinthe, 1982) and Sigrid Hunke, *La vraie religion de l'Europe* (Paris: Labyrinthe, 1985).

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 167-184.

[9] Alain de Benoist, *Comment peut-on être païen?* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1981); Alain de Benoist and Thomas Molnar, *L'éclipse du sacré* (Paris: La Table Ronde 1986); and Alain de Benoist, *L'empire intérieur* (Paris: 1996).

[10] See, for example, the March 1979 issue of *Éléments* published collectively by GRECE and titled "Économie organique et société marchande," pp. 56-69.

[11] Alain de Benoist, *Les idées à l'endroit*, pp. 263-282.

[12] See, for example, Paul Gottfried, "Alain de Benoist's Anti-Americanism," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994), pp. 127-134.

[13] Pierre-André Taguieff, "An Interview with Pierre-André Taguieff," *Telos* (Winter 1993-Fall 1994), p. 159.

[14] Alain de Benoist, "Three Interviews with Alain de Benoist," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994), p. 191.

[15] Alain de Benoist, *Les idées à l'endroit*, pp. 31-48.

[16] Alain de Benoist, "An Interview with Alain de Benoist," *Right Now!* (1997), p. 2.

[17] See, for example, Roger Griffin's argument that the ENR is an "ideal-type" of fascism because of its combination of "palingenetic" ultra-nationalism and search for a revolutionary post-liberal social order. Roger Griffin, (ed.), *Fascism*, pp. 8-9.

[18] See, for example, the interview with Louis Pauwels in *L'Aurore* (6 July 1979).

[19] Louis Pauwels, *France Soir* (29 March 1979).

[20] Michael Walker, "Spotlight on the French New Right," *The Scorpion* (Autumn 1986), p. 8.

[21] Marco Tarchi, "The Italian 'Nuova Destra': An Interview with Marco Tarchi," *Perspectives* 3 (Winter 1991-1992), p. 23.

[22] René Rémond, *Les droites en France* (Paris: Aubier, 1982).

[23] Quoted in Julien Brunn, *La nouvelle droite: le dossier du 'procès'* (Paris: Nouvelles éditions Oswald, 1979), p. 188.

[24] *Ibid.*

[25] Alain de Benoist, "An Interview with Alain de Benoist," *Right Now!* (1997), p. 1.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

[27] Alain de Benoist, "Three Interviews with Alain de Benoist," pp. 182-183.

[28] Pierre Vial, (ed.), *Dix ans de combat culturel pour une renaissance* (Paris: Copernic, 1979).

[29] Alain de Benoist, *Vu de droite*, pp. 456-460; and *Les idées à l'endroit*, pp. 250-259.

[30] Alain de Benoist, *Les idées à l'endroit*, pp. 258-259.

[31] Pierre Krebs, "The Metapolitical Rebirth of Europe," in Roger Griffin, (ed.), *Fascism* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 348-349.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 349.

[33] See, for example, the Internet site of Germany's *Thule-Seminar*: http://thulenet.com/index.htm.

[34] Martin Lee, *The Beast Reawakens* (Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1997), p. 451.

[35] Michael Walker, "Editorial," *The Scorpion* 19 (1998), p. 1.

[36] Michael Walker, "For a New Education," *The Scorpion* 19 (1998), pp. 2-6.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[38] Pierre-André Taguieff, *Sur la nouvelle droite* (Paris: Descartes and Cie, 1994).

[39] Alain de Benoist, "Editorial," *Éléments* (1978).

[40] Quoted in Harvey Simmons, *The French National Front: The Extremist Challenge to Democracy* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1996), p. 207.

[41] Tomislav Sunic, *Against Democracy and Equality: The European New Right*, pp. 13-14.

[42] Alain de Benoist, "Three Interviews with Alain de Benoist," p. 192.

[43] Alain de Benoist, *Vu de droite*, p. 16.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[45] See, for example, "Three Interviews with Alain de Benoist," pp. 185-186.

[46] *Ibid.*, pp. 173-174; pp. 185-186.

[47] *Ibid.*, pp. 188-189.

[48] Alain de Benoist, "An Interview with Alain de Benoist," *Right Now!*, p. 3.

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[50] Alain de Benoist, quoted in Pierre-André Taguieff, "An Interview with Pierre-André Taguieff," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994), p. 172.

[51] Pierre Krebs, "The Metapolitical Rebirth of Europe," p. 349.

[52] Guillaume Faye, *Éléments* 48 (Winter 1983-1984).

[53] Alain de Benoist, "Confronting Globalization," *Telos* 108 (Summer 1996), p. 131.

[54] See, for example, Michael Walker, "Against All Totalitarianisms," *The Scorpion* (Autumn 1986), pp. 8-14.

[55] Alain de Benoist, *Europe, Tiers monde, même combat* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1986), p. 219.

[56] Alain de Benoist, "The End of the Left-Right Dichotomy: The French Case," *Telos* 102 (Winter 1995), p. 89.

[57] José Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1932), p. 19.

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

[59] Raymond Aron, *Mémoires, 50 ans de réflexion politique* (Paris: Julliard, 1983), p. 701.

[60] Quoted in Julien Brunn, *La nouvelle droite: le dossier du 'procès'*, p. 324.

[61] Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (London: Granada, 1932). Also, see the non-fictional companion to *Brave New World* entitled *Brave New World Revisited* (London: Granada, 1958).

[62] Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (translated by George Schwab) (Rutgers, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1976), p. 35.

[63] See, for example, Alain de Benoist, "Three Interviews with Alain de Benoist," p.182 and *Vu de droite*, pp. 216-219.

[64] Alain de Benoist, "Three Interviews with Alain de Benoist," p. 201.

[65] Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, p. 48.

[66] *Ibid.*, p. 54.

[67] See, for example, "Three Interviews with Alain de Benoist," pp. 202-203.

[68] Alain de Benoist quoted in Julien Brunn, *La nouvelle droite: le dossier du 'procès'*, p. 14.

[69] This was actually the title of a 1981 work by the ENR's Indo-Europeanist specialist Jean Haudry. Pierre-André Taguieff has actually referred to the work as a "mini-tract of racist Nordicism." Alain de Benoist, on the other hand, claimed that he searched for common European foundations based on a dialogical rather than racialist notion of cultural difference. See Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire*, p. 168.

[70] Alain de Benoist, *Europe, Tiers monde, même combat*, pp. 21-51.

Chapter 4:
The Ambiguities and Tensions within the ENR's Worldview

In the last chapter on the ENR's influences and worldview, we argued that there are two fundamental factors which unite the ENR thinkers as a cultural school of thought: The primacy of cultural metapolitics and the overwhelming fixation on the "right to difference." Furthermore, we have also explained how the ENR's worldview was itself a unique and outwardly ambiguous synthesis between the ideals of the revolutionary Right and those of the Left and New Left. In addition, we have seen how the ENR prides itself on providing an intelligent analysis of the social world through the use of different academic disciplines as well as providing a coherent and total conception of the world. In this chapter, we seek to uncover the major ambiguities, tensions, and contradictions within the ENR's worldview. It is through an understanding of the ambiguities within the ENR worldview that we are better able to glimpse the heterogeneity of positions and ideas within this cultural school of thought; to gauge both continuity and change from its revolutionary right-wing ideological roots; and to avoid the rather simplistic interpretation which sees all ENR theorists as a new re-incarnation of "proto-fascism." In examining the ambiguities within the ENR worldview, we can explain both its ideological distance and proximity to the revolutionary Right milieu. In short, this examination will provide support for the contention that the ENR is an ambiguous cultural and political project which is tied between an older revolutionary Right heritage and extensive New Left influences. It is a cultural school of thought which is neither a new form of cultural fascism, nor a completely new political paradigm.

This chapter will attempt to highlight and elaborate the major ambiguities within the basic ENR worldview. These ambiguities and tensions within the ENR worldview are the following: (1) the tension between the primary focus on cultural

metapolitics and the traditional "politics of politicians"; (2) The tension between the ENR's violent anti-Judeo-Christian paganism and the Judeo-Christian heritage of the larger European population; (3) The tension between intellectual elitism and the desire for popular social change; (4) The ambiguous split between a revolutionary Right heritage and themes and an affinity for the ideals of the New Left; (5) The tension between its dual conservative and revolutionary views of human nature and social existence; (6) The tension related to a commitment to scientism and intellectualism, on the one hand, and a commitment to myths of origins, identity, and belonging, on the other hand; (7) The ambiguity connected to its simplistic anti-Americanism and simultaneous espousal of a North American-like federalism as a potential model for its future vision of a "Europe of a Hundred Flags"; (8) The tension between its pro-Third World, anti-Westernism and its tendency towards a veiled Euro-centrism; and (9) The ambiguity between its communitarian project and the right of individuals and communities to intellectual freedom and anti-conformism. I will, in turn, briefly analyze these major ENR ambiguities and tensions.

1. Between Cultural Metapolitics and Traditional Politics

The first ambiguity and tension within the ENR's worldview is between its primary focus on the cultural terrain of metapolitics and its more traditional forms of political intervention, especially its commentary on the politics of its day, its infiltration of right-wing political parties, and attempts to influence the higher echelons of decision-making power within the state, universities, and mass media. As pointed out before, the ENR was a unique political force in explicitly situating itself on the terrain of the cultural contestation of ideas. This divided the ENR thinkers from two post-World War II political forces originating from the revolutionary Right milieu: the ultra-nationalist or neo-fascist parliamentary parties and the violent, extra-parliamentary street forces of direct action and terrorism. However, this did not mean that there were no formal and informal channels of contact between these traditional political outfits and the culturally fixated world of the ENR thinkers. Some important ENR thinkers eventually went on to careers within the extreme-right or neo-fascist

political parties. In addition, the *nouvelle droite*'s ideas and themes, often in the form of cynically manipulated political formulas, began to penetrate into the programs of extreme right-wing or neo-fascist political parties such as the French FN, Italy's MSI, and later the AN. Furthermore, on several occasions, GRECE took official positions on the French Presidential contests of the 1970s. There were also intensive efforts in the 1970s to penetrate and influence the top decision-makers of France, whether through the administrative, political, military, or educational sectors. All these traditional methods of politics breached the ENR's strictly cultural orientation of publishing, editing, conducting conferences, and simply holding debates with its political friends and critics.

There was even some tension within the ENR itself about whether to remain a strict, long-term cultural force or to immediately attempt to infiltrate the political parties on the Right, whether the mainstream or far Right. The latter position called "entryism"[1] by Canadian political scientist Harvey Simmons can account for GRECE's flirtation with the RPR and UDF in the 1970s and the fact that several prominent GRECE intellectuals, including former secretary-general Pierre Vial, joined the extreme right-wing FN in the early 1980s. One must remember that a number of ENR thinkers in France and elsewhere throughout Europe were former right-wing revolutionaries who perhaps still had the thirst for action, or were growing impatient with a long-term cultural strategy to unseat the liberal democratic system. In any case, it must have been particularly difficult and traumatic for some right-wing revolutionaries who vehemently detested the existing liberal capitalist order to abandon their guns and re-orient the political struggle through other discreet, cultural means.

While there was a tension between the ENR's focus on cultural metapolitics and more traditional political forms of contestation, it can generally be argued that the ENR's main theorists remained faithful to their cultural vocation begun by GRECE in 1968. For a period of thirty years, including two "hot summers" of widespread mass

media press attention in France in 1979 and 1993, ENR thinkers continued to primarily focus on its cultural activities: publishing its journals, writing books and articles, hosting academic conferences, and entering into dialogue with other "non-conformist," anti-capitalist forces such as the New Left, Greens, and the French anti-utilitarian school led by Serge Latouche. ENR thinkers such as Alain de Benoist steadfastly believed that only a change in the dominant cultural apparatus and spirit of the age, especially the opinions of key cultural elites, could pave the definitive road towards a new, durable, and long-lasting post-liberal order. For de Benoist, the climate of the post-World War II era meant that it was intellectually and politically suicidal for a right-wing force to attempt to seize political power without first controlling the dominant cultural apparatus of the period and gaining general support. De Benoist recognized that the metapolitical struggle to displace liberalism, socialism, and the Judeo-Christian heritage would be a difficult one, but remained true to his metapolitical vocation from 1968, which many of his comrades long ago abandoned for the more immediate taste of direct political power. While these defections might have weakened the ENR's credibility about their commitment to the cultural terrain, they tended to enhance the profile and credibility of its leader.

2. Between the ENR's Anti-Christian Paganism and the Judeo-Christian Tradition

The second ambiguity in the ENR's worldview is that although it holds an anti-Judeo-Christian worldview based on the valorization of Europe's ancient pagan roots, this is a not a worldview held by the vast majority of Europeans. The ENR's violent invectives against the Judeo-Christian roots of Europe have alienated numerous monotheistic believers, liberals, and socialists. For the ENR, the latter two political categories are equivalent with a monotheistic, egalitarian, and universalist Judeo-Christian worldview that is seen as the precursor to a full-scale, dogmatic, and mass totalitarianism. While historically the zeal of a universalizing, proselytizing Christianity had led to the loss of numerous non-Western cultures and massive slaughter of numerous non-believers, pagans, and heretics throughout the world, it is

also true that paganism also had its fair share of repression in ancient times. Tomislav Sunic challenges the ENR's pro-pagan views by pointing to the more sinister side of both ancient and modern manifestations of paganism:

> Incidentally, the New Right still has to demonstrate how will it counter criticism that departure from Christianity, and possibly a return to paganism, may also have unpalatable political consequences, as shown by recent European history. After all, if one accepts the thesis that monotheistic religions have traditionally been repressive throughout history, one must admit that paganism has also had its share of repression. One need only read some classics in order to become convinced of the magnitude of pagan violence in antiquity. Thus far, the New Right has not examined in more detail the scope of religious and political intolerance in ancient Greece, murderous wars and persecutions in the Roman Empire, as well as the social and political implications of "paganism" in Nazi Germany.[2]

There are other problems with the ENR's "new paganism." In the first place, in the period before the fall of the Soviet Union and the decline of communism, the Christian heritage of the West was seen by the mass of believers and even prominent public figures as a bulwark against atheist, communist "subversion." In this atmosphere, the ENR's "new paganism" was unlikely to receive a warm public reception. Second, for many intellectuals and public figures, whether believers, atheists, or agnostics, the Judeo-Christian tradition must be preserved because it is seen as one of the sole remaining ideologies capable of erecting a communitarian social order as a rallying point against what many cultural critics view as the rampant egoism and anomie of liberal capitalist societies. For these cultural critics, Christianity can still act as a counter-force and spiritual ethic against the prevailing materialistic thrust of liberal democracies. They point to more non-dogmatic, mystical, millenarian, or esoteric strains of Christianity, which could still re-spiritualize a de-spiritualized world viewed by the ENR intellectuals as dominated by materialism, technology, and the capitalist "law of the jungle."

Finally, it is unlikely that the ENR's "new paganism" will have mass support in a European continent thoroughly conditioned by what Ernst Bloch called the "principle of hope." This "principle of hope" is shared by both Christian and Marxist eschatological visions and worldviews. The "principle of hope," or more precisely, mass hope, stands in stark contrast to the more pagan, tragic, Promethean, and

Nietzschean worldview of the ENR thinkers. The ENR thinkers' esoteric intellectualism, elitism, self-striving, and self-surpassing have been largely rejected by a Europe still firmly anchored to the Judeo-Christian tradition, its basic values, and its principles of mass hope. The ENR's all-out "war" against the Judeo-Christian tradition will continue to arouse suspicion among both masses and elites. Yet, the thirst in liberal societies for a renewed spiritualism, as evidenced by the contemporary proliferation of New Age philosophies, might still make the ENR ideological synthesis appealing.

3. Between Intellectual Elitism and Popular Social Change

The third ambiguity and tension within the ENR worldview is between its marked intellectual elitism and commitment to revolutionary social change. The ENR has directed its journals, books, and conferences to an elite, university-educated audience. The ENR views these intellectual elites as the prime movers of history and the greatest hope for a massive, revolutionary wave of social change. The problem with this Gramscian-like strategy of cultural and intellectual hegemony is that it assumes that the masses will eventually be seduced by the new ideas and myths of the intellectual elites. It perhaps underestimates the strength of mass popular support for the prevailing liberal democratic system. Furthermore, what is to prevent the ENR intellectuals from one day becoming the "New Class" of political exploiters they have so vehemently denounced in their works? Does not the Gramscian project of the ENR mask a more subtle bid to gain power?

It is probably with such critiques in mind, related to the ENR's esoteric elitism and standard anti-egalitarian views, that in the mid-1980s thinkers such as Alain de Benoist began to talk about "organic democracy," "bottom-up" social change, and the re-constitution of direct, regional or local social bonds of solidarity. In this valorization of "organic democracy," de Benoist was clearly appropriating the major ideological influences and themes of the New Left generation and the May 1968 student revolutionaries. The New Left's concerns with "grass-roots" democracy

against what they saw as a bureaucratic and impersonal representative democracy, the preservation of regional cultures, and the protection of an environment they considered torn asunder by capitalism for profits were all injected into de Benoist's re-formulated worldview of the 1980s and 1990s. De Benoist was also now deeply indebted to the anti-Western, "anti-progress" ideals of the French anti-utilitarians. Alain de Benoist had similar critiques of global capitalism, and liberal and socialist notions of "progress" as deeply embedded within a materialist, pro-development ethic which estranged Europeans from Nature, their cultural roots, and organic bonds of social solidarity. It is no accident, then, that the New Left, Greens, anti-utilitarians, and ENR showed up within the same conferences, debates, and journals, whether it was the American-based *Telos* or the joint Latouche-de Benoist debates on the environment in the early 1990s. In addition, Alain de Benoist even praised the works of French anti-utilitarian thinkers such as Serge Latouche and their organization *Mouvement antiutilitariste dans les Sciences Sociales* (MAUSS). Franco Sacchi corroborates the close relationship between ENR and MAUSS thinkers: "The Italian New Right and French New Right have paid considerable attention to their ideas (MAUSS) and have opened a constructive debate with them."[3]

This type of co-operation with former Left-oriented and Green-inclined scholars, deeply connected to an egalitarian ethos, probably gave the ENR thinkers a less elitist aura and a more credible position in their calls for revolutionary social change. This likely lessened the ENR's tension between its aloof, intellectual elitism and its disdain for mass populism, viewed as the antithesis of the cultivated, aristocratic life able to simultaneously join the contemplative and active, political lives. If we are to accept the ENR's turn towards "organic democracy," then presumably it is the masses of ordinary Europeans who would lead the way towards revolutionary social change within different regional and cultural contexts. Intellectuals would supposedly have a secondary role within these newly formed societies. In any case, it is somewhat unclear that the ENR thinkers have completely resolved their tension between an aristocratic elitism, or a disdain for the masses, and their metapolitical commitment to

popular, revolutionary social change. Metapolitics appeals to the ENR intellectuals as a strategy precisely because it is elitist, anti-egalitarian, and aristocratic in nature.

4. Between the "Conservative Revolution" and the New Left

The fourth ambiguity within the ENR's worldview is that it oscillates between an older conservative revolutionary heritage derived from both German and French inter-war era sources, on the one hand, and a kind of New Left identity born in the wake of the ENR's foundation and the radical events of May 1968, on the other hand. Both the ENR's conservative revolutionary heritage and New Left identification claim to take their ideological distance from historical fascism, on the one side, and Old Left Marxism, on the other side. For a cultural movement which originated on the Right, it was important for the ENR to avoid any direct links and references to the discredited worldviews of historical fascism and Nazism. Thus, the use of the conservative revolutionary thinkers was one way of avoiding any clearly conspicuous connections to fascism and Nazism, and by extension, return the Right to cultural and political respectability.

The identification with the cultural themes and ideas of the New Left was also conditioned by a tactical consideration. In the late 1960s, the Old Left began to lose its credibility among Western Marxists as there were growing revelations of the Stalinist horrors of the past in the Soviet Union, the bitter realities of "real existing socialism," and the growing phenomenon of "New Class" exploitation by the privileged, unaccountable communist leadership. By the 1970s, the general failure of the working class and Left to seize revolutionary power within Western Europe contributed to a more benign form of parliamentary Euro-communism and to the general de-legitimation of Marxism as an analytical and practical tool of politics. It was, then, in the ENR's tactical interest to identify with a fresher 1968 New Left youth generation which was preoccupied with new generational themes and concerns than with an Old Left already hounded by a dogmatic image and tarnished by its associations with the crimes of Stalinism and the Soviet Union.

The ENR thinkers have claimed to synthesize the ideas of their older conservative revolutionary heritage and more modern, New Left identity. Beginning in the 1980s, however, they tended to emphasize the New Left identity. This led a number of reputable scholars, including Pierre-André Taguieff, to wonder whether the ENR thinkers had vacated extreme right-wing political space or completely abandoned the ultra-nationalist, revolutionary Right milieu. For other scholars, the ENR intellectuals are more connected to their older, original conservative revolutionary heritage, with all its "proto-fascist" baggage, than to the New Left. The reason for the ENR's marked emphasis on its New Left identity in the 1990s was an attempt to create a large coalition of anti-liberal, anti-capitalist forces in both Europe and abroad, which would challenge both the United States and global capitalism. As communism faded with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the ENR understood that they could fill the ideological vacuum by appealing to revolutionary forces on both the Right and Left. The advantage of its New Left identity was that it was less politically discredited than the revolutionary Right milieu.

In any case, the ENR's more recent flirtations with the New Left combined with its conservative revolutionary affinities now means that it is under severe attack on several fronts: a hostile traditionalist, religious and ultra-nationalist Right, the Old Left or other left-wing tendencies raising the haunting spectre of fascism, and a liberal cultural and political elite keen on preserving its power base and the existing ideological status quo. The task of the ENR intellectuals has been to play an uneasy balancing act between what appears to be two contradictory political influences, namely, the conservative revolution and New Left. As a rather heterogeneous school of thought, the ENR thinkers and sympathisers ran the gamut of individual affinities from the extreme pole of the conservative revolutionary milieu to a more predominant New Left affinity. Hence, one advantage of a cultural school of thought, unlike a political party in power, is that it can be a sort of scavenger of political and cultural

influences without fully confronting its internal ideological tensions, or facing the ultimate choice between two perhaps irreconcilable identities.

5. Between a Conservative and Revolutionary View of the World

The fifth tension or ambiguity within the ENR worldview is between a conservative and revolutionary view of the world. Originating from a right-wing tradition, the ENR thinkers generally subscribe to a hierarchical, organic, and conservative view of human social existence which, they claim, is often deeply stamped by one's cultural origins. On the other hand, the ENR's Nietzschean and conservative revolutionary influences have meant its embrace of a sort of revolutionary nominalism which attempts to raze a given individual and society totally in order to transform both man and the world. For the ENR thinkers, what makes man such a revolutionary creature is that he is completely malleable, and always in the process of a revolutionary new creation. The revolutionary possibilities of man clash with the imprint of cultural and historical conditioning, whether as a member of a given culture, language, region, nation, or historical epoch. The ENR's valorization of European "ethnopluralism," or of the right of each European culture to maintain its cultural distinctiveness, could actually hamper the emergence of a revolutionary future where man is forged, in Nietzschean-like fashion, out of chaos and nothingness.

The ENR's tension between its conservative and revolutionary worldviews has several other dimensions. The ENR straddles a conservative view of man governed by man's dark history and the will to power of the strongest elites, and a revolutionary, left-wing drive associated with the progressive possibilities of moulding a "New Man"; between a revolutionary commitment to science and reason and a more conservative, anti-rationalist ethos connected to mystery, identity, or myth; between conservative resignation and disdain for the mass, materialist "decadence" of late capitalist modernity and the heroic, revolutionary visions of ancient classical thought; between a conservative harkening back to a pre-Christian, pagan era and the revolutionary longings for what it considers a splendid, post-liberal new tomorrow.

Some scholars have pointed out that this tension between conservative and revolutionary outlooks similarly nurtured the views of inter-war era German conservative revolutionary thinkers such as Ernst Jünger and Moeller van den Bruck, or even the classical theoreticians of historical fascism like Giovanni Gentile.[4] The ENR's historical origins in the revolutionary Right milieu and appropriation of conservative revolutionary thinkers has left their major intellectual figures with a heavy historical burden which they have not fully shaken. The ENR thinkers have stressed the conservative revolutionary thinkers in order to emphasize their leftist, socialist, and revolutionary roots against what they claim was the fascist or Nazi regimes' "perverted" mass populism and conservative courting of Church and industrial-business elites. The schism between conservative and revolutionary worldviews is somewhat corroborated by historical and political realities.

6. Between Scientism/Intellectualism and Myth-Making

The sixth tension within the ENR's worldview is between a profound use and acceptance of the latest scientific breakthroughs and the intellectual tools of analytical reasoning and the scientific method, on the one hand, and a more anti-rational, mythical quest for cultural roots, on the other hand. In short, while the ENR thinkers are modern in their beliefs in science and reason, they are critical of the excessive use of both which they claim is a common fault of both liberal democratic and socialist societies. For the ENR, like the New Left, there is a profound critique of the limits and excesses of science, reason, universalism, and the general ideals of the Enlightenment. The ENR thinkers argue that the Western countries have been blinded by their materialistic affinity to science and reason as the new gods of the contemporary age. The quest for a mythical, pre-Christian, pagan European sense of identity and belonging is intended to counter this faith in science and reason, and give each culture the opportunity to be "different" and flourish rather than accept what they consider is the world-wide imposition of an "abstract" and "pseudo-universalist" liberal or socialist ideology.

The ENR's quest for an "original" European identity, or a search for common European origins, has led to two contradictory interpretations. On the one hand, the primordial affinity for Europe's ancient, pagan past is seen as a reformulated form of cultural racism with close parallels to the "paganism" of the inter-war era's Latin fascists or Germany's National Socialists. Furthermore, the ENR thinkers have tended to attack both racist and anti-racist ideologies as assimilationist cousins bent on destroying the cultural diversity of the planet. The ENR's critics contend that its attack on the universalist ideology of anti-racism and criticisms of multiracial, multicultural societies are a disguised form of racism. On the other hand, there is little evidence of conspicuous racism and anti-Semitism within official ENR sources and even a denunciation of both these Old Right tendencies, thus leading some critics to claim that it is a genuine cultural movement holding a truly dialogical, relational view of identity and defensively rallying against the liberal, capitalist West's planetary homogenization of lifestyles, mentalities, and cultures.

Beginning in the late 1970s, the ENR moved beyond its explicitly biological, scientistic orientation towards a more cultural tone. The ENR's faith in reason, science, and "progress" waned, as like the New Left, it increasingly claimed that they were largely used in the service of giant multinational corporations and at the expense of human communities with their growing army of global poor, catastrophic waves of environmental destruction, and the loss of global cultural diversity. The ENR still uses the findings of science in order to legitimize and advance its anti-egalitarian and "differentialist" view of the world, but it is thoroughly open to post-modern, irrational, and existentialist currents of thought, which question the merits of "progress."

The ENR theorists, then, use the findings of science and the traditional tools of reason in order to give their cultural school of thought a sense of intellectual prestige and enhance their base of support within elite, intellectual circles. One could claim that reason and science could be used by ENR theorists in order to combat any notions

of common, pre-Christian, Indo-European roots. Yet, the search for an "authentic" identity and cultural roots are at the centre or heart of the ENR's worldview, thus militating against this particular option. Thus, the ENR has invented a mythical pagan past in order to recreate an organic, social glue allegedly uniting all "Indo-Europeans." With many agnostics and Nietzscheans in their ranks, the ENR thinkers rationally utilize a powerful myth of origins and identity in order to remain faithful to the ethic of "difference" and simultaneously appeal to what they view as a discontented, alienated, and egoistic European population torn apart from its cultural and spiritual roots. The problem is that this form of "paganism" has never achieved unanimous public support. Rather, it has created tension with liberals, the Left, Catholic ultra-nationalists, and traditional monotheistic believers throughout Europe, whether Catholics, Protestants, Jews, or Muslims.

7. Between a Simplistic Anti-Americanism and a Recycling of American Federalism[5]

The seventh tension within the ENR's worldview is between a traditional, simplistic anti-Americanism and a recycling of "organic democracy" and a defence of regional identities in the mid-1980s, which somewhat resembled the thrust of 18th century American theories of federalism, their defence of state and local identities, and impulse towards local self-government and democratic political control. In ENR journals, the United States, the Anglo-American world generally, and the Anglo-American New Right are singled out for the most violent polemical attacks. All these aforementioned forces are viewed as synonymous with the "egoistic" liberal ethos, the hyper-defence of the capitalist law of the "jungle," and a form of materialist "decadence" which seeks to convert the entire planet towards a uniform, egalitarian world vision dictated by Walt Disney, Coca-Cola, and McDonald's; a world where, ENR theorists argue, cultural diversity, human solidarity, and spirituality are obliterated in the march towards Americanization and the final victory of the *homo oeconomicus*. Paul Gottfried has argued that the ENR's anti-Americanism is rather simplistic because both Frenchmen and Americans belong to the same civilization and

the ENR's federalist turn in the mid-1980s has especially close resemblances to 18th century American federalism which was ironically less universalist, less culturally assimilationist, and less centralist in its thrust than the French republican, Jacobin model.[6]

However, the ENR's view of the USA and the Anglo-American world as an old, dying "prostitute" which simply obeys the "law of cash," a charge Alain de Benoist labelled at the West generally and the USA in particular during the 1990 Gulf War,[7] was more typical of the ENR's diatribes against the USA. The USA is often viewed within ENR publications as a land of Puritan religious moralists, putrefied materialists, cultural dinosaurs, racists, and subverters of all foreign national, cultural, or regional traditions. For the ENR thinkers, the USA's "intolerant" Protestant path stands in contrast to its neo-paganism which seeks to re-establish harmony with nature; accepts multiple gods and cosmic orders; and nurtures communal, organic, Indo-European solidarity against the "decadent" liberal paths of individualism, egalitarianism, technological materialism, and the subjugation of nature.

This singular and "demonic" view of the United States does not correspond to neither the American reality which is more regionally and culturally complex than the ENR viewpoint, nor to the tremendous violence and intolerance of pagan antiquity. Moreover, the Americans and Europeans are members of a common civilization, regardless of whether they view each other as friends or foes, and thus it is European civilization which should also be equally indicted by the ENR for its history of imperialism, nationalist excesses, destruction of non-Western cultures, and common liberal, capitalist materialist "obsessions." ENR thinkers do make such criticisms of European societies, but the anti-American ticket is especially pronounced and often an acceptable and resonant reflex public reaction in both Europe and the former Third World for both the Right and Left as well as more traditionalist forces.

8. Between a pro-Third World Stance and a Pronounced Euro-Centrism

The ENR's eighth tension is between its pro-Third World solidarity stance inherited in the mid-1980s and a rather pronounced tendency to focus largely on Europe, its cultural identity, its debates, its thinkers, and its political and historical influences. While there is no reason to believe that the ENR's pro-Third World solidarity positions are not genuine, this stance is largely a geopolitical one dictated by the will of many Europeans to politically weaken the USA as a global political force. ENR debates are still largely European, with European authors, and essentially European themes and references. The ENR's pro-Third World authors, whether the uses of anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss or the economist Serge Latouche, are based on decidedly Western modes of analysis.

