

Enigmatic Empire
The French New Right and Europeanism
(1978—1999)



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ABSTRACT

The French New Right, la *Nouvelle Droite*, was born in the eventful year of 1968. It has been identified as belonging to the *Far Right* by scholars and represented an attempt of constructing a *metapolitical* intellectual movement from the Right that could challenge the hegemonic Left. Its ideological doctrine is traditionally perceived as anchored in historical nationalism and fascism but differs from its predecessors in that it concerned primarily with the European continent rather than the nation-state. The suggested *transnational* character of its doctrine ensured that it in principle became transferrable beyond both state- and continental borders. Consequently, it should be viewed as having allowed for past nationalisms to morph into a continental equivalent we might term *Europeanism*. Europeanism is a *continental nationalism* which suggests discarding the nation-state in order to construct a federalist European Empire of ethnocultural regions based on pre-historical premises, with heavy emphasis on Indo-Europeans and the history of Pre-Christian Europe. By taking to ground that ‘national’ is something explicitly based on ethnic descend, its assumed principal goal was to exclude those who did not have their historical origin in Europe.

This thesis examines whether the myths and histories upon which the Europeanism of the *Nouvelle Droite* is based are plausible, and how the choice of histories meant to strengthen their views, may be interpreted as destructive, rather than contributing, to their credibility. It concludes that the historical premise for Europeanism stands at risk of eroding in the difficulty of confirming a historical continuation from the mythical Indo-Europeans to the present.

PREFACE

The process of writing this thesis has been both intellectually rewarding and challenging. Finalizing it feels bittersweet, not only because I have enjoyed working on it and could have continued doing so for longer, but also because it concludes my time here at Blindern after half a decade of swimming in this pool of knowledge. Truly, I am leaving behind both my thesis and this wonderful place with a combined feeling of heavy-heartedness and a profound sense of gratitude.

This thesis would never have seen the light of day, was it not to my eminent supervisor, Elisabetta Cassina Wolff. Thank you for your support and kindness, for enhancing my interest in the far right a few years back, and for introducing me to the fascinatingly complex universe of the Nouvelle Droite.

My dear co-students in the reading room, and especially Ingrid and Maren; Thank you for all our hallway-chats, lunches, laughs and discussions. Our regained access to the reading room and the chance to be part of a milieu, has made an isolated process feel less so.

A final deepfelt thank you to all my dear ones for your support and care in times of emotional trials and the occasional loss of faith in my work. Petter, Hedda, Dina, Helene, and Regine, Mathilde, mamma; Astrid and pappa, Tore-Anstein—you all helped pull me through, I am so fortunate to have you.

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CONTENTS

<i>List of Acronyms</i>	<i>III</i>
<i>Glossary</i>	<i>IV</i>
Introduction	
Presentation of Thesis	1
Organization and Limitation	3
State of Research	4
i. The Far Right	4
ii. La Nouvelle Droite	5
Interpretation of the Far Right	6
Primary Sources and Methodological Approach	8
Chapter I: Nouvelle Droite	
Prehistory	11
i. From Jeune Nation to Europe-Action	13
ii. The ‘Founding Fathers’: Groupement de Recherche et d’Études pour la civilisation Européenne	16
iii. 1968: Towards ‘Une Nouvelle Droite’	18
The ‘Heyday’ of Nouvelle Droite	20
Chapter II: An Ideological Enigma	
Influences and Concepts	23
Main Influences	23
A Coherent Set of Ideas	28
i. In the Ruins of Egalitarianism	28
ii. Against Multiculturalism and Globalization	30
iii. The Right to Difference	32

Chapter III: Europe – A Problematic Concept

Europeanism	35
The Question of Civilizational Continuity	36
i. Mythical Ancestry: The Nouvelle Droite’s Interpretation of the ‘Indo-Europans’	41
ii. Imagine Empire	44

Conclusion	49
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List of Sources

<i>Primary Sources</i>	51
<i>Secondary Literature</i>	52
<i>Other References</i>	57

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CR	Conservative Revolution
EA	Europe Action
ENR	European New Right
ESM	European Social Movement
FEN	Fédération des Étudiants Nationalistes
FN	Front National
GI	Génération Identitaire
GRECE	Groupement de Recherche et d'Étude pour la Civilisation Européenne
HRE	Holy Roman Empire
JE	Jeune Europe
JN	Jeune Nation
ND	Nouvelle Droite
OAS	Organisation Armée Secrete

GLOSSARY

Culture is applied in a wide sense, denoting something that is common to a group of people, for instance values, ideas, attitudes, rules, habits, tradition etc.

Enigma is a synonym for something that is difficult to understand, a puzzle, a mystery.

Ethnicity refers to the ancestral or original “belonging” of an individual; to the place which one has both its genetic and cultural roots historically. Ethnicity is fixed, as opposed to *nationality*.

Ethnocultural is used to describe a group that lives inside a limited geographical area and share both ethnicity and culture.

Ethno-plural means diversity in ethnicity, it is not necessarily easily distinguished from *multicultural*; however, multicultural is commonly used to describe societies in which cultural meetings are not controlled, so that cultures mix or merge and subsequently change from their initial shapes. The Nouvelle Droite desires a world that is ethno-plural, and ‘the Right to Difference’ and a discontinuation of the ‘homogenization’ happening through the world due to multiculturalism are considered to be prerequisites for that. All mentioned terms are discussed in chapter II.

Far-Right comprises any actors that are located “to the Right” of the mainstream and Conservative Right on the Left-Right political spectrum.¹ A more extensive elaboration on the term and its application in this thesis can be located under ‘Interpretations’ in the Introduction.

Federalism is an ideology which suggests that a state should be organized as a federation. The idea is that the communities or *regions* of which the state consists have a great degree of autonomy, differing from unitary states like the *nation-state*, in which power is concentrated in national institutions.²

Metapolitical refers to “the idea of influencing cultural, intellectual, and public domains as a way of preparing for a final revolutionary stage”.³ A more extensive elaboration on the term and its relevance to the Nouvelle Droite can be located in Chapter II, ‘Main Influences’.

Regionalism is based on emphasizing and nurturing the peculiarity of a particular territorial area, in this context first and foremost with respect to various cultures and ethnicities.⁴

Transnational, if split in two, makes the prefix *trans-* and the adjective *national*. ‘Trans’ alone comes from Latin and means “over, beyond, on the other side of”.⁵ The first part of the word is essential to the meaning of the word in its entirety; it illustrates that we are dealing with something that is ‘beyond’ the national when national describes something connected with one specific nation.⁶ Thus, we are interested in phenomena that are related to, and even dependent on the existence of a nation (ref. ‘national’), but that are obviously in possession of dimensions that goes beyond its national character; that are border-crossing or border-transcending.

¹ Gattinara, Leidig & Ravndal. «What characterizes the far right scene in Europe and beyond?» in Jupskås & Leidig, *Knowing what’s (far) right: A compendium*, p. 46.

² Store norske leksikon/snl.no, «Føderalisme», 03.06.2021. <https://snl.no/føderalisme>.

³ Ravndal, «Transnational Militancy in the Making», p. 7.

⁴ Den norske akademiske ordbok, «regionalisme», 03.06.2021. <https://naob.no/ordbok/regionalisme>.

⁵ Caprona, *Norsk etymologisk ordbok*, p. 1543.

⁶ Lexico/lexico.com, “National”, 02.06.2021. <https://www.lexico.com/definition/national>.

INTRODUCTION

Presentation of Thesis

In the early 1950's, French self-declared Fascist, Maurice Bardèche argued for a “strong fascist Europe to withstand the American and Russian superpowers”.⁷ Alongside multiple post-war neo-fascists from fourteen European countries, including *British Union of Fascists* (BUF)-leader, Oswald Mosley and the leader of *Movimento Sociale Italiano* (MSI), Augusto De Marsanich; Bardèche founded the *European Social Movement* (ESM) in Malmö in 1951.⁸ Together, they aspired to “Europeanize fascism by erecting a pan-European fascist movement” and, as described by historian Andrea Mammone: “create a transnational space in which the younger generation could congregate in order ‘to express their faith’ in a European continent that was neither Russian nor American”.⁹ Despite that there was disagreement with respect to certain aspects like anti-Semitism and racism, there was consensus in regard to the idea that a unified European resistance against the principal representatives of Liberalism and Communism should be constructed. The ESM, regardless of its eventual absent success, exemplified an increasing transnationality of the far right during the Cold War-period as well as the dawn of a more continental-focused far right across Europe, and stands as an essential ideological predecessor of the actor of study in this paper: The French New Right, *La Nouvelle Droite*.¹⁰ Consequently, even though ‘European nationalism’ did not replace traditional nation-state-oriented nationalism, it certainly added more complexity to the broad far right.

This thesis explores the historical and ideological keystones of the French New Right's *Europeanism*, a kind of *continental nationalism* that both separates the Nouvelle Droite from the historical far right and its inherent fixation on the nation-state *and* facilitates the characterization of the ND as a transnational intellectual movement. Though the paper concerns with the ideological predecessors of the movement, it is first and foremost interested in the logic and potential weaknesses of the *historical narrative* the Nouvelle Droite attempted to apply to the advantage of its Europe-centered doctrine. Thus, the principal problems in question for this thesis are: What are the historical and ideological fundamentals of *la Nouvelle Droite*'s Europeanism? Furthermore, how might their historical narrative fail to support its *metapolitical* doctrine?

⁷ Griffin, *Fascism*, p. 320.

⁸ Mammone, Andrea. “Revitalizing and de-territorializing fascism in the 1950's”, p. 314.

⁹ Bar-On, “Fascism to the Nouvelle Droite”, p. 335.; Mammone, Andrea. “Revitalizing and de-territorializing fascism in the 1950's”, pp. 315-316.

¹⁰ Mammone, Andrea. «Revitalizing and de-territorializing fascism in the 1950's”, p. 317.

The history of Nouvelle Droite's ideas is complex; It is complex because of a presupposed ideological heterogeneity among the followers of the movement, and perhaps equally much in regard to the historical references their ideas rely on. Besides having been influenced by a vast number of thinkers, ideologues, philosophers and historians; The history of humanity, and in particular of the European 'civilization', is of principal meaning to what might be perceived as the holy grail of the ND's presumed general doctrine: *Europeanism*. Nouvelle Droite's key-thinker, a Frenchman by the name Alain de Benoist, has attempted to draw the history of Europeans all the way back to the early 'Indo-Europeans', and suggests the existence- and continuation of an exclusive 'Europeanness' and a sacred European culture and identity which is at the verge of decadence. In its 'Heyday', the Nouvelle Droite meant that the suggested civilizational and cultural decay might only be averted if Europeans welcome a spiritual awakening and rediscover their common historical bond. Subsequently, they would come together in order to ensure the erection of a Federal European Empire that was to be divided into 'organic' communities based on ancient principles, denying access to anyone who did not have historical roots in the Continent. As a result, Europeans as one—however heterogenous—people would ensure the continuation of an undisturbed, ethnically and culturally diverse but 'pure' European civilization.

The Nouvelle Droite has become of fascination to scholars and others due to its strong emphasis on *culture* rather than *politics*, and subsequently its ambitions of being a *metapolitical* rather than power-seeking political actor. Because of its aspirations of being metapolitical, following a right-wing interpretation of Communist thinker Antonio Gramsci's 'cultural hegemony', the Nouvelle Droite first and foremost became an 'idea factory' with ambitions of influencing people's worldviews beyond France through participating in public debate. This was fulfilled by publishing texts in journals associated with the think-tank Groupement de Recherche et d'études pour la Civilisation Européenne (GRECE); by organizing seminars and writing books, and by being invited on occasion into independent established magazines or journals, allowing for them to reach a broader audience. Thus, in the wrapping of historical, philosophical or cultural topics, their worldview and values could be expressed in a discrete and often veiled rather than transparent way.

Organization and Limitation

The paper is split in 3 main chapters, all of which include subchapters to provide a clear and tidy division of the thesis. *Chapter I* is focused on the prehistory of the Nouvelle Droite and its

most influential years. The chapter is meant to contextualize the movement as well as to facilitate the preceding discussion, and investigates the pre-history, the emergence, and the heyday of the Nouvelle Droite. In *Chapter II*, I look into the history of the ideological doctrine of the Nouvelle Droite by presenting and discussing some of the thinkers who have had the greatest impact on the movement. Furthermore, I discuss a selection of central ND-ideas, which are all closely connected- and when merged, makes the body of the Europeanism that the ND, and perhaps more than anyone inside the movement; Alain de Benoist, has spent years of promoting. *Chapter III* is the culmination of the thesis, in which I discuss Europeanism and the prospect of a European Empire with ethnocultural regions. There, I look into and discuss the history and ideological principles upon which this ‘concept’ is based and question de Benoist’s interpretation and application of different scholars and sources in his research. In Chapter III, I also address the possible problem of claiming continuity in European history and civilization, and question whether the narrative that Nouvelle Droite has chosen for Europeans coincides with science, empirical research and doxas, or if it is simply an alternative approach to history which is not necessarily based on *truth* but instead meant to challenge doxas and common perceptions of human history.

In my conclusion I suggest that the Nouvelle Droite’s choice of historical phenomena and ideas has allowed for the construction of a European nationalism, meant to prevent a further multiculturalization of Europe by associating citizenship exclusively with historical origin on the continent, and by doing so making ethnic origin the only factor determining ones right to inhabit the European continent. Arguably, their circumstantial and ‘enigmatic’ ideological doctrine boils down to having one principal goal: To isolate Europe from the rest of the world in order to facilitate a civilizational renaissance in which the suggested decadence might come to an end. However, due to the problem of confirming both basic facts of the livelihood and origin of the Indo-Europeans, as well as to confirm a historical lineage up to our present; I argue that the basis for Europeanism erodes, so that it difficultly can be used in a historical narrative meant to serve the doctrinal purpose of supporting the erection of a protected European Empire exclusively anchored in inherited factors.

Because of the thesis’ limitations with respect to length, I concern primarily with the period 1978—1999. Thus, I take to grounds that the ideas discussed in the paper were of significance to the movement in the relevant time-period.¹¹ It is also of vital importance that the chosen time-period is closely connected to- and based on the limitations of my primary

¹¹ Supported by Griffin, “Between metapolitics and apoliteia”, p.44.; Spektorowski, “The Intellectual New Right, the European Radical Right and the Ideological Challenge to Liberal Democracy”, p. 168.

sources. In 1978, de Benoist was awarded the prestigious ‘Grand Prize’ by the French Academy for his 1977-publication *Vu de Droite: Anthologie critique des idées contemporaines*, which for this thesis has been one of the most important volumes to gain insight into Nouvelle Droite-thinking, and which also stands as Benoist’s most memorable and prominent work. 1999 is a fruitful ending-point because of the publication of the *Manifesto for a European Renaissance* by Alain de Benoist and Charles Champetier. The relevant volume is illustrative of the most central ideas of the Nouvelle Droite and was an attempt “to summarize its principles and key concepts”, as well as to present a clear vision of what needed to be done in order to avoid “cultural homogenization” of the world’s peoples.¹² 1999 is a logic point in history to stop, arguably also because it was during the period between the two listed years that the movement was at its most influential, starting with the increased publicity in the aftermath of the publication of *Vu de Droite*. In the 21st century, the Nouvelle Droite remains relevant first and foremost through the influence it has had on for instance the political parties and youth-fractions of the Identitarian movement in Europe and the Alternative Right in the United States and Russia.

State of Research

The Far Right

Research on the *Political far right* is extensive. It stretches between numerous different academic disciplines and has been attacked, metaphorically speaking, from so to speak every relevant angle possible in terms of research. Historians, Political Scientists, Sociologists, Anthropologists as well as not academic professionals, like numbers of journalists, have all attempted to understand the essence and drive behind this side of politics and its comprehensive complexity. In history studies, modern far right movements are not rarely compared to the historical nationalism that developed in the time descending the construction of the nation-state and subsequently reached its climax in the inter-war years with the National Socialism of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini’s Italian Fascism.

The extensive and ever richer debate and research on the far right as a concept, has been indispensable in my search for an in-depth understanding of everything that moves within this field of research. Thus, it should be self-explanatory that the majority of the literature I have chosen to use in my study, is focused on far-right and more specific, the historical and contemporary French far-right represented by the Nouvelle Droite and furthermore its impact

¹² Benoist & Champetier, *Manifesto for a European Renaissance*, in the blurb on the back of the book.

on the broader, European new- and far right. Prominent far-right scholars like Roger Griffin and Stanley Payne, with their works on historical fascism, in particular *Fascism* and *A History of Fascism (1914–1945)*, have served as important references in my general interpretation of the history of the far right. J.G. Shields, Michel Winock and Peter Davies have been crucial in my learning about the vast history of the French far-right through works like, respectively, *The Extreme Right in France: From Pétain to Le Pen; Nationalism, Anti-Semitism, and Fascism in France*, and *The Extreme Right in France, 1789 to the Present: From de Maistre to Le Pen*. With respect to the historical roots of nationalism, political theorist Hannah Arendt’s *The Origins of Totalitarianism* has provided me interesting perspectives that proved useful in comprehending the basis for Alain de Benoist’s accusations towards nationalism and the nation-state as having caused damage to the cultural diversity in European civilization, causing instead ‘homogenization’ of cultures and peoples.¹³

La Nouvelle Droite

The listed scholars of the Far-Right in France have also been important in order for me to understand the origins of the Nouvelle Droite as well as the movement itself. However, I cannot emphasize enough the crucial role of the research on the Nouvelle Droite that has been conducted by political scientist Tamir Bar-On and historian Andrea Mammone. Both Mammone and Bar-On have spent years exploring the Nouvelle Droite and also its transnational character—however from two different perspectives; Mammone has produced several articles on the transnational influence of the Nouvelle Droite and its connection to New Right and Far Right-movements across Europe. Bar-On’s research on the topic is more isolated to revolve specifically around the Nouvelle Droite and the properties of the movement which allowed for it to gain transnational impact. Consequently, whilst Mammone is very much an essential narrator of the transnational history of the Nouvelle Droite, Bar-On explains *how* they were and are transnational as a movement. Both of them have necessarily also written extensively on the movement in itself, and thus remain the uncontested sources to my ‘scholarly’ perception of the Nouvelle Droite.

In addition to the former, Bar-On has actively participated in the contemporary academic debate on the Nouvelle Droite for the past two decades, not only through research but also by taking part in an intellectual, written dialogue with Alain de Benoist himself which began when the latter published a response to one of Bar-On’s articles on the French New

¹³ See e.g., Benoist, “The Idea of Empire”, p. 6.

Right.¹⁴ Subsequently, this exchange of views between the two parties has constructed a space in which the object of study (Nouvelle Droite) has had the opportunity not only to present counterarguments to the researcher's allegations against the movement, but also correct the claims he makes of the movement and its ideas in cases where he is mistaken. Indeed, it offers a unique opportunity to approach the readings of both sides perhaps more objectively than what is normally the case in similar studies.

Political Scientist Alberto Spektorowski has come to be essential for me to properly grasp Nouvelle Droite's Europeanism, and his multiple articles on the topic Ethno-Regionalism and the New Right have been determining to my understanding of the complex Europeanism of the Nouvelle Droite as well as its actual implications and purpose.¹⁵

Alain de Benoist's own works on the ND and his writings in general, have served as an important window into the core of the movement, and remains the most important source to my interpretation of the Nouvelle Droite in this thesis. By reading both scholarly works on ND and Benoist *and* reading articles and volumes by one of the key-thinkers of the movement, as well as some of its other members and followers, has been important to reveal sugarcoating of the intentions and ideology of the ND through the application and avoidance of specific terminology and formulations. It has also helped nuancing my understanding of the Nouvelle Droite and the far-right in general. Lastly, this two-sided perspective has enabled a more thorough understanding of the movement and the world in which it emerged and keeps evolving as well as its border-transcending influence.

Interpretations of the Far Right

In this paper, the term *Far Right* is meant to serve as an umbrella term under which one might place movements, sentiments, parties, organizations and ideology that might be fruitful to assess as belonging to the political far right. According to a definition performed by the Center of Research on Extremism at the University of Oslo (C-REX), the ideological landscape of the far right comprises any actors that are located "to the right" of the mainstream and conservative right on the left-right political spectrum.¹⁶ Thus, the far right also comprise both the radical- and the extreme right. These terms are not rarely mixed and applied inconsistently, despite that

¹⁴ Benoist, "Alain de Benoist Answers Tamir Bar-On", pp. 141-168.

¹⁵ See e.g., "The Intellectual New Right, the European Radical Right and the Ideological Challenge to Liberal Democracy", "The New Right: Ethno-Regionalism, ethno-pluralism and the emergence of a neo-fascist 'Third Way'", and "Regionalism and the Right: The Case of France", all listed with details in my list of sources.

¹⁶ Gattinara, Leidig & Ravndal. «What characterizes the far right scene in Europe and beyond?» in Jupskås & Leidig, *Knowing what's (far) right: A compendium*, p. 46.

they carry different meaning. However, for this particular paper, it is first and foremost the ‘far right’ as an overarching term which is of relevance. The reason to this is the difficulties in terms of defining the Nouvelle Droite as either radical or extreme ‘rightists’; It is an intellectual and cultural school of thought rather than a political movement or organization with members who act out or is actively engaged in politics. As described by Benoist himself; it is a ‘think-tank’ and ‘a school of thought’ which has attempted to formulate a metapolitical perspective.¹⁷ It is however broadly ideologically connected to various both historical and contemporary groupings which are defined as extreme or radical rightist, and even if the Nouvelle Droite itself was never extreme, it has both been impacted by what might be characterized as extreme Rightists. Furthermore, the Nouvelle Droite have laid the foundations for- and constructed thought-systems upon which later contemporary radical and extremist [right] movements have built their fortresses.

How the ND is defined by scholars varies, ranging from neo-fascist to far-, radical-, or extreme-Rightists, to mention some of the terms that can be found in scholarly literature.¹⁸ I, however, wish not to be presumptuous and stick with the far-right term for as long as it may be perceived as fruitful—that is however not synonymous with me rejecting perceptions of the ND as either radical or extreme, nor neo-fascist, for that matter. Nonetheless, in the case of the ND, it is not necessarily whether they are radical or extreme which is the most important, but rather the description of them as belonging to the ‘Right’ side of the political axis. Even though the ND and de Benoist has had seemingly few problems with being categorized to the right, they do not automatically identify themselves as such, and have rejected the continued relevance of the traditional division of Left and Right in politics, arguing in the mid 1990’s, that the increasing irrelevance of the dichotomy was clearly shown in the French population when questioned whether it was still expedient to apply ‘right’ and ‘left’ in a political context.¹⁹

Nonetheless, the rejection of the left-right dichotomy as well as the apparent unwillingness to adopt the ‘Right’-label (whether neutral, far-, extreme-, or radical) by those who are described as such by scholars and others, is symptomatic of the far Right.²⁰ Lastly, the remarkable occurrence of ideas both from the Left and Right, provides the ND with an ideological profile which is necessary difficultly compatible with the classic political axis.

¹⁷ Benoist & Champetier, *Manifesto for a European Renaissance*, p. 9.

¹⁸ Among others Roger Griffin has characterized the ND as neo-fascist. See e.g., Griffin, *Fascism*, p. 315.

¹⁹ Benoist, «End of the Left-Right Dichotomy: The French Case». (by showing to Sofres-polls which in fact reflects a rapidly growing percentage of people who found the left-right contradiction to be outdated, with a growth of more than 20 percentage points in the timespan 1981-1989 (from 33% to 56%).

²⁰ Davies, *The Extreme Right in France*, p. 11.

Regardless, taken into consideration both their own distrust in the dichotomy and the alleged decreasing relevance to the public, it is not impossible that Benoist and his ND-colleagues positioned themselves as indifferent in relation to what they were defined as by others—as expressed by de Benoist in the introduction to his *View from the Right*, saying that “Personally, the question of knowing whether I am to the right or not is completely irrelevant to me”.²¹

Primary Sources and Methodological Approach

In the beginning of my work on this thesis, I was fortunate to discover the significant amounts of various publications and literature that are written by people inside the Nouvelle Droite. Fortunately, I have been granted access to some of these works through online libraries, the physical libraries of the University, through purchase or by borrowing from colleagues. The man who is considered to be *the* key-thinker of the Nouvelle Droite, Alain de Benoist, have published several articles, pamphlets and books, many of which have been translated into English and to my great joy proved to be available online or in the libraries of the University of Oslo. A not insignificant number of his texts which were originally only available in French, have, as mentioned, been translated into English in recent years by the alternative publishing house Arktos Media, who describes themselves as the “principal publisher in English of the writings of the European ‘New Right’ school of political thought.”²² Because these sources were originally written in a different language, the reader might be critical of their status as primary sources in this paper. That is necessarily in the full right of the reader, as the ‘tone’ and expression as well as the semantics of the wording in one language might come off as something entirely different when translated into another [language]. Furthermore, the perspective of the translator as well as his or her motif to translate the text will necessarily affect how the text appears in the translation, I recognize this problem. However, because the translated texts I have used as primary sources in this paper are translated by individuals who hold the same political and ideological values as the original author, I wish to argue that there should be little or no doubt in that the message of the text is expressed in a way that coincides with that in the original language. In a sense, the author and the translator already speak the same language in that their ideological and intellectual standing points are the same. Thus, it seems reasonable to feel safe that the translations have been done with an ‘ideological purpose’, being to make the relevant texts available to a broad(er) audience and henceforth spread ND-ideas. Consequently,

²¹ Benoist, *View from the Right*, p. 1.

²² Arktos, «About», <https://arktos.com/about/>.

they should be considered as a legitimate insight into the thought system of the movement and its thinkers.

Among Alain de Benoist's volumes, it is the English translation of his awarded 'tome' *Vu de Droite: un anthologie critique des idées contemporaines* (first published in 1977) – *View from the Right: A Critical Anthology of Contemporary Ideas*, which I have spent the most time studying and thus have most actively used in the work on my thesis. The English translation of the 2001-edition of the work was distributed in three volumes, all of which have a main topic: Volume 1 is on heritage and foundations, volume 2 is on systems and debates, and volume 3 is on controversies and viewpoints. Together, they provide a circumstantial insight into the ideas and thought systems of the Nouvelle Droite at the beginning of its peak as well as in the upcoming time period.²³ Other than *View from the Right*, de Benoist and Charles Champetier's *Manifesto for a European Renaissance* has provided me a thorough overview of some of the ND's most central ideas. Otherwise, various articles on relevant topics by de Benoist have been applied in contexts where they proved relevant.

Despite that de Benoist's writings are perhaps rightfully considered of principal relevance, the importance of publications by his ND-colleagues should not be ignored as primary sources helpful to nuance the ND's complex ideological profile. Indeed, numerous of de Benoist's ideas are obviously not exclusively his, but instead based on other scholars as well as the writings and ideas of people whom he became acquainted with in his early career, and whom later co-founded GRECE and henceforth the Nouvelle Droite. Thus, it would have been incautious not to refer to them and their publications in this thesis to the extent that it was feasible, and the texts were available. Consequently, references to publications or more generally ideas by Guillaume Faye, Pierre Vial and Dominique Venner, as individuals who were for a time indispensable to the development of GRECE and ND, are brought into discussion in the paper. It must however be emphasized that written sources by the three from the relevant period were not as easily obtainable as is the case with Alain de Benoist. It is therefore fortunate that Benoist often in his works speaks on behalf of the Nouvelle Droite, in the sense that he writes "the New Right proposes..." or "For the French New Right...".²⁴ Thus, not only is his role as head of the movement manifested, but it also indicates that there is little reason to doubt that he represented—and still does—the ruling consensus of the cases which

²³ Of formal reasons, it must be stressed that I have used both physical and digital editions of the book due to limitations in loans at the library. Therefore, there are variations in the references in relation to page numbers; Whilst the reference to the physical version is explicit in page numbers, the digital version does not provide such a division, so that I have had to refer to the subchapter to which the reference belongs.

²⁴ E.g., in Benoist & Champetier, *Manifesto for a European Renaissance*, pp. 18, 30, 47.

are discussed, or rather: That his role as key-thinker was synonymous with that he also set the public ‘tone’ of the movement. Of course, the Nouvelle Droite was ideologically heterogenous, but the availability of Alain de Benoist’s writings and the difficulties related to access those of the others, should justify the occasional inability to illustrate internal variations in this particular paper.

The reason why and how these literary sources may be viewed as *primary sources* are several. Not only are they written ‘proof’ of how these people thought at a time in history, but they also reflect the times in which they were produced, namely the first decades of the Nouvelle Droite’s existence. They are indeed historical source material because *they belong in a different time*. Besides its historical character and relevance, these sources can serve as important counters to the narratives on the topic presented by scholars who have studied extremist- and/or radical right movements, organizations or the like. They also provide a look into the heads of the key-thinker of the study object; something which a researcher of the movement could not offer. In that manner, the texts by Benoist and others surely have provided a significantly deeper understanding of not only the Nouvelle Droite as an intellectual movement, but also of the different thought systems inside the movement. In truth, if I was to solely rely on the writings, perceptions and terminology used by far-right scholars whom more often than not are exclusively critical towards the movement, this thesis would most certainly have carried less fruits. Finally, primary sources like the ones I have chosen should strengthen the ethos of the paper in its entirety, thus also the arguments and critique presented.

I

NOUVELLE DROITE

According to McCulloch (2006), it was the French *Le Monde*-journalist Gilbert Comte who in 1978 coined the ‘label’ *Nouvelle Droite* by questioning whether there was a New Right, “Une nouvelle droite?”, emerging in France.²⁵ By doing so, he provided a designation to the ever-growing number of intellectuals, groupings and organizations working on and promoting what is perhaps best described as a revised version of historical nationalism or, as argued by some, fascist ideas.²⁶ It was allegedly more sophisticated, less racist and discriminating; and it was not violent nor explicitly hostile to specific groups of people. Comte, when pronouncing the term, was referring to a particular institution, namely the French think-tank *Groupement de Recherche et d’Études pour la Civilisation Européenne* (GRECE), and the thoughts and ideas which had sprung out the heads of the intellectuals connected to this institution. To this day, GRECE is unavoidably associated with the *Nouvelle Droite*, and is considered the main institutionalization of the movement.

In the aftermath of Comte’s series of articles on the ‘New Right’, the term was broadly adopted by the French media, and remains the designation [New Right or, more correctly in this paper: *Nouvelle Droite*] which has been applied when in need of a term descriptive of the movement of intellectuals, organizations, and other human formations that should be identified with the initially French movement that emerged in the late 1960’s. It was described as a new *right* because of its similarities with the *historical* Right. It was *new*, because it appeared revised and different from the “old” both in terms of structure, actions and ideology.