The ENR's post-materialist bent, especially its adherence to the cultural "right to difference" of Western and non-Western cultures alike, could find some support in the former Third World countries, but the majority of non-Westerners are increasingly tied down by materialist preoccupations which have reduced their lives to the daily grind of mass poverty, starvation, disease, and cycles of endless militarization. The prevailing question for this growing army of global poor is not, like the ENR thinkers claim, namely, the preservation of "difference" in the world, but how to end this cycle of poverty and despair, which has both external and internal causes. One could similarly argue, as does Roger Griffin, that it is the environmental catastrophe which is the greatest danger in the world today rather than the preservation of the world's cultural differences: A destroyed environment and planet would put an end to all life which would naturally put an abrupt halt to the world's planetary bio-diversity in terms of both human cultural life and non-human forms of life.[8] In turn, contends Griffin, the ENR might see the eradication of cultural differences as the principle threat to the world today, but an environmental catastrophe or a nuclear winter would quickly destroy all the world's inhabitants and its cultural differences.

The ENR's ingenuity has been its recognition, inherited from the New Left, that world power will increasingly shift from the United States and Europe to the former

Third World countries. It has also understood the longings of all peoples and cultures throughout the world, whether Kurds, Basques, Quebecois, Samis, Palestinians, Native Americans, or the East Timorese, to freely practice their cultures, determine their own affairs, and duly contribute to the family of nations and international community. This type of radical cultural "ethnopluralism" has some definite appeal in a Europe with deep regional and cultural roots which historically preceded the foundation of the nation-state project in the late 17th century. In the ENR's viewpoint, a diverse world with several centres of power might be a preferable one, a more politicized world, to a unipolar or bipolar world determined by the whims of one or two superpowers. It might not necessarily be a safer, just, or more ordered world as the ethnic violence in the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia has so aptly demonstrated.

In short, the ENR's pro-Third World solidarity stance could have some political uses in a post-communist age where former Third World countries are increasingly immiserated by the lack of funds from their former communist clients in Eastern Europe and the cutbacks of liberal Western nations for Third World aid projects. While Europe will remain the focus of the ENR's worldview and identity, the former Third World will increasingly become a concern as a result of vast disparities between North and South, its economic and strategic interests, the growing economic and political clout of non-Western nations (especially communist China), the rising spectre of anti-Western Islamic fundamentalism, the vast increase of non-Western immigrants to the European continent since the 1960s, and the de facto emergence of pluralistic societies on European soil. In an ironic twist, could it be long before one day the former Third World provides the models, frameworks, and alliances for the Europe of tomorrow?

9. Between a Communitarian "Destiny" and the Right to Intellectual Freedom

The final tension within the ENR's worldview is between its support for a communitarian, organic, European political project, on the one hand, and its attacks on intellectual conformity and defence of intellectual freedom, on the other hand. In

essence, a communitarian project necessarily clashes with the desire of intellectuals for completely free expression, autonomy, creativity, and even the planned provocations of anti-conformist opinions. As a cultural school of thought, the ENR thinkers can shock liberal democratic societies with their opinions and themes without facing the direct political consequences. For the ENR theorists, this state of affairs smells of "soft totalitarianism" because the existing powers are said to either ignore "non-conformist" intellectuals completely, denounce them as marginal cranks, and leave them spiritually deadened. The ENR has argued that a society with a more communitarian "destiny," on the other hand, pays more attention to its intellectuals, fears the power of words as a destabilizing element within the body politic, and consequently imprisons or obliterates its intellectual critics. The conundrum for the ENR theorists is that while in a liberal democratic society they can publish all sorts of marginal and "non-conformist" opinions, they might be taken more seriously, perhaps even denounced, imprisoned, or killed, by régimes with a communitarian, authoritarian, or totalitarian orientation.

In conclusion, we have attempted to show nine points of ambiguity and tension within the ENR's general worldview. Its major ambiguity is its affinity for both revolutionary Right and New Left ideals as well as its denial of creating a revived cultural fascism. While the ENR thinkers do share numerous points of political and spiritual intersection, they have a number of unresolved ambiguities and tensions, which is natural for a largely constituted cultural school of thought and movement of ideas. For the ENR thinkers, a number of the tensions pointed out earlier are irrelevant because the point of a new political paradigm, the ENR's purported aim, is to ultimately unite, synthesize, and transcend the barriers between formerly antagonistic ideas and political forces. For this reason, the ENR has tended to search for allies equally on the Left and Right of the political spectrum. This, of course, will not resolve all the ENR's ambiguities, but it is precisely its cultural ambiguity which is its defining feature and at the core of its identity. Its cultural ambiguity prepares ENR

intellectuals for a prominent cultural role in any new post-liberal, revolutionary order, whether it is on the Right, Left, or beyond.

Notes

[1] Personal correspondence with York University Professor Harvey Simmons, Toronto, Canada, September 1991.

[2] Tomislav Sunic, *Against Democracy and Equality: The European New Right* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990), pp. 154-155.

[3] Franco Sacchi, "The Italian New Right," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994), p. 77.

[4] See, for example, Roger Eatwell's interpretation of Fascism in "Towards a New Model of Generic Fascism," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 4(2) (1992), pp. 161-194.

[5] This argument is borrowed from Paul Gottfried, "Alain de Benoist's Anti-Americanism," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994), pp. 127-133.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 132-133.

[7] Robert de Herte, "Le temps des hypocrites," *Éléments* 69 (Fall 1990), p. 3.

[8] Electronic mail correspondence with the author during the months of June and July 1998.

Chapter 5:
Interpreting the ENR

Previous chapters have examined the central ideological positions within the worldview of the ENR. In this chapter, I examine some of the prevailing interpretations of the intellectual activity of the ENR. I close the chapter by discussing what I term the "Griffin-Taguieff debate" on the ENR as well as offering a note of academic caution about evaluating the ENR theorists. There are three fundamental reasons why there has been a relative dearth of academic literature on the ENR: the Right's self-inflicted "burden of history" (thus leading critics to believe that the Right was ideologically and politically dead), the polemical journalistic storm surrounding ENR ideas in France in both 1979 and 1993, and, beginning in the early 1980s, the academic focus on the emergence of more conspicuous mass media phenomena on the Right, such as the Anglo-American New Right (AANR), Thatcherism, Reaganism, and the rise of extreme-right and neo-fascist movements and political parties.

1. Classification of the Scholarly Literature on the ENR:

At this point, I will proceed to interpret and classify the academic literature on the ENR phenomenon into what are essentially four basic positions: (1) The ENR ideologues represent a new form of cultivated and more sinister cultural-intellectual fascism; (2) The ENR theorists have fashioned a new political paradigm transcending the traditional Left-Right dichotomy; (3) The ENR thinkers have created a unique post-modern mixture of an older ideological legacy combined with more modern, novel themes; and (4) The ENR theorists have brought a pervasive sense of ambiguity and confusion to the academic or scholarly community.

These four categories are naturally "ideal" types and some scholars, including the most reputable on the subject, Pierre-André Taguieff, often fall into several

categories. The first position is related to the second because the proponents of the latter argue that the ENR has both tactically and ideologically distanced itself from its fascist or extreme-right legacies of the past and now constitutes a novel political paradigm: A New Right or post-Right variant of the more humane, eclectic, and spiritually-inclined New Left which sought to displace a dogmatic, outdated Old Left. The first position has tended to dominate the literature on the subject and has also been the most contested and polemical. In contrast, the second position is probably the least popular and a minority position in the literature. Its adherents have often been accused by the Left of falling into the ENR's seductive trap of "constructive ambiguity," its subtle attempts to satisfy the eclectic tastes of different constituencies, or what Roger Eatwell saw as the distinction between its different exoteric and esoteric doctrines.[1] As was the case in the 1993 *Appeal to Vigilance*, left-wing thinkers or scholars have even been accused of collusion with an ascendant, sinister extreme right-wing or neo-fascist agenda. The third position acts as a sort of moderating force between the first two and often overlaps with the fourth. The claims for the third and fourth positions have been clearly a product of a certain revolutionary Right's political and tactical pragmatism in light of its "burden of history" and a scholarly acceptance of sustained ENR attacks on Old Right pillars. These positions have gained some intellectual ground because of perceived ENR ideological changes away from the Old Right legacies such as fascism, totalitarianism, ultra-nationalism, colonialism, racism, anti-Semitism, Catholic integralism, moralism, economic liberalism, and extra-parliamentary street violence. Conflicting academic definitions of fascism and neo-fascism also enhance the claims of these positions, while the ENR's past and present links to the revolutionary Right has prevented some critics from reading the phenomenon as a completely new political paradigm.

For the purposes of intellectual and political life, the first position's claim of the ENR as a new form of intellectual fascism and the second's of a new political paradigm are clearly the most influential. If scholars of the first camp are correct, then the ENR has ingenuously created a new form of cultural fascism which denies the tags

of fascism, totalitarianism, and racism. For this intellectual camp, the ENR's sophisticated metapolitical acumen paved the road towards a greater acceptance of "differential racism" used so effectively by contemporary extreme-right political parties such as France's *Front National*. On the other hand, if the scholars in the second camp are correct, then the ENR has moulded a new political paradigm which has serious implications for both the disciplines of political theory and future political alliances and practices. This group of scholars points to the polemical attitude towards the ENR by individuals and groups of all political stripes during their height of French mass media exposure in 1979 and 1993 as evidence of panic in both Old Right and Old Left camps because they feared a new political paradigm which was free of all received ideologies and the comfort of intelligentsia "cliques." In both instances, the ENR ideological synthesis is highly relevant to both intellectual and political life.

It is my contention that both the first and second positions reveal a kernel of truth, but not the entire picture about the ENR thinkers. The fourth position stands on tenuous grounds because it might reveal real confusion in the minds of scholars studying the ENR rather than the "constructed ambiguity" of the ENR theorists themselves.[2] This leaves my claim closest to the third camp: An ideological synthesis between older and newer intellectual schools of thought. In short, given the ENR's various tendencies and ideological overhaul, the ENR phenomenon is perhaps neither completely a new form of cultural fascism, nor an entirely new political paradigm. So, for example, we have already seen in previous chapters how the ENR attempted to forge an ideological synthesis between the ideas of the revolutionary Right and New Left. It might be possible to identify within the ENR an entire range of possible strands of thought: More and less neo-fascist strains, more and less culturally pessimist, more or less beyond Right and Left, and moving towards a new political paradigm.[3] So, for example, Michael Walker's ENR journal in England *The Scorpion* is more openly and closer to the revolutionary nationalist, conservative revolutionary, and anti-Jewish, neo-fascist milieu than Charles Champetier's French-based journal *Éléments* or even Alain de Benoist's *Nouvelle École*. Furthermore, it is questionable

that the ENR's strictly cultural framework is itself a sign of a new political paradigm. Charles Maurras, the French founder of integral nationalism and the anti-Semitic and ultra-nationalist inter-war movement the *Action française*, largely devoted himself to the metapolitical terrain and remains a likely model for major ENR thinkers such as Alain de Benoist.[4] In fact, a large pantheon of ENR intellectual ancestors, including thinkers tarnished by their association with fascism and Nazism such as Julius Evola, Ernst Jünger, and Carl Schmitt, originate from an older right-wing generation of thought located between the beginning of the century to the 1930s. In essence, the ENR remains a heterogeneous and ambiguous project tied between its Nietzschean and conservative revolutionary heritage of the past and incomplete future visions based on a syncretic use of thinkers and ideologies ranging from the inter-war "non-conformists" to the New Left, from scientism to ecologism, and from paganism to federalism.

2. Position One: "Designer Fascism" or "Ur-Fascism"

Several respectable scholars have argued for this first proposition, namely, that the ENR represents a disguised form of cultural and intellectual fascism. These thinkers include the following: Julien Brunn, Richard Wolin, Umberto Eco, Roger Griffin, Harvey Simmons, Roger Eatwell, Robert Badinter, Ciaran Maolain, Henry Weinberg, Michalina Vaughan, and Martin Lee. This position has been the dominant one in the English-language literature on the subject. It is best exemplified by Richard Wolin's term "designer fascism" for the ENR intellectuals. In Wolin's view, the old revolutionary Right has replaced designer suits for the old jackboots and brownshirts and created a modernized, democratic veneer and unique metapolitical discourse rather than the extra-parliamentary violence of the inter-war years.[5] As Harvey Simmons argues, this refusal to accept the extremist or fascist label and loudly proclaim an allegiance to democracy behind a rhetorical fog of coded language and slogans is now an integral part of contemporary European culture and politics.[6] The first position can be succinctly summarized by the stance of world-renowned Italian author Umberto Eco:

> Ur-Fascism is still around us, sometimes in plainclothes. It would be much easier, for us, if there appeared on the world scene somebody saying, 'I want to reopen Auschwitz, I want the Black Shirts to parade again in the Italian squares.' Life is not that simple. Ur-Fascism can come back under the most innocent disguises.[7]

The earliest work on the subject from this first position, *La nouvelle droite: le dossier du "procès,"* was an edited collection of ENR writers and their critics assembled by the French scholar Julien Brunn in 1979. While the work did not hide its partisan support as a sort of "trial" of pernicious ENR ideas, it did have a redeeming quality in exposing the actual works of ENR thinkers or supporters, including Alain de Benoist, Pierre Vial, and Louis Pauwels. It also included an assessment of the ENR phenomenon by some renowned French thinkers such as Maurice Duverger, Raymond Aron, and Alain Touraine. Moreover, this work on the *nouvelle droite* sought to point out the ENR linkages with its Old Right revolutionary milieu, whether through extreme-right political parties such as the short-lived *Parti des forces nouvelles* (PFN) in the 1970s, its attempted infiltration into army circles, or relationship to "quasi-fascist" publishers and journals. It also pointed to GRECE's statements and bulletins in the 1960s and 1970s, which sought to abandon "outdated language," focus on the "respectable" credentials of its members, and attempt to infiltrate the highest levels of political decision-making. Brunn's implicit claim was that what Eco dubbed "Ur-Fascism" was returning under the most unlikely masks through the works of the ENR thinkers.

Another early work from this first position was a 1981 article written by philosopher Thomas Sheehan comparing what he called the "Fascism" of Italian philosopher Julius Evola and the ENR's Alain de Benoist.[8] Julius Evola, a traditionalist in the mould of French counterrevolutionary thinker Joseph de Maistre, was the author of the Italian fascist régime's manifesto of "spiritual racism" against Nazism's merely "biological racism," and in the aftermath of the war's ruins would become the guiding light for Italy's radical Right groups. He was so revered in the revolutionary Right's milieu that former MSI leader Giorgio Almirante once called

him "our Marcuse, only better." In his seminal work *Vu de droite*, de Benoist has five pages devoted to Evola,[9] but neglects to mention his relationship to Italian fascism and the fact that Evola translated the infamous and conspiratorial anti-Semitic forgery of the Russian czar, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion.* Franco Ferraresi, an Italian scholar of the radical Right, has recently shattered the myth of Evola's claim of a higher order "spiritual racism" with evidence of explicit racism and anti-Semitism.[10] De Benoist also claims that Evola's "aristocratic pessimism" made him a large number of adversaries within the Fascist Party, including Giovanni Gentile, its leading theoretician.[11] In any case, while de Benoist's Nietzschean, existentialist nominalism is clearly incompatible with Evola's traditionalism which borrowed heavily from French esoteric traditionalist René Guénon, Sheehan claims that the two are both "Eurofascists" providing the ideological ammunition for extreme right-wing groups dedicated to terrorism "in the name of saving Europe from both capitalism and Marxism."[12] Sheehan agrees that the metaphysics of Evola and de Benoist might diverge, but argues that the prevalence of myth, "theoretical violence," the common belief in a forceful, organic and hierarchical state, and subtle racism (e.g., he cites Evola's "spiritual racism" and de Benoist's praise of the Celts over Mediterranean peoples) makes them both imbued with a fascist *Weltanschauung.*[13]

French scholar Robert Badinter also wrote one of the earliest pieces supporting the first position. For Badinter, there are close parallels between the fascist ideological synthesis, the CR thinkers, and the ideas of contemporary ENR theorists.[14] According to Badinter, the ENR represents a new form of updated post-war fascism trying to subtly revive a series of ideas and a standard pantheon of revolutionary Right authors, which had underpinned fascism. Similar views were also expressed two years later in 1987 by cultural critic Henry Weinberg and Ciaran Maolain, author of an encyclopaedic, world-wide directory of the radical Right. For Weinberg, the ENR is, to some extent, a reincarnation of the Old Right, but which has modernized its crude racism and elitism to increase its appeal, projected a learned and sensible image prepared to debate all opponents, and expressed faith in science and the future against

the prevailing intellectual pessimism of the age.[15] Weinberg has called the French *nouvelle droite* "a sophisticated form of racism" and charged that its anti-Judeo-Christian stance is simply a rhetorical trope for its congenital anti-Judaism.[16] In a country where intelligence and intellectual discussion are highly valued, Weinberg concludes that the public forum given to the *nouvelle droite* has resulted in the legitimation of "quasi-fascist" concepts by a rather unsuspecting public.

Mirroring Weinberg's view of what he calls the "quasi-fascist" *nouvelle droite*, Maolain writes the following assessment about its principal think tank GRECE:

> GRECE provides a platform of right-wing interpretations of social, economic, cultural, genetic and historical topics. It rarely comes close to endorsing fascist or white supremacist ideas in an open manner, and specifically opposes fascist terrorism, but provides an intellectual forum in which elitist, pan-Europeanist and *quasi-fascist* ideas are developed. GRECE is anti-egalitarian, anti-American, anti-Soviet and pro-authoritarian, and regards the Judeo-Christian tradition as decadent and debilitating.[17]

In the 1990s, a number of other scholars published pieces supporting the first proposition we have called "designer fascism" or "Ur-Fascism." While the most prominent included Roger Griffin, Roger Eatwell, and Harvey Simmons, the list also included more recent writings by Richard Wolin, Michalina Vaughan, and Martin Lee.

Roger Griffin has been the most careful and thorough of this group of scholars in undertaking a close textual analysis of ENR authors, their historical antecedents and current influences, and then relating it to the fascist legacy. Griffin has neatly pointed out the ENR's historical continuity with the tradition of the inter-war's German conservative revolutionaries who used metapolitics to bypass discredited manifestations of fascism and Nazism: Its spherical view of history oscillating between spiritual decadence and renewal, anti-egalitarian elitism, warrior ethic, and the savage attacks on liberal Weimar institutions, "parasitic capitalism," positivism, the notion of one civilization, and linear "progress" world-improvement schemes of liberals and socialists.[18] Challenging Pierre-André Taguieff's claim that with the launch of Alain de Benoist's journal *Krisis* in 1988 the latter now transcended his

revolutionary Right origins, Griffin argued that the ENR leader's stance of detached cultural criticism and non-violent metapolitics known as *apoliteia* did not mean his abandonment of a refined ultra-nationalist, palingenetic, and ideal type of fascist worldview.[19] Griffin likened de Benoist's *apoliteia* stance to Julius Evola's idea of "riding the tiger" in order to resist the spiritual corruption and decadence of the post-war era and remain faithful to the flame of a "higher reality": A kind of "inner emigration" and a cultivated aloofness from conventional politics and the standard mass media version of world events.[20] He also pointed to more recent de Benoist texts, including the celebration of a revolutionary "return to the clarity of myth" in his 1995 work *L'empire intérieur*, as continuing evidence of a palingenetic, fascist-like orientation.[21] Griffin argues that the ENR is intellectually dangerous because a similar form of metapolitical speculation during the inter-war era helped to smash liberal democracy and launch the horrors of fascism and Nazism. He concludes that the novelty of the *nouvelle droite* was not a new paradigm for interpreting modernity, but instead "a new intellectual passport with which it has been able to operate largely incognito as a purely metapolitical form of cultural speculation."[22]

> Griffin clearly summarizes his support for the notion of "designer fascism":
> Despite elements of genuine renewal, and the fact that ever since its formation in the late 1960s the ND has been engaged in a constant process of evolution and diversification, it did not offer a new paradigm as Piccone suggests. Nor was it primarily a product of the crisis of the Left as Revelli implies: rather it was the product of the acute crisis of credibility which fascism faced as a viable extra-systemic ideology in the post-war era, fruit of a concerted effort at transforming fascism's strategy and discourse as to keep its palingenetic project alive. In IT terms the ND did not offer a new type of programme. Rather it is to be compared to a series of new or modified editions of an old software product (Wordperfect versions 4.1 to 6.3?), whose basic design and purpose are recognizably unchanged underneath all the impressive improvements to the display and the vast range of new functions which have been added to bring it in line with rival products. The ND at the height of its influence was thus a classic example of the adage 'plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.'[23]

Another important English historian of the fascist phenomenon, Roger Eatwell, has also forcefully argued for the first proposition. Echoing the earlier views of cultural critic Henry Weinberg, Eatwell argues that while not overtly anti-Semitic and racist, the *nouvelle droite* operates different agendas for its elitist think tanks and mass public in order to disguise its racism and anti-Semitism, and deep hatred for

multicultural societies.[24] Eatwell claims that there is a widespread consensus in the literature that the ENR is essentially racist.[25] Pierre-André Taguieff, the leading scholar on the *nouvelle droite* in France, has even argued that the ENR's early 1980s turn towards xenophilia is ultimately a form of "new cultural racism" or "differentialist racism."[26] This "right to difference" has been appropriated by the ENR in order to win the "cultural war" against what they viewed as a culturally superior Left. The "right to difference" has not been uncommon to sections of the New Left, the Frankfurt School, and even the French Socialist Party under François Mitterrand in the early 1980s.

In Eatwell's view, ENR ideological pillars of recent years such as the "right to difference," the stress on organic and Indo-European roots, cultural diversity, and cultural particularism against the "homogenizing tyranny" of global capitalism, the nation-state, and Westernization, are simply veiled code-words for a radical opposition to the project of a multicultural, multiracial France or Europe.[27] If the German New Right's slogan of a "heterogeneous world of homogeneous communities"[28] is an indication of this trend, then Eatwell's fears are not unwarranted. Eatwell's implicit message is that the ENR is a tactical, metapolitical, and intellectual response to counter the rise of European cultural diversity and immigration. Eatwell's warning is that the ENR is an intelligent and dangerous reply to the rise of de facto multicultural societies and the discourse of liberal universalism, while at the same time avoiding the vulgar, populist legitimization of extremist, anti-immigrant politics. The author leaves us eerily wondering what a mythical return to a "heterogeneous world of homogeneous communities" will mean in practice for liberals, leftists, anarchists, democrats, multiculturalists, internationalists, immigrants, Jews, dissidents, and the "political homeless"?

Like Eatwell, Toronto's York University political scientist Harvey Simmons concurs with the first position. In a recent chapter devoted to GRECE and their revision of post-war fascism, Simmons argues that ENR attacks on egalitarianism and

Judeo-Christian values might be a tactical and ideological way of dressing racism and anti-Semitism in a semi-respectable guise.[29] The ENR, we have noted earlier, holds that historically Judaism had presaged Christianity in creating a prosaic, dogmatic, monotheistic, and hence "totalitarian" worldview devoid of spiritual striving and mystery. Moreover, Simmons insists that the ENR is attempting to renew the "neither Right nor Left" formula of the fascist ideological synthesis by blurring distinctions between Right and Left, and distinguishing themselves from both communist and socialist positions, and also conservative and reactionary ones.[30]

In the eyes of Simmons, the ENR and especially the French *nouvelle droite* are essentially sophisticated tactical responses to near extinction: A cultural rehabilitation of the revolutionary Right and fascism in the post-war and post-colonial (i.e., post-Algeria) era. According to Simmons, political respectability and capturing the hearts of public opinion were the ENR's main goal and thus no Old Right pillars were any longer sacrosanct: The West, the "white race," the Judeo-Christian tradition, colonialism, nationalism, cultural superiority, and "progress."[31] Simmons insists that the violent tactics of the past had ghettoized the fascist cause and failed to culturally indoctrinate elites and public alike with a deep-seated, revolutionary spirit. This would explain the ENR concern and envy with cultural issues in the mould of the New Left, especially critical to the spectacular student-inspired revolt of May 1968. The focus on the cultural realm would allow the ENR to achieve more political success than violent street battles and terrorism directed against the rising Left, or the route of parliamentary politics against what they viewed as an "impotent" conservative establishment. Simmons shows how the ENR fixation on the terrains of culture, language, and metapolitics has been praised by explicitly neo-fascist political theorists such as Maurice Bardèche and mirrored by extreme-right or neo-fascist political parties like the French *Front National*.[32] Like several other adherents of this first position, Simmons has also traced GRECE's continued relationship and even exchange of personnel with extreme-right or neo-fascist political parties. This position has also attempted to highlight the alleged linkages between sophisticated cultural

networks such as GRECE and violent radical Right groups, whether "black terrorists," Nazi-oriented skinheads, or Holocaust negationist organizations.

In the late 1990s, Michalina Vaughan, Martin Lee, and Richard Wolin have continued to provide ammunition for the first position. In the 1970s, Vaughan contends that the ENR was fairly influential in rehabilitating a number of previously indefensible, "proto-fascist" ideas through its elitist discourse, scientific orientation, and emphasis on the "authentic" roots of European culture.[33] Vaughan even traced the ENR's continuity of personnel and major ideological tenets to the revolutionary nationalists of the anti-Gaullist, pro-French Algeria underground conspirators centred around the *Organisation de l'Armée Secrète* (OAS- Secret Army Organization).[34] Despite clear differences with the ultra-nationalist, royalist, and integralist *Action française* of the inter-war era, Vaughan maintains that the ENR shared with it a penchant for intellectual reform as a preliminary to societal change and both fostered a climate of opinion in which right-wing extremism could thrive.[35]

Martin Lee, a reputable scholar of fascism, is even more unambiguous than Vaughan about the ENR's relationship to fascism. Lee was adamant that France's leading *nouvelle droite* philosopher Alain de Benoist shrewdly espoused fashionable ideas borrowed from the New Left such as "ethnopluralism" and the "right to difference" in order to facilitate a resurgence of Eurofascism.[36] While he did not intentionally support racial superiority, claimed Lee, the ENR's major thinker could not prevent his ideas from being utilized by neo-fascist or extreme right-wing politicians in order to justify racism and xenophobia. Lee concludes that sophisticated tacticians such as de Benoist understood that there were multiple ways to play the neo-fascist game. This included dropping the fascist label in order to stay in touch with modern times as well as not openly expressing the old faith. In this way, Lee writes, "The torch of fascism still burns in new disguises."[37]

Finally, as mentioned earlier in this section, Richard Wolin's article entitled "designer fascism" is highly representative of the arguments supporting position one. Wolin asserts that a cultural, metapolitical "designer fascism" was central to the ENR's project and relatively successful in its goal of bringing extreme-right or fascist ideas into the mainstream of French and European political life. So, for example, Wolin writes this sober assessment about the relative success of the *nouvelle droite*'s cultural strategy in both France in particular and Europe in general:

> When one speaks of the French New Right or Nouvelle Droite, one is referring to a group of intellectuals, many of whom had prominent ties to fascist groups during the 1960s. Their agenda has been relatively straightforward: in a post-war era in which the extreme Right has been delegitimated owing to the taint of collaboration, they have sought to bring right-wing ideas into the political mainstream once again. And while, as intellectuals, many of the leading figures of the Nouvelle Droite have remained marginal, in historical retrospect one would have to say they succeeded in their aim. In essence, they have been able to relegitimate a discourse of race and racism that has had an insidious influence on the French politics of the 1980s and 1990s. ... In his attempt to revitalize fascist ideology, Benoist strove for a type of intellectual saturation effect – as he once put it, "the intellectual education of everyone in whose hands the power of decision will come to rest in coming years." To this end, he established an international network of publications, study groups, and front organizations designed to ensure that extreme right ideas would be received by French and European political elites.[38]

Like Pierre-André Taguieff, the leading authority on the subject, Wolin argues that the success of the *nouvelle droite* was built on a change in the early 1980s from what he called the "orthodox fascist concept of biological racism" to a new "cultural racism" based on a liberal sounding "anti-racist" discourse which was theoretically non-hierarchical and respectful of all cultural differences.[39] Its origins date back to the anti-republican attacks on the "abstract" Rights of Man and anti-universalist sentiments of European counterrevolutionaries such as French thinker Joseph de Maistre. In a famous remark from his *Considerations on the French Revolution* (1797), de Maistre once declared the following: "In my life I have seen Frenchmen, Italians, Russians, and so on. ... But as for man, I declared I've never encountered him; if he exists he is unknown to me."[40] Yet, practically speaking, Wolin maintains that this "right to difference" meant that where "Algerians should enjoy civil liberties was Algeria, "France for the French" (an old racist slogan from the 1930s), Europe for the Europeans, and so on."[41] He compares de Benoist's valorization of the "right to

difference" with Jean-Marie Le Pen's justification of ethnic particularism by contrasting their respective statements about immigration in the early 1980s. Wolin cites this remark made by de Benoist in the early 1980s: "The truth is that people must preserve and cultivate their differences. ... Immigration merits condemnation because it strikes a blow at the identity of the host culture as well as the immigrant's identity."[42] Moreover, Wolin makes a connection between de Benoist's aforementioned statement and this more ominous one made by Le Pen in favour of what he terms "parliamentary ethnic cleansing" which echoes the Vichy period's racial legislation:

> Peoples cannot be summarily qualified as superior or inferior, they are different, and one must keep in mind these physical or cultural differences. I love North Africans, but their place is in the Maghreb. ... I am not a racist, but a national. ... For a nation to be harmonious, it must have a certain ethnic and spiritual homogeneity. ... We must resolve, to France's benefit, the immigration problem, by the peaceful, organized return of immigrants.[43]

While Wolin's warning of a revival of a subtle form of "designer fascism" is central to his analysis of the ENR thinkers, his conclusions about why their ideas have an appeal is also especially instructive. This particular interpretation shows a stark resemblance between the fears and insecurities, which allowed for the rise of the ENR in the 1970s and fascism in the 1920s and 1930s. The major difference, however, is that whereas in the 1920s, the fascists and the revolutionary Right could play on fears of a tyrannical, communist internationalism and the fresh memories of the 1917 Russian Bolshevik Revolution, in the 1990s this card was temporarily buried by the fateful collapse of the Soviet Union and communist régimes in Eastern Europe. For Wolin, profound global social and economic changes, the creation of a knowledge-based post-industrial economy, and the attack on the welfare state has meant the arrival of a "two-thirds" society in which two-thirds of the population lives in relative affluence and the other third leads a marginalized, miserable existence.[44] Also, Wolin argues that the new global technological and economic order has ushered in a generalized anxiety, insecurity and malaise, the loss of the comfort of identity, meaning, and life purpose, powerlessness, hyper-individualism and isolation. The ENR's contemporary celebration of cultural differences and stress on "permanent

values," Wolin explains, is a clearly planned strategy constructed as an alleviating substitute for the insecurities of what he calls the "brave new world":

> The pronounced ideological emphasis in the discourse of the New European Right on "values" and questions of "collective identity" -- be it ethnic, regional, or national – is consciously cultivated. It is intended to compensate for the instability and disorientation sensed by those who have become supernumeraries in a profoundly threatened global economy or "world society" – a highly impersonal, brave new cybertechnological order. For world society has had the effect of eroding and destabilizing traditional networks of social solidarity on which individuals previously could rely as a source of normative integration: family and extended family, occupational groupings, neighbourhoods, communities – even the sacrosanct autonomy of the traditional nation-state.[45]

3. Position Two: A New Political Paradigm?

In complete contrast to the advocates of "designer fascism," position two scholars argue that the ENR theorists have created a new political synthesis and paradigm divorced from the Old Right, fascism, Nazism, totalitarianism, imperialism, racism, anti-Semitism, militarism, extra-parliamentary violence, and leader cult of the inter-war years. This group of thinkers includes the following: Paul Piccone, Mark Wegierski, Franco Sacchi, Pierro Ignazi, Roberto Chiarini, and Pierre-André Taguieff. The high number of Italian intellectuals within this position might be explained by the different appraisal of the phenomenon in Italy and France, the two countries' divergent historical relationships to fascism, and possibly a more open intellectual atmosphere within Italy towards forging a genuine, novel political paradigm beyond Left and Right. This position has been succinctly expressed by frequent *Telos* contributor and editor Paul Piccone: "What makes the French New Right particularly interesting is that it does not merely propose a bizarre reversal of positions, but the end of the traditional contraposition of Left and Right in favour of a new political paradigm."[46] Echoing the claim of Ernesto Galli Della Loggia that the Italian New Right (INR) might be one of the rare remaining revolutionary left-wing movements in the country, Piccone has even suggested that the *nouvelle droite* leader Alain de Benoist may be one of the few New Left intellectuals left![47]

This second position has argued that the ENR's principal theorist, Alain de Benoist, has had a profound influence in shaping the movement and moved it beyond

its revolutionary Right roots in the 1960s to embrace a number of novel positions between the late 1970s and 1990s. This position points to the allegedly "new" ENR stances of recent years: An indictment of liberalism, economism, and the United States rather than communism as the "principal enemies" in the 1970s; a radical critique of nationalism in favour of a federalist "Europe of a Hundred Flags," "organic democracy," and a pro-Third World, anti-American, anti-Western, anti-Enlightenment stance directed primarily against U.S. economic and cultural imperialism and homogenization in the late 1980s and 1990s[48]; the extreme parasitism on Marxist and New Left sources such as Lenin, Gramsci, and the Frankfurt School to the point of a brief philo-Soviet flirtation and envy for the Left's fidelity to its ideals; and the attack on liberal societies' "robotic" and materialistic-oriented ideological conditioning mechanisms (i.e., contemporary mass, cultural and informational technologies such as television and the Internet). The ENR thinkers have claimed that they are merely searching for more authentic, humane, and multiple spiritual values and roots in order to counter the myths of "progress," techno-utopianism, the rule of quantity, unlimited material desire, selfish egoism, unfettered market capitalism, and the shallow capitalist horizon based on utilitarian calculation and the cult of money. Perhaps, this claim has had some impact on the proponents of this second position.