Prehistory

The history of the far right in France is all but scarce and consists of numerous, diverse groupings and formations that have operated through multiple centuries. What might be termed a French *far-right tradition*, is oftentimes dated back to the counterrevolution of the late 18th century and has had a noteworthy “regularity of resurgences” ever since.²⁷ This ‘tradition’ has historically been dominated by a French nationalism that was mostly patriotic and interested in

²⁵ McCulloch, “The *Nouvelle Droite* in the 1980s and 1990s”, p. 159.

²⁶ E.g., Griffin suggests an undeniable relation to fascism if based on ‘the fascist minimum’ and not explicitly the historical fascism as in Italy and Germany during the rule of Mussolini and Hitler. Fascism defined in accordance with his minimum, is however not based on the historical fascisms of Italy and Germany, but rather in terms of fundamental myths and doctrine... (see “Plus ça change!: The Fascist Pedigree of the *Nouvelle Droite*”). In his *Fascism* (1995) he explicitly classifies the ND as fascist. (p. 315).

²⁷ Winock cited by Davies, *The Extreme Right in France, 1789 to the present: From de Maistre to Le Pen*, p. 5.

domestic and imperial issues. However, with time, ‘domestic’ issues have become ever more complex in an ever shrinking, more globalized world; and imperialism in its pre-modern sense is long outdated. Thus, the interests or most important ‘missions’ of the French far right at large have also changed, leading to an additional diversification of the discourse with significant emphasis on protecting the nation from immigration, multiculturalism and transatlantic influences. The emergence and quick growth of Front National (FN) since its establishment in 1972, as well as increasing popularity of the now transnational youth-movement Génération Identitaire (GI, est. 2012) and Identitarian movements in general, are highly relevant examples of the many-faced, contemporary French far-right. It also reflects the wave of ‘rightist’ sentiments which has flooded Europe and the West during the past few decades. Nonetheless, that the FN now is a leading party in French politics, and that the GI continues to establish factions all over Europe, would perhaps not have been possible was it not because of the counterrevolution of the 1790s, the pre-fascist groupings in the late 19th century, the Vichy-regime of the Second World War, or the emergence of the Nouvelle Droite.²⁸

In retrospect, it seems natural that the broad European far-right withdrew and went into hibernation after the end of the Second World War. That it vanished is however naïve to believe, as it in truth lived on in many European countries in one shape or the other, including in France. In the context of the French Far-Right, we must not forget that even though France initially was an ally during the War, it was not only partly occupied by Germany, but also had a great number of Nazi-sympathizers within the population. Henceforth, among the generation that grew up during and in the acute aftermath of the war, many had parents who had been sympathizers with the Vichy-regime and Nazi-Germany. And so, after the war was over, the abovementioned population group continued living their lives, and even though some might have exited the 1940’s with a changed mindset and worldview, many did not, so that their ideas did not vanish but lived on—if so in a less obvious way.

Much of the pre-history, or early history, of the ND is best detected in the first decades after the Second World War and the early lives of the individuals who are considered the most essential to the emergence of the movement. In particular Alain de Benoist, Dominique Venner and other members of GRECE, such as co-founders Jean-Claude Valla and Pierre Vial, and from 1970, Guillaume Faye, are perhaps especially relevant. They were all engaged in- and interested in politics and ideas from an early age, and many were also activists before they

²⁸ For information on Génération Identitaire/Generation Identity, I recommend José Pedro Zùquete’s *Identitarians* (2018).

abandoned radical activism in order practice more ‘subtle’ ways of ideological warfare, primarily in intellectual organizations or think-tanks with associated journals.

From Jeune Nation to Europe-Action

As was mentioned in the former section, the history of the French far right stretches over multiple centuries. Thus, it would be too circumstantial to elaborate on the entire line of predecessors of the intellectuals of the Nouvelle Droite. A perhaps more fruitful starting point is detected in the near withstanding past of the ND’s birth; in the post-war, neo-fascist and nationalist youth organization, *Jeune Nation* (JN). The JN was founded in 1949 as a French branch of the Belgian-founded *Jeune Europe* (JE), which according to Tamir Bar-On “best exemplified the pan-European flavour of the revolutionary right in the 1950s and 1960s” and at some point—rather suitably—had divisions in thirteen European countries.²⁹ At its peak, the French fraction of the movement had somewhere between 3000 and 4000 members in France and Algeria, including future ND-co-founders Dominique Venner and Pierre Vial.³⁰ Aside from that they were strongly against the decolonization of French Algeria and the end of French imperialism, and hence also supported the Algerian war; the Jeune had no problem with openly proclaiming its ambitions of bringing down the parliamentary democracy in France and replace it with “a new state that will be authoritarian and popular, national and social”.³¹

The life of the JN was rather short-lived, as the violent organization was shut down in 1962 by authorities due to accusations of conspiring against the state.³² Its members had not been afraid to add action to their ideas and carried out regular attacks on its appointed enemies, including the offices of both the French Communist party (PCF) and the trade union Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT). Additionally, the group was also violent towards North African workers and other civilians who were considered ‘foes’ of the organization in France.³³ Perhaps come as no surprise that also terrorist attacks found its place in their calendar, illustrated by a bomb attack on the National Assembly in 1958 which was attributed to the Jeune and whose purpose allegedly was to “mark the anniversary of the antiparliamentary riot of 1934 and the execution of [French Fascist] Robert Brasillach in 1945”.³⁴ Though discontinued and condemned, the Jeune Nation remains in history as “the most prominent French neo-fascist

²⁹ Bar-On, *Where have all the Fascists gone?*, p. 31.

³⁰ Bar-On, *Where have all the fascists gone?*, p. 31.

³¹ Shields, *The Extreme Right in France*, pp. 94, 97.

³² Shields, *The Extreme Right in France*, p. 97.

³³ Shields, *The Extreme Right in France*, p. 94.

³⁴ Shields, *The Extreme Right in France*, p. 94.

movement of the 1950s” with its rich, though violent and hostile initiative as well as its not insignificant number of members.³⁵ Though it can rightfully be perceived as an ideological predecessor of the Nouvelle Droite, the latter was as we will see also very different, and perhaps more than anything in its restraint both from activism and use of physical violence.

Since the Jeune was banished in 1962 after acting ‘vigilante’ on several occasions, its followers naturally needed new arenas in which they could continue to nurture their ideas and perspectives, however in a less rebellious and violent manner. One of the far-right newcomers in the wake of JN’s ban, was *Europe Action* (EA), which was founded in 1963 as both a journal and an organization by the previously mentioned Dominique Venner. At the time of the establishing of the EA, Venner had recently served in prison (1961-62) due to his engagement in the paramilitary, extreme right *Organisation armée secrete* (OAS) which “...took up an ‘extreme’ position on the Algeria question, attacked ‘French liberals, Left-wing figures and Moslems’”.³⁶ The loss of Algeria was however not synonymous with EA losing its faith in the historical occident perspective on- and justification of European imperialism, and continued to stress the ‘civilizing mission of the white man’. Consequently, EA was more than anything a ‘white mans’ protector, and by sustaining a continued belief in the civilizing mission of the white man, implied an idea of him [the white man] as being superior to other peoples of the world—in line with the far right of the first half of the 20th century.³⁷

Even though also Europe Action ended up existing only in a brief period in history, the organization and its affiliated journal was in ways other than just their members an important step towards the assemblage of what would become the Nouvelle Droite, as it was also “widely seen as reorienting toward transnationalism”.³⁸ The transnationalism of EA, was however less subtle in racist expression than what is to be said of the later Nouvelle Droite; Transnational *Europeanism* in a Europe Action-context included an explicit call for a united *white* defense of the “wide White nation”—including the US and at the time Apartheid-ruled South Africa—in what was perceived as an ongoing war of races.³⁹ Venner was also keenly interested in the history of a European civilization and kept insisting through his career that Europeans have forgotten ‘what they are’. Thus, his historical works first and foremost circulated around a narrative suggesting thousands of years of European culture and identity, preaching that

³⁵ Shields, *The Extreme Right in France*, p. 94.

³⁶ Davies, *The Extreme Right in France, 1789 to the Present*, p. 125.

³⁷ Zúquete, *The Identitarians*, p. 19.

³⁸ Zúquete, *The Identitarians*, p. 20.

³⁹ Zúquete, *The Identitarians*, p. 20.

Europeans had to return to their civilizational roots in order not to entirely lose their ancient identity.⁴⁰

Amongst the members of- and contributors to Europe Action and its journal, was the man who would become the key-thinker and leader of the Nouvelle Droite, the Saint-Symphorien born Alain de Benoist (b. 1943).⁴¹ His mindset and political views would be definitely shaped by the political climate in which he grew up. By the age fifteen, the case of French Algeria and nationalist Charles de Gaulle's return to power in France in 1951, ensured that the nationalist right would attract his attention.⁴² Writing and publishing on ideological and philosophical questions, starting at an early age, has remained one of the most central constants in Alain de Benoist's life and career up until this day, and he has published more than a hundred books and nearly two thousand articles.⁴³ His professional journey as a writer began already in 1960, when he started as a journalist in anti-Semite Henry Coston's magazine *Lecture Françaises*, often writing 'undercover' by applying the pseudonym Fabrice Laroche, one of his multiple alter egos.⁴⁴

Early in his twenties, de Benoist continued to work in publishing, first as editor of *France Information* with Amaury de Chaunac-Lanzac (alias Francois d'Orcival). In the early 1960s, while a student at the Sorbonne, he became a secretary in *Cahiers universitaires*, the—according to scholar Douglas Johnson—not very successful periodical of the far-right, anti-democratic, anti-communist and racist student society *Fédération des étudiants nationalistes* (FEN), in which also Jean-Claude Valla, Pierre Vial and other future GRECE-members like Jean Mabire were active contributors.⁴⁵ The FEN had been founded in 1960 by d'Orcival and a group of other radical students, including Dominique Venner, and was as mentioned quickly enriched with the presence of Alain de Benoist too.⁴⁶ Aside from being a racist, anti-democratic and anti-communist "...ultra-nationalist union of French university students",⁴⁷ FEN—perhaps despite its engagement related to French Algeria—was not as interested in 'pure' French nationalism as one might think based on its name and its mentioned characteristics. The group focused instead on promoting what historian Andrea Mammone defines as a *neo-fascist*

⁴⁰ Zúquete, *The Identitarians*, p. 20.

⁴¹ Camus in Sedgwick, *Key Thinkers of the Radical Right*, p. 73.

⁴² Winock, *Nationalism, Anti-Semitism, and Fascism in France*, p. 301.

⁴³ Camus in Sedgwick, *Key Thinkers of the Radical Right*, p. 73.

⁴⁴ Camus in Sedgwick, *Key Thinkers of the Radical Right*, p. 74.

⁴⁵ Quote from Douglas Johnson: Johnson in Cheles et al. *The far right in Western and Eastern Europe*, p. 235.; Bar-On, *Transnationalism and the Nouvelle Droite*, p. 203; Mammone, *The transnational reaction to 1968*, p. 219. & Shields, *The Extreme Right in France*, p. 96.

⁴⁶ Bar-On, *Where have all the fascists gone?*, p. 31.; Mammone, "The transnational reaction to 1968", p. 219.

⁴⁷ Bar-On, *Where have all the fascists gone?*, p. 31.

Europeanism— “It supported the defence of a ‘superior’ west European civilisation and was also strongly anti-egalitarian”, rather similar to the previously discussed Europeanism of Venner and Europe Action.⁴⁸ Thus, the ideological position of the FEN was also pointing in direction of what would end up being some of the most essential properties of ND and Benoist’s thinking later on in his career. And, according to McCulloch, it was in the FEN, that “ND theories emerged in embryonic form” which would later achieve a decisively clearer ‘synthesis’ with the founding of GRECE.⁴⁹ Besides their work in the student organization, de Benoist and other FEN-members, including Jean Claude Valla, contributed to the development of Venner’s *Europe-Action*.⁵⁰ Shortly after the establishment of the organization, in 1964, Benoist became editor-in-chief of *Europe-Action Hebdomaire* (later renamed as *L’Observateur Européen*), meanwhile he was also a writer for the neo-fascist magazine *Défense de l’Occident*, founded in 1952 by French neo-fascist and later GRECE-sympathizer Maurice Bardèche.⁵¹

As we have seen, both Europe Action and Fédération des Étudiants Nationalistes, as well as Jeune Nation had set course towards what we may term a ‘pan-national Europeanism’ or pan-Europeanism.⁵² The emergence of a New Right, *une Nouvelle Droite*, was accordingly a continued and perhaps more offensive attempt to redefine ideas of the far right away from historical nationalism and fascism ‘as they knew it’ by making it a continental—a European project, hence *Europeanism*. Therefore, as argued by Andrea Mammone, we might fruitfully argue that it was the FEN and EA, and to an extent Jeune Nation, which are to be considered the most important organized predecessors of the ND in its near and immediate past.⁵³

The ‘Founding Fathers’

Groupement de Recherche et d’Études pour la Civilisation Européenne

Groupement de Recherche et d’Études pour la Civilisation Européenne (GRECE) was founded in January 1968 with 40 founding members, including Dominique Venner, Pierre Vial, Maurice Bardèche, Jacques Bruyas, Jean-Claude Valla, and of course, the ‘main-founder’; Alain de Benoist.⁵⁴ Even though it was not ascribed its name until ten years later, it was with the founding of GRECE that the intellectual movement and school of thought *Nouvelle Droite* was born. The distinction between GRECE and ND, is however quite essential: While the ND is an ‘abstract’

⁴⁸ Mammone, “The transnational reaction to 1968”, p. 219.

⁴⁹ McCulloch, “The Nouvelle Droite in the 1980s and 1990s”, p. 160.

⁵⁰ Mammone, “The transnational reaction to 1968”, p. 219.

⁵¹ Bar-On, *Where have all the fascists gone?*, pp. 30-31.

⁵² Bar-On, “Transnationalism and the Nouvelle Droite”, p. 203.

⁵³ Mammone, “The Transnational Reaction to 1968”, p. 230.

⁵⁴ Shields, *The Extreme Right in France*, p. 145.

school of thought and intellectual movement; a mere umbrella term intended to include all journals, think-tank(s) or other establishments of thinkers possibly identifying with the movement, GRECE was and is a physical institution made up of individuals which together make a think-tank. It is the materialization or incarnation of the ND, so to speak. Thus, GRECE is part of the Nouvelle Droite, but the Nouvelle Droite does not consist exclusively of GRECE.

GRECE was in many ways an evolution from the previously discussed FEN; adopting a ‘Gramscianism of the Right’, inspired by the Italian Communist thinker Antonio Gramsci. This right-wing interpretation of Gramsci’s idea was aimed at slowly convincing society of the legitimacy of its ideas through a revised rhetoric and attempted legitimization of nationalist- and fascist-inspired ideas. Eventually, if the ND was to succeed in its quest for influence, such a strategy would result in *cultural hegemony* and henceforth the foundation of and path to legitimate de facto political power of someone with the same or similar ideas as the ND; what Gramsci termed *political hegemony*.⁵⁵ The indirect quest to win the “battle of ideas” in society in its entirety is what in an ND context is best known as *metapolitics*, which was presumed to be most easily and practically feasible by appearance- and exposure of its ideas in media and academic press as well as in their own journals and through publications delivered by the Nouvelle Droite’s own publishing house, Éditions Copernic.⁵⁶

As previously mentioned, the think-tank was to a notable extent the voice and body of the Nouvelle Droite from long before the movement itself even had a proper name, and aside from producing substantial amounts of writings on different ideas of the Nouvelle Droite, its members also organized seminars and participated in public debate as part of the mission. Historically, the presence of people of significance in GRECE-circles, has been important in order for GRECE to gain prominence and to legitimize the ND as an intellectual movement worthy of the attention of a broader audience. In the first decades of its existence, GRECE housed and was guested by what Bar-On characterize as an ‘impressive list of personalities’, consisting of people like post-war anti-Semite and neo-fascist, Maurice Bardèche, French author Jean Cau, philosopher Louis Rougier, Swiss far-right thinker Armin Mohler, and several others that are considered of historical distinction in the discourse of the post-war political European Far-Right.⁵⁷ In the publishing house Éditions Copernic and through guesting the journals *Éléments [pour la civilisation Européenne]* and *Nouvelle Ecole*, prominent right-wing Europeans like those mentioned in the former might be considered important contributors to

⁵⁵ Gramsci, *Politisk teori*, pp. 20-21.

⁵⁶ Griffin, “Between metapolitics and apoliteia”, p. 45.

⁵⁷ Bar-On, *Where have all the fascists gone?*, p. 7.

the strengthening ND's legitimacy in the larger European far right. Thus, because GRECE and its associated journals and publishing house to a significant extent was the voice of the Nouvelle Droite, contributions from already established and recognized far-right personas necessarily had influence of significance on the development of- and increased influence of Nouvelle Droite as a whole.

There should be no doubt whatsoever that GRECE has been invaluable not only to the emergence of the French Nouvelle Droite but its eventual transcendence into a continental movement—the European New Right (ENR)—and its continued existence. Despite that GRECE's visibility and influence was reduced in the late 1980's—which according to Guillaume Faye was a result of, amongst other things, ideological fossilization and the ascendancy of Front National—it remains an essential actor in the history of the Nouvelle Droite.⁵⁸

1968

Towards 'Une Nouvelle Droite'

The iconic year 1968 is most commonly recalled as a 'Leftist'-year, meaning that it symbolizes the emergence of a new and strong political Left as well as the decreasing strength of the political right and the remains of historical fascism and imperialism. In France, the criticism against President Charles de Gaulle and his decreasing popularity in the mid-1960's, and even more so in the aftermath of the revolts in 1968, exemplifies the state of the political right in France in the second half of the 20th century. Perhaps even more importantly to this context: The position of the *far right*, and thus also the radical and extreme, had also been weakened throughout the decade, and by 1968, the situation has been described as follows by J.G. Shields:

The year 1968 stands as a watershed in the evolution of the French extreme right. The disappearance of Occident, following that of Europe-Action and the FEN, removed the major channels for militant activism and ideological reflection respectively. The electoral failures of 1965 and 1967 had laid bare an absence of ideas with the capacity to mobilise popular support. The events of May and June 1968 further exposed the political weakness and disorientation of extreme-right movements faced with events which they were powerless to influence and on which they could not even readily determine their own best stance.⁵⁹

However, as argued by Storli, 1968 was in some ways also a year of positive significance to the right and marks the "...beginning of an ideologic and rhetoric shift of the far right".⁶⁰ An

⁵⁸ Faye, *Archeofuturism*, pp. 27-28.

⁵⁹ Shields, *The Extreme Right in France: From Pétain to Le Pen*, p. 143.

⁶⁰ Storli, «1968 og reaksjonens fødsel». Translated from Norwegian to English by the thesis-author.

important distinction between the Left and Right at the time, was that right-wing parties and organizations were nowhere near as strong as the Left and thus could not properly challenge it in the ‘battle’ of neither cultural- or political *hegemony*. The situation was that the political right was remarkably fragmented in comparison with the Left and consisted primarily of factions or smaller groupings like the ones discussed, rather than big organizations and established movements. This particularly validates for the *far* right, which was weak because of the absence of a strong “long-established extreme-right party” and was likely still suffering low popularity as a result of the grim memories from the German occupation and the Vichy-regime.⁶¹ The right, both moderate and extreme, was weak—arguably even in crisis. Even so, something and someone was lurking in the underground milieus of the European Far Right, waiting for the *right* timing to enter the surface of the Earth with new ideas and regained strength.

To suggest that the emergence of the ND was a counterreaction to the uprisings of May’68 and the “Left hegemony” should be considered a bold and possibly incorrect statement. Furthermore, even though GRECE was established prior to the revolts in Paris during May 1968, and its founding members already were deeply entangled in the far-right discourse in good time of these events; the progressive political left might have inspired the right to do some ‘soul searching’ in order to identify how they could possibly achieve something similar. Nonetheless, even though it may be interpreted as an insult towards the ND to assign the honor of having provoked their philosophical, spiritual and political feelings to ‘Leftists’, de Benoist felt no bitterness towards the Left, saying that

The enemy is not ‘the left’ or ‘communism’ or even ‘subversion’, but rather [this] *egalitarian ideology* whose formulations, religious or lay, metaphysical or supposedly ‘scientific’, have continued to flourish for over two thousand years, whose ‘ideas of 1789’ were but a step, and of which communism and the current subversion are the inevitable outcome.⁶²

Thus, even though there was an obvious distinction between the hegemonic left and the suffering right, the ND did not blame the left for the decay of the right – rather it was the ideological ‘concepts’ that the Left favored which was the enemy, not the Left or Communism in itself. The Left then, might be said to have inspired rather than to have provoked the intellectuals of the right to reorganize and reform their beliefs. Furthermore, the emergence of the ND did indeed signal that the right, at least the *far* right, had made the realization that in order to win the people’s head and hearts, its intentions and opinions had to appear legitimate

⁶¹ Mammone, “The transnational reaction to 1968”, p. 219.

⁶² Benoist, *View from the Right*, p. 2.

and edible, but nonetheless radical and distinct. How could one change the skin without ruining the body?

The ‘Heyday’ of Nouvelle Droite

It would take some time before the ND got a proper foothold in the French, and eventually the broader European, far-right intelligentsia. Soon enough, however, ‘New-Right’-factions emerged in its neighboring countries Germany, Italy and Belgium.⁶³ Subsequently, in spite of a rather slow start, the continuous pushing of articles in its multiple associated journals as well as arranging of seminars and other similar activities, ensured that the ND eventually caught the eye of a bigger audience both in a positive and negative sense. Thus, the latter half of the 1970s is by many considered the period of time in which the ND peaked in regard to visibility and influence, a trend which lasted for a while into the 1980’s and on occasion in the 1990’s. In the 21st century, it is primarily as a historical reference as well as through the encyclopedic intellect of Alain de Benoist and his mountainous bibliography that the movement remains relevant to the far right.⁶⁴

The publication of Alain de Benoist’s *Vu de Droite: Anthologie critique des idées contemporaines* in 1977 ensured considerable publicity for a period, and the ND became no less relevant when Benoist in 1978 was awarded the ‘Grand Prix de l’Essai’ by the prestigious and historic French Academy for the volume.⁶⁵ The time following this publication and the attention it received, might fruitfully be considered as the *heyday* of the ND. An important explanation to this is the public voice that was provided to Alain de Benoist by him being invited into the “prestigious French daily *Le Figaro*”, which had several thousand paying monthly subscribers now exposed of the ND mindset.⁶⁶ The editor of the magazine, Louis Pawel, was intentionally attempting to create a publication which offered perspectives from the right, and according to Bar-On, he “sought to distinguish between an ‘Old Right’ and ‘New Right’ and to rid the right of its ‘irrational’ anti-Semitism.”⁶⁷

⁶³ Spektorowski, “Regionalism and the Right: The Case of France”, p. 353.

⁶⁴ E.g., Sellner, *Identitär! Ett Uppbrots Historia*. Translated to Swedish by U. Wilhelm and K-O Arntsberg. Söderhamn: Debattförlaget, 2018. On page 10 in this book, the leader of the Austrian Identitäre Bewegung Österreichs, Martin Sellner explains how a fascination for the New Right, Alain de Benoist and Guillaume Faye, as well as their ideological references like Gramsci, Spengler and Nietzsche, served as a gathering factor for the establishment of a reading circle which later developed into the Austrian Identitarian movement.

⁶⁵ Camus in Sedgwick, *Key Thinkers of the Radical Right*, p. 80. All previous receivers of the Prix d’Essai is listed on the webpage of Académie Française (academie-francaise.fr) under “Les prix et fondations”.

⁶⁶ Shields, *The Extreme Right in France*, p. 153.

⁶⁷ Bar-On, *Where have all the fascists gone?*, p. 9.

Commonly termed the “Hot summer” in context of Nouvelle Droite, the summer of 1979 generated hundreds of articles on the ND in the French popular media. Facing critique from most stands, this summer might be said to have been bad for ND’s reputation with respect to their ambitions for the future. According to Camus, the ND was being called “closet Fascists” and “Nazis” who “...hid their beliefs in a racist antiegalitarian *Weltanschauung* aimed at reformulating *völkisch* ideas in a seemingly acceptable way by replacing the hierarchy of races with ‘ethnodifferentialism’”.⁶⁸ Having attempted from the beginning to construct an alternative new right that differed from historical fascism and Nazism as well as the historical far right in general; the accusations of being just that naturally hampered the progress of the movement’s mission. Thought to be a ‘serious threat to democracy’ after being associated with former, unnamed communists, the Nouvelle Droite faced new, harsh critique in the summer of 1993, when a group of 40 intellectuals from several European countries signed ‘An Appeal to Vigilance’ in the French daily *Le Monde*.⁶⁹ According to Griffin, the same appeal, now with 1500 signatures, was published yet again a year later in 1994.⁷⁰

Not long after Alain de Benoist was awarded his price from Académie Française in 1978, so was Dominique Venner in 1981 for his historical work *Histoire l’armée rouge*.⁷¹ The ND then entered the 1980’s seemingly with wind in their backs. Spektorowski has argued that it was during this decade that the political discourse of the ND shifted from racism to culturalism and from some kind of French nationalism to a clearer Europeanism. Evidently, these changes ultimately transformed the ND from a French to a European and very much transnational intellectual movement now known as the European New Right (ENR).⁷² The European New Right then, is a collective term for the distinctive New Right movements which exist across Europe—including the French Nouvelle Droite. It may fruitfully be described as an unofficial body of organizations rather than an ‘intangible’ constellation like the French Nouvelle Droite.⁷³

The birth of the ‘cultural school of thought’ and intellectual and meta-political movement, Nouvelle Droite, should be considered as a successful attempt to provide a new ‘face’ to the far right—at least parts of it.⁷⁴ In the end, even though the Nouvelle Droite, did not

⁶⁸ Camus in Sedgwick, *Key Thinkers of the Radical Right*, p. 75.

⁶⁹ Griffin, “Plus ça Change!”, p. 1; Bar-On, *Where have all the fascists gone?*, p. 11.

⁷⁰ Griffin, “Plus ça Change!”, p. 1.

⁷¹ Academie Francaise, “Prix Boquette-Gonin (littérature)”, <https://www.academie-francaise.fr/dominique-venner>.

⁷² Spektorowski, “The Intellectual New Right, the European Radical Right and the Ideological Challenge to Liberal Democracy”, pp. 167-168.

⁷³ Bar-On, *Where have all the fascists gone?*, p. 9.

⁷⁴ Bar-On, “Transnationalism and the Nouvelle Droite”, p. 200.

favor the characterization of them belonging to the ‘right’ or name itself as *droite*, it had no problem with acknowledging its roots as anchored on the *right*, which is also illustrated by the title of Benoist’s major work *Vu de Droite* or *View from the Right*.⁷⁵ It has been recognized by the movement itself as much as by far-right scholars, that, the “French ND was deeply indebted to the old values of an archetypal European extreme right”, and thus is rightfully claimed as part of the historical lineage of French far-right thinking, however distinct it might have been.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Benoist, *View from the Right*, p. 1.

⁷⁶ Mammone, *Transnational Neofascism in France and Italy*, p. 166.

II

AN IDEOLOGICAL ENIGMA

Influences and Concepts

Roger Griffin wrote that “The French Nouvelle Droite (ND) represents something of an enigma for the students of the far right as its political allegiances and tactics seem to yield no clear view of its ideological positioning”.⁷⁷ Like so many other schools of thought and intellectual movements, the Nouvelle Droite has drawn inspiration from multiple theorists and ideologies, associated both with the traditional (far-)right and left sides of politics as well as from individuals and movements in a number of different countries. Naturally, a circumstantial and slightly ‘incoherent’ portfolio of inspirators make it difficult to decipher the ideological profile of the movement in its entirety. Having said that, the reader should keep in mind that the ideology or system of thought of the Nouvelle Droite was not necessarily meant to *make sense* and thus is purposefully enigmatic. Rather it might be viewed as an attempt to construct an alternative truth or a counter to the common perception of history, the present and the future. Must not be forgotten, the ambitions of the Nouvelle Droite were initially *metapolitical*, thus should their ideas not necessarily need be logically compiled nor actually applicable to reality.

In the following, I will discuss the historical predecessors and some of the thinkers which has had significant influence on the Nouvelle Droite’s ideological doctrine. Subsequently, I will proceed to discuss some of the ideas which are essential to the idea of Europeanism, which again will be discussed in chapter III. Hopefully—besides examining the philosophical and ideological histories that have been of importance to the Nouvelle Droite, and some of the principal ideas of the movement—this chapter will help making the ideological aspect of the movement a bit less *enigmatic* to the reader.

Main Influences

There are some modern classics in European philosophy which have come to serve as principal readings to followers and thinkers of the broad Far right. Germans Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger were two of these ‘modern classic’ thinkers who came to be indispensable to the Nouvelle Droite. Nietzsche as a source of inspiration, is clear in numerous contexts, including in shaping the ND’s perception of the French revolution as a mistake, and Christianity and egalitarianism as the scapegoats of Europe’s alleged cultural and civilizational decay. An

⁷⁷ Griffin, “Between metapolitics and apoliteia”, p. 35 (in abstract).

eventually deluded man, Nietzsche also had a clear vision for the political structure and division of Europe which should be viewed as an obvious inspiration to the ND's Pan-European project and subsequently their idea of a European empire.⁷⁸ Heidegger, who is commonly perceived Nietzsche's successor, was a firm believer in that the West was facing a 'civilizational crisis' whose roots had to be identified in order to find a different path so that the European civilization could live more authentic lives.⁷⁹ Despite being directly involved with Nazism, Heidegger as a philosopher is often categorized as part of the pre-Nazi conservatism of the *Conservative Revolution* rather than to National Socialism and Fascism.⁸⁰ According to Griffin, Heidegger's "...critiques of the mass media society and dreams of an 'existentially' sound Fortress Europe continue to exert an influence on European neo-fascists today", including and especially the New Right.⁸¹

From the school of the '*Conservative Revolution*' (CR) there are multiple individuals aside from Heidegger whom have been of importance to ND-thinkers; Nazi ideologue Arthur Moeller van den Bruck (1876-1925), German historian and philosopher Oswald Spengler (1880-1936), famous for his *The Decline of the West*; German philosopher and jurist Carl Schmitt (1888-1985), as well as German author and nationalist Ernst Jünger (1895-1998) and his Swiss secretary, writer and philosopher Armin Mohler (1920-2003), who popularized the term *Conservative Revolution* through the publication of his *Die conservative revolution in Deutschland 1918-1932* in 1950. The CR is as mentioned largely an informal term of a pre-Nazi conservatism or nationalism that emerged in Germany during the Weimar Republic (1918-1933). Hardly any 'school of thought' has been equally influential as the Conservative Revolution on the Nouvelle Droite and in particular Alain de Benoist, reflected in the list of intellectuals whose philosophies and histories have been crucial to the ND's ideas.