Similarly, Mark Wegierski and Franco Sacchi have pointed to the ENR's "new" ideological overhaul of recent years. For both scholars, the ENR intellectuals are novel thinkers with a new political paradigm for several fundamental reasons: The slow, protracted Gramscian metapolitical struggle rather than older extreme right-wing and fascist tendencies towards direct revolutionary action and open hostility towards liberalism and the parliamentary system; the rejection of Old Right theses such as virulent nationalism, racial superiority, racism, colonialism, "hygienic" militarism, heroism, combat, Christian moralism, and economic liberalism; the orientation towards an anti-totalitarian, anti-nationalist, anti-Jacobin federalism within a pan-European context; the stress on classical roots and anti-Christian, anti-Jewish paganism; and the sacrosanct "right to difference" of diverse world communities and

individuals against the "tyranny" of a homogenized global order.[49] These two critics, then, claim that the ENR is an innovative force of cultural criticism far divorced from the violent, jackboot nationalism of the extreme-right or fascism. In the eyes of Wegierski and Sacchi, the allegations of a new subtle form of fascism, position one, are both intellectually perverse and inaccurate. The ENR, Sacchi and Wegierski imply, are revolutionary in their analysis of modernity, but neither Nazi-like (or neo-fascist) nor conservative in outlook as a result of a diverse, post-modern set of philosophical and political influences.

Two Italian political scientists, Piero Ignazi and Roberto Chiarini, have further given some support for the new political paradigm thesis. Ignazi has claimed that the *nouvelle droite* is both a cultural and political movement which has no relation with contemporary extreme right-wing political parties. Its worldview, argues Ignazi, differs drastically from that of the extreme- right and fascists, especially its rupture with nationalism in favour of federalism, its call for the preservation of diverse ethnic and regional identities, and its total rejection of state, bureaucratic, communist, or capitalist social engineering.[50] Chiarini explains how the Italian *nuova destra* was definitely a post-fascist phenomenon born from the ashes of a Right in disarray and in the wake of the *movimento del '77*, a youth protest movement which came into existence in 1977, transcended political ideologies, and was mostly interested in the fulfilment of subjective aspirations.[51] The Italian *nuova destra* was committed to the realms of culture, ideology, philosophy, and civil society. According to Chiarini, the aims of the *nuova destra* were to distance itself from all the Right's previous stances, both legal and illegal, and to genuinely re-think the Right's cultural paradigm to free it of sterile, backward-looking positions in order to prepare it for the future.[52] Chiarini's implicit message is that the *nuova destra* came from a new generational era which had no direct ties to the fascist past and some of its members sought to authentically forge a new political paradigm.

In contrast to the "official" neo-fascist MSI-AN's parliamentary orientation and the illegal, "black" terrorism of *Ordino Nuovo* and *Avanguardia Nazionale*, the *nuova destra* was indifferent to the fascist and Evolian references of both tendencies. Instead, like its French counterpart, the *nuova destra* believed that liberal democracy could only be superseded through a metapolitical process of cultural renewal and "hegemonization." As a result, many standard *nuova destra* ideas have even penetrated into the worldview of rank and file MSI-AN members, thus giving it the profile of a more libertarian party open to the Left rather than a standard neo-fascist party. Ignazi has asked the important question of whether this apparently impressive shift in political culture within the MSI-AN towards many essential *nuova destra* ideas might not eventually prove fatal to a party nurtured on the ideas, myths, and memories of Italian fascism and the Sàlo Republic?[53]

While the aforementioned Italian political analysts have pointed out that some ENR members sought the creation of a new political paradigm, Pierre-André Taguieff has provided the most important endorsement of this second position. In his classical work on the subject, *Sur la nouvelle droite*, Taguieff boldly asserted that ENR doyen Alain de Benoist moved outside the orbit of the extreme-right or fascist camp with that launch of his limited-circulation journal *Krisis* in 1988.[54] Taguieff claims that de Benoist has now entered into the realm of scientific detachment and pure cultural criticism, or what Roger Griffin has called *apoliteia*: An Evolian-like spiritual distance and cultivated aloofness from the conventional, materialistic view of mass media and politics. This concept of *apoliteia*, however, has been the chasm which separates Griffin's support for the "designer fascism" position and Taguieff's limited support of the new political paradigm thesis. Griffin has used an ideal-type definition of generic fascism to convincingly argue that position two advocates confuse means with ends (i.e., fascism is not about the distinction between non-violent metapolitics and the violent means of past years which were often shared with extreme communists, but about basic unifying ideas and the vision of a post-liberal, ultra-nationalist future cleansed of decadence) and fail to see the continuity of fascist ideas within the ENR

worldview.[55] Unlike Taguieff, Griffin insists that one can pursue a cultural strategy of detached *apoliteia* as the ENR practices, while still maintaining an eternal faith to an ideal-type, fascist-like *Weltanschauung*. For Griffin, de Benoist's *apoliteia* stance still has a metapolitical goal in the desire to have its particular ideas and worldview triumph and is thus not simply equivalent to the realm of memoirs, poetry, quietism, or esoteric mysticism.

In any case, we can conclude that de Benoist's *apoliteia* orientation has several possible motivations: the wish to escape the "ghetto" of the Old, revolutionary Right and fascism; a reaction of disgust against suicidal Old Right tactics of direct action and confrontation with the liberal capitalist system; a deliberate strategy of "constructed ambiguity" in order to win new followers among the Left and "political homeless"; keeping alive a sort of "ideological and cultural bio-diversity" in the world; a preparation of elites for the new post-liberal order after the potential collapse or implosion of the liberal order; and a long-term, inward spiritual preparation against the current age of "decadence" before the internal collapse of the existing system from its own contradictions (i.e., what Evola dubbed "riding the tiger" and remaining loyal to the flame of your sacred ideals and inner vision even in the post-World War II age of materialist "black decadence" and ruins). Moreover, it is clear that while *apoliteia* is for de Benoist an intellectual rejection of "politics first," the "politics of politicians," parliamentary politics, and street politics, it can also be read as the latest reincarnation of the project of long-term metapolitics designed to "awaken" selected elites and create the conditions for the hegemonic supremacy of ENR ideas on the European continent. In this sense, then, *apoliteia* cannot be confused with traditional politics, anti-politics, or the de-politicization of the masses, but is the continuation of politics itself through the cultural "war" of ideas. *Apoliteia* can be seen as the extension of the cultural and political "wars" through other means.

Apoliteia is not the only point of differentiation between positions one and two. The ENR's incessant valorization of the "right to difference," its sacrosanct position

for the last two decades, has been contested and analyzed by position one scholars and a number of other thinkers. Both French scholars Pierre-André Taguieff and Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol are not convinced by the ENR's supposedly liberal and tolerant appropriation of the notion of the "right to difference." For Duranton-Crabol, the "differentialist" orientation of the ENR has anti-democratic implications because it has tended to take racial prejudices and cultural differences for granted, or make them a banal fact of everyday life.[56] Taguieff, too, argues that "differentialist racism" is the new European political reality and is based on the love of rather than hate of cultural differences since racists actually love differences and have a terrible fear of racial mixing ("mixophobia").[57] According to Taguieff, this new "cultural racism" has caught both the anti-racist movement and old-style racists alike with the surprising sophistication of its "differentialist" discourse. Taguieff insists that this form of "cultural racism' is far more subtle and pernicious than standard biological variants of racism.

Position one scholars have argued that this "cultural racism" has been employed by a number of extreme-right and neo-fascist parties to support a modern fascism within one ethnic group, region, or country rather than the fascist desire of the inter-war years to spread the system internationally. In the end, "cultural racism" can mask its racism with an updated "anti-racist," anti-superiority, and "differentialist" rhetoric in the mould of Jean-Marie Le Pen; it undermines the natural cultural and racial mixing of multicultural societies; possibly legitimizes hierarchy, domination, and inequality on the part of "unique" or "different" local communities each with their own relative moral standards; and can use the banner of the inherent "right to difference" as a way of refusing common humanistic or international standards of behaviour.

In response to these arguments about the manipulation of the "right to difference" for racialist ends, position two scholars have argued about what they view as de Benoist's genuine defence of both individual and community manifestations of

difference, and "relational" and "dialogical" interpretations of the "right to difference." So, for example, they point out that while in 1989 the French *Front National* used the infamous "*foulard* affair" ("scarf affair") to fuel anti-immigrant, anti-Arab, and anti-Muslim sentiments, Alain de Benoist actually defended the "right to difference" of three Muslim school girls expelled by a principal in Creil, France for wearing the *chador* (Islamic headscarf) in the secular public school system. In addition, it can be claimed, as position two thinkers have, that the ENR's "differentialist" rather than ethnocentric spirit is based on a particular and long European tradition dating from the Neapolitan philosopher Giambattista Vico (1668-1777) to the German thinker Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803), and from a Right anti-colonialism to the New Left. This tradition has stressed the flowering of the world's cultural diversity and uniqueness; the inherent value and beauty of all world cultures; and the duty to preserve these cultural differences because they entail a rich multiplicity of different ways of feeling, seeing, and living in the world. It is essentially a tradition of radical cultural heterogeneity, which believes that even incommensurable values between cultures is, from an evolutionary perspective, culturally and spiritually beneficial for humanity.

Thus, the ENR's use of *apoliteia*, its metapolitical stance, and the notion of the "right to difference" have led to differing interpretations of the ENR between position one supporters of "designer fascism" and position two advocates of a new political paradigm. For the first position, *apoliteia* and the route of metapolitics are simply culturally civilized masks hiding fascist or "proto-fascist" ideas such as the "right to difference." On the other hand, position two scholars argue that the switch of certain ENR thinkers towards *apoliteia* and the ENR's long-term metapolitical battle represent substantive rather than tactical changes in the direction of a novel political paradigm. For this second group, metapolitics is the most cultivated and logical approach in order to restore diversity and the "right to difference" to a grey, homogenized global order increasingly under the spell of large corporate interests.

4. Position Three: Ideological Synthesis of Old and New Right?

While the first and, to a lesser extent, the second positions, have formed the bulk of the scholarly literature on the ENR thinkers, the third position of a new ideological synthesis between Old Right and New Right ideas is less prominent in the literature. It is a position that has been, at times, acknowledged by scholars supporting the majority position one and its antithesis, position two. Ruth Levitas, Tomislav Sunic, Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, and Pierre-André Taguieff are the most representative figures of this position. The third position's merits are of exposing both what is simultaneously old and new within the ENR worldview. Consequently, it fills in the missing gaps of the "designer fascism" and "new political paradigm" perspectives. Ruth Levitas has neatly summarized this position: "What is new about the New Right is not that all these various (old) right-wing ideas are enjoying a new ascendancy, but that they have been welded together in a new ideological synthesis."[58]

As an example of position three, Tomislav Sunic has situated the ENR in relationship to other right-wing currents in Europe to show how they are heirs of an older conservative tradition connected to diverse religious and pagan thinkers such as Catholic counterrevolutionaries Joseph de Maistre and Juan Donoso Cortés, the conservative revolutionary thinkers Oswald Spengler, Vilfredo Pareto, and Carl Schmitt, and the inter-war Latin fascists Gabriel d'Annunzio, Henry Montherlant, and Julius Evola.[59] At the same time, Sunic argues that the ENR is new because they claim a radical split with legal and extra-legal extreme right-wing parties and movements; claim all of Europe as a homeland rather than one country or region; and its members and sympathisers come from a younger post-World War II generation facing new social issues previously unknown in Europe.[60]

Given this ENR mixture of older ideological legacies and new issues and themes, Sunic wonders whether we are dealing with a "New Right," "Fascist Right," or what he calls "European Leftist Conservatives?" He expresses the ENR's peculiar, ambiguous ideological position by comparing it to other "Rights" each with their

different historical experiences and each with their share of influence on the ENR worldview:

> There is today a liberal right profoundly committed to parliamentary institutions and opposed to all right-wing movements violating these institutions. But there is also a certain right which has traditionally derided parliamentary systems, even when it stubbornly insisted on being admitted to parliament. Furthermore, there is also a certain right which glorifies nationalism and opposes doctrines espousing internationalism. And finally there is the European New Right which professes none of the above, yet remains indebted to all of them.[61]

Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol has also endorsed this third position. She argues that the goal of GRECE, the key *nouvelle droite* think-tank, was to rejuvenate French nationalism and the legacy of the revolutionary Right using the historical examples of ultra-nationalist thinkers such as Charles Maurras.[62] We have already mentioned her criticisms of the ENR's racialist manipulation of the "right to difference." Yet, Duranton-Crabol has also acknowledged the ENR's ideological heterogeneity and its originality based on a strictly ideological, metapolitical orientation designed to hegemonically capture the terrain of civil society.[63]

Pierre-André Taguieff has located the ENR's originality elsewhere, while still pointing out how the conservative revolutionary milieu continues to inform the ENR worldview. For Taguieff, the ENR's essential innovation is the break with the Old Right pillars of tradition, the once sacred Christian past, or more generally, the monotheistic Judeo-Christian heritage.[64] This has allowed the ENR to claim that this Judeo-Christian heritage has produced the seeds of totalitarianism through its imposition of a reductionist, moralistic, and dogmatic egalitarian, universalist philosophy. Liberalism, socialism and multiculturalism are simply seen as identical secular manifestations of an egalitarian, Christian worldview. In turn, this has led the ENR to argue that it stands forcefully "Against All Totalitarianisms."[65] According to Taguieff, this break with the Judeo-Christian tradition in favour of an aristocratic, pagan notion of politics is clearly novel because it takes its distance from the Old Right's rigid adherence to Catholicism as an integral part of French nationalist identity.

In short, we have seen that position three scholars hold that the ENR's mixture of Old and New Right ideas has created a unique post-modern ideological synthesis. This new ideological synthesis stands between the position one stance of a re-incarnated fascism and the anti-totalitarian, anti-fascism claims of position two. It is a position that is wary of what it views as the reductionist claims of both positions one and two. While the former sees fascism everywhere within ENR thought, the latter refuses to see how Old "proto-fascist" ideas continue to influence ENR thinkers, journals, and politicians. Position one scholars point out the ENR's incessant repetition of fascist-like themes: elitism, myth, the sacred, the spiritual, renewal and regeneration from materialist decadence, the search for Indo-European roots, the valorization of warrior and aristocratic values against merchant values, the call for hierarchical "tripartite" societies, and a return to idealized, mythical, homogeneous, and small-scale organic communities. We also know clearly that the ENR is heavily indebted to the older German conservative revolutionary tradition as well as inter-war Latin fascists "who pined for the gods of the ancient city and for a redivinized pagan Nature."[66] At the same time, its novelty might reside in its sensitivity to the newer subjective influences of the New Left, scientism, paganism, ecology, federalism, and "organic democracy." For position two scholars, the ENR's essential paradigm shift is that it is an audaciously anti-Christian, anti-capitalist, anti-colonialist, anti-nationalist, and anti-Western Right.

Furthermore, the ENR's preference and focus on the metapolitical terrain is a substantive shift away from the older activist, revolutionary Right project of seizing state power towards capturing the levers of elite and public opinion within civil society. This does not necessarily entail a return to fascism, or a new political paradigm. The ENR intellectuals, as Pierre-André Taguieff once remarked about Alain de Benoist, are smart enough to realize that the horrors of the gas chambers have forever discredited fascism.[67] Simultaneously, it is unclear whether all the differing ENR strains have sufficiently transcended their revolutionary Right roots to mould a

new political paradigm. Metapolitics or *apoliteia* are not in themselves a sufficient basis to claim a new political paradigm because Oswald Spengler and Ernst Jünger as well as Charles Maurras' *Action française* were all firmly situated on this cultural terrain of political contestation. Moreover, their ideas would eventually have a profound impact on the respective ideas of the Nazis in Germany, the Vichyites in France, and, in general, the French inter-war and post-war ultra-nationalist Right. The ENR's metapolitical appropriation of leftists such as Lenin, Che Guevara, and Gramsci as well as the New Left might not point to a new political paradigm, but could rather be a survival strategy of the Right and tactical stance of ideological deception against the Left. Similarly, its notion of the "right to difference" can be traced to both the Right and Left and has been used for diametrically opposed ends. It is not in itself a new form of sinister cultural fascism, or a novel political paradigm without historical antecedents.

5. Position Four: Residues of Confusion and Ambiguity

This final position is the residual and minoritarian one based on the genuine confusion and ambiguity ENR intellectuals and ideas have created for scholars studying this school of thought. The confusion and ambiguity has been a product of the ENR's important tactical and theoretical changes since its university student origins in ultra-nationalist, radical Right, and pan-European racialist circles of the early 1960s. This has included the turns towards metapolitics, anti-Christian paganism, anti-colonialism, anti-nationalism, and pro-Third World anti-Westernism. The anticommunist, anti-capitalist refrain against materialist decadence and in favour of cultural "rootedness" and "eternal" spiritual values has remained from the early 1960s until the late 1990s. This particular critique of modernity has its origins in the late 19th and early 20th century revolt against positivism, liberalism, socialism, and parliamentarism – all seen as the same side of the decadent materialist coin. This critique was borrowed by radical Right, fascist, and "non-conformist" forces in the inter-war era in order to simultaneously combat capitalist and communist materialism.

It should be pointed out that this ambiguity has been carefully nurtured by the ENR itself in order to satisfy its different strains, audiences, and ideological tastes.

Two important representatives of this most uncommon position are Douglas Johnson and Jean-Marie Domenach. In an anthology on the "Far Right," Douglas Johnson appears to deliver no authoritative judgement on the ENR's political identity and goals. In addition, Johnson argues that the movement has become mired in mass confusion and ambiguity, thus reducing the impact of its potentially substantive ideas in the future. Johnson writes what can be considered a microcosm of this position:

> There is every reason to believe that the *nouvelle droite* has become a centre of confusion as well as controversy, and that this reduces its importance. As it denies allegations of anti-Semitism, negationism and Pétainism, it is lost in a welter of self-justification which weakens whatever message it still intends to put forward in the future.[68]

Yet, as one astute expert of the phenomenon has noted, it is still unclear whether the confusion is in the minds of ENR thinkers or their critics.[69] Most "designer fascism" or new paradigm thesis proponents would likely argue that position four scholars are themselves at the root of the confusion of ENR ideas. This claim is probably slightly harsh given that the ENR is itself a peculiar Right without the standard associations evoked by the term, whether a rigid defence of the materially privileged, Catholicism, crown, empire, nation, or the West. Jean-Marie Domenach, the former editor of the respected Left-leaning, French Christian journal *Esprit*, has underlined his sense of intellectual confusion around the positions of the ENR and GRECE. This position four advocate is especially unclear about the ENR's implications for political theory. Domenach states his intellectual conundrum:

> Here is a right which is not for colonization, not for the nation nor for the West – for Europe no doubt, but a Europe which looks to its origins, which do not lie in Asia where Christianity came from, but to the North from whence poured forth the poetic and hierarchical barbarians: Celts, Vikings and Germans.[70]

The biggest merit of Domenach's stance of intellectual ambiguity and confusion is that it honestly admits that its object of study is both confusing and problematic. Its greatest drawback is that, unlike the authoritative stances of the other

three positions, it suspends judgement on the ENR because the phenomenon does not fit into an accustomed order of neat, unambiguous categories. Furthermore, this position misses the fundamental insights of the other three positions, namely, the residues of the old revolutionary Right, its fundamental novelty, and a synthesis of the two within the ENR worldview. The essential problem of this position, however, is that it is not likely to produce any lasting, definitive work on the subject of the ENR intellectuals. It will too often be interpreted as a failure of the scholar studying the phenomenon rather than an acknowledgement of genuine intellectual ambiguity and confusion.

6. The Griffin-Taguieff Debate on the ENR Thinkers: Fascism or Post-Fascism?

Roger Griffin and Pierre-André Taguieff present alternative views of the ENR intellectuals in the 1990s. While Griffin sees the ENR thinkers perpetuating a fascist-like worldview, Taguieff has argued that certain ENR thinkers might have now moved beyond the worlds of fascism and the revolutionary Right. The English scholar Roger Griffin would have lamented the treatment of fellow intellectual Taguieff in the French mass media during the summer of 1993, but he was still not convinced by the latter's claim that de Benoist had moved beyond extreme right-wing political space in the 1990s. For Griffin, de Benoist continued his fidelity to a fascist-like worldview within a strictly cultural, metapolitical orientation. Griffin contends that the ENR and de Benoist's revision of fascism tried to de-historicize classical fascism by borrowing from the thought of the inter-war era's "conservative revolution" and focusing exclusively on the metapolitical terrain of political contestation.

For Griffin, this ENR metapolitical revision of fascism still practised by de Benoist in the 1990s entailed five tactical changes from the older revolutionary Right worldview: (1) the pluralistic, multicultural society of liberal democracy would be replaced not by a racially pure national community led by a charismatic leader, but by a homogeneous ethnic cultural community (*ethnie*) within the framework of an imperial or federal "spiritual" Europe; (2) democracy, universal human rights,

equality, and individual rights would be exchanged by an "organic democracy" which respected natural inequality and aristocratic elitism; (3) the xenophobic spirit of the past with its stress on the superiority of the West, sanctity of national roots, and a mythical past would give way to a xenophile spirit which celebrates the "right to difference" of all world cultures; (4) the old fascist enemies such as communism or the Jews are replaced by a generalized attack on the now "stable" individualist and materialist liberal capitalist system, and on multicultural, "cosmopolitan" forces bent on destroying regional or national identities for the sake of profit; and (5) the fascist political, military, and nationalist-oriented Third Way between liberal democracy and socialism has been revamped by a culturally-centred, social, and economic Third Way replete with post-modern influences, a new syncretism of ideologies and disciplines (especially after the demise of communism), and the influence of numerous leftist and ecological thinkers.[71]

Griffin has used this aforementioned categorization to show how de Benoist's worldview in the 1990s continues to be deeply imbued with a fascist-like ethos. Claiming to offer an objective, scientific analysis of modernity in a spirit of cultural criticism without clear solutions in the 1990s, Griffin maintains that de Benoist still longs for a "palingenetic" rebirth of a revolutionary post-liberal order where the current age of spiritual darkness and materialist decadence are completely shattered. An example of such a neutral, scientific, and detached stance of cultural criticism is de Benoist's 1996 article in *Telos* entitled "Confronting Globalization."[72] If one was not aware of de Benoist's revolutionary Right origins, one could easily believe that it was written by a scholar with liberal or leftist ideological roots. However, Griffin contends that this detached stance of cultural criticism is not common to all of de Benoist's works in the 1990s. So, for example, Griffin points to the lasting residues from de Benoist's days within the revolutionary Right milieu: a 1990 edited work on the thinkers of the "conservative revolution," an edited volume on the key thinkers of the Right, and his important 1995 book, *L'empire intérieur*, which praises the

revolutionary "clarity" of the myth and calls for a spiritualized, European empire of the soul where warrior values such as honour, fidelity, and courage reign.[73]

On the other side of the debate, Pierre-André Taguieff claimed that de Benoist's stance of cultural criticism known as *apoliteia* had allowed the doyen of the ENR to move beyond extreme right-wing political space. For Taguieff, de Benoist moved definitively outside the realm of the extreme right-wing with the unveiling of his limited circulation journal *Krisis* in 1988. Taguieff has pointed out how GRECE was a novel force on the Right in denouncing the entire Judeo-Christian heritage of the West. He also alludes to de Benoist's public statements that declare a break with the Old Right's liberalism, moralism, Catholic integralism, and racism. He insists that de Benoist distinguishes himself with disdain from the GRECE members who joined the *Front National* and support their "intolerable" and populist "scapegoat logic." At the same time, however, Taguieff is too informed to fully accept, at face value, de Benoist's radical overhaul from his revolutionary Right roots in the mid-1960s. Like Griffin, Taguieff still finds residues of right-wing thought from de Benoist's more militant, ultra-nationalist days. When asked in a 1994 *Telos* interview whether de Benoist had now become a leftist, Taguieff was far from convinced:

> Let us not be so hasty or naïve. Benoist's undeniable intellectual evolution, which part of GRECE followed, did not reflect or result in an unambiguous political evolution. His credibility will only be beyond reproach when he publishes an argumentative text in which he both clearly breaks with the neo-nationalist or "revolutionary-conservative" milieu and clarifies the reasons for this break. For example, the obvious parallels between his Third World positions and those of some communist or Left groups are not in themselves certificates of pride. The wearing of the Islamic *chador* in schools can certainly be defended with diametrically opposed arguments, creating an ambiguous field in which racism and anti-racism turn into each other in this ideological oscillation or redistribution of opinions which is the "right to difference."[74]

7. A Note of Academic Caution

After classifying the various bodies of literature on the ENR thinkers, I now offer a note of academic caution based on three points for those scholars evaluating the ENR phenomenon. The first essential reason is the heterogeneous nature of its thinkers and sympathisers in terms of divergent ideological tendencies, differing

national or regional contexts, and theme changes across time. This can inhibit any reductionist or categorical reading of the different ENR intellectuals. Pierre-André Taguieff has actually listed three intellectual tendencies within the French *nouvelle droite*: traditional counter-revolutionaries or integral nationalism in the tradition of Charles Maurras, René Guénon, or Julius Evola; European conservative revolutionaries who are partisans of a "third way," including revolutionary nationalists, neo-fascists, and neo-pagans associated with GRECE; and neo-conservatives of a "liberal' stripe, whether the *Club de l'Horloge*'s national liberalism, liberal, republican national populism, the *Front National*'s "popular capitalism," anti-state libertarians, or the "new economists."[75] The first two tendencies are extremely hostile to the third, the neo-conservative "liberals," seeing this tendency as a mere extension of the utilitarian, "jungle capitalism" of the AANR, or the political wing of global market forces of "decadent" consumerism. Along with the ENR's recovery of many themes from its left-wing adversaries, including anti-liberal capitalism, anti-economism, "organic democracy" anti-Americanism, and pro-Third World solidarity in recent years, these different strains of thought make the phenomenon all the more difficult to evaluate in a definitive manner. If we also add the divergence and even outright hostility between different national or regional tendencies (e.g., French New Right, Italian New Right, German New Right, Belgian New Right, Russian New Right, etc.) and their differing areas of focus, we are left with a staggering academic task.

A second more practical concern for academics is the precedent of the successful lawsuit launched against the Israeli historian of fascism Ze'ev Sternhell for his accusations of fascism made against French writer Bertrand de Jouvenel.[76] It is conceivable that an ENR theorist could take any journalist or academic to court who labels him a "fascist," where the ENR thinker would surely proclaim an anti-totalitarian, anti-fascist, anti-racist stance. Given the large number of accusations of a re-incarnated fascism made against the *nouvelle droite* within the French press, especially in its heady days of mass media glory in 1979 and 1993, this is certainly a

legitimate possibility. It should be pointed out, however, that the ENR and even the *Front National* have generally opted to publicly protest the fascist tag made by scholars and journalists with letter writing campaigns, through the use of influential French dailies such as *Le Monde*, and national television channels like *Télévision Française* (TF1).

Finally, the last note of academic caution is based on an alarming trend set by the 1993 *Appeal to Vigilance* against the ENR and its intellectual "lackeys" launched by 40 French and European intellectuals and signed by an additional 1500 a year later within the reputable daily *Le Monde*. Unfortunately, the appeal might have also had the effect of discouraging scholarship on the phenomenon by accusing scholars studying the phenomenon of contributing to the unconscious legitimization and rise of the "Far Right." These implicit accusations against meticulous scholars such as Pierre-André Taguieff appear to be unfair and inaccurate. Honest and well-researched scholarship is surely not intended to support the narrow interests of Right or Left, or any other political faction. Should we similarly accuse those who undertake studies of neo-Nazism, "black terrorism" in Italy, or the French *Front National* of supporting these anti-democratic tendencies? Moreover, should not an appeal to vigilance against the legitimization of the "Far Right" have precise names, groups, and targets? If this had been the case, then perhaps the rabidly anti-immigrant *Front National* and elements of the entire French political class, including the Communists, Socialists, RPR, and UDF, would be shown to be responsible for the rise of what Jean Baudrillard called a chilling anti-immigrant, "white fundamentalist Europe."[77] It might also be demonstrated that we require just as much "vigilance" against these mainstream political forces as with the intellectual *nouvelle droite* or scholars studying the phenomenon.

Another essential aspect of the *Appeal to Vigilance* was that the manifesto even called for the boycott of ENR publishing houses and, in short, a banishment of the ENR from the forum of public ideas. In this partisan, McCarthy-like atmosphere of

allegations and innuendo, there is a need to assert a humanistic, liberal, and democratic ethos of unrestricted access to debate for all cultural and political forces. This should naturally be coupled with an authentic search for knowledge and truths, and a high degree of scholarly rigour. The privileges of the intellectual and the contemplative life do not entail the silencing of even the bitterest opponents. In following this path, the signatories of the *Appeal to Vigilance* serve neither the noble causes of democracy, nor the liberty of ideas. In short, the *Appeal to Vigilance* negates the loftiest intentions of a scholarly life.

Notes

[1] Roger Eatwell, "How to Revise History (And Influence People?), Neo-Fascist Style," in Luciano Cheles et. al., *The Far Right in Western and Eastern Europe*, p. 320.

[2] Roger Griffin, "Plus ça change! The Fascist Pedigree of the Nouvelle Droite," p.1.

[3] Personal electronic mail correspondence with Roger Griffin, Oxford Brookes University, in the months of June and July 1998.

[4] Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire*, p.32.

[5] Richard Wolin, "Designer Fascism," in Richard Golsan, (ed.), *Fascism's Return: Scandal, Revision, and Ideology since 1980*, pp. 48-60.

[6] Harvey Simmons, *The French National Front: Extremist Challenge to Democracy*, "Preface."

[7] It should also be noted that the Italian radical Right's guru, Julius Evola, edited a cultural review between 1927 and 1929 called *Ur*, synonymous with traditionalist themes such as fire, origins, and the primordial. See Umberto Eco, *New York Review of Books* (June 22, 1995).

[8] Thomas Sheehan, "Myth and Violence: the Fascism of Julius Evola and Alain de Benoist," *Social Research* 48 (1981).

[9] Alain de Benoist, *Vu de droite: anthologie critique des idées contemporaines* (Paris: Copernic, 1979), pp. 432-436.

[10] Franco Ferraresi, *Threats to Democracy: The Radical Right in Italy After the War*, pp. 43-50

[11] Alain de Benoist, *Vu de droite*, p.433.

[12] Thomas Sheehan, "Myth and Violence: the Fascism of Julius Evola and Alain de Benoist," p.45.

[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 64-73.

[14] Robert Badinter, (ed.), *Vous avez dit fascismes?* (Paris: Montalba, 1985).

[15] Henry Weinberg, *The Myth of the Jew in France 1967-1982* (Oakville, Ontario, Mosaic Press, 1987), pp. 111-130.

[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 119-120.

[17] Ciaran Maolain, *A World Directory of the Radical Right* (Essex, England: Longman, 1987), p. 97.

[18] Roger Griffin, "Plus ça change! The Fascist Pedigree of the Nouvelle Droite," pp. 7-12.

[19] *Ibid.*, pp. 13-17.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

[23] *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

[24] Roger Eatwell, *Fascism: A History* (London: Vintage, 1996), pp. 248-250.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 250.

[26] Pierre-André Taguieff, "The New Cultural Racism in France," pp. 109-122.

[27] Roger Eatwell, *Fascism: A History*, p. 250.

[28] See, for example, the elaborate Internet site of a German branch of the ENR, the *Thule-Netz*: http://thulenet.com/index.htm.

[29] Harvey Simmons, *The French National Front: The Extremist Challenge to Democracy*, pp. 212-215.

[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 261-262.

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 209.

[32] *Ibid.*, pp. 212-231.

[33] Michalina Vaughan, "The Extreme Right in France: 'Lepénisme' or The Politics of Fear," in Luciano Cheles et. al., *The Far Right in Eastern and Western Europe*, pp. 219-220.

[34] *Ibid.*, pp. 217-220.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 219.

[36] Martin Lee, *The Beast Reawakens*, pp. 171-216.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

[38] Richard Wolin, "Designer Fascism," p. 51.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 55.

[40] Quoted in Isaiah Berlin, *The Crooked Timber Of Humanity* (London: Pinter, 1991).

[41] Richard Wolin, "Designer Fascism," pp. 55-56.

[42] *Ibid.*

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 55.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 59.

[45] *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

[46] Paul Piccone, "Confronting the French New Right: Old Prejudices or a New Political Paradigm?," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994), p. 7.

[47] *Ibid.*

[48] Pierre-André Taguieff, "From Race to Culture: The New Right's View of European Identity," pp. 99-126.

[49] Mark Wegierski, "The New Right in Europe," pp. 55-69 and Franco Sacchi, "The Italian New Right," pp. 71-80 both in *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994).

[50] Piero Ignazi, "The Changing Profile of the Italian Social Movement," in Leonard Weinberg and Peter Merkl, (eds.), *Encounters with the Contemporary Radical Right* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1993), pp. 76-77; p. 92.

[51] Roberto Chiarini, "The Italian Far Right: The Search for Legitimacy," in Douglas Johnson, (ed.), *The Far Right in Western and Eastern Europe* (London: Longman, 1991), p. 34.

[52] *Ibid.*

[53] Piero Ignazi, "The Changing Profile of the Italian Social Movement," p. 92.

[54] Pierre-André Taguieff, *Sur la nouvelle droite*, p. 313.

[55] Roger Griffin, *Fascism*, pp. 1-12.

[56] Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire*, pp. 241-246.

[57] See, for example, Pierre-André Taguieff, (ed.), *Face au racisme* (Paris: La Découverte, 1991).

[58] Ruth Levitas, *The Ideology of the New Right* (Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 1986), p. 5.

[59] Tomislav Sunic, *Against Democracy and Equality: The European New Right*, p. 8.

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

[61] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[62] Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: Le GRECE et son histoire*, pp. 96-97.

[63] *Ibid.*

[64] Pierre-André Taguieff, "An Interview with Pierre-André Taguieff," p. 163.

[65] See, for example, Michael Walker, "Against All Totalitarianisms," *The Scorpion* (Autumn 1986), pp. 3-6.

[66] Paul Gottfried, "Preface," in Tomislav Sunic, *Against Democracy and Equality.*

[67] Pierre-André Taguieff, "An Interview with Pierre-André Taguieff," pp. 166-167.

[68] Douglas Johnson, "The New Right in France," p. 242.

[69] Roger Griffin, "Plus ça change! The Fascist Pedigree of the Nouvelle Droite," p. 1.

[70] Jean-Marie Domenach, quoted in Harvey Simmons, *The French National Front: The Extremist Challenge to Democracy* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1996), p. 211.

[71] Roger Griffin, "Plus ça change! The Fascist Pedigree of the Nouvelle Droite," pp. 5-6.

[72] Alain de Benoist, "Confronting Globalization," *Telos* 108 (Summer 1996), pp. 117-137.

[73] Roger Griffin, "Plus ça change! The Fascist Pedigree of the Nouvelle Droite," pp. 15-17.

[74] Pierre-André Taguieff, "An Interview with Pierre-André Taguieff," p. 160.

[75] Pierre-André Taguieff, "The New Right's View of European Identity," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994), pp. 99-100.

[76] Roger Griffin, "Plus ca change! The Fascist Pedigree of the Nouvelle Droite," p. 27.

[77] Jean Baudrillard, *The Perfect Crime* (London: Verso, 1996), pp. 135-136.

Chapter 6:
The Influence of the *Nouvelle Droite* in Europe and Beyond: A Right-Wing International?

At this juncture, we begin the second section of the dissertation. Having already examined the ideological universe and worldview of the ENR thinkers as well as competing interpretations of the ENR phenomenon, we now seek to highlight the ENR's relationship to various cultural and political forces throughout Europe and around the world. This chapter will deal with the relationship between the French *nouvelle droite* and various other ENR formations. We will also closely consider the interesting ways in which the French *nouvelle droite*'s ideas made their arrival within the cultural milieu of some former New Left intellectual sectors in North America in the mid-1990s. Does this mean that the ENR represents a sort of right-wing International, or is it more of a loosely constituted school of thought? This question will be further examined in the seventh or final chapter when we examine the ENR's linkages to extreme-right, neo-fascist, and mainstream right-wing political forces.

1. The French *Nouvelle Droite*'s Pan-European Context

While the French *nouvelle droite* was essentially born with GRECE in the mid-1960s, its cultural and political influences extended beyond France to numerous European countries, including Belgium, Holland, Italy, Spain, Germany, England, Romania, and even Russia. ENR journals, debates, conferences, or offices even extended around the world: the French island of *La Réunion*, South Africa, Argentina, Peru, the United States, and Canada. Yet, Europe's cultural, historical, spiritual, and political destiny stood at the heart of the ENR's metapolitical battle against liberal democracy and global capitalism. The *nouvelle droite*'s influence on centres of intellectual opinion throughout Europe, however, did not mean that the ENR was a homogeneous revolutionary right-wing International. We have already seen how

GRECE itself was divided into various schools of thought. Similarly, the ENR itself is a heterogeneous vanguard with national and regional differences, competing ideological strains, and personality conflicts between intellectual leaders from different countries. Finally, the ENR's romantic New Left, ecological, federalist, and pro-local democracy positions in the 1990s often resembled the ideals of left-wing or Green political forces rather than those of the Right. These aforementioned positions would not appeal to the traditional right-wing constituency.

Nonetheless, these differences did not prevent the European-wide co-operation of ENR intellectuals from various nations in leading debates and conferences, creating academic journals, conducting university exchanges, or establishing formal and informal channels of communication. In short, co-operation was possible between different ENR thinkers throughout Europe because they were generally united by their primary focus on cultural metapolitics and an anti-liberal, anti-egalitarian, and anti-capitalist view of social and political existence. Moreover, the relative success of the French *nouvelle droite* and its celebrated intellectual Alain de Benoist served as a model for other New Right formations across Europe. As a result, there is an especially close ideological relationship between a number of French *nouvelle droite* journals and their Italian, Belgian, Dutch, and Spanish counterparts.

While the German New Right is important for obvious historical reasons, related to that nation's Nazi past, the Italian New Right was probably more intellectually brilliant and successful. Moreover, the Italian New Right could draw on its own strong local cultural and historical manifestations of revolutionary Right and fascist currents of thought. After all, it was in Italy that fascism was born in actual practice after the fascists' infamous March on Rome in 1922. Given its conspicuous sympathy for "Red-Brown" alliances, the Russian New Right is also important as a result of the political and economic chaos produced by the transition to a market economy after the sudden collapse of communism in 1989 and the official disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991. Both Germany and Russia are also

geopolitical powers of immense political importance with historically prominent strains of ENR-like anti-Americanism. Given the strongly embedded cultural currents of revolutionary right-wing thought in France, Italy, Germany, and Russia, it is in these countries that the ENR "cultural war" could have its most important political influence in the future. With its long history of anti-democratic, anti-capitalist, and hyper-nationalist traditions, Eastern Europe might also be susceptible to a number of ENR ideas.

Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol has demonstrated some of the cultural links between the French *nouvelle droite* and other ENR chapters. While insisting on the ideological heterogeneity of the ENR, Duranton-Crabol has also recognized the "multinational" character of GRECE.[1] So, for example, the German *Neue Rechte* is modelled after France's GRECE and its first journal, *Elemente*, is named after its French sister publication *Éléments*. Armin Mohler and Hennig Eichberg, two prominent *Neue Rechte* thinkers, have encouraged the exchange of rebels between the French and German New Right. Despite serious differences between the French *nouvelle droite* and the Italian *Nuova Destra*, the launching of the journal *Elementi* in 1978 followed the model of France's *Éléments*. Franco Sacchi has explained how the Italian *Nuova Destra* was born in 1974 after contacts were established and guidance given from the French *nouvelle droite*.[2]

There are other examples of multinational co-operation between the French New Right and intellectuals from other European countries. Alexander Dugin's Russian New Right journal *Elementy* is modelled on its French counterpart and Alain de Benoist briefly served on its editorial board. Both de Benoist and Robert Steuckers, head of the Belgian New Right and its journals *Vouloir* and *Orientations*, went to Moscow in March 1992 to participate in various public meetings run by Alexander Dugin. GRECE's influence can also be found in Spain with the journal *Punto y coma* and England through the *Mankind Quarterly* and Michael Walker's *The Scorpion*. The latter along with university professors Marco Tarchi of Italy and Tomislav Sunic of

Croatia are also on the current editorial board of the French New Right journal *Éléments*. Furthermore, GRECE's source of contacts, conferences, and exchanges extend to Portugal, Greece, and Austria. The New Right also started a journal in Spain, *Hesperides*, under Jose Javier Esparza four years ago. It began a Romanian New Right journal, *Maiastra*, in late 1998 under the leadership of Bogdan Radulescu. The *nouvelle droite* also has a kind of sister publication for Dutch and Flemish speakers called *TeKos* edited by Luc Pauwels. Interestingly, there is even an Argentinian New Right journal, *Disenso*, under the direction of Alberto Buela. *Disenso* manages to issue its publication throughout Latin America.

Despite these contacts and exchanges between different nationalities, the ENR also had its share of disagreement and conflict. While often singing the philosophical, artistic, geopolitical, and historical praises of Germany, de Benoist has accused the German *Neue Rechte* of being obsessively fixated with its own internal and national issues.[3] De Benoist's federalist leanings of recent years are a far cry from the ultra-nationalist longings of the *Neue Rechte*, their desire to rehabilitate Germany's stained past from what they call the "intolerable" taboos of the post-World War II and New Left-influenced 1968 generations, and to return Germany to political normalcy (i.e., where the Germans once again take their role as one of the great world powers.)[4] Similarly, de Benoist has taken his ideological distance from the German New Right's thinker Pierre Krebs, Michael Walker of the English language ENR-influenced publication *The Scorpion*, and Alexander Dugin from the Russian New Right. De Benoist claimed not to have had contact with Krebs for about twenty years and argued that Walker "has his own views" which are "certainly" different from his own.[5] A brief examination of Walker's *The Scorpion* shows that it is impregnated with overt ultra-nationalist, racist, and Holocaust denial ideals. In contrast, de Benoist's published works contain no conspicuous attachment to the racist, ultra-nationalist, anti-Semitic, or Holocaust revisionist sectors of the revolutionary Right milieu. Furthermore, de Benoist's current New Left, ecological, federalist, and democratizing impulses are incompatible with Walker's positions.

In terms of Russia, de Benoist has claimed that he never authorized Alexander Dugin, the head of the Russian New Right, to put his name on the editorial board of *Elementy*. At his request, de Benoist's name was later removed from *Elementy*'s editorial board in the early 1990s. De Benoist was likely turned off by the openly nationalistic and anti-Semitic sentiments of the Russian New Right. From a pragmatic perspective, the open expression of hyper-nationalist views was politically detrimental to the Right as a whole. Moreover, on the ideological terrain, de Benoist and Dugin have essentially parted company. De Benoist has publicly dissociated himself from the Russian New Right.[6] There is a vast gap between de Benoist's Indo-European, federalist, and differentialist vision of a "spiritual" European empire and Dugin's more traditionalist and idiosyncratic concept known as "Eurasianism," an Orthodox Christian-Islamic empire fighting Western (American) materialism and homogenized "totalitarianism."

2. The Italian *Nuova Destra*: Fascism's Kiss of Death?

The Italian *Nuova Destra* also points to the relatively independent path it has charted vis-à-vis the French *nouvelle droite*. Some thinkers claimed that the emergence of Italy's *Nuova Destra* had meant the creation of a new post-fascist, revolutionary outfit divorced from the traditionalist or revolutionary Right. These critics essentially argued that the modernizing thrust of the Italian New Right might spell fascism's demise, or its twilight. Writing in the 1990s, Franco Sacchi called the Italian *Nuova Destra* "a metapolitical movement representing one of the most interesting developments in Italy today."[7] While its origins are linked to the Italian extra-parliamentary, radical Right and the official neo-fascist political party called the *Movimento Sociale Italiano* (MSI), it diverges from both by focusing exclusively on the terrain of culture rather than direct, violent street action or parliamentary politics. In this regard, it has an affinity for the metapolitical framework of the French *nouvelle droite*.

While the *Nuova Destra* was born in 1974 as a result of exchanges with its French counterparts, it was in 1977 that it began to steer its own course of action. Attacking Old Right pillars and the MSI's "petty" parliamentarism, the *Nuova Destra* began to also lament the loss of "Black, Red, and White" (i.e., fascist, communist, and liberal) youth during the radical spate of Italian terrorism in the 1970s. The *Nuova Destra* thought that a genuine convergence was possible between revolutionaries on the extreme-right and extreme-left against liberal democracy. An initial hard-edged journal of the 1970s, *La voce della fogna* (*The Voice of the Sewers*), later gave way to the more refined *Diorama letterario* which took its distance from its various French counterparts. As mentioned earlier, another *Nuova Destra* journal *Elementi* was launched in 1978, but it has now been replaced by other journals. The *Nuova Destra*'s important opportunity, however, came in 1977 when fascist and extreme right-wing forces were in disarray and in the wake of the birth of *movimento del '77*, a youth protest movement formed in 1977 which transcended political ideologies and was mostly interested in the fulfilment of subjective aspirations. This generational difference also led to a divergence between the *Nuova Destra* and the French *nouvelle droite*, heirs of an older post-war, post-colonial generation of political memories and distinct national experiences.

This new generational phenomenon within the *Nuova Destra* led to the claims that it distanced itself from all the Right's previous stances, both legal and illegal, and was re-thinking the Right's cultural paradigm in order to free it from sterile, backward-looking positions.[8] For the *Nuova Destra*, the future could only be prepared through metapolitics and cultural power, what Marco Tarchi dubbed "the primary engine, an indispensable tool."[9] Thousands of *Nuova Destra* youth sympathisers began this cultural "combat" through Marco Tarchi's help with the foundation of *Campo Hobbit*, a national and popular festival named after one of the novels of the English fantasy writer J.R.R. Tolkien (1892-1973), which focused on the importance of myth and "sacred time." These *Hobbit* camps were held in Italy in 1977, 1978, and 1980. Stressing the idea of what Tarchi called "festive time" and the search for alternative

cosmologies, *Campo Hobbit* included political dissidents from the Left and Right in an attempt to transcend the barriers between the two camps. *Campo Hobbit* included the following agenda: a focus on youth issues, subjective and spiritual aspirations, a desire to create an eclectic culture, an opening to the Left and ecological issues, and the creation of a new avant-garde in the arts. In *Campo Hobbit*, as with Alain de Benoist's thinking, we can see the indelible marks of the basic ideas of the New Left revolutionaries from May 1968. Thus, the Italian New Right was grafting a New Left-like ideology onto its original revolutionary Right heritage. In the eyes of some cultural critics, it was actually creating a new ideological synthesis, or a novel political paradigm.

Shortly after the last *Campo Hobbit*, Marco Tarchi, the future leader of the *Nuova Destra*, was purged from the neo-fascist MSI in 1981. This was another turning point for the *Nuova Destra* as it held numerous meetings in 1980 and 1981 in order to analyze the experiences of the 1970s and clarify both its positions and objectives. Later, Tarchi would become the editor of *Trasgressioni* and one of the harshest right-wing critics of the MSI, its successor called the *Alleanza Nazionale* (AN), and other right-wing political parties throughout Italy. The *Nuova Destra* under Tarchi claimed to reject all the Right's previous positions. Its main enemy is not modernity itself, but the inconsistencies and contradictions of liberal democracy. Tarchi insists that he has rejected the fascist past, criticized the authoritarian thrust of the neo-fascist milieu, claims to defend the democratic principle, and accepted the cultural Other as well as substantive intercultural dialogue.[10] His philosophical influences include a diverse and wide range of authors on the Right, Left, and beyond: Julius Evola (during his youth), Karl Marx, Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Pitrim Sorokin, Max Weber, Tönnies, Serge Latouche, Charles Taylor, and Alain de Benoist from the French *nouvelle droite*.[11]

Fighting for federalism and the preservation of cultural identities, the *Nuova Destra* attacks what it sees as the hyper-materialism of liberal capitalism, which they

argue tears asunder communal existence. Tarchi has called for a "new communitarianism" and a "society of communities" against the homogenized "steamroller" of universal ideologies such as nationalism, liberalism, and socialism.[12] For Tarchi, this form of communitarianism would not be slavishly imposed from above as in the colonial experience or the Jacobin model of the nation-state, but would entail a fluid, negotiated pattern of existence between diverse cultural communities. These communities, argues Tarchi, would avoid a generalized apartheid by being open and ready to assimilate new influences and members. Reminiscent of Charles Taylor's "sources of the self," Tarchi holds that the maintenance of cultural differences can only occur in a relational, dialogical fashion rather than the assimilationist or exterminationist spirit of the past. These pro-communitarian, pro-democratic positions have been similarly expressed by Alain de Benoist within *Krisis* and *Telos*.

What does Tarchi consider to be the most pressing problems of our age? He has listed a number of problems, which confirms our analysis that the ENR's worldview is especially driven by its central notion of the "right to difference." So, for example, Tarchi writes that "if we cannot reverse the homogenizing and individualist tendencies which characterize our age, the world loses its richness: the plurality of differences, which constituted the world from the beginning of epochs."[13] In short, Tarchi argues that modern man must recover a sense of the common good; abandon his egoism; restore man's quality of life and a positive relationship between man and nature; and adopt a positive multicultural attitude within the context of human relations, which allows both humanity and its various peoples to maintain (or re-discover) their identities and coexist in harmony.[14] In addition, Tarchi is adamant that modern man must re-consider the autonomy of regions and local communities in order to create large spaces of self-determination as a counterweight against the arrival of a materialist, global system.[15]

It is no wonder, then, that many supporters of the *Nuova Destra* no longer see themselves as part of the Right as it is historically known. Several critics, including

Mark Wegierski, have even concluded that the Italian New Right and ENR in general have made major efforts to break with its revolutionary Right origins and no longer even deserve the right-wing label because they oppose both Anglo-American conservatism (with its emphasis on bourgeois individualism, capitalism, and property rights) and traditional continental conservatism (with its fixation on monarchy and Church).[16] In an age of communism in ruins, could the Italian New Right be one of the few remaining left-wing movements in Italy today? Or, is this simply a case of a rightist strategy of cultural appropriation, solidly derived from the most essential New Left ideas, in order to mask its fundamental revolutionary Right historical origins and worldview? His writings suggest that Tarchi would simply reply that the Italian New Right is neither Left nor Right. He would stress the novelty of its cultural politics.

In the end, Tarchi still "dreams" of the revival of a political "Third Way" beyond liberalism and communism, but one that is not seduced by the "sirens of the totalitarian mirage."[17] In this context, Tarchi insists that political rivals will likely increasingly find themselves allies in the common struggle of individuals and peoples against liberalism and global capitalism.[18] Yet, this political project, Tarchi adds, will not be possible if the ENR remains a cultural school of thought without a larger following and does not become involved in a movement of social renewal.[19] For Tarchi, this movement for social renewal must begin from the "bottom-up" and hope for "the invention of another future and a better world than the one we now live in."[20] Like de Benoist and several other ENR thinkers, Tarchi has been seriously influenced by the romantic, revolutionary notions of the intellectual New Left and the 1968ers.

As in the case of his French New Right counterpart Alain de Benoist, Roger Griffin is not completely convinced that Marco Tarchi, who became a political science professor at the University of Florence in 1998, has abandoned his old revolutionary Right worldview. While claiming to transcend Left-Right divisions and withdrawing from the sphere of activist politics to cultural criticism, Griffin argues that Tarchi has not abandoned his "proto-fascist" dreams of a "palingenetic," post-liberal social order.

He cites Tarchi's edited journal *Diorama letterario* which in the late 1990s continued its kinship with the *nouvelle droite* by publishing an article by Alain de Benoist, advertised for the French *nouvelle droite* journal *Éléments*, reviewed the biography of Carl Schmitt, and included in its "special books" section works by Julius Evola, Carl Schmitt, and J.R.R. Tolkien's cult classics on "sacred time," as well as explicitly fascist or conservative revolutionary authors, such as Drieu de La Rochelle, Ezra Pound, Giovanni Gentile, Armin Mohler, and Ernst Jünger. Attacking the claim that Tarchi's *Diorama letterario* has purely cultural, apolitical concerns, Griffin writes the following: "It would make the message *Diorama letterario* transmits to its subscribers less ambiguous if it stopped advertising texts which are capable of nurturing extreme right nostalgia and palingenetic imaginings."[21] Griffin also has pointed out how the Italian *Nuova Destra* and other New Right cultural groups in France, Germany, Belgium, England, and Russia have provided the philosophical arguments and their fair share of personnel for extreme-right and neo-fascist political parties.[22] Yet, this writer's reading of the ENR insists that it cannot be classified as a new form of fascism. Its recent New Left, federalist, ecological, and pro-democratic positions are incompatible with the "top-down," ultra-nationalist ideals of fascism.

In general, we have seen how the *nouvelle droite*, born in France in the late 1960s, eventually spread its tentacles to other European as well as a number of non-European countries. However, despite its contacts, exchanges, and conferences between different European nations, the ENR never constituted a full-scale revolutionary right-wing International. We pointed to the explicit differences between the French, Italian, German, and Russian New Right. Instead, we suggest that the ENR is a loosely formed and heterogeneous "school of thought" which collectively preaches the primacy of cultural metapolitics and an anti-liberal, anti-egalitarian view of existence. At minimum, the *nouvelle droite* has helped to restore the credibility of a once dying revolutionary right-wing ideology throughout Europe as well as helped to shift the focus of the French and larger European cultural landscapes. Moreover, some critics have gone one step further to claim that the ENR ideological synthesis is both

novel and unique, thus leading to both fear and distrust from established cultural and political elites.

3. The ENR Comes to North America: The Isolated Case of *Telos* or a Broader Cultural and Political Trend?

In this particular section, I discuss the unique case of the United States-based academic journal *Telos* which in the early 1990s began to seriously debate the works of ENR intellectuals, especially French New Right thinkers such as Alain de Benoist and, to a lesser extent, Italian New Right intellectuals like Marco Tarchi. I begin by tracing the historical and ideological trajectory of the iconoclastic journal of critical political theory which, like the ENR, came into existence in the wake of the New Left's rise to political prominence in May 1968. I then examine and analyze the context and contents of the special *Telos* double issue on the ENR entitled "The French New Right: New Right-New Left-New Paradigm?" published between the winter of 1993 and fall of 1994. While the ENR had its ideological birthplace in France and the European continent in general, it now received the intense attention and scrutiny of disgruntled former leftists and anarchists from *Telos*. The New Left children of *Telos* were now embracing the other revolutionaries of May 1968, namely, the former right-wing revolutionaries of the French New Right. Was this simply the isolated case of an idiosyncratic editor and journal, or part of a broader cultural and political trend sweeping the post-communist world? Did the *Telos* exposure of ENR thinkers to North America years after the *nouvelle droite*'s heyday in France in 1979 corroborate the veracity of the ENR's own strategy of remaining faithful to a long-term metapolitical confrontation against liberal democracy?

4. A Short History of *Telos*: The Drift from Left to Right

Telos, a quarterly journal of critical thought, was born around May 1968 and has been committed to the development of an American critical theory, and the analysis of American and international questions from a broad geopolitical perspective. It has attempted to navigate between a symbiosis of American and

European critical theory, and is especially indebted to German, French, and Italian intellectual and political debates. In the late 1960s and 1970s, *Telos* was highly influenced by the political, social, and cultural practices and concepts of the American New Left born out of the anti-Vietnam war movement, various social movements for emancipation, the calls for equal human rights and dignity, social solidarity, peace, justice, cultural autonomy, intellectual and artistic self-expression, the right to control one's life circumstances, and the search for participatory educational and professional structures. It especially rejected what *Telos* editor Paul Piccone, in a Marcuse-like vein, called the materialist "onedimensionality of American society."[23] The American academic journal was originally dedicated to neo-Marxist critical theory and the famous debates of Frankfurt School luminaries such as Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer in the 1930s and 1940s. *Telos* was firmly rooted in the tradition of Western Marxism and the phenomenology of German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). The journal prided itself on a sort of "non-conformist" critical political theory. Rejecting the idea that it had firmly "neo-Marxist" origins, *Telos* editor Paul Piccone claimed that "Marxist economics were a joke, the concept of class never made any sense, the Leninist Party was no better than the Mafia, the Marxists could not deal with culture, and that feminism was a liberal hang-up."[24] Its circulation tended to reach a rather limited, elite audience of about 3000 subscribers and the special double issue on the French New Right in 1993 and 1994 tended to be fairly requested yet retained a similar circulation rate.[25]

Beginning in the 1990s, however, the "non-conformism" of *Telos* became increasingly evident when it published and debated the works of French and Italian New Right theorists. Around this same period (more precisely in the mid-1980s), the American journal also began to translate and debate the writings of ENR intellectual heirs, including the controversial German political scientist and jurist Carl Schmitt and the French partisan, intellectual, and renowned Schmitt scholar Julien Freund (1921-1993).[26] In the late 1980s and mid-1990s, *Telos* turned towards studies related to the phenomenon of populism, "rooted organic communities," and federalism, including

the writings and views of the ENR's leader Alain de Benoist and Italian political science professor Gianfranco Miglio, the former theoretician of the federalist-inspired Northern League under Umberto Bossi.[27] Renate Holub, a University of California at Berkeley professor, explained how the populist, conservative, and New Right turn of *Telos* in the 1980s tended to definitively abandon its own "neo-Marxist," critical perspective:

> The main ideological line emerging from *Telos* over the past few years has systematically suggested that the journal's initial European/American symbiosis of critical theory, has now evolved into a new symbiosis, called "new populism." What it does not systematically argue, but what it systematically does, is denigrate critical thought. While it is not quite clear why a discussion of the theories and concepts associated with "new populism" such as federalism, direct democracy, and conservatism need to lead to an ideological embracement of the political formations of populisms in the United States and in Europe, it is clear that the major editors of *Telos* have chosen to embrace them. They have therefore abandoned their original emancipatory program. For, all assurances to the contrary, legitimations of Italy's Northern Leagues, or of France's New Right, or of Carl Schmitt's "political theology" for that matter, are rooted not in a critical paradigm, but in a form of neo-conservatism. ... Let me say simply here that I see no rhyme or reason why *Telos* had to uncritically legitimate, rather than critically reflect on, the Italian Leagues, French New Right intellectuals, and German Historical Right intellectuals, such as Carl Schmitt.[28]

In short, given its decidedly leftist origins, *Telos* searched for new ideological alternatives as communism fell to ruins in 1989. It was even ready to abandon its own critical, neo-Marxist roots in order to avoid an intellectual and political vacuum. Thereafter, *Telos* tended to oscillate between a commitment to anti-capitalism and radical social and political change, on the one hand, and a more detached, objective form of cultural criticism attacking all received ideological dogmas. With the launching of the French New Right journal *Krisis* in 1988, de Benoist published many leftist, "anti-utilitarian" and "non-conformist" authors, thus presaging his entrance within the pages of the left-oriented *Telos*. When de Benoist began to write in *Telos* in the 1990s, the New Left revolutionary children of 1968 finally saw eye-to-eye with the French New Right revolutionaries born in that same year. The end of communism, the intellectual vacuum, and their common antipathy for global capitalism, liberalism, and orthodox variants of Marxism made debates and alliances possible.

For the *Telos* editorial staff, this aforementioned "new populist" and right-wing turn was made especially possible by the fateful collapse of the Berlin Wall and communist states in 1989. In short, one needs only to reread the back issues of *Telos* to get a sense of the decidedly left-wing, communitarian anarchist, "non-conformist," or ecological bent of the journal before the mid-1980s.[29] The thinkers who appeared in *Telos* in the period before the entrance of the ENR theorists included the following who's who of prominent left-leaning intellectuals: Herbert Marcuse, Jean-Paul Sartre, Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Michel Foucault, Christopher Lasch, Alvin Gouldner, Murray Bookchin, William Leiss, Russell Jacoby, Georg Lukacs, and Antonio Gramsci.