However, other European countries have also produced intellectuals whose ideas would come to shape the ND. Two Italians who have had impact on the ND, were philosopher Julius Evola and in particular Italian political thinker and Communist, Antonio Gramsci, whose concept of hegemony came to be crucial to ND-thinking. Though being born around the same time (respectively 1889 and 1891), Evola and Gramsci represented entirely different sides of political thinking in their lifetime. Gramsci, on the one hand, was considered a potential threat

⁷⁸ In his *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche discussed different European nations, its peoples and cultures. In aphorism 256, he wrote that "...people nowadays are overlooking or arbitrarily and mendaciously reinterpreting the most unambiguous signs that suggest that *Europe wants to be one*.", p. 148.

⁷⁹ Berdinesen, «Heidegger og den metafysiske jødedommen».

⁸⁰ Griffin, *Fascism*, p. 356.

⁸¹ Griffin, *Fascism*, p. 151.

by Il Duce, and was thus imprisoned, making his contributions to political theory during his time as a prisoner of the regime. Evola, on the other hand, though controversial to begin with, came to be of significance to Mussolini, and in 1941 wrote the *Synthesis of Racial Doctrine* for the Italian Fascist regime.⁸² He was however never politically active nor a declared fascist or member of the fascist party, and should therefore not be viewed as such [fascist].⁸³ In fact, he opposed modernity and was concerned instead with *tradition* and the decadence of the West, which did not match with the fascist doctrine's optimism, futurism and emphasis on modernity as something positive.⁸⁴ Similar to the ND, Evola had also learned his opposition to egalitarianism and democratic ideals through his early readings of Nietzsche.⁸⁵ Both tradition and decadence were essential to the Nouvelle Droite in context of cultural decay, and Evola should be viewed as having had impact on the ND's idea of Empire as well as in their emphasis on the 'European spirit'.

Out of Gramsci's thinking, it is primarily the idea of *cultural* hegemony which has mattered to the ND.⁸⁶ In short, cultural hegemony is *consensus* in the public—the power of the civil society, as opposed to political hegemony, which refers to the 'exclusive' power of the authorities to conduct power and force.⁸⁷ The 'twist' is, that in order for the state power to be able to protect itself in case it was challenged by revolutionary powers, it has to have the support from a powerful civil society (a society in which cultural hegemony exist).⁸⁸ Furthermore, in Western societies, Gramsci meant that if a specific civil group wanted to achieve political hegemony (=become the ruling power/authority), they would first have to achieve cultural hegemony. The cultural hegemony would eventually lead to or facilitate the political hegemony of the relevant group. By securing cultural hegemony prior to political hegemony, the group would eventually be *both* the ruling power and continue to be the leader of consensus in society.⁸⁹ The former might also allow us to assume that a repressive power without the support from the civil society, would perceive the latter as a threat for as long as they do not rule the masses. Eventually then, if the ruler fails to achieve cultural hegemony, it will either remain an oppressive rule, or eventually be seized by another group lacking the support of the majority *or* by a group that actually has achieved cultural hegemony and therefore can seize power, become

⁸² Griffin, *Fascism*, p. 317.

⁸³ Wolff, "En ensom ridder mot den modern verden" in Sørensen et al. *Høyreekstremisme*, p. 165.

⁸⁴ Wolff, "En ensom ridder mot den modern verden" in Sørensen et al. *Høyreekstremisme*, p. 165.

⁸⁵ Haki, "Julius Evola and Tradition" in Sedgwick (ed.), *Key Thinkers of the Radical Right*, p- 55.

⁸⁶ See e.g. Benoist, *View From the Right, Volume II: Systems and Debates*, "Cultural Power".

⁸⁷ Lima in Gramsci pp. 16-18.

⁸⁸ Lima in Gramsci p. 19.

⁸⁹ Lima in Gramsci p. 20-21.

the leader of the state and remain the leader of the people. In the West, all the way up to our day, cultural hegemony is manifested first and foremost by liberal democracy—the declared enemy of the Nouvelle Droite. Tamir Bar-On has argued that “He [Gramsci] understood that liberal democracy survived not because of a repressive apparatus of the state, but due to cultural hegemony in civil society”. Thus, to succeed in the quest for cultural hegemony one would have to convince the people and subsequently come to power, not seize it by force.⁹⁰

To the ND, cultural hegemony and metapolitics go hand-in-hand. By influencing the masses into agreeing with ‘you’, rather than attempting to control them from ‘above’, you will eventually achieve political hegemony. The point is that the Nouvelle Droite was not interested in hands-on political power, they simply wanted to participate in- and influence the public debate and from thereon, if many enough ended up adopting their thought system and ideas, someone (if not the ND itself or its members) who shared the world view of the ND, would eventually come to power. If the metapolitical project of the ND was to succeed, culminating in cultural hegemony, the European population would together create a European empire, leave the nation-state behind, and attempt a return to their authentic, pre-Christian self—if so in a contemporary manner.

The list of influences would not be anywhere near complete did we not include a selection of Frenchmen whose ideas and doings were important to the emergence of the Nouvelle Droite. These are necessarily important because they were contributors to a continued far-right heritage in French culture, and in such a way can be interpreted as predecessors of the ND in different ways. Anti-Semite and nationalist Maurice Barres, ideological leader of Action Française, Charles Maurras—to whom Alain de Benoist has been compared to as a leader; and self-pronounced fascist and holocaust-denier Maurice Bardèche, who collaborated directly with the ND through contributions in their associated journal *Nouvelle École*, were all important historical and contemporary sources of inspiration to the ND. Already in the 1950’s, the latter called for a continental European fascism, stating in good time of the establishment of the Nouvelle Droite that “for the revolutionary right to reinvigorate itself in the context of the official defeats of Fascism and Nazism in 1945 it would have to turn more European rather than strictly nationalistic”—an idea in which *la Nouvelle Droite* ended up being a clear materialization of.⁹¹

Before we proceed, one cannot emphasize enough that the ND is a clearly revised, arguably different edition of previous nationalism and fascism as seen in the first half of the

⁹⁰ Bar-On, “Transnationalism and the French Nouvelle Droite”, p. 212.

⁹¹ Bar-On, «Fascism to the Nouvelle Droite», p. 335.

20th century. It was without doubt a *new right*, and therefore cannot be considered the same as historical fascism nor nationalism despite of the many common inspirational ideologues—to claim otherwise might and should be considered anachronistic both in regard to the relevant movement and the context in which they emerged. Regardless, it is common to suggest that the emergence of a new right was the result of an attempt to legitimize some central ideas of historical fascism. Hence it may fruitfully be assessed as *related* to fascism and Nazism, however—allegedly—without any intentions of putting into action the same kind of injustice and crimes as was done by its predecessors in the past. Additionally, the reader should keep in mind that ND-leader, Alain de Benoist, and the Nouvelle Droite in general both was and is strongly opposed to the concept of nation, consequently also nationalism, and therefore difficultly can be categorized as a nationalist as we usually understand the term; as a prerequisite both to German Nazism and Italian Fascism.⁹² Furthermore, despite sharing historical references as well as perspective on certain aspects, the Nouvelle Droite has been consistent in distancing itself from groupings traditionally characterized as nationalist, e.g., the catholic nationalist right, the Anglo-American New Right, the Extreme right, neo-fascism, neo-Nazism, and the conservative right.⁹³

With the former in mind, it is also important to be aware that the ND does not consist of one set of ideas, nor that its followers were or are always consensual in every aspect of ideas or politics.⁹⁴ Furthermore, certain aspects of its ideological profile have changed more than once through history, and so have the minds of its past and present followers. Nonetheless, there are some ground pillars of the movement's doctrine which we may fruitfully presume that held consensus, and which to some extent has survived the ravages of time and thus has remained intact. The choice of ideas in the following is based on that they are closely intertwined with one another; that there is an obvious coherence between the single standing ideas. Furthermore, these ideas are also necessarily fundamental to ND thinking broadly speaking. Most importantly, I suggest that they are all essential to support what Zúquete describes as “*the driving concept behind the ND's intellectual enterprise*”; Europeanism and the idea of a Pan-European Empire.⁹⁵ In short, a discussion on the following ideas: *anti-egalitarianism*, *anti-multiculturalism* and *differentialism*, will eventually lead us to the final part of this thesis: a discussion of the transnational and historically anchored concept of *Europeanism*.

⁹² Alain de Benoist on nationalism in “The Idea of Empire”.

⁹³ Bar-On, «Transnationalism and the Nouvelle Droite», p. 213.

⁹⁴ François, Stéphane. “The Nouvelle Droite and ‘Tradition’”, p. 91.

⁹⁵ Zúquete, *The Identitarians*, p. 229.

A Coherent Set of Ideas *In the Ruins of Egalitarianism*

In modern Western democracies, *egalitarianism* is a fundamental principle. An Egalitarian society supports and aspires for equality, thus any society adopting it seeks to uphold as little inequality between its peoples as possible.⁹⁶ *Universalism*, the philosophical foundation for the legislation of universal human rights, might therefore be fruitful to consider as a natural derivate of egalitarianism, implicating the same rights, status, and fundamental worth of all peoples.⁹⁷ It is based on the idea that we all come from and will all end up in the same place, that in essence we are all the same and therefore should have the same rights and be treated alike.⁹⁸ Ideally, an egalitarian society is blind to socio-economic status, gender, ethnicity, religion, or other ‘aspects’ of humans which traditionally have been used to argue the cause of discrimination or unequal treatment of some sort.

In Europe, these principles were—in primary forms—fundamental values in the territorial State as it appeared prior to the beginning nationalization of territories in the 18th century, presumably closely related to the strong position of Christianity in European societies. From monarchies and ‘enlightened despotism’, “the state inherited as its supreme function the protection of all inhabitants in its territory no matter what their nationality was”, wrote political theorist Hannah Arendt.⁹⁹ The function of nationality in the territorial state was thus entirely different from in the preceding nation-state, because it was the ruler or emperor who constituted the gathering factor of the State—not the common origin of the peoples. The conceptualization of ‘nation’ happened as a consequence of that

peoples had acquired consciousness of themselves as cultural and historical entities, and of their territory as a permanent home, where history had left its visible traces, whose cultivation was the product of the common labor of their ancestors and whose future would depend upon the course of a common civilization.¹⁰⁰

Nationality thus became bound to the ground upon which these peoples stood as well as the lands their ancestors and themselves had cultivated for centuries. Consequently, *nationalism*,

⁹⁶ *Store Norske Leksikon/snl.no*, “Egalitær”, 25.05.2021. <https://snl.no/egalitær>.

⁹⁷ There are numerous different definitions of Universalism; both in relation to philosophy and religion. This *moral* kind of universalism suggests that some system of ethics applies *universally*. This system is inclusive of all individuals, regardless of culture, race, sex, religion, nationality, sexual orientation etc. Christian universalism is based on the faith that all humans will eventually be saved.

⁹⁸ Britannica Academic, “Universalism”. 01.06.2021.

<https://academic-eb-com.ezproxy.uio.no/levels/collegiate/article/Universalism/74361>.

⁹⁹ Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 300.

¹⁰⁰ Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 299.

rose from the awareness of the distinction between what Arendt termed as *native* citizens of an area with definite borders and *naturalized* citizens, “those who had received their rights by law and not by birth, from the state and not from the nation”, in other words: those whom did not have their historical nor cultural origin in the relevant nation-state.¹⁰¹ The removal- or weakened power of monarchs whose symbolic value had previously been essential to unity in a population, accompanied by the emergence of classes and all conflicts that followed, made the common origin; the *nationality* of the citizens of a nation-state, the remaining shared bond.¹⁰² Subsequently, the state, thus also law and individual rights of man, became an “instrument of the nation and the identification of the citizen with the member of the nation”.¹⁰³ Nationality, then, went from being close to irrelevant to being crucial in the evaluation of the individuals rights and privileges, and *nationalism* bound the native citizens together. As a consequence, we may fruitfully assess the increased awareness of some peoples’ more than others’ historical and cultural “right” to inhabit a place as having ensured the reduction and to some extent: extinguishing of multiple European peoples.

With the development of nation-states and the continued nourishing of Enlightenment-thinking, egalitarianism and universalist ideas bloomed and were strengthened through legislation in Western nation-states, culminating in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was adopted by the United Nations in 1948.¹⁰⁴ The Nouvelle Droite thought of these historical factors to be among the main threats to historical identity, culture and tradition. For instance, Alain de Benoist has argued that universalism undermines *diversity* and facilitates homogenization of a country’s population. To him, the modern nation-state and the strive for a unified nationality or feeling of nationality among its inhabitants has ruined organic society, culture and grouping of peoples as it appeared prior to the revolutions of the 18th century and the following ‘nationalization’ of Europe.¹⁰⁵

To an extent, it might be fruitful to claim that the modern idea of nationality has done severe damage to cultural diversity in more than one European or Western nation. Considering the assimilation-processes of indigenous peoples to majority culture and continued suppression of vulnerable ethnocultural groups since the ‘dawn’ of modernity, it would be wrong to reject Benoist’s accusation of nationality as a ‘cultural bulldozer’ entirely. The “Norwegianization” of multiple ethnic minorities in Norway from the mid-19th century until the 1980’s stands as an

¹⁰¹ Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 302.

¹⁰² Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 300.

¹⁰³ Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 301.

¹⁰⁴ Palmer, Colton & Kramer, *A History of Europe in the Modern World*, p. 1059.

¹⁰⁵ Benoist, “The idea of Empire”, p. 6.

important example of this. The aim of this ‘assimilation process’ was to, by force, assimilate the minorities into the majority, and subsequently eradicate their culture to the advantage of a unitary national culture. They were denied schooling in their native languages, children were taken away from their parents, and many were forcibly sterilized or exposed of other horrible things which directly affected not only the lives of individuals but also their descendants and cultures in their entirety.¹⁰⁶

Nonetheless, egalitarianism is in general in hard weather when discussed by de Benoist, who believes that “...diversity is the treasure of the world, and that egalitarianism is killing it”.¹⁰⁷ In other words, he suggests that constituted inequality between people is necessary in order to maintain diversity. We have to recognize differences, not attempt to erase them. Tamir Bar-On’s description of the ND’s anti-egalitarian stand is merciless, saying that the ND is a “...movement that insist on the necessity of inequalities between people and is opposed to formal, juridical equality in the context of a liberal, multicultural society”.¹⁰⁸

According to the ND, liberalism and egalitarianism and therefore the essence of what is perceived by them as wrong with modern society, was to blame on the emergence of ‘Judeo-Christianity’ in Europe.¹⁰⁹ The roots of the former are apparently to find in the latter. Hence, the revolutions that occurred in Europe in the 18th and 19th century were viewed as the culmination of a 1500-year long process more than simply a reaction to its near past and present. However, as the German poet Herman Heidrich wrote: “The philosophical revolution in Europe emerged from the religious one, and is indeed nothing other than the logical conclusion of Protestantism.”¹¹⁰ In other words, the protestant reformation of 1517 onwards might be considered a peak in this 1500 year-long continuation of Judeo-Christian reign in Europe, culminating in the Enlightenment and the beginning of secularization, and thus also provide an utter press on the pedal to the acceleration of speed towards the establishment of the nation-state and all of its—in the mind of de Benoist—destructive features.¹¹¹

Against Multiculturalism and Globalization

Multicultural is a term which becomes ever more used to describe societies in which numerous cultures meet, intermix, and exist. The reason to its ever-stronger relevance, is explained by

¹⁰⁶ Lien & Nilsen, «Undertrykkelsen har vært motbydelig for meg», p. 42.

¹⁰⁷ Benoist, *View from the Right*, p. 16.

¹⁰⁸ Bar-On, “Fascism to the Nouvelle Droite”, p. 329.

¹⁰⁹ Zúquete, *The Identitarians*, p. 105.