Rallying against intellectual conformity and "New Class" cultural and political systems of administration and domination, *Telos* desperately searched for a non-Marxist, alternative critique of a triumphalist global capitalism and liberal democracy, which was starting to prematurely trumpet the "end of history." Like the ENR, *Telos* is radically anti-capitalist and also critical of the destructive, homogenizing cultural and technological tendencies of the United States and various modern ideologies such as nationalism, liberal democracy, socialism, and fascism. Both cultural forces, the ENR thinkers and *Telos* editorial staff, seek to arrest the uncontested reign of global capitalism and liberal democracy, and also struggle against what they view as the "steamroller" of global Westernization in lifestyles and mentalities. Both the *Telos* agenda and its counterpart with ENR intellectuals in the 1990s sought to combat all homogenizing ideologies and the bureaucratization of the "life-world," to use the language of Jürgen Habermas, in order to restore social solidarity, political decisionism, and the revival of organic, small-scale, self-sufficient, and self-governing political communities. Both *Telos* and the ENR intellectuals retained a marginal position within the respective politics of the two continents which, for Paul Piccone, gave them intellectual "vitality" and "honesty."[30]

In the late 1990s, *Telos* editor Paul Piccone argued that the journal reaches "people with open minds – they have to be, given the sort of things we publish."[31] Recognizing its intellectual "non-conformism," *Telos*' main lines of political analysis revolved around the following issues: "The involution of modernity, the rise of the New Class and new modes of domination, the disintegration of community and of personality, populism, federalism, new modes of social organization."[32] These ideas neatly dovetailed with both the concerns of the American New Left and the French New Right. In Paul Piccone's eyes, "The French New Right had taken up the best features of the American New Left, which the American New Left had forgotten."[33] The New Right official manifesto for the year 2000 tended to reflect many of the concerns of the New Left in the 1960s. Moreover, in analyzing Piccone's aforementioned quotation, we recognize that both he and the ENR's de Benoist were uniting the most revolutionary, anti-systemic ideas of both Right and Left. In a sense, they were both carrying on the revolutionary struggle that they claim the 1968ers had long ago abandoned.

5. *Telos* Considers the Merits of the ENR's Worldview: The 1993/1994 Debates

In the mid-1980s, *Telos* began its post-modern and right-wing turn by appropriating a sort of left-wing Schmittian decisionist perspective and praising populism and federalism against what it viewed as the homogenizing thrust of all modern ideologies. In the mid-1990s, it began to open its pages to ENR intellectuals such as Alain de Benoist and Marco Tarchi.[34] This was a matter of enormous prestige for European intellectuals to be published in a reputable academic journal on the North American continent, in the United States, and in English, the world's dominant cultural language. It might have even increased the cultural capital of these ENR intellectuals back home on the European continent.

With the publication of the special *Telos* double issue in 1993/1994, there was now a serious consideration of the merits of the ENR worldview. One could even find authors such as the editor Paul Piccone who gave a qualified and temporary embrace

of the ENR worldview.[35] The title of the special double issue, "The French New Right: New Right-New Left-New Paradigm," and the arguments of its editor Piccone and other authors such as Frank Adler, Mark Wegierski, and Franco Sacchi gave the distinct possibility of a rapprochement and novel political synthesis between the New Left children of 1968 and their leftist-like, French New Right counterparts born in the same year. In any case, a number of *Telos* editors and authors argued unambiguously that the ENR had transcended its revolutionary Right roots in the 1960s and did not bear any relationship to historical fascism or neo-fascist currents of thought. For example, Franco Sacchi gave this positive judgement of the French *nouvelle droite*: It has "absolutely nothing to do with the world of neo-fascism."[36] Mark Wegierski was equally adamant about distancing the ENR intellectuals from the ideological world of neo-fascism: "Under no circumstances can the European New Right be characterized as a neo-fascist residue."[37]

The special 1993/1994 double issue on the European New Right was a massive collection of its ideas consisting of the following: the writings of ENR authors such as Alain de Benoist and Charles Champetier (prominent in the French *nouvelle droite*'s youth wing and the current editor of *Éléments*), three in-depth interviews with de Benoist, an interview and two scholarly articles by Pierre-André Taguieff, articles by Paul Piccone, Frank Adler, Mark Wegierski, Franco Sacchi, and Paul Gottfried on the merits and contradictions of the worldviews of the Italian and French New Right, and the manifesto, documents, and letters (Alain de Benoist, Pierre Vidal-Naquet, and Roger-Pol Droit) related to the 1993 "Appeal to Vigilance by Forty Intellectuals" signed in *Le Monde* on July 13 and re-published exactly one year later with 1500 more signatures. In a certain sense, the special double issue was a *Telos* response to the 1993 *Appeal*, itself signed by mostly leftist intellectuals who saw the ENR as a new form of sinister, subtle cultural fascism. It especially gave prominent space to Pierre-André Taguieff, the key scholar of the ENR phenomenon, and Alain de Benoist, the ENR doyen, because the two were prime targets of the 1993 *Appeal*, the latter for apparently reviving fascism and the former for unwittingly legitimizing the ideas of

the *nouvelle droite* by entering into dialogue with its thinkers. *Telos* editors and authors essentially argued that the entire affair surrounding the ENR in 1993, years after a similar polemical response in 1979, was the product of a vigilant, McCarthy-like Left raising the ugly ghosts of fascism in order to discredit the Right and revive a Left reeling from the demise of communist states in the East and the lack of concrete ideological support after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

While the *Telos* double issue attempted to offer a more nuanced appraisal of Alain de Benoist's ideas by criticizing the distortions surrounding his works, they were especially keen to defend the scholarship of Pierre-André Taguieff, a "non-conformist," Left-leaning scholar with a solid reputation for the highest academic quality and integrity. The *Telos* staff was especially angry that a scholar with a known reputation for meticulous scholarship could be the target of the *Appeal*, viewed by *Telos* as an Old Left witch-hunt of an outdated Parisian intellectual establishment. In this respect, *Telos* cited the outpouring of French intellectual and public support for Taguieff more than for de Benoist, a more marginalized right-wing intellectual, as a result of the treatment he received from the signatories of the *Appeal*. So, for example, there was an important collective letter defending Taguieff's excellent scholarship published in the prestigious French journal *L'Esprit* in January 1994 and signed by sixty-nine scholars, who unlike the signatories of the *Appeal*, were especially knowledgeable in issues connected to the Right, far Right, ENR, World War II, the Vichy régime, the Algerian War, Islam, immigration, racism, anti-Semitism, and communism.[38] The scholars included all the top French intellectuals in the field: Pierre Hassner, Gilles Kepel, Nona Mayer, Gérard Noiriel, Henry Rousso, Emmanuel Todd, Dominique Schnapper, Bruno Etienne, Pierre Rosanvallon, Patrick Weil, Michel Wieviorka, and Michel Winock.

Yet, *Telos* editorial associate Frank Adler went beyond the position of the left-leaning *L'Esprit* scholars, who defended Taguieff, to also call for intellectual solidarity with Alain de Benoist, despite political differences and in respect of the

broader ethics of intellectual freedom and truth.[39] In addition, the special double issue on the ENR theorists tended to stress the cultural group's novelty, "new" themes such as the predominant focus on cultural metapolitics, anti-Christian paganism, and anti-Western positions, left-wing affinities with the 1968 generation, and attempts to create a new political paradigm uniting New Right and New Left against the political "dinosaurs" of the Old Right and Old Left. In the process, the ENR's revolutionary Right roots were not sufficiently probed and examined by the *Telos* special double issue. In the rush to discover a new political synthesis, it was in the interest of *Telos* to downplay the ENR's revolutionary Right and conservative revolutionary roots and influences, and to show that they were unambiguously distanced from the Old Right and cultural fascism. Although the ENR, as Taguieff has pointed out, might have a credibility problem because of its numerous theme changes over its history,[40] *Telos* editor Paul Piccone was willing to give the ENR and Alain de Benoist the benefit of the doubt in terms of accepting its exoteric agenda, or writings and interviews, at face value: "What one explicitly says and writes must be considered more important than what can be surmised about what one 'really' means, on the basis of conspiracy theories, intuition, or just plain suspicion."[41] Aside from the ENR's rejection of administratively and legally imposed equality, one would be hard pressed to find many differences between the anti-capitalist critique of modernity and all established political ideologies found in *Telos* and the worldview of ENR intellectuals.

Many *Telos* writers tended to paint the ENR intellectuals and especially de Benoist in a fairly positive light: the victims of an anti-intellectual, anti-spiritual campaign of archaic, McCarthyite-like forces on the Old Left and Old Right, and as a truly unique cultural force seeking a new political paradigm. So, for example, Frank Adler of *Telos* condemned the "simplistic and anachronistic" French Left, "vigilant" signatories of the 1993 *Appeal*, for making de Benoist the "real enemy" and a "*néo-nazi masqué*" rather than Jean-Marie Le Pen.[42] In this respect, *Telos* was especially close to merely swallowing the ENR's own claims about the "decadence" of capitalist modernity, liberal democracy, and the "New Class" of intellectuals seeking to impose

a universal, abstract, and homogenizing liberal or socialist agenda on all individuals, regions, and cultures. So, for example, these lines written by *Telos* editor Paul Piccone protesting against what he considered the liberal and left-leaning academic Establishment could have been easily penned by Alain de Benoist:

> Liberals and the remnants of the New Left are extremely dogmatic and unwilling to confront discordant voices. They usually respond by not responding, basking in their position of official authority within academia. Check the idiotic liberal reception of Carl Schmitt to get a general idea. All they can talk about is Nazism, without actually understanding what it was all about. Political Correctness is good for one's career.[43]

The special *Telos* double issue contained numerous other examples of this trend where the academic journal left the house of objectivity and entered the partial house of partisanship searching for a novel political paradigm. So, for example, Paul Piccone argues that the French New Right "deserves to be taken seriously rather than censured by self-righteous *apparatchiks* unable or unwilling to deal with rational arguments on their own grounds."[44] Piccone went even further when he insisted on the novelty and key cultural impact of the ENR intellectuals: "The refusal to seriously study and learn from opponents may result in missing what is truly original in their views and, in the particular case of the French New Right, why its ideas are having such a profound impact throughout Europe."[45]

For Piccone, what was "original" about the French New Right was that it was essentially a left-wing movement supporting standard 1968-like New Left positions such as participatory democracy, self-determination, local autonomy, and opposition to capitalism, bureaucratic domination, nationalism, racism, and traditional imperialism.[46] Piccone explains his interpretation of the ENR as a left-wing cultural movement: "The French New Right, if it is still possible to place them anywhere on the Right – have redefined themselves by incorporating 95% of standard New Left ideas, but on the whole, there is no longer anything that can be identified as 'Right.'[47] By Piccone's own admission, incorporating 95 per cent of the New Left's ideals means that the ENR is still connected to a number of its older revolutionary Right ideas. In any case, both born under the spell of the New Left ideas of 1968, the New

Right and New Left should have been mortal political enemies, but were making common cause against global capitalism and liberal democracy. New Right and New Left in two different continents sought to join their ideas in order to prepare for the revolutionary, post-liberal social order of the future.

While the *Telos* double issue was generally sympathetic to the claims of the ENR intellectuals, there were also residues of doubt surrounding the agenda of de Benoist and the old revolutionary Right worldview of a number of prominent ENR theorists, including the ENR doyen himself. The most critical analyst of the ENR in the *Telos* double issue was the French thinker Pierre-André Taguieff. Taguieff's scepticism is more pronounced than the *Telos* editorial staff which desperately longed for a new political paradigm after 1989, although the former remained faithful to his non-partisan and long-standing academic credentials. In reply to an interview question asking whether de Benoist can be considered a left-wing thinker found within the French journal *Vingtième Siècle* and re-printed in the special *Telos* issue on the ENR, Taguieff gave this reply: "Let us not be so hasty or naïve. Benoist's undeniable intellectual evolution, which part of GRECE followed, did not reflect or result in an unambiguous political evolution."[48]

In Taguieff's view, de Benoist still retained residues, themes, and values which did not break with either the French neo-nationalist, conservative revolutionary, or "third way" milieus of his revolutionary Right student days in the Paris of the early 1960s. Despite his appropriation of numerous leftist-like themes, Taguieff argues that de Benoist has never officially and completely broken with this revolutionary Right worldview. De Benoist's article in the special 1993/1994 issue entitled "The Idea of Empire" helps to corroborate Taguieff's thesis on the remaining residues of the former's revolutionary Right worldview. In this aforementioned article, de Benoist follows the lead of Julius Evola, the guru of Italy's post-World War II radical Right, to call for the end of the nation or the "anti-empire" and a revival of "the spiritual character of the imperial principle" where supporting a common, supra-national idea

allows one to transcend a narrow belonging to the same soil, blood-line, or language.[49] In addition, de Benoist calls for the empire because he claims it is a primary vehicle for preserving regional and cultural diversity and organic, holistic, and mediated social ties against the "abstract individualism" and closed nature of national construction. It is precisely this type of article with echoes of clearly revolutionary Right references, which concerns Taguieff, but seemed to largely elude the analysis of the *Telos* editorial staff.

De Benoist re-states this position in favour of empire and myths, two older revolutionary Right staples, within his 1995 work *L 'empire intérieur*. Moreover, *Telos* published a number of de Benoist's articles in both the early and late 1990s, which had faint echoes of his former revolutionary Right milieu. In a 1998 review article comparing Nazism and Stalinist communism, which discredits the traditional liberal view that the former was a greater evil than the latter, de Benoist argues that the two totalitarian ideologies are in fact "evil twins."[50] Moreover, in a 1993 article entitled "Democracy Revisited,"[51] de Benoist praises direct democracy in contrast to mass modern societies which need political intermediaries because they have ceased to embody "collectively lived meaning," but carefully circumscribes his notion of direct democracy. That is, de Benoist claims that direct democracy is "primarily associated with the notion of a relatively *homogeneous* people conscious of what makes them a people."[52] De Benoist continues by elaborating his rather specific, homogeneous, and anti-multicultural view of the democratic model:

> The proper functioning of both Greek and Icelandic democracy was the result of cultural cohesion and a clear sense of shared heritage. The closer the members of a community are to each other the more they are likely to hold common sentiments, values and ways of looking at the world, and it is easier for them to make collective decisions in the regard to the common good without the help of mediators.[53]

Why did *Telos* choose to publish works of a decidedly right-wing flavour from all of de Benoist's vast output of articles and books? As a journal with New Left roots, could it not have re-printed one of de Benoist's more leftist-inspired articles? In fairness to *Telos*, it has published a number of de Benoist's more left-wing forms of

cultural criticism, including an article entitled "Confronting Globalization"[54] in which he attacks the rapid monopolization of world capital, the immiseration of the masses, and the decline of the nation-state. It also published a violent critique of the neo-liberal guru of Austrian economics Friedrich A. (von) Hayek in a paper called "Hayek: A Critique."[55] This latter work expresses the wide gulf between the Anglo-American New Right's view of the limited state and support of unfettered market forces, on the one hand, and the ENR and de Benoist's belief in a strong "organic state" restraining capitalist forces within the context of a politically and culturally sovereign Europe, on the other hand.

In any case, *Telos* followed a trend which began in the mid-1980s and recycled right-wing authors such as Carl Schmitt and Julien Freund, or transversal themes like federalism and populism, in order to give them a more left-wing or anarcho-ecologist spin. The focus on populism and federalism was also used to counter criticisms that the *Telos* editorial staff represented a distant, overly cerebral, and elitist "New Class" of intellectuals. It neatly dovetailed with the leftist, quasi-anarchist, and ecological focus of the ENR in the late 1980s and 1990s in favour of "organic democracy," small-scale, "natural," and independent communities running their own internal affairs, and the preservation of regional and cultural diversity. This type of New Left-New Right reconciliation process sought to re-invent a critique of late capitalist modernity and liberal democracy in order to prepare for the possible political fault lines of the future between those in favour of global capitalism, liberal democracy and Americanization, and all radically anti-liberal, anti-capitalist, anti-American, and even anti-Western forces.

There were other *Telos* voices of doubt surrounding the "real" agenda of Alain de Benoist and the ENR theorists, but they still tended to give the ENR intellectuals a fair measure of sympathy and a high degree of trust. In this regard, this is the assessment of *Telos* editor Paul Piccone made in favour of the ENR thinkers and against the charges of a new cultural fascism.

> Are the new views on race merely rhetorical decoys to legitimate the same old biological racism of a couple of decades earlier? Is the "right to difference" a stratagem to justify a new kind of cultural apartheid meant to guarantee the purity of European (Aryan?) civilization? Is the critique of the nation and the re-discovery of federalism by attacking equality and thereby indirectly relegitimating old hierarchical structures? Is the critique of liberalism ultimately a justification for the standard conservative project of dismantling the centralized redistributive state apparatus? Presumably, the Left vigilants would answer most if not all these questions in the affirmative. On the basis of what has been published, there is a remote possibility that they could be right, but this is extremely unlikely. At any rate, no convincing arguments have been provided to that effect and, consequently, it remains idle speculation concerning possible motives.[56]

Thus, while Piccone initially followed Taguieff in questioning the ENR's basic agenda and the possibility of reviving old revolutionary Right ideas under new guises, he ends up actually embracing the ENR's own claims that they are novel political thinkers, full of original ideas, and in the process of moulding a New Left-New Right political paradigm. While Piccone is correct to point out the multitude of old prejudices and Nazi-like accusations against the ENR theorists, his notion of the ENR intellectuals as trail-blazing thinkers with a novel political paradigm is less than credible. As both *Telos* and the ENR intellectuals are proponents of a new political synthesis and paradigm, they are likely to accentuate the New Left side of ENR ideas and downplay, ignore, or hide its residual revolutionary Right tendencies. If it was not for the inclusion of Taguieff in the *Telos* special collection, then the ENR's revolutionary Right roots would have been lost on the readers. In the process, the *Telos* editorial staff entered de Benoist's own cultural terrain by joining a detached style of objective academic research to a partisan form of radical social criticism where the ultimate aims were the fashioning of a new political paradigm and the erection of a new, revolutionary social order. In 1993 and 1994, not only did *Telos* consider the merits of the ENR worldview, its editor and writers practically embraced it in its entirety.

6. The Case of *Telos* and the ENR Debates: Idiosyncratic or Broader Phenomenon?

The debates surrounding the ENR theorists within *Telos* in 1993 and 1994 can be seen as either the narrow, peculiar, and idiosyncratic manifestation of the *Telos*

staff and its editor Paul Piccone, or part of a broader cultural and political phenomenon sweeping industrialized societies in both the West and East in the 1990s. Like the "non-conformists" of the 1920s and 1930s in Europe, *Telos* always prided itself on taking iconoclastic positions which seriously challenged the logic of global capitalism and liberal democracy, and the prevailing intellectual climate of the age. In addition, the post-communist age after 1989 left *Telos* questioning the safe analytical anchor of critical Marxist theory. Thus, its slightly veiled sympathy for the ENR intellectuals was not simply connected to the idiosyncratic nature of its editorial board. The essentially pro-ENR stances of *Telos* in 1993 and 1994 were also related to the broader phenomenon of new cultural and political antagonists of liberal democracy and global capitalism uniting even for short-term purposes, irrespective of major ideological differences, in order to displace the existing intellectual and political status quo. In this respect, the common starting points for both the French New Right and *Telos* were the influential New Left ideas of the student radicals born during May 1968. Both the French New Right and *Telos* came to embrace the anti-capitalist radicalism and idealistic eclecticism of the May 1968 revolutionaries.

While it is true that *Telos* was a unique, "non-conformist" academic journal for North American standards by playing its own solitary ideological tunes and paths, even refusing to get involved in the highly polemical American academic "cultural wars" in the 1980s and 1990s, it did embrace a new form of cultural conservatism through its sympathetic portrayal of the French and Italian New Right, the political thought of Carl Schmitt, the federalist theories of the bourgeois-oriented Italian Northern League, and its veneration of the "new populism" and direct democracy. In this sense, as *Telos* tended to be seriously influenced by European "hegemonic intellectuals" and predominantly European debates, it was simply following a conservative trend which hit Europe in the late 1970s and 1980s; a cultural backlash against liberalism and Marxism according to which not all people are seen as equal and hence should not have access to the same kinds of rights and privileges. This cultural backlash, of course, included the rise of the ENR intellectuals as well as their

distinctly different Anglo-American New Right counterparts incessantly calling for the "god" of unrestrained "free-market" capitalism. In the 1980s, this cultural backlash and new conservatism also hit American university campuses and the political stage with the rise of the Ronald Reagan phenomenon.

To add to the common New Right and *Telos* affinity for the New Left 1968ers and the cultural conservatism of the late 1970s and 1980s, the *Telos* decision to essentially embrace New Right intellectuals such as Alain de Benoist in the 1990s was also related to another broader international phenomenon: The search for an anti-liberal, anti-capitalist, anti-Western global front or network of alliances. In this regard, in the 1990s there are numerous cultural and political forces, including the ENR intellectuals and the New Left-inspired editors of *Telos* who after 1989 argued that they refused to believe in the inevitable global march of market capitalism and the Westernization of lifestyles and mentalities. These political and cultural forces are diverse, at times even antagonistic ideologically, but all remain firmly rooted to an anti-capitalist and usually anti-American, anti-Western mantra. To its credit, *Telos* has tended to avoid a simplistic form of anti-Americanism and anti-Westernism. These political forces may include the following: European New Right, New Left, Old Left Marxists, Maoists, and Trotskyites, anarchists, Green environmentalists, organic conservatives, conservative revolutionaries, national communists, regional autonomists or separatists, religious fundamentalists, and Third or Fourth World cultural preservationists. The Russian "national-communist," "patriotic-communist," or "Red-Brown" alliances of the 1990s revealed that these Left-Right intellectual debates and exchanges were more than just academic hot air. The French New Right's brief flirtation in the early 1990s with the Russian New Right's leader Alexander Dugin, an active promoter of "Red-Brown" alliances, also showed that it was slightly more than a merely detached, critical cultural force.

In a sense, the French New Right under the guidance of GRECE and Alain de Benoist had taken a similar course to *Telos*, but in precisely the opposite direction.

Whereas *Telos* had drifted towards the Right and a new, radical cultural conservatism, the French New Right's Alain de Benoist increasingly alienated traditional vestiges of right-wing support, whether monarchical, Catholic integralist, extreme chauvinist, or more conservative, private property-minded elements, by appropriating most of the themes of the New Left student revolutionaries born in 1968. In short, both *Telos* and the French New Right were viewed with suspicion from their traditional constituencies. Many elements on the Old Left and some from the New Left resented the right-wing thrust of *Telos* in the 1980s and 1990s because they claimed that it had abandoned its Marxist internationalism, its concern for the growing army of global poor, and critical neo-Marxist tone. On the other side, the ultra-nationalist Right, fascist Right, Catholic Right, and mainstream, conservative Right were all weary of the French New Right's intellectual evolution and often tended to see Alain de Benoist as a sort of closet communist.

Thus, as common intellectual and political outcasts both heavily indebted to the May 1968 events, the French New Right and New Left-inspired *Telos* became allies in the struggle to displace liberal democracy, restore what they called social solidarity, and confront the dangers of rapid capitalist globalization. Both had taken idiosyncratic political trajectories from revolutionary Right and Left respectively to eventually claim a new political paradigm which attempted to synthesize and salvage the best features of Right and Left. The New Right-New Left synthesis, or in Russia the Old Right-Old Left alliance, was also starting to have its concrete political impact in the 1980s and 1990s. The new types of alliances reminded many of the inter-war era's "non-conformists," conservative revolutionaries, aristocratic socialists, anarcho-syndicalists, national-populists, and politically "homeless" who tended to drift indiscriminately from Right to Left or Left to Right in the radical attempt to overturn what they called the materialist "poisons" of liberal parliamentarism and capitalism.

To reiterate, although both the ENR intellectuals and *Telos* editorial staff marched towards solitary and idiosyncratic intellectual paths, they were also reflecting

broader intellectual and political trends sweeping the European and North American continents: The steady demise of Western Marxism as a cultural force, the return to conservative cultural critics in the late 1970s and 1980s as the welfare state began to crumble and memories of World War II, fascism, and the Right faded, the collapse of socialism as a political force after 1989, the ensuing blurring of boundaries between Right and Left, and the rumblings of new radical, anti-capitalist alliances between Right and Left (or united Western and anti-Western forces challenging the hegemonic global capitalist and liberal order increasingly dictated by the terms of the sole remaining superpower, the United States). What especially united the ENR intellectuals and the New Left-inspired editors of *Telos* was the common place of intellectual birth around the events of May 1968. The anti-materialist idealism of the New Left student radicals would radically influence the cultural and political stances of both of these apparently diametrically opposed social critics of liberal democracy. The outright anti-egalitarianism and elitism of the ENR theorists and the veiled elitism of the *Telos* staff longing for the world of "high culture" was also a point of intersection. Both claimed to invent a new political paradigm constructed by intellectuals, despite the valorization of a "new populism." Also, both the *Telos* editors and ENR theorists inherently believed that the ideas of the few could ultimately move history, the masses, and change the world.

7. The Lessons of the ENR-*Telos* Rapprochement

There are several important lessons which can be gleaned from the unique intellectual debates and partnership between the ENR intellectuals and the *Telos* editors, which began in the late 1980s and reached their zenith in the *Telos* debates between the two forces in 1993 and 1994. In a sense, there are essentially eight lessons which can be drawn from the intellectual arrival of the ENR thinkers to *Telos* and hence the North American continent in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

In the first place, the ENR-*Telos* rapprochement of ideas revealed the deep trouble with the socialist ideology as communist states suddenly crumbled in the East

in 1989. Naturally, all ideologies are engulfed with trials, tribulations, and crises. The fall of the Soviet Union, the main flag bearer of communism, however, was more than simply a crisis or trial. It represented the almost complete collapse of a once dominant world-wide ideology, a myth, a hope to many followers around the world. Those who remained faithful to the communist creed in the West were seen as old dinosaurs or naïve followers without the knowledge of the horrors of totalitarianism, Stalinism, and "real existing socialism." The end of this dominant challenging ideology to liberal democracy meant the blurring of Left-Right boundaries and the emergence of dialogue between the ENR intellectuals and *Telos*, two cultural forces deeply shaped by the New Left ideas of May 1968, which themselves now needed a re-evaluation after 1989.

Second, the dialogue between the ENR and *Telos* demonstrated that intellectuals rooted to solid ideological markers such as analytical Marxism detest a vacuum and quickly attempt to fill the void by claiming to invent a new political paradigm. For former neo-Marxist leftists intellectual with *Telos*, it was also a matter of creating new intellectual ideas and work in order to survive as a cultural force. In any case, no cultural force, whether the ENR or *Telos*, could avoid an intellectual confrontation with the historical events of 1989 which culminated with the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the destruction of communist states in Eastern Europe. In a certain sense, this intellectual evolution came earlier for *Telos* with the realization that both the institutionalized Communists in Eastern European states and Western unions in the post-World War II welfare state era had helped to moderate and dampen the revolutionary impulses of the popular classes.

Third, there was a historical precedent to the ENR-*Telos* debates in search of a new intellectual and political synthesis. During the inter-war years between the two world wars, numerous "non-conformist" cultural and political forces throughout Europe sought to find a political paradigm which combined elements of Right and Left, and transcended both liberalism and socialist Marxism. This sort of intellectual

paradigm provided the groundwork for the fascist synthesis, conservative revolutionary worldview, national-anarcho-syndicalist position, and various other "third way" permutations which straddled between left-wing social commitment and right-wing fidelity to the patriotism of the nation. Thus, the *Telos* editorial staff and ENR intellectuals such as Alain de Benoist did not work in a complete intellectual vacuum, but could look to the lessons of history for answers and questions. The difference between these aforementioned "third way" forces and the ENR-*Telos* symbiosis was that the latter was also deeply indebted in its experiences and major themes to the New Left student revolutionaries who suddenly hit the political scene of industrialized societies on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean in May 1968.

Fourth, the success of the ENR intellectuals in North America, albeit limited to an intellectual, academic journal like *Telos*, did somewhat confirm the ENR's own claim that "cultural war" must be a slow and methodical process. There was a gap of about fifteen years between the French New Right's heyday in 1979 and its definitive entrance into the pages of *Telos* in 1993 and 1994. It was somewhat ironic that the ENR intellectuals received a better reception in New York than Paris where many of the latter's intellectuals were more firmly connected to analytical Marxism and perhaps more cognizant of its historical and ideological origins in the revolutionary Right milieu. For the ENR thinkers, like the *Telos* editors, the cultural ideas of the New Left and Marxist Antonio Gramsci were crucial for any lasting political success. For both culturally-fixated forces, it was not the numbers of people that mattered in terms of changing the world and smashing liberal democracy, but the support of enough cultural elites who could then propagate their own hegemonic view of the world and alter the basic *Zeitgeist* of the age. At this point, then, both cultural forces believed that the call of the masses to oust liberal democratic elites and dismantle market capitalism would become natural and self-evident.

Fifth, if the ENR ideological synthesis was well-received in limited academic circles within the United States, could it possibly have a future in other parts of the

United States and Canada? With its heavy focus on maintaining the regional and cultural roots of the past through a federalist-oriented Europe, the ENR worldview has some similarities to the federalism of the American Founding Fathers such as John Madison, John Jay, and Alexander Hamilton. Despite the ENR's vitriolic anti-Americanism, its valorization of cultural difference, regional diversity, and "organic democracy" in the late 1980s and 1990s resembles the 18th century longings of the Founding Fathers for a federalism which protected the diversity of the different states, the cultural differences between North and South, and the strong American local traditions of self-government. Canada, too, has a long history of federalism which dovetails with the federalism of ENR intellectuals like Alain de Benoist. As an official, constitutionally recognized federal system since its birth in 1867, Canada has neatly protected its regional, cultural, and linguistic diversity. It might also appeal to the ENR thinkers because it is differentiated from the United States historically, culturally, linguistically, and intellectually. Its strong conservative, Tory strain of organic thought and more minor socialist strand are also somewhat reminiscent of the ENR's communitarian, anti-egalitarian, anti-capitalist identity.

The danger with federalism, of course, is that it can lead very close to separation as with the two referendums for sovereignty-association and sovereignty in 1980 and 1994 in the majority francophone province of Quebec. In the American South, too, a heightened sense of cultural distinctiveness and sense of alienation and deprivation vis-à-vis the North led to a catastrophic Civil War in the 1860s. Federalism is no guarantee of political peace, but for ENR intellectuals such as de Benoist this political structure is a logical route towards the preservation of regional and local cultures trampled by the "steamroller" of Americanization and Westernization. The ENR, as Paul Gottfried claims, might be wise to re-consider its simplistic anti-Americanism in order to make cultural and political inroads in a North American continent deeply attached to the values of federalism.[57] This will be unlikely given the ENR's intense pan-Europeanism, Eurocentric focus, its need to challenge the American superpower status, and its primordial quarrel with an egalitarian North

America, seen as the antithesis of the ENR's organic, anti-egalitarian worldview. As firm proponents of the stability of cultural differences, the ENR is not likely to spend too much time trying to win over what it often views as a "colonized" North American continent perpetually hostage to neo-liberalism, the "all-mighty dollar," and the trances of spectacles and television.

Sixth, the ENR-*Telos* rapprochement was perhaps a precursor to the transversal and eclectic sorts of political alliances and syntheses we might witness in the new millennium. As Right and Left lose their political persuasiveness, anti-capitalist forces from around the world will make alliances, even temporary, short-term, or tactical ones, in order to fight against what they view as the hegemony of liberal democracy, global capitalism, and US or Western-led cultural imperialism propagated by large multinational corporations upon non-Western countries and cultures. It is not only with anti-capitalist forces of different persuasions that one hears worries about the spread, pace, and de-humanizing effects of globalization, or the anti-liberal, anti-democratic trends of liberal democracies themselves. In several public statements and interviews, French President Jacques Chirac has argued that globalization is an inevitable reality, but that its most harmful human effect, the increase of global poverty both at home and abroad, will lead to social exclusion and conflict. In the influential US journal *Foreign Policy*, Jacques Attali, the former special advisor to French President François Mitterrand, argued against the West's post-Cold War triumphalism because he claimed that the "dictatorship" of the market will eventually annihilate both democracy and Western civilization.[58] The wealthy American philanthropist George Soros has expressed similar fears about globalization and its threat to democratic values and institutions.[59] ENR and *Telos* ideas did not obviously live in a vacuum of pure marginalization.

Seventh, the fact that *Telos* embraced the "new populism" and ENR intellectuals should tell us that they are likely more concerned with social and political change than a strict reflection on these aforementioned different cultural and political

forces. Populism, by its very definition and essence, is anti-intellectual, anti-reflective, and a denial of the critical faculties of reason and analysis. In this sense, although the ENR has tended to be anti-populist, it has rejected the "New Class" of intellectual imposing its "abstract" and "universal" ideals on recalcitrant world regions and cultures with their own unique values. In addition, the ENR belief that myths move history, people, and the world could be viewed as a similar suspension of the critical focus of the intellectual. The intellectual evolution of both Alain de Benoist and the *Telos* editorial staff, at minimum, suggests a credibility problem and the need to question the precise motives of their idiosyncratic intellectual migrations.

Last, despite the rapprochement between dissident forces of the Left from *Telos* and ENR intellectuals, historical descendants from the revolutionary Right political camp, we should not overestimate the cultural and political impact of this dialogue. Debates and dialogue within the limited circles of the intellectual, academic press is not a signpost of widespread acceptance of this synthesis between left-wing and right-wing dissidents searching for a new intellectual and political home. In reality, there was plenty of resistance in France to this type of political synthesis as the two "hot summers" of 1979 and 1993 showed. The reception for this new political synthesis was warmer in Italy and too limited to a small academic audience in the United States to have serious political consequences. It was in the chaos of post-communist Russia that it had its clearest, most fruitful political manifestation. For most intellectuals and the public at large, however, this New Right-New Left synthesis remained a strange, marginal, and intellectual aberration divorced from the clearer major political ideologies of our age, or the concrete social, economic, and political problems of common people.

In conclusion, this chapter has sought to bring the ENR worldview into full view in the 1990s by examining the relationship between the French *nouvelle droite*, other ENR intellectuals throughout Europe, and disgruntled sectors of the New Left in North America. We sought to point out that the French *nouvelle droite* was active in

the cultural realm in different European countries, but that this did not necessarily mean the formation of a clearly co-ordinated right-wing International. In North America, the post-communist age allowed for a cultural alliance between the ENR and *Telos*. This alliance was like manna from the sky for two cultural forces seeking to re-orient themselves under radically new cultural and political conditions. We sought to convey the idea that both the ENR and *Telos* intellectuals were deeply indebted to the ideals of the New Left since they were both born around 1968, the year of the student and worker protests. Moreover, the two cultural forces sought to reconcile and synthesize the most essential ideals of the New Right and New Left. In essence, the *Telos* staff was convinced that the French New Right was the sole left-wing cultural force today that was continuing to carry the revolutionary flame of the New Left's idealism. In the process, *Telos* argued that the French New Right, like itself, sought the creation of a new political paradigm which transcended the categories of Right and Left. While this political paradigm was partially new in that it integrated numerous New Left positions, it was not completely novel because the ENR still displayed a residual fidelity to its other ideological heritage, namely, the revolutionary Right.

Notes

[1] Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *L'Europe de l'extrême droite de 1945 à nos jours* (Brussels: Complexe, 1991), pp. 68-73.

[2] Franco Sacchi, "The Italian New Right," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994), p. 73.

[3] Alain de Benoist, "Three Interviews with Alain de Benoist," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994), pp. 181-182.

[4] See, for example, the collection of essays by Jürgen Habermas entitled *The Historians' Debate and the New Conservatism* (Boston, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1989) about Germany's Nazi past, the German historians' debate of the early 1980s, and what he called the "apologetic tendencies" of *Neue Rechte* thinkers such as Ernst Nolte, Andreas Hillgruber, and Michael Sturmer. These revisionist thinkers ultimately sought to sanitize the nation's past and restore its national self-confidence. In the most blatantly revisionist argument, Ernst Nolte claimed that the Holocaust "race murder" was merely an understandable (if exaggerated) "response" to a "more original Asiatic deed" (the Bolshevik "class murder" of Stalin's gulags), of which Hitler and the Germans considered themselves as potential victims. In short, Nolte reduces the singularity of Nazi atrocities to a "copycat crime," one among numerous others.

[5] Letter from Alain de Benoist to the author written in Paris on September 26, 1999.

[6] See, for example, Alain de Benoist, "Three Interviews with Alain de Benoist," pp. 209-210.

[7] Franco Sacchi, "The Italian New Right," p. 71.

[8] Roberto Chiarini, "The Italian Far Right: The Search for Legitimacy," in Luciano Cheles et al., *The Far Right in Western and Eastern Europe*, p. 34.

[9] Quoted in Franco Sacchi, "The Italian New Right," p. 74.

[10] Personal interview response by Marco Tarchi, written in Florence, Italy, April 4, 1999.

[11] *Ibid.*

[12] Franco Sacchi, "The Italian New Right," pp. 79-80.

[13] Personal interview response by Marco Tarchi, written in Florence, Italy, April 4, 1999.

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] Mark Wegierski, "The New Right in Europe," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994), pp. 55-56.

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] *Ibid.*

[19] *Ibid.*

[20] Personal interview response by Marco Tarchi, written in Florence, Italy, April 4, 1999.

[21] Roger Griffin, "Plus ça change! The Fascist Pedigree of the Nouvelle Droite," p. 17.

[22] *Ibid.*, pp. 9-12.

[23] Electronic mail interview with Paul Piccone, March 2, 1999.

[24] *Ibid.*

[25] *Ibid.*

[26] See, for example, John P. McCormick, "Introduction to Schmitt's 'The Age of Neutralization and Depoliticizations' (1929)," pp. 119-129 and Carl Schmitt, "The Age Of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations (1929)," pp. 130-142 both in *Telos* 96 (Summer 1996). Also, see the special 1987 *Telos* issue entirely devoted to the thought of Carl Schmitt. In terms of Julien Freund, see Julien Freund, "Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism," *Telos* 102 (Winter 1995). In this same issue, one can find a favourable obituary and political analysis of Julien Freund.

[27] See, for example, the special *Telos* issues devoted to populism and the phenomenon of the Italian Leagues found in number 90 (Winter 1991-1992). For a sample of Gianfranco Miglio's writings, see Gianfranco Miglio, "Beyond Schmitt," *Telos* 100 (Summer 1994), pp. 123-128; "The Cultural Roots of the Federalist Revolution," *Telos* 97 (Fall 1993), pp. 33-40; and "Towards a Federal Italy," *Telos* 90 (Winter 1991-1992), pp. 19-42. For Alain de Benoist's writings, see Alain de Benoist, "Tradition?," *Telos* 94 (Winter 1993-1994), pp. 82-88; "The Idea of Empire," pp. 81-98 and "Quarrels of the *Ancien Régime*," pp. 143-144 both in *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994); "The End of the Left-Right Dichotomy: The French Case," *Telos* 102 (Winter 1995) pp. 73-89; "Confronting Globalization," *Telos* 108 (Summer 1996), pp. 117-137.

[28] Renate Holub, "Between Europe and the USA: The Rise and Decline of the Journal *Telos*," *Bad Subjects* 31 (March 1997), p. 1.

[29] See, for example, the special 25th anniversary issue of *Telos* published in 1994 and tellingly entitled "Is There a 'Telos' Left in Telos? Reflections After 100 Issues," 101 (Fall 1994). The editorial team after 1989 was obviously questioning whether it still retained any neo-Marxist residues of thought, or whether it was still committed to a *telos*, or final intellectual and political destination in the Marxian sense of the term.

[30] Electronic mail interview with Paul Piccone, March 2, 1999.

[31] *Ibid.*

[32] *Ibid.*

[33] *Ibid.*

[34] For a sample of the latter's work, see Marco Tarchi, "In Search Of Right and Left," *Telos* 102 (Winter 1995), pp. 181-188.

[35] Paul Piccone, "Confronting the French New Right: Old Prejudices or a New Political Paradigm?," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994), pp. 3-22.

[36] Franco Sacchi, "The Italian New Right," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994), p. 80.

[37] Mark Wegierski, "The New Right in Europe," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994), p. 69.

[38] Frank Adler, "Left Vigilance in France," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994), pp. 30-31.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

[40] Pierre-André Taguieff, "An interview with Pierre-André Taguieff," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994), p. 160.

[41] Paul Piccone, "Confronting the French New Right: Old Prejudices or a New Political Paradigm," p. 14.

[42] Frank Adler, "Left Vigilance in France," pp. 28-29.

[43] Electronic mail interview with Paul Piccone, March 2, 1999.

[44] Paul Piccone, "Confronting the French New Right: Old Prejudices or a New Political Paradigm?," p. 22.

[45] *Ibid.*

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

[48] Pierre-André Taguieff, "An Interview with Pierre-André Taguieff," p. 160.

[49] Alain de Benoist, "The Idea of Empire," pp. 81-98.

[50] Alain de Benoist, "Nazism and Communism: Evil Twins," *Telos* 112 (Summer 1998), 178-192.

[51] Alain de Benoist, "Democracy Revisited," *Telos* 95 (Spring 1995), pp. 65-75.

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 75.

[53] *Ibid.*

[54] Alain de Benoist, "Confronting Globalization," *Telos* 108 (Summer 1996), pp. 117-137.

[55] Alain de Benoist, "Hayek: A Critique," *Telos* 110 (Winter 1998), pp. 71-104.

[56] Paul Piccone, "Confronting the French New Right: Old Prejudices or a New Political Paradigm," pp. 13-14.

[57] Paul Gottfried, "Alain de Benoist's Anti-Americanism," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994), pp. 127-133.

[58] Jacques Attali, "The Crash of Western Civilization: The Limits of the Market and Democracy," *Foreign Policy* 107 (Summer 1997), pp. 54-64.

[59] George Soros, "The Capitalist Threat," *Atlantic Monthly* (February 1997).

Chapter 7:
The ENR's Relationship to the Extreme-Right and Neo-Fascism

This chapter will discuss the rather ambiguous relationship between the ENR intellectuals and extreme-right and neo-fascist political forces, especially parliamentary-based political parties such as the French *Front National* (FN) and the Italian MSI-AN. I will first attempt to show the major differences and marginal similarities (i.e., anti-egalitarianism and the obsessive quest for the preservation of cultural identity) between ENR thinkers such as Alain de Benoist and the French FN. These differences between the two forces on the Right include the following: the FN's quest for immediate power versus the ENR's cultural metapolitics or *apoliteia* stances as a reaction against both the parliamentary politics and extra-legal street action of the Old Right; the FN's marked populism versus the ENR's intellectualism and aristocratic elitism; the FN's largely pro-Christian, pro-West stances versus the ENR's attacks on Judeo-Christian traditions, and its pro-Third World solidarity positions; the FN's dominant "national-liberalism" versus the ENR's violent anti-capitalism and organic, communitarian agenda; and the FN's ultra-French nationalism versus the ENR's pan-European quest for common Indo-European roots within the framework of a "federalist empire" which acts as the guardian of regional and cultural diversity.

In addition, however, this chapter will also demonstrate how the ENR's metapolitical orientation, worldview, themes, and discourse have influenced the parliamentary political forces on the extreme right-wing or neo-fascist ends of the political spectrum. This aforementioned point does not mean that the rise to power of the FN in France, the Vlaams Blok in Belgium, the Freedom Party in Austria, the AN in Italy, or the rise of other extreme right-wing or neo-fascist political parties in Europe in the 1980s and 1990s can be directly attributed to the rising cultural and

political influence of ENR intellectuals. Rather, concrete issues including disillusionment with established political parties, unemployment, generalized insecurity about the future in a more global economy, and the breakdown of "lawful" immigration, the centrepiece of the platforms of most extreme right-wing parties, were likely more responsible for the ascendancy of extreme right-wing and neo-fascist forces than the more intellectual ideas of the ENR theorists.

The ENR's tension with the traditional parliamentary or extra-legal forces on the revolutionary Right has some obvious historical precedents. The intellectual, cultural fascists of the inter-war era, various "non-conformists" of the period, and conservative revolutionary-influenced figures such as Ernst Jünger and Julius Evola also had an ambiguous relationship to both the movements and régimes of Nazism and fascism. While these intellectuals claimed to take their distance from these régimes, the works of these figures were appropriated by the Nazi and fascist régimes, thus giving the respective régimes an aura of intellectual credibility irrespective of real affinities or connections. Could we say that the same sort of ambiguous, symbiotic relationship applies between ENR intellectuals such as Alain de Benoist, Marco Tarchi, and Michael Walker, on the one hand, and the parliamentary forces of an extreme-right or neo-fascist bent, on the other hand? Or, is the ENR a unique cultural force completely divorced from any connections to the revolutionary Right political parties?

1. The Divergences between the ENR and Alain de Benoist and the FN

In the mid-1980s as certain former ENR figures such as Pierre Vial and Claude Bardet jumped on the FN bandwagon, Alain de Benoist and the French *nouvelle droite* generally began to officially take their distance from the ideas of the FN. So, for example, in 1988 Alain de Benoist made the following statement which showed the ENR's divergences from the FN's political orientation, their different types of public support, and a chasm in terms of basic ideas:

> Nous ne nous situons pas sur le même plan, nous ne nous adressons pas au même public et, quant aux idées, dont les rares domaines où le Front national a fait connaître les siennes, celles-ci m'apparaissent comme tout à fait étrangères aux nôtres. Partisans de la cause des peuples, d'une solidarité entre l'Europe et le Tiers Monde, d'une lutte contre l'idéologie occidentale et la politique des blocs, nous ne saurions approuver l'atlantisme du Front national, pas plus que sa critique du gaullisme ou des institutions de la Cinquième République. Nous sommes également en désaccord avec toute campagne anti-immigré. ...[1]

De Benoist had reason to establish some distance from the French FN. In the 1990s, de Benoist continued to make a number of public statements which confirmed his disdain for the FN in general and "Lepenisme" in particular. These statements also created a stir within FN circles and press which either resented his polemics against Christianity or suspected him of harbouring subversive, pro-communist sympathies. In 1990, Alain de Benoist made a statement about the French Right and FN which amounted to a declaration of "ideological war":

> For nearly half a century the French Right was conspicuous by its absence from all the great debates. ... As for my position concerning the National Front, it is quite simple. I see in it no ideas which are my own and give meaning to my life. I think that the Right always ran the risk of falling into four major positions: liberalism, moral order, integralism, and racism. I fear that the National Front, a basically national-populist party, is falling into all four by varying degrees.[2]

Already critical of the French Right and the FN's tendencies towards neo-liberalism, moralism, Catholic integralism, and racism, Alain de Benoist further cemented his anti-FN views in a 1992 interview. In this 1992 interview with the French magazine *Les dossiers de l'histoire*, de Benoist was even more precise about his distaste for the FN's hegemonic anti-immigrant logic: "Personally, the ideas of the National Front dishearten me. ... Especially its ideas about immigration, because I cannot stand its scapegoat logic."[3]

These statements created a stir within pro-FN circles and press outlets which began to denounce de Benoist as an anti-French nationalist as well as a pro-Russian, communist sympathiser. In the pro-FN press, Roland Gaucher, the editor of *National Hebdo*, accused de Benoist of "treachery" for denouncing the FN and Le Pen, and simultaneously becoming the "little guru" of the "National Bolsheviks," or embracing

the "dirty hands" of both Russian Bolsheviks and conservative, anti-Western, and ultra-nationalist Russian imperialists.[4]

Already back in the *nouvelle droite*'s "hot summer" of press coverage in 1979, Alain de Benoist was vehemently denounced in ultra-nationalist circles as a representative of the "false," pagan, and anti-Christian Right.[5] In the 1980s and 1990s, the ultra-Catholic, anti-Semitic wing of the FN press, whether in *Présent*, *National Hebdo*, or *Rivarol*, regularly denounced the neo-paganism of GRECE and Alain de Benoist. The FN's ultra-nationalist, Catholic wing was especially fearful that its publications would be taken over by the neo-pagans of GRECE. In 1992, for example, Gérald Penciolelli bought the extreme-right publications *Minute* and *Le choc du mois*, and Jean-Claude Valla, a former GRECE secretary general, was appointed the editorial director of *Minute*.[6] Nonetheless, the neo-pagans of GRECE were one of many distinct tendencies within the FN and actually declined in influence in the 1990s.

Undeterred by these aforementioned criticisms, de Benoist continued to elaborate his differences with the FN and Jean-Marie Le Pen in the mid-1990s. Responding to the claim that the ENR has had a great impact on the FN, de Benoist denied the allegation, called for "solidarity" with immigrants whom he saw as the victims of both hyper-capitalist global expansion and "ethnocidal" policies of national assimilation and American cultural homogenization. He also criticized the French and the FN for their narrow focus on immigration, their pro-capitalist orientation, their lack of a social agenda, and tactic of blaming all their problems, including a loss of cultural identity, on immigrants. It is worth quoting this passage at length in order to demonstrate the deep chasm between the FN and the ENR's Alain de Benoist:

> This "great impact" exists only in the minds of those who ascribe it to us. This allegation surprises me all the more since we often took a public stand against the National Front. I was regularly attacked in its media. I have not the slightest sympathy for a movement which, by manipulating the population's fears and confusion, *de facto* intensifies xenophobia by letting the French believe that immigration is the cause of all their problems. National identity is a real problem and so is immigration. Such problems cannot be solved by merely finding a scapegoat. Identity is not an unchangeable essence that remains the same and is not affected by

> outside influences. On the contrary, identity is a dynamic process by which a people moulds itself and by which it shapes others. Identity has more than one definition, and one does not defend it by retreating into a bunker. Le Pen defends French identity against others. I defend the identity of all people while retaining solidarity with my own identity. The principal "my country, right or wrong," implies that under no circumstances can a people be wrong. ... One has to have the courage to admit the real causes of the destruction of identity are internal. Immigrants are not to blame when it is impossible for the French to lead a life corresponding to their own essence. Immigrants are also not responsible for the subjugation to the logic of commodities that has destroyed and torn apart the social fabric. Immigrants cannot be blamed for colonizing France when the French watch only American films on tv. It is also not the case that French identity is endangered because there are immigrants. On the contrary, identity has already been lost – which explains why France cannot deal with immigration. Historically, the phenomenon of immigration was triggered by the worldwide expansion of capitalism. Those who remain silent about capitalism should not complain about immigration.[7]

De Benoist was not the only ENR figure to denounce what he viewed as the FN's slick, simplistic, anti-immigrant, national-populism. Others in GRECE had problems with what they considered was the FN's rather crude view of immigration and national identity issues. Numerous GRECE leaders and their sympathisers also criticized the FN for its extreme populism, complete denigration of ideas, opportunistic campaign appeals, and immediate search for the levers of political power. In 1990, Jacques Marlaud, the then president of GRECE, highlighted the ENR's five major points of departure from the far Right's FN:

> Currently the differences between the far Right and the 'New Right' seem insurmountable. First, the National Front is impregnated with a Catholic messianism incompatible with our paganism. Second, the National Front's identitarian doctrine can be summed up as a narrow 'Frenchified' nationalism whereas we are European before being French. Third, the National Front is opposed to mosques and chadors. We stand for the imprescriptible right of peoples to remain as they are; on our soil or elsewhere. Fourth, the security-conscious and superficial identitarian attitudes of the Front's members hide the fact that they lack a social agenda which would break with the consumer society we have denounced as a 'system for killing people.' Fifth, the prevailing military atmosphere in this party is irreconcilable with our libertarian and aristocratic conception of excellence.[8]

To summarize, the major cleavages between the ENR and the FN are the following: a pagan versus Christian conception of existence; an elitist versus populist orientation; different evaluations of liberal capitalism; and a pan-European search for identity versus a more restricted form of French nationalism. In terms of tactics, the ENR remained faithful to a strategy of long-term metapolitics and a search for greater theoretical sophistication. In contrast, the FN was geared towards the direct capture of

political power, whether winning local councils or the most powerful political office of the land, the French presidency.

2. The Affinity Between the ENR and Extreme-Right: The Anti-Egalitarian Ethos and the Obsessive Quest for Identity?

Although there are significant ideological and tactical differences between the ENR intellectuals and the extreme right-wing FN, the cultural school of thought and the political party share two points of intersection: an anti-liberal, anti-egalitarian orientation and their overwhelming fixation on cultural identity and "rootedness." In their respective newspapers and journals, the ENR theorists and the FN ask similar questions and have the same thematic obsessions, but often have different styles, answers, and audiences. So, for example, in the aforementioned *Telos* interview given by de Benoist in 1994, he clearly stated his preoccupations with national identity and immigration: "National identity is a real problem and so is immigration." Or, at the culmination of a 1985 conference, de Benoist defined the highest value of GRECE and the ENR: "Some call for SOS-RACISME. We answer: SOS-ROOTS."[9]

While de Benoist has been critical of the FN's racism, he has also vehemently condemned anti-racist organizations such as SOS-RACISME, multicultural policies, and anti-racism as an ideology for its allegedly negative tendency to assimilate and homogenize all cultural differences.[10] It was Alain de Benoist, not Jean-Marie Le Pen, who wrote the following ringing affirmation of all "racial" and cultural identities in 1979: "We have the right to be for Black Power, but on the condition of simultaneously being in favour of White Power, Yellow Power and Red Power."[11] After the wounds of de-colonization associated with the French *pieds noirs*, de Benoist developed his radical cultural "differentialism" in the 1970s where France was to belong to the French, Algeria to the Algerians, and Vietnam to the Vietnamese.[12] This doctrine could, in practice, have a number of (mutually irreconcilable) interpretations, but was racially manipulated by the FN and Le Pen to call for legal measures in favour of a pure, Catholic France cleansed of "inassimilable" Muslim and North African

immigrants. Moreover, we have already seen how the ENR's most vital concern is with the disappearance of individual and cultural differences in a world they view as increasingly dominated by "levelling" egalitarian ideologies such as liberalism and socialism, the materialist "beast" of global capitalism, and American cultural homogenization. Pierre-André Taguieff has succinctly expressed the main ideological fixation of Alain de Benoist and the ENR: "Roots, identities: these are the new absolutes."[13]

The FN has similar fixations as the ENR over issues such as national identity, immigration, and the cultural "right to difference." The immigration ticket, connected by the FN to all of France's ills, from the loss of national identity and the breakdown of law and order to rampant unemployment, has been the source of its greatest success. Arguing in 1984 that France was being culturally submerged by a Third World immigrant population, Le Pen claimed that "civil war was at our gates" and "the very existence of the French people is at stake."[14] Claiming that French culture and values are not superior to any others, the FN still insists that Algerians, Moroccans, and Tunisians cannot impose their values on a long established French culture and identity. For the FN, the French have the right to defend the integrity of their national identity. The FN, like the ENR, also vehemently attacks as "racists" those liberal and socialist universalists who wish to get rid of national identity and cultural differences through the creation of a *mondialiste*, or "one-world," materialistic philosophy. The major slogans of the FN party, "*La France aux Français*" ("France for the French") and "*Les Français d'abord*" ("The French First"),[15] were crude representations of Alain de Benoist's cultural "differentialism" which tended to be more pan-European and relational, although these types of slogans had a long history in France dating back to Charles Maurras' *Action française* and the racial legislation of Marshal Petain's Vichy regime. Despite their claims to valorize all cultures with equal force (the FN's claim is clearly tainted by its consistent, vitriolic insults against immigrants, foreigners, Muslims, North Africans, and Jews), both the FN and ENR maintain an anti-liberal, anti-egalitarian orientation. Jean-Marie Le Pen and the FN

belong to a long right-wing anti-egalitarian tradition in France dating back to political forces as diverse as the Catholic counterrevolutionary tradition, Boulangism in the 1880s, and the Vichy régime of the 1940s. It must be remembered that even Gaullism's view of man, society, and politics was tinged with a markedly elitist, anti-egalitarian tendency. This well-established French tradition has also included prominent French writers and intellectuals such as De Maistre, Drumont, Barrès, Maurras, Brasillach, Drieu la Rochelle, and Bardèche. Also, Jean-Marie Le Pen has constantly praised the anti-egalitarian ethos of Nazi collaborators such as the Belgian Léon Degrelle and authoritarian leaders or dictators, including Francisco Franco, Augusto Pinochet, Juan Peron, Antonio Salazar, Anastasio Somoza, and Saddam Hussein.[16]

In addition, Le Pen has frequently alluded to a hierarchical, organic order where some people "naturally" have more rights than others.[17] Jean-Marie Le Pen was himself sympathetic to the attempts by the OAS army generals, the partisans of *Algérie française*, to overthrow the French republic in the 1960s. Finally, the official FN press is littered with a clear-cut anti-egalitarian view of human existence and the desire to squash liberal democracy's egalitarian premise of equal treatment under the law for all citizens. This especially applies to the FN's policy platforms in the infamous *300 mesures pour la renaissance de la France*, including its idea of "national preference" for the "French French" and desire to repatriate even French citizens of "immigrant" origins.[18]

The ENR's Alain de Benoist, too, subscribes to an anti-liberal, anti-egalitarian view of man, the social world, and the political order. If the ENR's journals are an indication, the ENR's ideal-type of society would be organic, hierarchical, and elitist in its essential thrust. In addition, Alain de Benoist's right-wing Gramscian strategy seeks to unify in thought and action the brightest and most capable European political elites. Moreover, in de Benoist's classical text, *Vu de droite*, the theoretical influences suggest an anti-egalitarian, elitist view of the world: the father of "scientific racism"

Arthur de Gobineau, the sociologist of elite theory Vilfredo Pareto, the "non-conformist" French socialist Georges Sorel who praised the power of myths and elites in moving history, the theorist of "crowd psychology" Gustave Le Bon, and the Nobel prize-winning doctor Alexis Carrel who longed for an anti-egalitarian, hierarchical, and organic "spiritual" and "biological" aristocracy in order to replace the "decadent" reigns of democracy and capitalism.[19] Finally, as pointed out earlier, to be on the Right, for de Benoist, means to support anti-egalitarianism and "difference," especially the hierarchical principal of "unity in diversity," against what he considers the homogenizing egalitarian tendencies of Christianity, liberalism, socialism, and the Left in general.[20]

In short, then, while the ENR and FN differ in terms of some ideological positions and tactical choices, they share a common search for cultural identity and an intensely anti-liberal, anti-egalitarian view of existence. While the ENR and Alain de Benoist claim a complete break with the FN's "Old Right" mentality and ideological positions, it is better to view the two as what French political journalist Alain Rollat called "*les cousins ennemis*."[21] That is, Rollat argued that the French *nouvelle droite*, Le Pen's FN, and the older extreme right-wing party of the 1970s and early 1980s called the PFN were generally "cousins" of the same revolutionary, right-wing spiritual family, but could also be bitter "enemies" in terms of internal quarrels, tactics, and differing ideological positions. Rollat's aforementioned expression is probably the best way to encapsulate both the historical similarities and divergences between the ENR as a long-term cultural "school of thought" and the FN as an extreme right-wing political party eager to immediately seize power.

3. The ENR's Connections to Extreme-Right and Neo-Fascist Circles

Although the ENR intellectuals have denied any affiliations with the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary forces of the extreme-right and neo-fascism, a number of prominent GRECE figures joined the FN in the early 1980s and the cultural focus of GRECE has been neatly appropriated by the FN in terms of tactics, style,

discourse, and theme changes. The FN's pronounced focus on culture and a number of key FN slogans, including "France for the Frenchmen," "anti-French racism," the "right to difference," "pro-Third World solidarity," "anti-racism," "anti-fascism," and "anti-totalitarianism" have been likely borrowed from the cultural ideas of GRECE and the ENR thinkers. In both France and Italy, many extreme-right or neo-fascist leaders and supporters read ENR publications which have, in turn, influenced the ideas and themes of the extreme-right and neo-fascist political parties.[22] The MSI's "progressive" and "liberal" positions and the influence of post-materialist and post-modern issues on its agenda, such as opposition to the death penalty, a willingness to increase aid to the Third World, the relative empathy for marginal groups like homosexuals, drug addicts, and even immigrants, and a cautious attitude towards the official authorities of law and order reflects the influence of right-wing positions which are *nouvelle droite*-like rather than standard right-wing ones and could prove fatal to the party's existence and traditional fascist ideology.[23] In any case, the existence of a serious intellectual and cultural movement like the ENR gives these political parties on the far Right some credibility regardless of the real affinities or connections.

Another intellectual source of the FN's ideas and slogans was the neo-liberal and national-populist think tank the *Club de l'horloge* which, according to Pierre-André Taguieff, became more influential on the FN worldview in the 1980s as GRECE faded from the political scene and became less directly involved in traditional politics.[24] Two key *Club de l'horloge* members, Yvan Blot and Jean-Yves Le Gallou, bolted to the FN in the mid-1980s and the latter provided the FN's key anti-immigrant slogan, "national preference," with his book *La préférence nationale: réponse à l'immigration*.[25] While GRECE was vehemently anti-capitalist, anti-Christian, anti-American, and anti-West and the *Club de l'horloge* represented the antithesis of these positions, it did share with the *Club de l'horloge* a common fixation with "roots," "identity," and the protection of cultural identity against the forces of capitalist globalization and homogenization.

In addition, a number of ENR thinkers and sympathisers have some affiliations with racialist, negationist, and even terrorist circles close to extreme-right and neo-fascist forces. So, for example, Michael Walker, the English editor of ENR journal *The Scorpion*, has personally sheltered Robero Fiore, the young Italian radical Right terrorist who fled to London after the 1980 Bologna bombing. *The Sting*, a companion newsletter to *The Scorpion*, has an unmistakable sympathy for neo-Nazi Holocaust deniers.[26] Moreover, it should be remembered that many ENR thinkers and sympathizers are probably susceptible to the pull of revolutionary Right ideas because many have their origins in the extreme-right and neo-fascism milieu. There are probably few ENR thinkers who are completely free of the ideological residues and themes which nourished various revolutionary Right currents of thought.

Sensing impatience and fatigue with the ENR's long-term metapolitical stance, a number of GRECE figures longed for the taste for action and jumped into the political realm of the extreme-right and neo-fascist political parties. Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol has pointed out how the French extreme right-wing party the PFN, founded in 1974, had many ideological convergences with the ENR and the principal founders of the PFN and GRECE both belonged to the *Centre national des indépendants et paysans* (CNIP) organization.[27] Some old PFN militants would later join *le Mouvement nationaliste révolutionnaire* (MNR) under Jean-Gilles Malliarakis, which had a sort of rapprochement with ENR thinkers such as Alain de Benoist.[28] In a review article on the think tank GRECE, Alain Bihr argues that both the PFN and MNR had definite and declared fascist-like tendencies.[29] In this period during the 1970s, however, a greater number of GRECE members were tempted by the mainstream Right, especially the Gaullist RPR and UDF, a number of RPR members attended GRECE cultural activities, and GRECE members such as Yvan Blot and others even joined the RPR.[30]

It was in the 1980s, however, that a number of prominent GRECE intellectuals, including the former secretary-general Pierre Vial and Claude Bardet, joined the FN. Claude Bardet became editor-in-chief of the FN's theoretical journal of "national studies" *Identité*. A founding member of GRECE and a lecturer in history at the University of Lyon III, Vial joined the FN in 1988, became a member of its central committee in 1990, its political bureau in 1994, and created the FN bulletin *Terre et peuple* which stressed the primacy of "cultural war" and the "total ethnic war" of the future. A number of other prominent GRECE figures either joined the FN or flirted with this extreme-right, national-populist party: members of the *Nouvelle École* patronage or editorial committees in the 1970s and 1980s such as Hervé Lavenir, Bernard Asso (RPR regional councillor who declared himself "ultra-nationalist" and solicited the FN's support), Roland Gaucher (ran for the FN in 1986 legislative elections), Jean-Jacques Mourreau, Pierre Debray-Ritzen (a member of CODAR who rallied for the FN in 1985), and Jean-Yves Le Gallou (joined the FN central committee in 1985).[31] For the 1979 European elections under the FN banner, the ENR's doyen, Alain de Benoist, even allowed his name to be put on the Euro-Right's list.[32]

Other GRECE figures, whether Alain de Benoist, Pierre Vial, or Guillaume Faye, influenced the discourse of the FN in terms of the centrality of national identity, cultural roots, and immigration.[33] Le Pen's anti-fascist, anti-totalitarian, and anti-racist discourse was first formulated by GRECE thinkers de Benoist and Faye. When Le Pen argues that he is not a racist, especially not an "anti-French racist," one can hear the faint echoes of de Benoist's pronouncements of France for the French or Algeria for the Algerians. Also, it was Alain de Benoist that stated that "it is normal for all men to prefer the culture they belong to."[34] While de Benoist has been critical of Le Pen's narrow idea of concentric circles of affinity because he argues that the closest people are not necessarily the nicest or most honourable[35] (i.e., Le Pen's concentric circles idea means that he prefers his daughters to his cousins, his cousins to the neighbours, the neighbours to the foreigners, foreigners to the enemies, Frenchmen to other cultures, and then Europeans above non-Europeans), the two share an affinity for

maintaining strong cultural roots. The distinct difference is that whereas the preservation of the French identity is primary for Le Pen, de Benoist's valorization of cultural identity is more pan-European in nature.