¹¹⁰ Beiner, *Dangerous Minds*, pp. 9-10.

¹¹¹ Beiner, *Dangerous Minds*, p. 10.

that many [Western] countries in general have become increasingly multicultural as a result of among other migration and globalization in the modern age. Additionally, the growing degree of multiculturalism in countries which were previously imperial powers, should also be viewed as a culmination of European colonialism with the past colonial subjects moving to the homelands of their past suppressors, something which the ND came to think as well. The loss of French Algeria in the first half of the 1960's, ensured that later ND-followers and GRECE-members who had previously been deeply involved and engaged in the continuation of France's imperial mission, recognized the time of colonialism as passed. Interestingly, the Nouvelle Droite started stressing "...that colonialism in France was related to the republican left, which first colonized and later *permitted the integration of the colonized into the French nation.*"¹¹² Thus, fortunately to the ND, an increasingly multicultural society could according to them be attributed the Left rather than the historical nationalist right—neglecting then the absolutely central role expansionism and colonialism have had to nationalists.

It might initially seem like a paradox that someone so preoccupied with culture as the Nouvelle Droite came to have such strong resent towards increasingly multicultural societies. As it happened, Benoist and the ND considered multiculturalism poison to diversity and thus appear to have been strongly *mixophobic* despite claiming themselves to be keen "differentialist" anti-racists and pro-diversity.¹¹³ In that relation, it might prove useful to attempt to understand what *culture* denotes to the Nouvelle Droite. Besides traditions, rules, myths or other related factors, belonging to a specific culture can also consist in being part of an ethnic group that historically has existed in a particular part of the world, which again might be reflected in the looks of the relevant group. We might therefore, with reason, question whether it is really culture in the sense mentioned which the ND is scared will disappear, or if it is the mixing of "races" that enduring cultural meetings denote which appears intimidating to them. Such an interpretation would fit with the way culture is discussed in works by Alain de Benoist, as something closely related to skin complexion and physical appearance determined by genetics in general.¹¹⁴

Multiculturalism, then, possibly facilitates both the disappearance of specific cultures *and* of distinctive physical appearances. In order to avoid the decay of diverse cultures, Alain de Benoist suggest that they [cultures] should exist separated from one another in assigned

¹¹² Spektorowski, "The Intellectual New Right, The European Radical Right and the Ideological Challenge to Liberal Democracy", p. 166.

¹¹³ Benoist & Champetier, *Manifesto for a European Renaissance*, p. 34.

¹¹⁴ One of the principal perspectives in the first volume of *View from the Right* is that of 'race' and how it affects different aspects of humanity, both in a social and biological sense.

territories. As an alternative to multicultural societies, the ND instead wanted an *ethnoplural* world, meaning a world of many ethnicities and cultures which is organized in such a way that no ethnocultural group stands at danger of being extinguished. They feared that the peculiarity of the worlds different peoples would be discontinued if multicultural societies kept developing, thus the ultimate solution would be to facilitate separate living with basis in their historically geographical origin.

The “problem” of multiculturalism is necessarily also political, as culture is naturally reflected in the systems within a political unit, its laws, religion or absence of it, hierarchical structures, traditions and so on. Cultural meetings might therefore invite to conflict because of distinctive opinions on societal questions, human rights, gender equality and other things which are regulated by beliefs and tradition. According to McCulloch, the ND thought that “Cultures have their own ‘centre of gravity’”, thus “different cultures give different responses to essential questions. That is why every attempt to unify them ends up destroying them”.¹¹⁵ In other words, the ND understood cultural meetings as destined to end in destructive conflict, precisely because of the de facto power cultures have in society and on political institutions and structures. Consequently, they thought such a conflict was destined to culminate in the destruction of if not all then the majority of the cultures involved and eventually lead to a homogenization of humanity. Finally, multiculturalism should necessarily be viewed as a problematic factor in ND’s quest for cultural hegemony, as it [hegemony] would be much easier attained in a harmonious population in which people agree and have the same values, mind-set and traditions to begin with. Thus, multiculturalism was an essential obstacle in the quest for cultural hegemony and henceforth a culture in accordance with the doctrine of Nouvelle Droite—Racially pure and economically protectionist.

The Right to Difference

“The distinction between one human group and another...is an accidental and arbitrary by-product of human history”, writes Francis Fukuyama; that the “desire for recognition based on nationality or race...is not a rational one.”¹¹⁶ Hardly any quote could be more contradictory to the Nouvelle Droite’s perception of humanity, which presumes that “Individuals belong to humanity *only* through the mediation of a particular culture”; that humanity consists of numerous ethnic and cultural groups that are fundamentally different from one another.¹¹⁷ This

¹¹⁵ McCulloch, “The Nouvelle Droite in the 1980’s and 1990’s”, p. 165.

¹¹⁶ Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last man*, p. 201.

¹¹⁷ Zúquete, *The Identitarians*, p. 9.

difference, according to the ND, is the most important aspect of humanity; how we are fundamentally distinct from one another. The *right to difference*, or *Differentialism*, is based on the idea that it is our human right to proclaim our distinctiveness and to address that us humans, we are simply not the same and thus should stop attempting to pretend that we are, because by doing so humans only harm themselves and their cultures. In the *Manifesto for a European Renaissance*, in the chapter “The World: A Pluriversum”, Benoist and Champetier state that “The French New Right is profoundly opposed to the suppression of differences” and “The true wealth of the world is first and foremost the diversity of its cultures and peoples”.¹¹⁸ Thus, few things can be more important than to ensure the continued life of the ‘heterogeneity’ of the world, according to the Nouvelle Droite.

In the *Manifesto*, the recognition of the worth of other cultures and ethnicities is expressed as important to the ND: “One is only justified in defending one’s difference from others if one is also able to defend the difference of others...the right to difference cannot be used to exclude others who are different”.¹¹⁹ Thus, the purpose does not seem to be that groups *should* be treated differently based on ethnocultural background, but instead that they will be able to pursue better lives if they live segregated from one another and rule over themselves in their designated region. However, logic is difficultly detected in this regard, and an attempt of formulating the essence of- and also justify the right to difference can hardly get more confusing than the citation above. Because how can we possibly avoid excluding others who are different if the ambition is to isolate peoples from each other? Such a change would require precisely what they say one cannot do; it would require the exclusion *only* because of their difference and not inclusion despite of it. It is difficult to see the logic in shipping someone away, and whilst you do so, say that ‘I am protecting you against your will in order for both of us to remain different from each other’. Differentialism is in essence based on that we need to exclude each other because of our cultural and ethnic differences thus it seems illogical to make it seem otherwise.

Furthermore, it appears that differentialism is perceived to be in all people’s interest, that “The French New Right upholds the cause of peoples, because the right to difference is a principle which has significance only in terms of its generality.”¹²⁰ The best way to protect peoples from possible cultural decay, is accordingly by segregating cultures from each other, and by doing so, also *protecting* them from the influence of other cultures, which is perhaps

¹¹⁸ Benoist & Champetier, *Manifesto for a European Renaissance*, p. 28.

¹¹⁹ Benoist & Champetier, *Manifesto for a European Renaissance*, p. 33.

¹²⁰ Benoist & Champetier, *Manifesto for a European Renaissance*, p. 33.

particularly relevant in societies with a majority culture and several minority cultures where the latter will always be at danger of being consumed by the former. Scholar Tamir Bar-On describes the phenomenon as a belief in that “We all have the right to preserve our cultural, regional or national identities, and the best place to do so is within our respective territories”.¹²¹ If authorities would facilitate the segregation of peoples into their own geographically limited, ethnic area, all cultures might thrive and expect continuation in the future rather than decadence and eventual disappearance.

Despite emphasizing how crucial culture is to all peoples, the Nouvelle Droite was always most concerned with the state- and protection of European cultures, and it is clear—considering that it was an initially European movement—that it is the [alleged] preceding decadence of European culture and heritage which was their biggest concern. This latter point should also be considered an important explanation as to why differentialism is perhaps the most central concept which contemporary far-right groupings have adopted from the ND, because it fits perfectly as a legitimization of islamophobia and other types of xenophobia all times present in today’s societies.

It becomes ever clearer that culture—in its many forms—is considered to be an essence of human existence and being, but because of modernization, globalization and universalism, it stands at danger of being completely extinguished.¹²² Even though the world in the relevant time-period was- and in our present still is what the Nouvelle Droite would presumably term as “ethno-pluralistic” and culturally diverse, there is no reason to trust that just like the world in general is becoming smaller, that also cultures and ethnicities with time will become fewer in comparison to our past and current. Conclusively, differentialism is thus closely related both to all the former discussed ideas—anti-egalitarianism and anti-multiculturalism and anti-globalization as well as a crucial factor to Europeanism, which will be investigated in the following chapter.

¹²¹ Bar-On, “Transnationalism and the Nouvelle Droite”, p. 207.

¹²² Mammone, “The Transnational Reaction to 1968”, p. 231.

III

EUROPE – A PROBLEMATIC CONCEPT

Europeanism

Even though the Nouvelle Droite was arguably always ‘Europeanists’, the idea of a European empire and Europeanism as such was, as we learned in the introduction, not entirely new, but instead a continuation of an already existing idea in the far-right milieu across the European continent which had derived from the philosophies of Nietzsche, Spengler, Evola and others. Nouvelle Droite, however, would come to further concretize and promote the idea of *Eurofascists* like Maurice Bardèche and both dedicate and relate much of their work to providing ideas which could help convince the European people of the importance of conserving their cultural and ethnic heritage, and at the same time embrace the uniqueness of different peoples.

In more than one way, the Nouvelle Droite’s “mission” was from its very birth pervaded by ideas of European civilization and its history, well-illustrated in the name of its main-think tank *Groupement de Recherche et d’étude pour la civilisation Européenne* – Group for research and studies of *European Civilization*; and its journal, *Éléments pour la civilisation Européenne* – Elements for the *European Civilization*.¹²³ The movement was therefore also transnational in its very essence from its beginning in that it emphasized the connectedness of European peoples and their alleged common ancestry very explicitly. It promoted something like a *Continental nationalism* which was intended to protect the continent and its civilization, not the nation-state with its ‘Judeo-Christian’ fundament and constructed identities, but the *European Motherland* and “real” Europeans.

Europeanism might fruitfully be said to cover all of the ideas discussed in Chapter II. This is not only because that in order to achieve a Pan-European empire in compliance with the aspirations of the ND, all of the relevant ideas would have to be taken into consideration and set into practice, but also because the ideological doctrine of the Nouvelle Droite is rather intangible. Thus, what this ‘continental nationalism’ was and is, is partly explained through the description of the other central ND-ideas; rejection of egalitarianism, multiculturalism, globalism and a strong emphasis on the ‘Right to Difference’. However, it is also more; It is based on a perception of- and belief in Europe as a cultural and historical entity, as the true *homeland* of a European civilization. According to Zúquete, GRECE-member Dominique

¹²³ Bar-On, “Transnationalism and the Nouvelle Droite”, p. 203.

Venner “repeatedly sent out a call for a European ‘awakening’ that would transcend its nation-states in the name of a wider, historically, physically, and spiritually connected ‘European homeland’.”¹²⁴ Similarly, GRECE-members Pierre Vial and Jean Mabire were deeply committed to the idea of a ‘Carnal Europe’ and the ‘ethnic conception of nation’, meaning the historical way of understanding the nation, as “first and foremost a community of descent”.¹²⁵

In sum, Europeanism was a continental ‘nationalism’—a nationalism then based on an interpretation of ‘national’ as something principally ethnic—, aimed at gathering ‘original’ Europeans as a strong and united people, which together could resist the powers of globalization and thus also avoid cultural decadence. The *substance* of Europe was a shared, descended ethnocultural ancestry, so that even though Europe consisted of different peoples, they were thought to be derivatives of the same people, namely the Indo-Europeans. This mythical people not only ensured the genetic connection between Europeans, but also a bond that was thought to be even deeper, like something more intuitive or spiritual that was part of a European identity of which many were perhaps unaware.

The Question of Civilizational Continuity

Europe is a continent of *nation-states*, some of which are as young as the concept itself, whilst others have roots that go much farther back in time. For long periods in the past, the map of Europe frequently changed and appeared like what is perhaps best described as a patchwork of unclear territorial borders, with numerous ethnic groups scattered across the continent, and a population with little sense nor knowledge of a continental identity or belonging.¹²⁶ Still, parts of the continent have for periods been relatively stable in its outlook due to successful, long-lasting empires. The former is perhaps best illustrated by the Roman Empire (27 B.C.- 476 A.D.), which de facto controlled and ruled an enormous area in Europe for a considerable length of time however with shifting forms of rule.¹²⁷ Though decisively different in shape and power from the Roman, and also smaller in size, the Holy Roman Empire (800–1806) is another example of an enduring Empire in Europe.¹²⁸ In this case, the power of the emperor was however explicitly formal, and the different regions were more or less autonomous with designated rulers, not too different from the nation-state which soon enough came to be the principal way of organizing European territories and peoples. However periodically and partly

¹²⁴ Zúquete, *The Identitarians*, p. 228.

¹²⁵ Zúquete, *The Identitarians*, p. 111.

¹²⁶ Imsen, *Europa 1300-1550*, p. 88.

¹²⁷ Britannica, “Roman Empire”, 01.06.2021. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Roman-Empire>.

¹²⁸ Wilson, *Heart of Europe*, p. 2.

stable in appearance, for the most part, the ‘patchwork’-analogy is probably the most suitable characterization of the continent before the nation-state got a proper foothold—especially when taken into consideration that a sizeable part of the continent was not included in the Empires, but rather in personal unions or other complex territorial situations. Thus, the continent remained patchy and fluctuate rather than reflecting continuity and unity.

The resolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806 may be considered an event that marked the beginning of a new era in geographical division of Europe. Not only was the focus on ‘the nation’ and consciousness of one’s own ethnocultural and historical belonging ever growing and romanticized, but it also precluded both the dissolve of existing Empires and attempts of constructing new ones. The former is first and foremost exemplified by the resolution of the Ottoman Empire after WWI; the latter with the construction of the Soviet Union in 1922 (dissolved in 1991) and Adolf Hitler’s attempt of a ‘Third Reich’ (1939-1945). Neither of these succeeded in constructing enduring, grand political units in a way that is comparable to the empires of the pre-Enlightened Europe or those of its neighboring continents. Consequently, Europe has been what could rightfully be claimed a more or less fluid or fluctuate continent in regard to its ‘appearance’ through most of the history that we know, with little *continuity* in its shape and substance.

The word ‘Continuity’ is something I would like to go deeper into, because it is of definite relevance to a discussion of the Nouvelle Droite’s Europeanism. *Europeanism* or *Pan-Europeanism* is grounded in the belief that Europeans share a cultural heritage and a historical identity, both in severe need of protection and nurturing in order not to vanish in its entirety from the consciousness of European peoples. It assumes that the post-modern world, capitalism, and immigration, as a result of the Enlightenment and Globalization, are strangling the remains of “authentic” European culture and civilization, and that an awakening is necessary to put an end to decadence and prevent its eventual disappearance.¹²⁹ Of pivotal importance: Europeanism concerns with Europeans, it is indifferent to nationality, ethnicity or culture, for as long as it is defined as European; as historically ‘belonging’ to Europe.

By questioning the continuity in European civilizational history, I suggest that it should be held under doubt if one can fruitfully claim that such a shared heritage exists—both in reality and in the minds of Europeans—, and furthermore whether it is possible to prove the continuation of a historical identity that is somewhat common to all Europeans. Aside from the varied both territorial and political organization, the peoples of the continent can hardly be said

¹²⁹ Benoist & Champetier, *Manifesto for a European Renaissance*, pp. 11-16.

to have been the same through ‘all’ of history due to for instance migration and trade. Thus, the claim that there is a ‘common’ European *heritage* is hard to argue in favor of, and, despite the possibility of its existence, it should be held under doubt whether it still has—if it ever had—any relevance to the population of the continent.

However, regardless of the difficulty of proving contemporary and past Europeans as both genetic and cultural derivatives of an ancient people, the Nouvelle Droite has pointed out a prehistoric people as the principal representatives of the deepest historical roots of European civilization. ‘Authentic Europeanness’ is supposed inherited from a mythical people known as the *Indo-Europeans*, which are perhaps *the* most important historical reference in Nouvelle Droite’s historical narrative of Europe and its cultures, peoples and their shared identity. However, *Indo-European* is a term first and foremost meant to describe the original language out of which most European and several Asian languages have been born. It is thus originally a description of a *linguistic* phenomenon.¹³⁰ Such a linguistic kinship, however, also suggest that the people who spoke or speak the relevant languages, are genetically connected in some way or at some point in history. Furthermore, it also denotes a geographical place of origin which its speakers must have had in common. It is this common *homeland* and the genetical aspects in the shape of humans, and henceforth also the culture that the speakers had, which came to be the most important to the Nouvelle Droite, a perception heavily influenced by- and anchored in the research and hypotheses of French philologist Georges Dumézil.¹³¹

The historical narrative that the Nouvelle Droite has chosen for the history of the European civilization, is thus a romantic idealization of a distant past of which we do not know enough: The living time of the speakers of the Indo-European *ursprache*.¹³² When compared to more recognized and consensual histories of the distant past, the ND’s take on the growth of the European civilization should also be considered to be an alternative history of it, its peoples and cultures. That being said, it is not the inclusion of Indo-Europeans in their narrative which should be revised, necessarily, but rather the stressing of its importance to contemporary European identity and culture. Moreover, the use of historical references in the works of de Benoist is at times inconsistent or presumptuous rather than factual and based on consensus within the relevant discourse and scholarly debate, which is one among several reasons why it might be worth questioning the reliability of much of his research. However, making an

¹³⁰ Lundager & Schjødt, *Suveræniteten, kampen og frugtbarheden*, p. 17.

¹³¹ Benoist, Alain de. *View from the Right*. Chapter «The Indo Europeans».

¹³² “Original language” in German, as referred to by Benoist in *View from the Right*, chapter “The World of the Indo-Europeans”.

assessment of his historical approach and use of sources is not the same as rejecting the undeniably impressive work conducted by de Benoist nor other ND-thinkers. It is more an attempt to shed light to how easily history can be manipulated into suiting one's perception of reality, and in this particular case how it is done to serve a [meta]political purpose: To strengthen the idea of a common European heritage and thus also the idea of a shared culture and identity in a population which indeed does not pass the test required to be considered a genetic, linguistic, cultural entity in any sense other than geographical.

To draw conclusions in disputed historical debates and in such a way construct alternative histories with a specific intend, is of course not unique to the Nouvelle Droite, but rather a very common practice in schools of thought and intellectual movements, and especially the kind which leans towards being *radical* or far out on either side of the traditional political specter. However, the selectiveness of the relevant actors in their choice of histories and references is of course problematic in itself. The encyclopaedical intellect and major ethos that in particular Alain de Benoist and some of the other prominent individuals of the movement have had in certain milieus can also make it seem like their chosen narratives are the closest to the truth, even though they in reality might be nothing but filled with theories, myths or hypotheses.

Alain de Benoist and other ND-thinkers obsession with Indo-Europeans and pre-Christian and ancient Europe, is manifested by all of Benoist and others', like Pierre Vial, Jean Mabire and Dominique Venner's, works on the development of a European civilization through thousands of years, with a particular interest in the pre-Christian days.¹³³ Furthermore, Benoist's knowledge on the topic is no doubt circumstantial and rich, and it becomes clear that also he was passionate in his insisting on a common European heritage, culture, spirit, and threatened continuation. Still, despite his apparently thorough research and broad knowledge of this particular field, Benoist appears to be selective in his choice of references and created little space for nuance in the discussion of some essential scholarly debates. Moreover, he has had a general tendency of referring to intellectuals who are either not schooled in the relevant discipline or scholars who are controversial or whose theories are.¹³⁴

¹³³ Benoist has authored a volume titled *The Indo Europeans: In search of the Homeland*. IE-history and research are also discussed in an own chapter in the first volume of *View from the Right*. Additionally, he has published multiple articles on the topic in ND-associated magazines and consistently apply the IE-people as a historical reference wherever relevant. The same goes for colleague Dominique Venner who spent a significant part of his career researching and writing on the Indo-Europeans, attempting to challenge traditional narratives of pre-civilizational history and its attachment to the present.”

¹³⁴ In relation to the hypotheses on Indo-European, his trust in French philologist Georges Dumézil is particularly relevant.

Aside from in the retelling of the history of- and theories on the Indo-Europeans, the former is also illustrated when de Benoist in his *View from the Right (Vol. 1)* makes multiple attempts of ‘Europeanizing’ parts of the world or historical artifacts which have at some time in history been theorized as *possibly* related to Europe, but that even immediately or at a later point in history proved not to be. An example is the Kensington runestone which said that Scandinavians had arrived in Minnesota more than 100 years prior to the Portuguese’s arrival in the late 15th century. After it was found, in 1898, the authenticity of the stone was debated and conclusively identified as false due to several rather obvious reasons, among others severe linguistic mistakes.¹³⁵ At the point of his writing, nearly seventy years after the stone was found and had been declared false, Alain de Benoist *still* suggested the possibility that the stone might be authenticated at a later point in history, and in such manner helped facilitate a possible continuation of doubt in what should be viewed as a concluded case.¹³⁶

Another example of such speculations in historical myths, is Benoist’s commentary of racial theoretician Jacques de Mahieu’s claim that a specific group of the Peruvian population, the Chachapoyas—also known as the ‘Warriors of the Clouds’, were of European or North-European origin as a result of pre-Colonial European settlements in the Americas. Mahieu’s hypothesis was based on a chronicle by one 16th century conquistador named Pedro Cieza de Leon, out of which he read that the Chachapoyas had light skin and hair color close to blonde, making them remarkably distinctive in appearance from other population groups in the same geographical area.¹³⁷ Mahieu’s interpretation of Cieza de Leon’s chronicle as well as the suggestion of the Chachapoyas as descendants of Europeans have nonetheless been proven wrong by archeologists in newer time, but has still led to a tradition of claims that these indigenous South-American peoples had ‘European appearance’ as a result of pre-colonial European settlements.¹³⁸ Consequently, both these stories may be viewed as constituents of the same narrative aimed at giving the pagan European ancestors a more significant role in history by assigning them presence in a space in which they presumably were absent. In that relation, Benoist ends up giving of the impression of having a decisively Eurocentric worldview. And regardless of the *possibility* or *potential* of altering the truth ‘as we know it’, the attempt to pose ‘whiteness’ descended from Europeans on peoples in other parts of the world, should be considered as little but absurd for as long as it is not supported by scientific proof.

¹³⁵ Store Norske Leksikon/snl.no, «Kensington-stenen», 30/5-2021. <https://snl.no/Kensington-stenen>.

¹³⁶ Benoist, *View from the Right*, p. 101.

¹³⁷ Benoist, *View from the Right*, pp. 105-107.

¹³⁸ Schjellerup, Inge R. *Incas and Spaniards in the Conquest of the Chachapoyas*, “Physical anthropology”, pp. 219-222. Schjellerup found no significant deviation from other Peruvians in the remains of the Chachapoyas.

Nevertheless, to the Nouvelle Droite, the Indo-Europeans were first and foremost the original people of the European continent and the predecessors of the peoples who lived in Pre-Christian Europe, like the Celts, Germanics, Slavs, Greeks and Romans. Evidently, they were thought to represent “the most profound roots of the European peoples”.¹³⁹ Therefore, ‘Indo-European’ was applied as historical proof of civilizational continuity and more in general in their discussion of rooted European peoples. Indeed, the history of the Indo-Europeans might qualify as the ND’s chosen ‘creational myth’ for the “European Civilization”. Aside from the convenience of the designated name ‘Indo-European’ and its supposed place of origin, the ‘popularity’ of the Indo-Europeans as a historical ‘actor’ in far-right histories, can—and probably should—possibly be explained by the ‘ethnic distinctiveness’ that the Indo-European peoples were said to have, similar to a North European physique—typically light-skinned, with light hair and blue eyes.¹⁴⁰

Mythical Ancestry *Nouvelle Droite’s Interpretation of the ‘Indo Europeans’*

The year 1786, Sir William Jones conducted a lecture on the significant resemblance he had found in the linguistic body of Sanskrit, Greek and Latin, Celtic, Gothic and old Persian. To this day, he remains the first published recognition of the linguistic entity now referred to as *Proto-Indo-European*.¹⁴¹ Ever since, the data on the descendants of a common ancestor has been thoroughly processed in the reconstruction of the ‘mother’ of most European and many Asian languages. With the discovery of this original language, the interest in locating its geographical point of origin also emerged soon enough, and as a natural consequence of the former, so did the quest to uncover the history of the mysterious practitioners of Indo-European. In the beginning, and for a long time, it was widely agreed that the origin of the IE-languages, hence also the first IE-peoples, “[...] derived from the territory between the Caspian Sea and Bactria, part of Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Tadzhikistan, and the cradle of the Indo-Europeans was set variously in mountainous areas such as the Hindu-Kush”.¹⁴² With the possibility that an identification of the original homeland was successful derived stories of how language and culture was nurtured before these ancient peoples had left their homeland “[...] to spread their higher culture to Europe and the rest of Asia”.¹⁴³ This story of IE-origin remained

¹³⁹ Zúquete, *The Identitarians*, p. 17.

¹⁴⁰ Zúquete, *The Identitarians*, p. 17.

¹⁴¹ Mallory & Adams, *Encyclopedia of Indo-European Culture*, pp. 458-459.

¹⁴² Mallory & Adams, *Encyclopedia of Indo-European Culture*, p. 291.

¹⁴³ Mallory & Adams, *Encyclopedia of Indo-European Culture*, p. 291.

widely accepted for quite some time, however in 1851, English philologist, Robert Gordon Latham became the first to argue against the idea of an Asian homeland to the Indo-European family, and henceforth ensured a tradition of placing the homeland in various parts of Europe.¹⁴⁴

The English philologist argued that the theory on an Asian homeland was contrary to the existing linguistic evidence as well as that it “[...] violated the basic principles of natural science”.¹⁴⁵ According to him, the original home of the language had to be Europe rather than Asia because the area occupied by Indo-European languages in Europe was vast in comparison to that in Asia. Consequently, it was also more diverse.¹⁴⁶ Despite that his theory initially failed to gain significance among most linguists and archeologists in his present, he was not infrequently referred to by various scholars in the 1870s and 1880s—in time with the rise of *Physical Anthropology* as a research field and a generally increasing focus on biological differences in the human species.¹⁴⁷ What followed, was that his arguments were drawn out of context and given racial connotations, so that the geography of the original language became a discussion of ethnicity and race rather than a search for answers to linguistic mysteries. In other words, *language* became confused with *race*, and so the Indo-European myth became part of the major race-fixation of the late 19th century and the first half of the 20th. In turn, Indo-European came to be referred to as *Aryan*, meant to denote the “lightest pigmented Caucasian physical type”, as referred to previously: Blonde, tall, and blue-eyed.¹⁴⁸ The ‘Aryan’s’ geographical place of origin was set to Scandinavia or Northern Germany, and some scholars, notably Austrian philologist Karl Penka, insisted that the ‘Aryans’ simply could not have originated elsewhere.¹⁴⁹

Even in our present, we still cannot say for certain whence the Indo-European language originated, thus neither where its peoples were settled. The theories of potential homelands are many and diverse. However, there is little doubt that those suggesting a European origin must have resonated best with the Nouvelle Droite’s doctrine and Alain de Benoist’s mindset, which is why those theories received an uncontested focus in ND-publications on Indo-Europeans. Interestingly then, that if Europe was to be the cradle of all languages belonging to the Indo-European language-family, then many peoples from both the Middle East and other parts of

¹⁴⁴ Mallory & Adams, *Encyclopedia of Indo-European Culture*, p. 291.

¹⁴⁵ Mallory, *In Search of the Indo-Europeans*, p. 152.

¹⁴⁶ Mallory, *In Search of the Indo-Europeans*, p. 152.

¹⁴⁷ Physical anthropology is the study of biological and behavioral aspects of human beings. Here it refers particularly to the increased interest in racial questions which took place in the relevant period. Physical anthropology is necessarily essential to the ND’s fixation with differences between peoples.

¹⁴⁸ Mallory & Adams, *Encyclopedia for Indo-European Culture*, p. 291.

¹⁴⁹ Mallory, *In Search of the Indo-Europeans*, pp. 268.

Asia would have a specific, identified, common heritage with Europeans as well as a historical or ancient connection to the continent. Thus, Indo-European does not denote ancient Europe alone, but rather a significant part of the world's population. Any actualization of this relation is, as far as my knowledge goes, not particularly prominent in Benoist writings, with the exception of the interest in myths and in Benoist's argumentation that all cultures matter equally and should therefore be respected in line with that.¹⁵⁰ Rather, his main focus remains on those who stayed, the makers of Europe, the forefathers of the Greeks and Romans, Celts and Germans.

In his *View from the Right: A Critical Anthology of Contemporary Ideas*, Alain de Benoist included a rich explanation of the origin of the Indo-European language-group and its speakers. The idea of an Indo-European 'homeland', distinct cultures and specific physical appearance of the peoples does however seem the more interesting or essential to him than the linguistic side of this mysterious and intricate research field. As a consequence, the language became a footnote rather than the heading in the debate on Indo-European, so to speak. Furthermore, he was, at the point of his writing, convinced that the Indo-European language family had originated in Europe, and referred only to two 'homeland-hypothesis' which he argued were the only ones still relevant, both centered in Europe—respectively the Nordic or Germanic thesis, oriented around today's Lithuania, Germany and Scandinavia; and Southern Russia/Central Europe. According to Benoist, "The idea of an 'Asiatic origin of the Indo-Europeans...is no longer defended today by anyone'.¹⁵¹ Thus, de Benoist gives of the impression that these two were the only truly relevant theories of his time, failing to nuance a very disputed topic by not mentioning the numerous other theses on the original homeland that was yet, if ever, to be discarded.

Nonetheless, it is true that peoples who are to be considered the ancestors of a great part of the European population or civilization must have lived here thousands of years ago. However, multiple waves of migrants have come, left and what not since then—and by not shedding sufficient light to the complexity of the problem, the enormous 'volatility' in the genetic pool of the European civilization might easily vanish in an attempt to argue the cause of it as having developed in a predictable, linear way. Moreover, even though de Benoist may with some degree of correctness argue the case of a biological heritage in a significant part of the population, one can difficultly claim a cultural one for as long 'culture' is understood in

¹⁵⁰ Benoist & Champetier, *Manifesto for a Modern Renaissance*, p. 33.

¹⁵¹ Benoist, *View from the Right*, p. 27.

relation to a set of common ideas, customs, values, traditions and rules in a population living in constantly changing societies.