While de Benoist focused on Europe's search for common pre-Christian, pagan roots, Faye's call for the repatriation of immigrants to their countries of origin and Vial's idea of an imperial European community of regions and "destiny" are examples of what Duranton-Crabol calls "objective convergences" between the ideas of GRECE and the FN.[36] Also, the FN's anti-Americanism and pro-Third World solidarity stance during the 1990 Gulf War when Jean-Marie Le Pen visited the Iraqi leader Sadaam Hussein finds its intellectual counterpart in Alain de Benoist's 1986 work entitled *Europe, Tiers monde, même combat.* Yet, Le Pen's virulent anti-Arab stance within France somewhat made a mockery of his alleged friendship with the Arab peoples and the Iraqi dictator. Furthermore, de Benoist's stance on immigration appears to be more aware of the global economic dimension of immigration as well as subscribing to a more dialogical view of cultural identity than Le Pen's FN.

The FN's close attention paid to coded language, the cultural terrain, and attempts to attain respectability by distancing themselves from the extra-parliamentary revolutionary Right, whether neo-Nazi skinheads or ultra-nationalist terrorist groups, also mirrors the pattern of the ENR intellectuals. FN city councillors have even attempted to ban "anti-national" liberal and left-wing books in certain French cities where the FN has captured power such as Toulon, Orange, and Marignane. On the cultural and ideological front, there were also alliances between the *nouvelle droite* and extreme-right or neo-fascist forces. Until the disappearance of Maurice Bardèche's explicitly fascist journal *Défense de l'Occident* in 1982, the GRECE journal *Éléments* regularly advertised for the former and opened its columns to Robert Poulet, Yves Bataille, and Alain Sanders, all writers for extreme right-wing, pro-FN publications such as *Rivarol* and *Jeune nation solidariste.*[37] As Roger Griffin correctly points out within the context of the late 1990s, ENR journals such as *Éléments* in

France, *Diorama letterario* in Italy, or *The Scorpion* in England continue to be appropriated by extreme-right parties and to publish a large number of their articles, advertisements, and numerous book reviews on extreme-right, fascist, or "Third Way" topics.[38]

Despite the intense conflicts between the ENR and FN over the appraisal of the Judeo-Christian heritage, elitism versus populism, and the divide between a focus on long-term cultural power and short-term political conquest, even the two adversaries recognized a measure of affinity with the basic ideas of GRECE thinkers: elitism, anti-egalitarianism, the intense hatred for liberal democracy, the cult of heroes, and the primordial importance of myths for both shaping history and guiding political destiny. It was even in *Présent*, the FN journal for its Catholic integralist wing under the leadership of Romain Marie, that one could hear some common convictions between the FN and GRECE. While *Présent* and other Catholic fundamentalist sections of the FN never tired of vehemently denouncing the irreligious, paganism and Nietzschean nominalism of GRECE, they did see common cause with old revolutionary Right comrades such as Delort, Maibre, de Benoist, and other GRECE thinkers against liberalism, democracy, and the Rights of Man:

> Delort, Maibre, de Benoist, vieux compagnons de route sont présents et l'on voudrait que je condamne mes anciens camarades au nom du libéralisme de Bernard Stasi? Mais, élitisme, culte de héros, reconnaisance de l'enégalité des hommes, là est aussi mon camp et non pas celui qui proclame sa passion pour la démocratie et son attachement aux Droits de l'homme.[39]

Even more troubling for ENR thinkers than such declarations for a think tank searching to enhance the Right's aura of respectability were the linkages between ENR thinkers and collaborationist, racialist, or Holocaust negationist circles, journals, and organizations. The French writer Raymond Abellio (1908-1986) was an old French collaborator who was part of the patronage committee of GRECE journal *Nouvelle École* and heavily influenced Alain de Benoist's ideas of a "spiritual" Europe fighting against the materialism of the Soviet East and Anglo-American West.[40] Roger Pearson, the President of the racist Northern League, which Michael Billig claimed

was part of an active "racist international" in the 1970s, belonged to the patronage committee of GRECE journal *Nouvelle École* along with a number of other GRECE sympathisers who were also connected to allegedly racist journals, namely, *The Mankind Quarterly* of England and *Neue Anthropologie* of Germany.[41]

To reiterate, this chapter has attempted to describe the rather ambiguous relationship between the ENR theorists and the extreme-right and neo-fascists. A post-1968 cultural force seriously influenced by the revolutionary ideas of the former leftist student radicals, the ENR thinkers have situated themselves on a distinctly different terrain of political contestation, namely, cultural confrontation, from both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary political forces. A number of their ideas also diverge from some standard right-wing ideas of the past, including their rejection of ultra-nationalism, Catholic fundamentalism, the defence of the "white man," and Western heritage. Political forces such as the French FN have cynically appropriated the works of ENR intellectuals like Alain de Benoist, but the chasm between the two is deep and wide in terms of means, ends, and ultimate ideals about the future society.

The two forces, one largely cultural and the other generally political, are spiritual, political, and historical cousins embedded in common right-wing influences and yet divided on both tactical and ideological fronts. Born in the period of student unrest in May 1968, it is no accident, then, that the ENR thinkers have attempted to distance themselves from the FN's older right-wing currents of thought and to enlist the support of Left and New Left ideals in their struggle against liberal democracy, neo-liberalism, and American cultural homogenization. For the contemporary ENR, these left-wing forces are closer spiritually than the FN because they wish to fight the same common liberal capitalist enemies, whereas they claim the FN has now become a hollow social force in the wake of the death of the old communist scarecrow.

Notes

[1] Quoted in Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire*, p. 216.

[2] Alain de Benoist in *Le choc du mois* 31 (July-August 1990), p. 32.

[3] Alain de Benoist in *Les dossiers de l'histoire* 82 (July 1992), pp. 149-150.

[4] Roland Gaucher, "Le GRECE est de retour," *National Hebdo* (446) (February 4-10, 1993), p. 9.

[5] André Figueras, "La fausse droite," *Le Monde* 28 July 1979.

[6] Harvey Simmons, *The French National Front: The Extremist Challenge to Democracy* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1996), p. 198.

[7] Alain de Benoist, "Three Interviews with Alain de Benoist," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994), pp. 185-186.

[8] Jacques Marlaud, "Droit de réponse," *Le Nouvel Observateur* (17 May, 1990).

[9] See Alain de Benoist, *Une certaine idée de la France* (Paris: Editions GRECE/Le Labyrinthe, 1985).

[10] See, for example, Alain de Benoist, *Les idées à l'endroit* (Paris: Libres-Hallier, 1979), pp. 145-156.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 156.

[12] This formulation was expressed by Alain de Benoist in *Vu de droite* (Paris: Copernic, 1979).

[13] Pierre André Taguieff, "An Interview with Pierre-André Taguieff," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994), p. 172.

[14] Quoted in Harvey Simmons, *The French National Front: The Extremist Challenge to Democracy*, p. 160.

[15] See, for example, Jean-Marie Le Pen, *Les Français d'abord* (Paris: Carrère-Lafon, 1984).

[16] Harvey Simmons, *The National Front in France: The Extremist Challenge to Democracy*, p. 4.

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] See, for example, the FN's policy manifesto entitled *300 mesures pour la renaissance de la France* (Paris: Editions Nationales, 1993).

[19] Alain de Benoist, *Vu de droite* (Paris: Copernic, 1979), pp. 261-288.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

[21] Alain Rollat, *Les hommes de l'extrême droite: Le Pen, Marie, Ortiz, et les autres* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1985), p. 143.

[22] So, for example, more than one-third of French *nouvelle droite* journal *Éléments* subscribers express an ideological affinity or proximity with the ideas of the extreme-right FN. See Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, "Les néo-païens de la Nouvelle Droite," *L'Histoire* 219 (March 1998), p. 51.

[23] Piero Ignazi, "The Changing Profile of the Italian Social Movement," in Peter H. Merkl and Leonard Weinberg, (eds.), *Encounters with the Contemporary Radical Right* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1993), p. 92.

[24] Pierre-André Taguieff, "Three Interviews with Pierre-André Taguieff," p. 168.

[25] Jean-Yves Le Gallou, (ed.), *La préférence nationale: réponse à l'immigration* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1985).

[26] Martin Lee, *The Beast Reawakens*, p. 450.

[27] Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire*, p. 213.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 218.

[29] Alain Bihr, "GRECE," *Celsius* 55 (January 1993), p. 1.

[30] Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire*, p. 213.

[31] *Ibid.*, pp. 216-217.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 124.

[33] A. Chebel d'Appollonia, *L'extrême droite en France: de Maurras à Le Pen* (Brussels: Complexe, 1988), p. 420.

[34] Alain de Benoist, "Contre tous les racismes," *Éléments* 8-9 (November 1974-February 1975), p. 16.

[35] Alain de Benoist, "Three Interviews with Alain de Benoist," p. 174.

[36] Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire*, p. 234.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 124.

[38] Roger Griffin, "Plus ça change! The Fascist Pedigree of the Nouvelle droite," pp. 1-28.

[39] J. Faure of *Présent* quoted in Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire*, p. 125.

[40] See, for example, Alain de Benoist, *Vu de droite*, pp. 428-431.

[41] Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire*, p. 148.

Conclusion:

This dissertation has attempted to trace the cultural, philosophical, political, and historical trajectories of the French *nouvelle droite* in particular and the European New Right (ENR) in general. As a cultural school of thought, the ENR intellectuals have sought to distance themselves from all the historical Right's previous stances, whether fascism, Nazism, Evolianism, or the monarchical, counterrevolutionary tradition. In addition, the *nouvelle droite* views the neo-liberalism of the Anglo-American New Right as its greatest enemy. In order to accomplish this difficult task of re-orienting the cultural and political framework of the Right, the *nouvelle droite* began a long period of soul-searching in 1968, which was interestingly the same year as the New Left-inspired student and worker revolts in France in particular and throughout Europe in general.

In short, it has been our general argument that the cultural and political syntheses of the ENR intellectuals is a unique combination of both New Left-like and post-modern influences, on the one hand, and residues of the older revolutionary Right or conservative revolutionary worldview, on the other hand. Moreover, while the *nouvelle droite*'s undeniable intellectual and political origins are on the Right and it has generally been labelled by cultural critics as a right-wing current of thought, its current positions give it a left-wing and ecological rather than right-wing aura. In a sense, then, the ENR ideological synthesis is a novel one because it would not have been possible without the spectacular events of May 1968 and the general impact of both the American and French New Left. As vehement opponents of liberal democracy and global capitalism, we also pointed out that the ENR intellectuals were not averse to flirting with the revolutionary ideas of the radical Left in general. Yet, at the same time, the major themes and obsessions of the ENR intellectuals, whether anti-egalitarianism, the notion of the right to difference, its marked elitism, the extreme focus on cultural preservation, or the radical critique of the foundations of liberal democracy, all

ring echoes of an earlier revolutionary right-wing legacy from the inter-war era of the 1920s and 1930s. Thus, it is this ambiguity between its dual affinities for the modern New Left and the older revolutionary Right milieu, which is at the heart and core of the ENR's worldview as well as its cultural and political projects. In our estimation, then, the ENR is neither a new form of cultural fascism, nor a completely novel political paradigm. ENR intellectuals straddle the uneasy tight rope between what some critics view as a renewed form of sinister cultural fascism and others view as a radically new, post-modern and post-fascist cultural and political paradigm.

We began the dissertation with a historical and ideological account of the origins, birth, and development of the *nouvelle droite* in France. This first chapter sought to highlight the explicitly right-wing roots and origins of the *nouvelle droite* in particular and the ENR in general. We also attempted to demonstrate how the *nouvelle droite* insisted that it was only through a long-term Gramscian-like capture of the cultural terrain that the Right would be able to escape its post-World War II "ghetto" status of the past; regain cultural and political respectability and legitimacy; and eventually gain a durable hold on the levers of political power. Consequently, in contrast to the Old Right, the *nouvelle droite* and ENR intellectuals abandoned what they considered the sterile parliamentary and extra-parliamentary realms of political contestation in favour of a long-term strategy of capturing hearts and minds. The ENR's leading ideologues, including its main theoretician Alain de Benoist, reasoned that if peoples' worldviews are radically altered (especially within elite cultural, political, and economic sectors of opinion), then the ENR's anti-liberal, anti-egalitarian revolution would be much closer to fruition.

The second chapter highlighted how the new cultural project of the ENR would look to the Left, New Left, and the spirit of May 1968 as sources of inspiration in order to re-orient the cultural and political trajectories of the Right in general. Indeed, May 1968 was a critical philosophical and political turning point for the ENR intellectuals, despite the fact that most of its thinkers originated within

the revolutionary Right and neo-fascist camps. While many ENR thinkers rejected what they considered the manipulative and hedonistic aura of the 1968 protests as well as the elite co-optation of the former 1968ers into the liberal capitalist system they once sought to vehemently overthrow, they shared with the 1968 generation a thirst for a post-liberal revolutionary order; a primordial anti-materialist idealism; and the longing for a better, more spiritual world. Whereas ENR intellectuals now claimed that the old 1968ers had largely abandoned the fight against liberal capitalism and the search for a more authentic and humane world, it was they who now raised the banner of May 1968 and called themselves the true revolutionary carriers of the idealistic flames of 1968. It is no accident, then, that by the late 1980s and 1990s ENR journals, such as *Krisis*, *Éléments*, and *Trassgresioni* were replete with New Left-like themes: the heavy indictment of the logic of Western, capitalist or communist notions of progress; pro-Third World solidarity; the critique of the subtle New Class forms of political and bureaucratic modes of domination; the valorization of federalism and small-scale political and economic communities; a pronounced ecological agenda; and the right of differing local cultural identities to resist the homogenizing, assimilationist logic of capitalism and the nation-state. The ENR's ultimate goal was to unite with the most revolutionary remnants of the 1968 generation in order to create a novel political synthesis for the new millennium.

In chapter three, we began to more thoroughly uncover the ENR's political and philosophical influences and worldview. We sought to explain that both the focus on cultural metapolitics and the valorization of the right to difference represent the two central tenets of the ENR's worldview. On the one hand, the exclusive focus on the cultural terrain allowed the ENR to gain a measure of cultural and political respectability by distancing itself from the Right's most horrific political legacies, namely, fascism and Nazism. On the other hand, the En's use of the rather ambiguous notion known as the right to difference was a way in which the Right could distinguish itself from the egalitarian-based politics of the Left and simultaneously gain a degree of sympathy from the revolutionary anti-capitalist sectors of the Left and New Left. This left-wing agenda became

especially important after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the collapse of communist states in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and the intellectual demise of socialist ideology. That is, with the rise of a global, neo-liberal capitalist ethic and the attack on the welfare state consensus in Western Europe in the 1980s and 1990s, the revolutionary anti-capitalist forces of the far Right and far Left could conceivably unite against liberal democracy and the triumphant march of global capitalism. In a sense, then, the ENR intellectuals had already anticipated these new cultural and political alliances before the fateful events of 1989. In the post-communist, post-Cold War era, the ENR clearly anticipates that the political alliances of the future will not reflect that neat Left-Right divisions of the past; such alliances might be shifting and fluid rather than clearly defined and unambiguous; and could be both novel and bizarre in terms of the nature of the political alliances.

In chapter four, we further elaborated on the ENR's worldview by examining its ambiguities and tensions. We pointed out a number of different ambiguities within the ENR worldview. In the first place, the ENR is a unique ideological mixture between two polar opposite worldviews, namely, the revolutionary Right and New Left. This has created a sense of great confusion for academics, concerned intellectuals, and political activists alike. Second, the ENR is an ambiguous cultural project since it denies the fascist and extreme right-wing labels, but continues to display an affinity for the anti-liberal themes of the right-wing conservative revolutionary milieu, which nourished both the fascist and Nazi régimes of the past. The third major ambiguity within the ENR's worldview is that it is a right-wing movement which searches for new alliances more often on the Left than the Right and has been attacked with equal ardour by the Left and Right. That is, the ENR has been vehemently denounced by the pro-capitalist Anglo-American Right for its anti-capitalist and anti-Western stances and the Catholic Right for its irreligious, pagan, and anti-Judeo-Christian positions. Fourth, there is a deep tension between traditional forms of politics and the ENR's elitist focus on cultural metapolitics. Fifth, the ENR's commitment to a detached form of scientism and intellectualism clashes with its attachment to revolutionary myths as

well as a myth of cultural belonging. Finally, it could be argued that there is a contradiction between the ENR's espousal of cultural tolerance, polytheism, and pluralism, on the one hand, and its valorization of particular forms of cultural identity, on the other hand. That is, if the ENR rejects the idea of one God and one Truth, then it cannot in the same breath resurrect the idea of culture as the new idol.

In chapter five, we completed the first section of the dissertation by examining competing interpretations of the ENR phenomenon. We attempted to thoroughly classify the academic literature surrounding the ENR intellectuals. At minimum, accusations of fascism seem rather inaccurate when applied to the ENR thinkers because they have rejected all homogenizing modern ideologies (including fascism). In addition, the ENR now supports the bottom-up concept of local democracy which is an affront to the hierarchical, top-down elitism of fascism and Nazism. Moreover, the fascist label presents us with many problems because fascism was simultaneously an ideology, political movement, and form of government, and there is little consensus among political scientists and historians as to what constitutes fascism.[1]

The second section of the dissertation began with chapter six and was more generally devoted to the ENR's relationship to contemporary cultural and political forces especially in Europe as well as North America. Chapter six asked the question of whether the *nouvelle droite* and the ENR in general constituted a sort of right-wing International. The first part of chapter six focuses on the ENR's cultural contacts in Europe, while the second part examines its idiosyncratic relationship with *Telos*, the North American critical theory journal. While it is true that the different ENR formations throughout Europe shared a commitment to long-term cultural metapolitics and an obsession with the right to difference of individuals and communities (as well as a hatred of egalitarianism, liberal democracy, global capitalism, and the United States), it is difficult to argue that the differing national and regional branches constitute a co-ordinated right-wing International. Some ENR formations, it appeared, had more affinity for the Left

and New Left rather than the Right as is perhaps the case with the Italian New Right. Moreover, there were even outright schisms between some national branches, including the split between Alexander Dugin's Russian New Right and Alain de Benoist's French *nouvelle droite*. Finally, given the vast differences and bitter antagonisms between the ENR intellectuals and their neo-liberal and paleo-conservative Anglo-American counterparts, a right-wing International is rather difficult to accomplish in practice.

In fact, an interesting cultural development of the 1990s was an attempt by ENR intellectuals in France, Italy, and even North America to appeal to former left-wing rather than right-wing radicals in the struggle against liberal capitalism. The ENR's entrance onto the pages of the American critical theory journal *Telos* was one such attempt to unite the radical anti-capitalist poles of the ENR with disgruntled New Left intellectuals from the United States. While the editors of *Telos* claimed that the ENR had definitively left behind their old revolutionary Right or neo-fascist milieu of the past, other critics saw this development as a co-ordinated right-wing cultural and political strategy of deception, manipulation, and legitimation. In short, these critics contend that the Right was simply adapting to the changing times and its dominant cultural and political environment by co-opting a number of New Left, ecological, democratic, anti-racist, anti-totalitarian, and pro-Third World themes in order to escape the Right's "burden of history" and appeal to a new generation of Europeans born without the bitter memories of the two world wars. Some critics pointed out that the fascist ideological synthesis was, like the ENR's worldview, a strange cocktail of numerous influences and tastes. The ENR's advantage was that in the 1990s, unlike in 1979 when it was heavily vilified in the French press by many critics as a quasi-fascist cultural movement, an ideological vacuum had been opened with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of the old socialist project. Yet, at the same time, the problem for the ENR was that fewer cultural and political critics were paying attention to the ENR in the 1990s than in the late 1970s. However, as economic and political conditions potentially deteriorate both in Europe and abroad as a result of cultural and economic globalization, perhaps the ENR's anti-capitalist message embedded

within the framework of cultural preservation will become more appealing as a rallying cry for some contemporary political elites.

In the second part of chapter six, we looked at the interesting ways in which the ENR's ideas had travelled to North America in the early 1990s and found a refuge within the left-wing critical theory journal *Telos*. Was this cultural development an isolated case or part of a broader cultural and political trend? Was this co-operation between former right-wing and left-wing radicals a harbinger for the new cultural and political alliances in the post-communist era? We also sought to draw both modern and historical lessons from this unique rapprochement between the former forces of the revolutionary Right and revolutionary Left. In an age of greater economic and cultural globalization as well as an ascendant, institutionalized neo-liberal capitalist agenda which increases the power of large corporations and weakens the democratic power of both national parliaments and local citizens (e.g., through the policies of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, the regional trade agreements in Europe, the Americas, and Asia, and perhaps even the Multilateral Agreement on Investment in the future), one can expect more of these apparently strange anti-capitalist, anti-liberal alliances between the extreme poles of the Right and Left. Will these potentially new post-communist, post-welfare state alliances lead to the creation of a new ideological synthesis, or rather the revival of an older, more pernicious political agenda reminiscent of the 1920s and 1930s? In their extreme, revolutionary hatred of capitalism and liberal parliamentarism, many intellectuals of the 1920s and 1930s oscillated between the far poles of Right and Left and were actually indifferent to whether the System fell from the Right or Left. This might also describe the revolutionary stance of ENR intellectuals vis-à-vis what they consider a decadent contemporary liberal democracy.

In chapter seven, or the final chapter, we examined the ENR's problematic relationship to the revolutionary Right, extreme-right, and neo-fascists. We uncovered the differences between ENR thinkers such as Alain de Benoist and the French extreme right-wing political outfit known as the *Front National*. At the

same time, we also sought to point out that perhaps there is an affinity between ENR thinkers and extreme right-wing political parties in terms of their common anti-egalitarian ethos and obsessive quest for the maintenance of particularistic cultural identities. Both the ENR and the extreme-right and neo-fascist milieus reject the egalitarian and universalist dimensions of the Enlightenment and liberal democracy. In addition, we also examined the ENR's connections, both real and imagined, to extreme-right and neo-fascist circles. GRECE and ENR intellectuals and supporters desperately sought to escape the Right's "ghetto" status of the past, thus distancing themselves from the revolutionary Right, extreme right-wing, neo-fascist, and Holocaust denial sectors of the Right.

In general, then, this dissertation sought to convey the main idea that the ENR, a cultural school of thought born around the time of the New Left-inspired student and worker protests in 1968, represents a rather unique and ambiguous ideological synthesis between the ideals of the New Left and those of the revolutionary Right. In addition, the dissertation also attempted to explain that while the ENR is a relatively marginalized cultural and political force, its ideological synthesis could have greater political influence in the future due to the ideological and political vacuum left after 1989. Moreover, the ENR actually embodies one of the most interesting and innovative cultural developments in the post-World War II era because it claims to transcend the revolutionary Right and neo-fascist milieus by offering us a new political paradigm for the next millennium. Yet, as we have already pointed out, a number of cultural and political critics are not so ready to accept the ENR's impressive ideological overhaul at face value and continue to insist that its project is, at it central core, revolutionary right-wing in nature. On the one hand, in still retaining a number of residues of revolutionary Right themes, the ENR cannot be considered a completely new political paradigm. On the other hand, in attempting to open towards the Left, New Left, and post-modern themes, the ENR appears to transcend its roots in the revolutionary Right and neo-fascist milieus.

The ENR's cultural trajectory in the 1990s provides us with some clear examples of this ideological synthesis between revolutionary Right and New Left currents of thought. Alain de Benoist's limited circulation journal *Krisis* is filled with left-wing, ecological, anti-utilitarian, and post-modern authors rather than revolutionary Right authors: Ignacio Ramonet (the editor of the prestigious French political and cultural monthly *Le Monde diplomatique*), Jean-Marie Domenach (the former editor of the left-wing, Christian journal *Esprit*), the world renowned French philosopher Jean Baudrillard, the former French communists Roger Garaudy and Régis Debray, the deep ecologist guru Arne Naess and the head of the French Green Party Antoine Waechter, the French anti-utilitarians Serge Latouche and Alain Caille, and other left-leaning authors, such as Jean-Pierre Vernant and Thierry Maulnier. So, for example, a number of recent *Krisis* issues, including September 1993 (ecology), June 1994 (community), and March 1999 (federalism), are devoted to left-wing and ecological themes and authors.[2] The ecology issue even includes an interview with the French Green leader Antoine Waechter as well as an elaborate article by the deep ecology guru Arne Naess. The community issue contains an article by the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss as well as re-printed articles from several North American neo-communitarian thinkers, such as Alasdair MacIntyre, Amitai Etzioni, Michael Sandel, and Amy Gutmann. Finally, the issue on federalism contains a text by the 19th century French leftist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, the Italian left-wing writer Massimo Cacciari, several articles about the father of federalism Johannes Althusius (1557-1638), and a number of articles by Paul Piccone and Paul D'Amico from the left-leaning American critical theory journal *Telos*.

Nonetheless, despite the allegedly left-wing and ecological orientation of *Krisis*, the older revolutionary Right or conservative revolutionary themes still manage to creep into the contents of the journal. The ecology issue contains an article, "*Le recours aux forêts*," by the leading figure of the conservative revolutionary milieu, Ernst Jünger.[3] Furthermore, the community issue has an important article by Carlo Gambescia about using the communitarian ideology in the service against liberal universalism as well as the Western, paradigm of

capitalist modernization.[4] This subtle affinity for revolutionary Right themes can be found in a number of other issues within *Krisis*, perhaps the most explicitly left-wing of all ENR publications. Issue number four about society and traditions consists of articles by Raymond Abellio about power, knowledge, and invisible history as well as the 19th century Spanish counterrevolutionary Donoso Cortés. Issue number five is about the nation and contains an article by the German conservative revolutionary author Arthur Moeller Van Den Bruck about Germany as the power bridge between Europe and the West. Issue number six is explicitly devoted to the question of myth, a staple of revolutionary right-wing thinking, with articles by the French revolutionary writer Georges Sorel, Alain de Benoist, and Augusto Del Noce. Issue number eight contains articles by the Carl Schmitt scholar Julien Freund, Friedrich Nietzsche, and even a reprinted piece about genetic determinism and morality by Edward O. Wilson. Finally, issues numbers 10-14 contain articles by Carl Schmitt, Carl Von Clausewitz, and the French fascist author Pierre Drieu La Rochelle.

Thus, even in *Krisis*, the most avowedly left-wing of the ENR journals, the old revolutionary right-wing authors and themes seem to mingle in a rather strange sort of ideological cocktail with left-wing, New Left, ecological, and post-modern influences, themes, and authors. Born in 1968 at around the same period as the New Left-influenced student and worker revolts in France, it became almost second nature for the French *nouvelle droite* to co-opt all the standard New Left themes and concerns. Besides, the ENR's left-wing co-optation strategy had the advantage of giving the Right a new aura of intelligence, prestige, and credibility. In co-operating with a number left-wing authors and journals in France, Italy, and even North America, the ENR's legitimacy was further enhanced. This cultural co-operation between former intellectual dissidents from the revolutionary Right and Left also allowed the ENR to claim that it was in the midst of creating a new political paradigm which both challenged the hegemonic liberal democratic ideology and filled the ideological vacuum left by the erosion of the socialist ideology after 1989. Whether this ideological synthesis is genuine or part of a

larger political and historical "game" with deep roots in the past is still a matter open for interpretation.

If we turn to one of Alain de Benoist's last pieces of the century, we get an indication of the ENR's ambiguous ideological synthesis as we approach the next millennium. Written for the left-leaning American journal *Telos* in the winter of 1999, de Benoist's article is entitled "What is Racism?"[5] Written in a rather neutral, detached, and scientific tone, the aforementioned article investigates the historical, cultural, philosophical, and political manifestations and meanings of racism. By attempting to argue that racism is difficult to define and understand because it is connected to a larger political agenda which tries to pejoratively discredit its opponents with the racist tag, de Benoist argues that the term has become vague and discourages meaningful analysis. We also know from other ENR works that their intellectuals view racism and totalitarianism as rooted in the monotheistic Judeo-Christian tradition as well as the imposition of Western models of economic and political development on the entire planet. Thus, perhaps de Benoist's purpose is to define racism in a particular and circumscribed manner (i.e., above all, racism is viewed as a theory of racial hierarchy and inequality) in order to prevent the ENR itself from being labelled as racist in nature. In arguing that racism is essentially a theory of racial hierarchy and inequality, de Benoist and the ENR can argue that they are not racist because they firmly believe in the right to difference of all world cultures in a xenophile spirit. The French scholar Pierre-André Taguieff has repeatedly pointed out that the right to difference can be both xenophobic or xenophile in spirit; both differentialist and anti-differentialist in orientation; both racist and anti-racist in its ideological rhetoric.

There is a further problem with de Benoist's *Telos* article about racism. In the article, de Benoist appears to go out of his way to defend Julius Evola, the architect of the Italian Fascist Manifesto of "spiritual racism," as well as Arthur de Gobineau, the French philosopher famous for his theory of racial conflict. In a sense, there is a definite line of ideological continuity between this *Telos* piece written in 1999 and de Benoist's most famous text published in 1977, *Vu de droite*.

In the earlier work, we must recall that de Benoist also went to great lengths to downplay and sanitize the real nature of the historical works of Evola and de Gobineau. In short, as late as 1999, de Benoist's affinity for the revolutionary Right milieu and its themes had not completely faded.

Finally, the core of the ENR's ideological project is revealed in the final quote of de Benoist's *Telos* article by Irenaus Eibl-Eibesfeldt:

> One often hears the argument that only a single world civilization, with a total mixture of all races, would resolve the tensions and conflicts between groups. That does not appear to me necessary or desirable. If one could teach man to be tolerant, i.e., to be ready to understand and accept other lifestyles both within civilizations and between various peoples, then ethnocentrism will find itself defused without it being necessary for groups to surrender their cultural uniqueness nor pride in their own civilization. Establishing peace among peoples need not be accompanied over the dead bodies of civilizations and races.[6]

While this type of discourse might not support the harsh, racist, anti-immigrant politics of Le Pen in France, Haider in Austria, or Schonhuber in Germany, it is also against the idea of so-called race mixing and the creation of truly multicultural, multiethnic societies where all cultures are equal and no one dominant culture exists. Moreover, Eibl-Eibesfeldt's position ultimately supports a type of politics, which thoroughly discredits the liberal and leftist politics of cultural pluralism, multiculturalism, and universalism. In fearing the arrival of a single world civilization dominated by capitalist or Marxist materialism, or even Euro-American cultural homogenization, the ENR expresses its most basic desire, namely, the need to hold onto a rooted European cultural identity which has been forever lost. Furthermore, it is interesting that the Right, which once vigorously and almost unanimously defended the homogenizing projects of both the nation-state and colonialism, has all of a sudden, become the big defender of all world cultures. Has the ENR become truly multiethnic in spirit, or rather does it wish to create a so-called heterogeneous world of homogeneous communities in order to defend the differing European cultures and communities from the alleged onslaught of foreigners? This sort of project can easily play into a political project which dreads multicultural societies by alleging that the French or Europeans are in danger of cultural assimilation or extinction. Why does the ENR not fully

defend the principle of multiculturalism in practice in a spirit, which guarantees both cultural integration as well as respects cultural understanding and difference?

In short, the ENR's cultural agenda cannot be simply taken at face value because it is often actions rather than words, which ultimately guide both politics and history. Naturally, ideas can have a significant impact on the movement of politics and history as we saw in this century with the magnetic appeal of the ideas of Karl Marx on the worldwide socialist movement. Alain de Benoist is not Karl Marx, but his ideas might increasingly appeal to cultural, political, and economic elites wishing to create a revolutionary, post-liberal social order. The ENR's ideological overhaul and opening to the Left as well as use of numerous post-modern themes have been startling and impressive for the Right, which has generally been associated with tradition, the old moral order, or the rigid defence of private property and the social and economic status quo. Yet, as we explained throughout the dissertation, the older revolutionary Right themes and authors have never been fully abandoned by the ENR's major theorists. Therefore, the ENR sits at a rather indeterminate precipice between an older, discredited revolutionary right-wing worldview and more contemporary, post-modern, and New Left currents of thought. At minimum, the ENR has given the continental European Right a greater aura of cultural and political credibility and legitimacy, which has now increased after the demise of the socialist ideology in 1989. However, in contrast to the neo-liberal, hyper-capitalist Anglo-American Right and in a manner reminiscent of the New Left, the ENR has rejected all the major ideologies of this century (i.e., liberal democracy, socialism, social democracy, fascism, etc.) as well as the triumphant march of global capitalism which, it argues, threatens to homogenize all world cultures, destroy the environment, increase gaps between rich and poor, and obliterate all notions of communal solidarity.

The ENR's proximity to the New Left does not end with the rejection of global capitalism and liberal democracy. Like the New Left, the ENR valorizes a type of political project which rejects the universal spread of Western modes of instrumental thinking, its technological mastery over the forces of Nature, the

capitalist model of modern development as the hallmark of progress, and Western lifestyles and mentalities. In contrast, the ENR, like the New Left, supports the right to difference of all world cultures, regions, languages, or unique institutions and ways of life. These different cultures, the ENR contends, can survive and flourish autonomously by rejecting homogenizing tendencies of contemporary political ideologies, the nation-state, the supra-national European Union (EU) project, or the interference of large multinational or transnational corporations. Moreover, in giving an excessive preference to particular identities and cultures as opposed to the liberal-Left's logic of universalism, the ENR is also similar to the New Left which supported regional movements, radical nationalist tendencies, the cultural right to difference of immigrants, feminist, gay, and lesbian politics, and revolutionary black separatist or pan-African politics. In short, both ENR and New Left projects can conceivably lead to insular, narrow, and particularistic forms of politics.

We are not accusing neither the New Left or New Right of the fascist label, but simply pointing out that their common particularistic, anti-universal forms of thinking often resembles the inward-looking, hyper-nationalist dogmas of the past. This turn towards the particular, and to local forms of fundamentalism, might only be enhanced by greater cultural, political, and economic globalization and Americanization. In a sense, the ENR has firmly recognized one important global trend of the contemporary age, namely, what the American political scientist Benjamin Barber has called "Jihad versus McWorld" (the clash between local, particular forms of fundamentalism and the universal spread of Western, materialist corporate culture),[7] or what another political pundit has dubbed the coming world "clash of civilizations."[8] For the ENR, like the New Left, the universal spread of capitalist consumerism is in fact a particularistic, Jihad-like form of politics which masquerades in universal guises. The New Left might lament the comparisons to the ENR and claim to be more universalist and tolerant than the ENR, but their common critique of Western universalism and celebration of the cult of difference might, as the ENR wishes, leave room for cultural and

political co-operation in the future. Yet, the ENR is probably well aware that common hatreds do not lead to common societal blueprints for the future.

In the end, what can we conclude from the ENR's entrance into the European and cultural scenes in 1968, the precise year of the student and worker revolts in France? In the first place, the ENR reached its apogee of mass media as well as political exposure and influence in France in the late 1970s after which it declined in importance as a result of the earthquake Socialist electoral victory of Mitterrand in 1981. Yet, the decline of the French and European Left in general, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, and the demise of the socialist ideology in the 1990s might allow the ENR ideological synthesis to make a political comeback in the future. The ENR's ideas might also receive greater cultural and political credibility in the future as a result of the somnambulistic tendencies of a younger generation which does not remember the spectres of fascism, Nazism, and pro-Nazi collaborationist régimes throughout Europe. The ENR's unique ability to integrate May 1968-like New Left, ecological, pro-Third World, pro-democratic, anti-racist, and anti-totalitarian themes and authors helps this cultural movement to outwardly distance itself from the haunting revolutionary Right ghosts of the past.

This brings us to the ENR's relationship to liberal democracy. In essence, the ENR's entire cultural project is designed to de-legitimize liberal democracy and eventually create a revolutionary post-liberal social order. However, the mass media focus on the ENR in 1979 and 1993 in France served to conveniently aid the political forces of the French Left by raising the simplistic, sinister spectre of fascism. In the process, a number of more menacing anti-democratic trends were obfuscated throughout the French and European political landscape, whether it is the Stalinist nature of the Old French Left or the rise of anti-immigrant political movements and parties throughout Europe, such as the French *Front National*, the Austrian Freedom Party, the Belgian *Vlaams Blok*, Sweden's New Democracy, Germany's *Republikaner* Party, or Italy's Northern League. These insular, nationalistic or regionalist tendencies are even more prominent in Eastern Europe as a result of the ideological vacuum left by the demise of socialism as well as the

lack of democratic and pluralistic political traditions in the region. More importantly, as the political scientist Martin Schain has pointed out, we must recognize that European political parties and elites of all ideological stripes have participated in consciously or unconsciously accepting and legitimizing this rising anti-liberal, anti-immigrant ethic in both their ideological rhetoric and government policies.[9] In this political atmosphere, we must realize that the ENR was often used by liberal and left-wing forces as a sort of expanded fascist monster in order to hide the contradictions, shortcomings, and excesses of these aforementioned political forces as well as the liberal democratic system in general.

If the ENR wishes to avoid the cynical manipulation of its cultural ideas, it would have to clarify and break its relationship with the revolutionary Right milieu, thus avoiding any accusations of fascism, Nazism, and the like. Yet, in reality, the ENR has never fully severed its relationship to this revolutionary Right milieu and desires the revolutionary overthrow of what it considers a decadent, egalitarian, and materialistic liberal capitalist system. In turn, the ENR has undertaken a patient, long-term, Gramscian-like cultural project as a precondition for the arrival of a highly elitist, hierarchical, and anti-liberal revolutionary social and political order where the capitalist economy is firmly restrained by the powerful will of political, military, and cultural elites. With historical hindsight, it is fairly clear that this type of social re-engineering might be a convenient political mechanism of new elites and can conceivably create more chaos and pain to common people than the current liberal democratic system. Intellectual and ideological overhauls in the cultural realm as with the ENR's combination of New Left and revolutionary Right ideals, however impressive and sophisticated they might appear to be at first glance, are no guarantee for the way its ideas will be used by political actors in the future. At present, the ENR resembles the New Left in its analysis of liberal democracy and global capitalism; it cultivates ties with cultural and political forces on the Right, Left, and beyond; and patiently waits for it ideas to spread through peoples' hearts and minds as well as the heart of the body politic.

We must also add that there is a general danger of any cultural or political project which preaches the merits of anti-egalitarianism and elitism in combination with a return to a mythical, pre-Christian, and pagan cultural identity. This type of political project can often be mistaken for a revived form of Nazi-like paganism. Moreover, this political project assumes that elites always shape and make history, while ordinary people are the mere spectators of history. Furthermore, it is a political project which might have difficulty with cultural differences within societies more than between societies because it views multiculturalism as a form of cultural "ethnocide." Finally, the complete lack of faith in ordinary people smacks of a deep resentment for the principles of egalitarianism and the rule of the masses. If the ENR is serious about its principles of organic democracy and the idea of local self-governance, then it is the people themselves rather than political, cultural, and economic elites that must decide the future direction of their respective societies. For the ENR, like numerous other intellectual and cultural outfits across the political landscape, the idea of select elite rule is a comforting thought because it allows certain people in the world the right to feel a false sense of superiority vis-à-vis other unselected people. There is no reason to believe that, given other criteria for political rule, common people would have more political influence and intellectuals would occupy a less privileged position than the one charted by the ENR. In the end, it is difficult to fully reconcile the ENR's highly elitist Gramscian project and Promethean view of life, on the one hand, and its calls for organic democracy, local self-governance, federalism, and the like. The former project is highly elitist, while the latter is democratic in the original Athenian meaning of the term.

It should also become increasingly apparent that the ENR's ideological synthesis began to have more saliency in the post-1989 period and the blurring of ideological boundaries as a result of the demise of socialism. At a time when the Left increasingly moderates itself and makes its peace with capitalism by turning to compromise solutions in the "Third Way" mould of Tony Blair or Gerhardt Schroeder, the ENR has taken up radically anti-capitalist and even ecological positions which are more traditionally associated with the Left. Indeed, the ENR

has proven to us that Right and Left are rather fluid ideological anchors which can naturally change over time, country, and issue dimensions. As the Right and Left increasingly co-operate over issues such as immigration, the preservation of cultural identity, and ecological questions, it becomes more difficult to classify the Right and Left. Were the rather bizarre alliances which formed against the pro-European integration and supranational Maastricht Treaty between the extreme nationalist forces of the far Right and the vigorously anti-capitalist communist parties on the Left in France and throughout Europe what the ENR intellectuals had in mind when they envisioned the new alliances of the post-communist era? De Benoist and the ENR dream of the far poles of the Right and Left uniting against the triumphant march of global capitalism and liberal democracy. Depending on the shifting political landscape and the quickest route to make the liberal democratic system fall, the ENR doyen could easily be on the Left or Right.

In the future, then, what will actually separate Right and Left: economic issues, cultural questions, or the stance vis-à-vis the Third World? Does the Left still stand for equality and the Right for inequality as a neat demarcation line?[10] Given the destructive nature of Western notions of progress in which both Right and Left have participated in perpetuating, is the Left really more progressive than the Right? Moreover, we should also keep in mind that most ideological syntheses which have attempted to reconcile and unite the main features of Right and Left, whether with the fascists or the current vogue of the so-called "Third Way" common to European social democratic parties, have generally favoured the Right, if the Right is taken to mean the established forces of law and order, big business, and private property. Can the same be said about the ENR ideological synthesis which unites what it considers the best features of Right and Left?

We know that the Italian National Alliance, the former neo-fascist party known as the Italian Social Movement, has already participated in a national coalition precisely because it allegedly disavowed its fascist heritage of the past, or perhaps because the entire political class had drifted towards an accommodation with the far Right. In any case, this was the first time in the post-World War II era

in which a revolutionary Right political outfit had been accepted into a coalition government. In short, the cultural and political climate had radically changed in the 1990s, thus making the Right less of an ostracized, illegitimate political pariah as in the 1960s and 1970s. On the cultural terrain, the ENR has worked patiently and tirelessly for the days when the Right was no longer an object of political scorn and a marginalized entity in general. Yet, given the ENR's deep indebtedness to the New Left and 1968 revolutionary tradition, could its intellectuals more suitably be called organic, synthetic utopians rather than right-wing or new right thinkers?[11]

Therefore, we come to our last point about the importance of the cultural realm and ideas in general in changing the political, social, and economic direction of history. Ideas which were once marginalized, like the idea of a sun-centred universe, are today firmly mainstream ideas. The same can be said about political ideas which like democracy were once ridiculed by ancient Greek philosophers as the basest form of political rule, but today there is no political ruler in the world which does not, at minimum, give lip service to the idea of democracy and the rule of the people. Today, everyone is a democrat across the political landscape and the ENR intellectuals are no exception to this trend. In any case, it is highly plausible that once marginalized political ideas, including those of the ENR theorists, can gain increasing ascendancy, normalcy, and mainstream status in the future. In a de-ideological and de-spiritualized age without grand visions, is it not possible for the emergence of new political elites which will mirror ENR ideas? The ENR ideological synthesis has some appeal in continental Europe for cultural, historical, and political reasons. While material conditions are highly important in shaping and determining one's worldview and ideological universe, we know from the history of this last century that the ideas of the few can move scores of men and women towards the longing for agitation in support of a revolutionary new social order. Working on the metapolitical terrain for over thirty years now, the ENR still patiently waits for the full impact of its ideas in the political realm.

Notes

[1] For a good overview of different theories related to opposition fascism, régime fascism, and neo-fascism, see Roger Griffin, (ed.), *Fascism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

[2] See the following *Krisis* issues: 1993 (15) (ecology), 1994 (16) (community), 1999 (22) (federalism).

[3] Ernst Jünger, "Le recours aux forêts", *Krisis* (15) (September 1993), pp. 165-168.

[4] Carlo Gambescia, "Communautarisme contre universalisme. Pour une critique du paradigme occidental de modernisation," *Krisis* (16) (June 1994), pp. 122-141.

[5] Alain de Benoist, "What Is Racism?" *Telos* 114 (Winter 1999).

[6] Ireanus Eibl-Eibesfeldt in Alain de Benoist, *Ibid.*, p. 48.

[7] Benjamin R. Barber, *Jihad Versus McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995).

[8] Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*. New York: Touchstone, 1998.

[9] Martin Schain, "The National Front in France and the Construction of Political Legitimacy," *West European Politics* 10 (2) (April 1987).

[10] This is Norberto Bobbio's main thesis in *Right and Left: The Significance of A Political Distinction* (London: Polity Press, 1996).

[11] For this insight, I am indebted to a friend and Toronto lawyer, Howard Goldstein. Also, see Tamir Bar-On, "The Ambiguities of the Nouvelle Droite, 1968-1999," paper presented for *Is Fascism History?* Conference at York University, Toronto, Canada (28-29 October, 1999).

Bibliography

Adler, Frank. "Left Vigilance in France," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994).

Ali, Tarik and Watkin, Susan. *Marching in the Streets*. London: Verso, 1998.

Aron, Raymond. *Mémoires, 50 ans de réflexion politique*. Paris: Julliard, 1983.

_____ "La Nouvelle Droite," *L'Express* (July 21, 1979).

_____. *The Opium of the Intellectuals* (translated by Terrence Kilmartin). London: Secker and Warburg, 1957.

Attali, Jacques. "The Crash of Western Civilization: The Limits of the Market and Democracy," *Foreign Policy* 107 (Summer 1997).

Badinter, Robert (ed.). *Vous avez dit fascismes?* Paris: Montalba, 1985.

Barber, Benjamin R. *Jihad Versus McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1995.

Bardèche, Maurice. *Qu'est-ce que le fascisme?* Paris: Les Sept Couleurs, 1961.

Bar-On, Tamir. "The Ambiguities of the Nouvelle Droite, 1968-1999," paper presented for *Is Fascism History?* Conference at York University, Toronto, Canada (October 28-29, 1999).

Baudrillard, Jean. *The Perfect Crime*. London: Verso, 1996.

Bell, Laurence and Flood, Christopher (eds.). *Political Ideologies in Contemporary France*. London: Pinter, 1997.

Benda, Julien. *The Treason of the Intellectuals* (1928) (translated by Richard Aldington). New York: Norton, 1969.

Berlin, Isaiah. *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*. London: Pinter, 1991.

Biehl, Janet and Staudenmaier, Peter. *Ecofascism: Lessons from the German Experience*. Edinburgh, Scotland: AK Press, 1995.

Bihr, Alain. "GRECE," *Celsius* 55 (January 1993).

Bobbio, Norberto. *Right and Left: The Significance of A Political Distinction*. London: Polity Press, 1996.

Brunn, Julien. *La nouvelle droite: le dossier du 'procès.'* Paris: Nouvelles éditions Oswald, 1979.

Caciagli, Mario. "The Movimento Sociale Italiano-Destra Nazionale and Neo-Fascism in Italy," *West European Politics* 11 (2) (April 1988).

Cau, Jean. "Marx et Coca-Cola," *Éléments* 8-9 (November 1974-February 1975).

Champetier, Charles. "The Summer of the Dinosaurs: Violent Press Campaign Against the New Right," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994).

Chebel d'Appolonia, Ariane. *L'extrême droite en France: de Maurras à Le Pen*. Brussels: Complexe, 1987.

Cheles, Luciano et. al. (eds.). *The Far Right in Western and Eastern Europe*. London: Longman, 1991.

Cohen, A. *Persécutions et sauvetage: juifs et français sous l'occupation et sous Vichy*. Paris: Maspero, 1993.

Cohen, Gerald et. al. *The New Right: Image and Reality*. London: Runnymede Trust, 1986.

Cornick, Martyn. "May 1968," in Alex Hughes and Keith Reader, (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Contemporary French Culture*. London: Routledge, 1998.

Crozier, Michael. *La société bloquée*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1975.

De Benoist, Alain. "Johannes Althusius (1557-1638)," *Krisis* 22 (March 1999).

_____. "What Is Racism?" *Telos* 114 (Winter 1999).

_____. "Nazism and Communism: Evil Twins?," *Telos* 112 (Summer 1998).

_____. "Hayek: A Critique," *Telos* 110 (Winter 1998).

_____. "I Metodi Della Nuova Inquisizione," *Diorama letterario* 210 (January 1998).

_____. "An Interview with Alain de Benoist," *Right Now!* (1997).

_____. "Confronting Globalization," *Telos* 108 (Summer 1996).

_____. *L'empire intérieur*. Paris: Labyrinthe, 1996.

_____. "Horizon 2000: Trois entretiens avec Alain de Benoist," *Point de vue* (Paris: GRECE, 1996).

_____. "Democracy Revisited," *Telos* 95 (Spring 1995).

_____. "The End of the Left-Right Dichotomy: The French Case," *Telos* 102 (Winter 1995).

_____. "Between the Gods and the Titans," *The Scorpion* 15 (1994).

_____. "Three Interviews with Alain de Benoist," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994).

_____. "The Idea of Empire," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994).

_____. "Quarrels of the *Ancien Régime*," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994).

_____. "Tradition?," *Telos* 94 (Winter 1993-1994).

_____. Interview. *Les dossiers de l'histoire* 82 (July 1992).

_____. Interview. *Le choc du mois* 31 (July-August 1990).

_____. *Europe, Tiers monde, même combat.* Paris: Robert Laffont, 1986.

_____. *Démocratie: le problème.* Paris: Labyrinthe, 1985.

_____. *Une certaine idée de la France.* Paris: Editions GRECE/Le Labyrinthe, 1985.

_____. *La cause des peuples* Paris: Labyrinthe, 1982.

_____. "L'ennemi principal," *Éléments* 41 (March-April 1982).

_____. *Comment peut-on être païen?* Paris: Albin Michel, 1981.

_____. *Les idées à l'endroit.* Paris: Libres-Hallier, 1979.

_____. *Vu de droite.* Paris: Copernic, 1979.

_____. "Editorial," *Éléments* (1978).

_____. "Contre tous les racismes," *Éléments* 8-9 (November 1974-February 1975).

_____. *Rhodésie, terre des lions fidèles.* Paris: La Table Ronde, 1967.

_____. *Les Indo-Européens.* Paris: G.E.D., 1966.

_____. *Le courage est leur patrie.* Paris: Action, 1965.

De Benoist, Alain and Champetier, Charles. "La nouvelle droite de l'an 2000," *Éléments* 94 (February 1999).

De Benoist, Alain and Molnar, Thomas. *L'éclipse du sacré.* Paris: La Table Ronde 1986.

Debray, Régis. *Teachers, Writers, Celebrities: The Intellectuals of Modern France* (translated by David Macey). London: New Left Books, 1981.

De Herte, Robert. "Le temps des hypocrites," *Éléments* 69 (Fall 1990).

_____. "Et voici la 'Nouvelle Droite'!," *Éléments* (August 1979).

Dobbin, Murray. *The Myth of the Good Corporate Citizen.* Toronto: Stoddart, 1998.

Durand, Dominique. "Une officine nazie à Paris," *le Canard Enchaîné* (December 20, 1972).

Duranton-Crabol, Anne-Marie. "Les néo-païens de la nouvelle droite," *L'Histoire* 219 (March 1998).

_____. *L'Europe de l'extrême droite: de 1945 à nos jours.* Brussels: Editions Complexe, 1991.

_____. *Visages de la nouvelle droite: Le GRECE et son histoire.* Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1988.

_____. "Le G.R.E.C.E. de 1968-1984." Doctoral dissertation, Université de Paris X-Nanterre, 1984.

Eatwell, Roger. *Fascism: A History*. London: Vintage, 1996.

----------. "Towards a New Model of Generic Fascism," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 4(2) (1992).

Eco, Umberto. "Ur-Fascism," *New York Review of Books* (June 22, 1995).

Electronic mail interview responses. Marco Tarchi, written in Florence, Italy, April 4, 1999.

Electronic mail interview responses. Paul Piccone, written in New York, USA, March 2, 1999.

ENR Collective. *Le Mai 68 de la nouvelle droite*. Paris: Labyrinthe, 1998.

Faye, Guillaume. *Contre l'économisme*. Paris: Labyrinthe, 1983.

Ferraresi, Franco. *Threats to Democracy: The Radical Right in Italy After the War*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Figueras, André. "La fausse droite," *Le Monde* (July 28, 1979).

Freund, Julien. "Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism," *Telos* 102 (Winter 1995).

Front National Policy Manifesto. *300 mesures pour la renaissance de la France*. Paris: Editions Nationales, 1993.

Gambescia, Carlo. "Communautarisme contre universalisme. Pour une critique du paradigme occidental de modernisation," *Krisis* (16) (June 1994).

Gaucher, Roland. "Le GRECE est de retour," *National Hebdo* (446) (February 4-10, 1993).

Giddens, Anthony. *Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1994.

Gildea, Robert. *France Since 1945*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Golsan, Richard (ed.), *Fascism's Return: Scandal, Revision, and Ideology since 1980*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1998.

Gottfried, Paul. "Alain de Benoist's Anti-Americanism," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994).

Gramsci, Antonio. *The Modern Prince and Other Writings*. New York: International, 1959.

Grant, George. *Technology and Empire*. Concord, Ontario: Anansi, 1969.

GRECE. "Economie organique et société marchande" (March 1979).

Roger Griffin, (ed.). *Fascism*, Oxford University Press, 1995.

_____. "Plus ça change! The Fascist Mindset behind the Nouvelle Droite's Struggle for Cultural Renewal," Oxford Brookes University, paper delivered at conference in Dublin, Ireland on "The Extreme Right in France 1890-1997," (April 26-28, 1998).

Gretton, John. *Students and Workers: An Analytical Account of Dissent in France May-June 1968.* London: Unwin Brothers, 1969.

Habermas, Jürgen. *The Historians' Debate and the New Conservatism.* Boston, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1989.

Hirsh, Arthur. *The French New Left: An Intellectual History From Sartre to Gorz.* Boston: South End Press, 1981.

Holmes, Stephen. *The Anatomy of Antiliberalism.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996.

Holub, Renate. "Between Europe and the USA: The Rise and Decline of the Journal *Telos*," *Bad Subjects* 31 (March 1997).

Hunke, Sigrid. *La vraie religion de l'Europe.* Paris: Labyrinthe, 1985.

Huntington, Samuel. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order.* New York: Touchstone, 1998.

Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World.* London: Granada, 1932.

_____. *Brave New World Revisited.* London: Granada, 1958.

Johnson, Douglas (ed.). *The Far Right in Western and Eastern Europe.* London: Longman, 1991.

Jünger, Ernst. "Le recours aux forêts," *Krisis* (15) (September 1993).

_____. *Storms of Steel* (1920). New York: Howard Fertig, 1996.

Pierre Krebs, "The Metapolitical Rebirth of Europe," in Roger Griffin, (ed.), *Fascism.* Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Popper, Karl. *The Open Society and Its Enemies.* London: Routledge and Kegan, 1962.

Kretzschmar, Michel. *La campagne de presse autour de la nouvelle droite.* Paris: Institut d'études politiques, 1985.

Latouche. Serge. *The Westernization of the World.* London: Polity Press, 1996.

Lee, Martin. *The Beast Reawakens.* Toronto: Little, Brown, and Company, 1997.

Le Gallou, Jean-Yves (ed.). *La préférence nationale: réponse à l'immigration.* Paris: Albin Michel, 1985.

Le Pen, Jean-Marie. *Les Français d'abord.* Paris: Carrère-Lafon 1984.

Levitas, Ruth (ed.). *The Ideology of the New Right.* Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 1986.

Loubet del Bayle, J.-L. *Les non-conformistes des années 30.* Paris: 1969.

Maolain, Ciaran. *A World Directory of the Radical Right.* Essex, England: Longman, 1987.

Marlaud, Jacques. "Droit de réponse," *Le Nouvel Observateur* (May, 17, 1990).

Merkl, Peter and Weinberg, Leonard (eds.). *Encounters with the Contemporary Radical Right*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1993.

Marcuse, Herbert. *One-Dimensional Man*. Boston: Beacon, 1961.

Marrus, Michael and Paxton, Robert. *Vichy France and the Jews*. New York: Basic, 1981.

McCormick, John P. "Introduction to Schmitt's 'The Age of Neutralization and Depoliticizations' (1929), *Telos*.

Miglio, Gianfranco. "Beyond Schmitt," *Telos* 100 (Summer 1994).

_____. "The Cultural Roots of the Federalist Revolution," *Telos* 97 (Fall 1993).

_____. "Towards a Federal Italy," *Telos* 90 (Winter 1991-1992).

Mitra, Subrata. "The National Front in France – A Single-Issue Movement?," *West European Politics* 11 (2) (April 1988).

Nairn, Tom and Quattrocchi, Angelo. *The Beginning of the End, France, May 1968*. London: Verso: 1968/1998.

Nolte, Ernst. *Three Faces of Fascism*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965.

Ortega y Gasset, José. *The Revolt of the Masses*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1932.

Payne, Stanley. *Fascism: Comparison and Definition*. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980.

Petitfils, Jean-Christian. *La droite en Fance de 1789 à nos jours* (Paris: PUF, 1973).

Pfister, Thierry. "La nouvelle droite s'installe," *Le Monde* (June 22, 1979).

Piccone, Paul. "Confronting the French New Right: Old Prejudices or a New Political Paradigm?" *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994).

Pol-Droit, Roger. "The Confusion of Ideas," *Le Monde* (July 13 1993).

Rémond, René. *Les droites en France*. Paris: Aubier, 1982.

Revelli, Marco. "La nuova destra," *Iride* 18 (May-August 1996).

Rollat, Alain. *Les hommes de l'extrême droite: Le Pen, Marie, Ortiz, et les autres*. Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1985.

_____. "Où est donc passée la nouvelle droite?," *Le Monde* (November 17, 1984).

Sacchi, Franco. "The Italian New Right," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994).

Said, Edward. *Representations of the Intellectual*. London: Vintage, 1979.

Schain, Martin. "The National Front and the Construction of Political Legitimacy," *West European Politics* 10 (2) (April 1987).

Schmitt, Carl. *The Concept of the Political* (translated by George Schwab). Rutgers, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1976.

_____. "The Age Of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations (1929)," *Telos* 96 (Summer 1996).

Servan-Schreiber, J.-J. *The Spirit of May*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969.

Sheehan, Thomas. "Myth and Violence: the Fascism of Julius Evola and Alain de Benoist," *Social Research* 48 (1981).

Simmons, Harvey. *The French National Front: The Extremist Challenge to Democracy*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1996.

Sorel, Georges. *Reflections On Violence* (translated by T.E. Hulme and J. Roth). New York: Collier, 1961.

Soros, George. "The Capitalist Threat," *Atlantic Monthly* (February 1997).

Sternhell, Ze'ev et. al. *The Birth of the Fascist Ideology*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Sternhell, Ze'ev. *Neither Right, Nor Left*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1986.

_____. *La droite révolutionnaire: 1885-1914*. Paris: Seuil, 1978.

Sunic, Tomislav. *Against Democracy and Equality: The European New Right*. New York: Peter Lang, 1990.

Taguieff, Pierre-André. *Sur la nouvelle droite: jalons d'une analyse*. Paris: Descartes and Cie, 1994.

_____. "The New Right's View of European Identity," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994).

_____. "Discussion or Inquisition? – The Case of Alain de Benoist," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994).

_____. "An Interview with Pierre-André Taguieff," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994).

_____. "A Serious Error in Analysis" *Le Monde* (July 27, 1993).

_____. "Origines et métamorposes de la nouvelle droite," *Vingtième Siècle* 40 (October-December, 1993).

Taguieff, Pierre-André (ed.). *Face au racisme*. Paris: La Découverte, 1991.

Taguieff, Pierre-André. "The New Cultural Racism in France," *Telos* 83 (Spring 1990).

_____. *Essai sur le racisme et ses doubles*. Paris: La Découverte, 1988.

_____. "Le néo-racisme différentialiste," *Langage et Société* 34 (December 1985).

Tarchi, Marco. "Editorial," *Diorama letterario* 186 (March 1996).

_____. "In Search of Right and Left," *Telos* 102 (Winter 1995).

_____. "The Italian 'Nuova Destra': An Interview with Marco Tarchi," *Perspectives* 3 (Winter 1991-1992).

Telos "Editorial." "Is There a 'Telos' Left in Telos? Reflections After 100 Issues," 101 (Fall 1994).

"The Appeal to Vigilance by Forty Intellectuals." *Le Monde* (July 13, 1993).

"The Appeal to Vigilance." *Le Monde* (July 13, 1994).

The Scorpion web site. http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/2125/scorpion.html.

Thule-Netz web site. http://thulenet.com/index.htm.

Van Craenenburg, Rob. "Whose Gramsci? Right-Wing Gramscism," *Undercurrent* 6 (Spring 1998).

Pierre Vial, (ed.). *Dix ans de combat culturel pour une renaissance*. Paris: Copernic, 1979.

Vial, Pierre. "Objectif Sakhaline," *Éléments* 39 (Summer 1981).

Vidal-Naquet, Pierre. "A Dangerous Game," *Le Monde* (July 27, 1993).

Walker, Michael. "Editorial," *The Scorpion* 19 (1998).

_____. "For a New Education," *The Scorpion* 19 (1998).

_____. "Spotlight on the French New Right," *The Scorpion* (Autumn 1986).

_____. "Against All Totalitarianisms," *The Scorpion* (Autumn 1986).

Wegierski, Mark. "The New Right in Europe," *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Fall 1994).

Weinberg, Henry. *The Myth of the Jew in France 1967-1982*. Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 1987.

Wohl, Richard. "French Fascism, Both Right and Left: Reflections on the Sternhell Controversy," *Journal of Modern History* 63 (March 1991).