If we are to believe Alain de Benoist, the Indo-Europeans were the reigning population on the European continent until they around the 13th century BC divided into the pre-Christian Greeks, Romans, Celts, Slavs, Baltics and Germanics.¹⁵² These groups make the large linguistic families of the European continent that are descended from the Indo-European original language, covering most of the spoken languages in contemporary Europe. Though distinct from their historical predecessors and each other, the Greek, Roman, Celtic and Germanic societies were similar in that their beliefs were mythical and mystical. Furthermore, their societies were hierarchical, structured in line with the dominating political tradition of dictation from above, which endured up to the late 18th century, superseded by an orientation towards equality and individual rights.¹⁵³ Need not mention: Their languages were also kindred. Most importantly, however, were that they all were European in a sense that is perhaps more comprehensible than what is the case of the Indo-European mythical peoples.

Imagine Empire

To a significant extent, the ND-interpretation of the Indo-Europeans and the descending European pagan cultures might be viewed as the principal foundation to the idea of a European empire. By putting such strong emphasis on the Indo-European myth(s), the Nouvelle Droite came to mix linguistic science and history with culture, and culture with the complexion of people's skin and their ethno-geographical origin. In a way, the stressing of the Indo-Europeans and genetic and cultural lineage up to our day, might be considered as a reduction of [European] history to a "succession of races".¹⁵⁴ The ND held on to an idea of the European as mainly and, more importantly, *originally* white, and thus made 'whiteness' a part of European culture and identity in order to make racial differentializing seem both entitled and harmless.

Ethnicity and culture—which as mentioned are not always easy to distinguish from one another in ND-texts—would be the main-factors for consideration in the reorganizing of Europe; the turn away from the nation-state and all its liberal properties. Scholar Alberto Spektorowski stressed that "The New Right proposes the ethnic region as the basis for the formation of a federation of ethnic groups of Europe; such a federation would represent the

¹⁵² Benoist, *View from the Right*, chapter "Specific Characteristics".

¹⁵³ Beiner, *Dangerous Minds*, p. 9.

¹⁵⁴ Mallory, *In the Search of the Indo-Europeans*, p. 267.

reconstruction of the idea of Empire”.¹⁵⁵ If set into action, nation-states as they appear today would be replaced by a Federal Europe based on the idea of Empire consisting on the ‘low level’ of numerous ethno-cultural regions, and on the ‘upper level’ of a ‘federation of ethnicities’, or as put by Benoist “Imperial principle above, direct democracy below”.¹⁵⁶ The purpose of constructing *ethnies* was based on the idea that it would ensure the continuation of ethno-cultural diversity in Europe: Implicitly—and ideally—to keep people who did not share cultural nor ethnic heritage apart from one another, and thus ensure that their peculiarity might flourish instead of eroding in the masses. Europe would be the homeland of all the distinctive ethnic groups that had historical roots *inside* the borders of the continent.

Ever so, the empire was first and foremost an *idea* which supposedly was to exist in the consciousness of the peoples who lived in regions inside the borders of [the empire]. Despite that an empire would cover a large geographical area, it was not to be considered the same as a grand nation, something which Benoist was careful to emphasize.¹⁵⁷ As in the old European empires, an emperor was to hold “...power by virtue of embodying something which goes beyond simple possession”, stresses Benoist, “he rules over sovereigns, not over territories, and represents a power transcending the community he governs”.¹⁵⁸ The striking similarity of Benoist’s imagined empire and the HRE, finds perhaps its natural explanation in his pronouncement of the Holy Roman Empire as one of the “historical constructions deserving this name”, not surprisingly accompanied by the Roman and Ottoman Empire.¹⁵⁹ These empires, which belong to different times in history, all remain favored and admired by Alain de Benoist and other Nouvelle Droite-thinkers.¹⁶⁰ However, the ability of the ruler of the multi-ethnocultural Holy Roman Empire to ensure a caretaking home for all European cultures, religions and peoples, seems to have been of particular fascination to him.

To the Nouvelle Droite, the years in which these societies and cultures existed remain the glory days of Europe and its peoples. It is to them they looked for inspiration in the search for the perfect societal structures and territorial divide of the continent. The abovementioned ‘actors’ all covered significant land areas in which distinct subcultures lived peacefully, and they were allegedly closer to *ethno-plural* societies than *multicultural* societies as experienced in our present. They were primarily descended from the “authentic” European societies rather

¹⁵⁵ Spektorowski, “The Intellectual New Right, the European Radical Right and the Challenge to Liberal Democracy”, p. 171.

¹⁵⁶ Spektorowski, “Regionalism and the Right”, p. 352.; Benoist, “The Idea of Empire”, p. 11.

¹⁵⁷ Benoist, *The Idea of Empire*, p. 3.; Benoist & Champetier, *Manifesto for a European Renaissance*, p. 38.

¹⁵⁸ Benoist, *The Idea of Empire*, p. 3.

¹⁵⁹ Benoist, *The Idea of Empire*, p. 8.

¹⁶⁰ E.g., Past (and now deceased) ND-member Guillaume Faye in his *Archeofuturism*, pp. 192-193.

than rooted in countries from all over the world. Their societies were *organic*, rather than constructed, in the sense that they had emerged from within the continental borders as we know them today.¹⁶¹

Clearly, the idea of a European empire with ‘ethnies’ or ethnoculturally based regions, was based on a free selection of historical events and political structures which Benoist and the ND found appealing.¹⁶² Apparently inspired by the Holy Roman Empire-‘model’, the ND wanted to separate Europe into different ethno-cultural groups living in designated regions, in order to prevent different cultures from disappearing and instead ensure the continuation of their unique ethnocultural heritage, as discussed in Chapter II. The principle based itself on a perception of that while “the nation engenders its own culture or finds support in culture in the process of its formation, the empire embraces various cultures”, and furthermore “Its general law is that of autonomy and of the respect for diversity”.¹⁶³ By eliminating the nation-state and instead construct a federal empire with partly autonomous ethnic regions, one could guarantee a “heterogeneous world” of “homogenous communities” in which differences could flourish in isolation, in line with the Differentialism discussed previously.¹⁶⁴

Spektorowski has suggested that the Nouvelle Droite favored Europeanism because the “...ethnic region is the ‘natural’ framework within which the basis of citizenship could be redefined from civic to ethno-cultural” and besides “where bureaucratic barriers are more easily raised against immigrants”.¹⁶⁵ In other words one might deconstruct a circumstantial ideological doctrine into having one principal goal: To keep out of Europe anyone who did not have historical belonging on the continent. “The ethnic region”, explains Spektorowski “does not expel foreigners with draconian laws; it raises impenetrable cultural barriers even to those of them who want to integrate into the national polity, because it links the concept of participatory citizenship to cultural roots”.¹⁶⁶ In other words, the construction of a federal Europe and the practice of differentialism between European peoples, would help legitimize the exclusion of anyone who did not have historical roots in the continent, subsequently it would also ensure the abandonment of principles inherited from the Enlightenment which are not only legislated in most European countries, but are also presumably indoctrinated as fundamental values in the minds of the majority population of the continent. Regulating where people are

¹⁶¹ Benoist, “The Idea of Empire”, p. 5.

¹⁶² In Griffin, “Plus ça Change?”, p. 6 (and several other places), the term ‘ethnies’ is used to describe the distinctive regions based on the ethnocultural origin of its inhabitants.

¹⁶³ Benoist, “The Idea of Empire”, p. 5.

¹⁶⁴ Bar-On, “Fascism to the Nouvelle Droite”, p. 329.

¹⁶⁵ Spektorowski, “Regionalism and the Right: The Case of France”, p. 353.

¹⁶⁶ Spektorowski, “Regionalism and the Right: The Case of France”, p. 355.

allowed to live based exclusively on their historical ethnocultural roots is problematic in its very essence exactly because of the multiple definite and inescapable humanitarian and universalistic principles that would have to be overruled in order for the construction of an Empire to be set into action. Roger Griffin has summarized the actual consequences the construction of a federal European empire would have to inhabitants of the continent, in that

Any attempt to realize the utopia of a European federation of homogenous ‘ethnies’ based on ‘organic’ democracy, rooted in a ‘pre-Judeo-Christian’ cosmology, and freed from the corrosive effects of multi-culturalism and globalization, would in practice involve social engineering by an autocratic (super-)state pursuing policy of cultural and ethnic homogenization and exclusion. These policies, even if different in their rationale from the genocide attempted by the Nazis and the ‘ethnic cleansing’ carried out in the former Yugoslavia, would deliberately set out to reverse the effects of many decades of liberal pluralism, multi-culturalism, multi-ethnicity, secularization, and individualism.¹⁶⁷

In the 21st century, the idea of Europeanism might be said to have been succeeded by what European Identitarians call ‘Remigration’ or the ‘Great Return’, which is the suggested final solution to the “Great Replacement” of Europe, “a change of its cultural and ethnic makeup and therefore of its people and civilization”.¹⁶⁸ The idea, remigration, is indeed what would have to be done in case the erection of a Federal Europe with ethnic regions was to be realized; it is in short, a forced moving of people of non-European ethnic origin to their historical “home”; in many cases, the home of their ancestors. It is, essentially, a deportation of peoples who know no other home than their birth-country—in this case: a European nation-state—to a country or place of which they have an alleged rootedness with basis exclusively in genetic ancestry and possibly in some broad sense a cultural connection. The ‘Great Return’ is, similarly to many of Nouvelle Droite’s ideas, pronounced as something which benefits all parties involved, like something more or less harmless and peaceful; In the spellings of the French Bloc Identitaire, “In order for Europe to Remain Europe, we demand Remigration”, the “peaceful and organized return of a great part of immigrants and their descendants”.¹⁶⁹ The simplification of a process which is more circumstantial and violating to humanity than one could possibly imagine, is striking. Such a formulation implies that it would be unproblematic to set the Great Return into action; It presuppose that those who would be affected by such a decision would not attempt to resist and would without question agree to be “returned” to a place which they perhaps have no sense of belonging.

¹⁶⁷ Griffin, “Plus ça Change!”, p. 6.

¹⁶⁸ Zúquete, *The Identitarians*, pp. 146-147; 157.

¹⁶⁹ Zúquete, *The Identitarians*, p. 158.

One can hardly deny a kinship between the Identitarians and Nouvelle Droite, but it is therefore no less interesting that, according to Zúquete, de Benoist—in *Éléments* in 2015—opposed a “solution” like the one described above; he thinks that “instead of blocking out an uncomfortable reality, it is necessary to deal with things as they are”.¹⁷⁰ Due to enduring immigration over a long period of time, he argued that it seems expedient to accept “a degree of communitarianism, with enough space for particular groups and traditions, coexisting under a common law”.¹⁷¹ Subsequently, those whom are already settled in Europe, and even more so, the descendants of immigrants from the former century, should, according to de Benoist, be permitted to stay, in their by now well-established communities. Identitarians, on the other hand, think of communitarianism as accepting failed assimilation and integration, and as something which only provides strength to “the cultural and ethnic demands of foreign peoples and facilitates their territorial rootedness and conquest”.¹⁷² They support the conservation of all identities, like the Nouvelle Droite always emphasized, however preferably “not on a continent that is not their own”.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Zúquete, *The Identitarians*, pp. 157.; He is referring specifically to pages 48-55 in a 2015-publication of the Nouvelle Droite-journal *Éléments pour la civilisation Européenne*.

¹⁷¹ Zúquete, *The Identitarians*, pp. 157.

¹⁷² Zúquete, *The Identitarians*, pp. 157.

¹⁷³ Zúquete, *The Identitarians*, pp. 157.

CONCLUSION

By drawing the historical lines of the Nouvelle Droite back to the recent aftermath of the Second World War, we might see the movement as an extension of a historical French Nationalism that can be traced back to the revolution of the 18th century. However, the beginning shift towards a more continental rather than French kind of ‘nationalism’ which begun already in the 1950’s, illustrates the desperate attempt of the far right to rid of its skin but preserve its essence after the horrors of the Second World War. By focusing on culture rather than nationalism and explicit racism, and connecting it to identity both on a higher, European level and a lower, regional level; the ND might arguably have hit a nerve which allowed for their ideas to become increasingly popular in the years following their emergence, and perhaps even more so in the 21st century, a time in which identity politics occupies the agenda of multiple European countries.

As we have seen, the historical and ideological concepts which makes the foundation of Nouvelle Droite’s Europeanism, makes the idea remarkably complex. It is not only complex because of the miscellaneous selection of thinkers that have influenced the ideological doctrine of the ND, but also in the paradoxes of their ideas and world views, making it challenging to conduct an assessment of the movement as a whole. Their strong Europe-focused thesis ensured the ND’s transcendence from a French intellectual ‘club’ into a continental movement with potential of international influence. Subsequently, by not entangling their ideological doctrine with the birth-nation of the movement, and instead focus on Europe and civilizational questions related to contemporary political questions, the Nouvelle Droite could become what might be considered a transnational movement. Moreover, that their ideas were disinterested in the nation-state both as an idea and a concept, and instead in the shared historical heritage of indigenous and “authentic” Europeans, made them at the disposal to anyone who feared European decadence and perceived foreign impulses as threatening to both their national and continental identity, culture and ethnicity.

Additionally, due to the fact that the Nouvelle Droite’s ideas had a continental, regional and civilizational focus rather than a national, they could in theory be adopted by whoever shared their views on ethnic and cultural distinctiveness, immigration and fear of cultural decadence and ‘homogenization’, regardless of their geographical location in the world. Thus, despite that the ND was concerned first and foremost with Europe, the idea of a ‘continental nationalism’ was in principle transferrable to any part of the world in which a suggested civilizational and cultural continuation existed. This ‘transnationality’ of the movement’s

Europeanism might thus explain the emergence of New Right- and ‘Alternative’ Right-movements across mountains and oceans who are naming the French ND as an important historical reference and Alain de Benoist as a particular source of inspiration.

The fact that the ideas of the Nouvelle Droite were both paradoxical and enigmatic at times, and not to mention probably difficultly fulfilled, also allowed for them to be rather dystopic—however utopian to the ND themselves—, in the sense that they had an intimidating view on human rights, and that some of their ideas, if put to life, would come to have devastating consequences for the peoples of Europe. By anchoring their ideological doctrine in pre-historic myths like that of the ‘Indo-Europeans’ and empires of the past, they constructed an idea of a ‘modern’ society structured as something that has long been lost and something which Western societies have developed way beyond. Despite it not being said explicitly, the construction of a federalist European empire would mean—not only to stop development towards “decadence”—but reverse the societal and political evolution of Europe, and in doing so eliminate the world as it appears today. In all likelihood, de Benoist and other ND-thinkers were aware of the impossibility of their doctrine ever being realized, which is why it was convenient to be *metapolitical*. Subsequently, even though the ND themselves would in practice attempt the construction of a political party with the ambition of coming to power and furthermore begin the federalization of France, hoping that the rest of Europe would follow, and not to mention be open to organize under a ‘spiritual’ empire for an exclusive, historic, and ethnic European civilization; Their designation as metapolitical would never stop them from inspiring others to establish movements or parties with a future prospect of attempting just that.

The ND’s commitment to be ‘metapolitical’, insinuated their lack of interest in de facto political power, and instead a desire to influence peoples and the opportunity to convey alternative perceptions of the past, present and future of not only France, but Europe; also ensured a larger space between them and former far-rightists. Through their “Right-Wing Gramscianism”, they also ensured utter confusion as to what the movement’s actual position on the political axis was. Nonetheless, the Nouvelle Droite’s undeniable kinship with past radically nationalist, neo-fascist and racist movements, has equipped the movement with a major handicap which makes it so to speak impossible for them not to be affiliated nor compared to historical nationalism and the historical far-right in general in a scholarly debate. Furthermore, the heavy emphasis on pre-historical myths, first and foremost the ‘Indo-European’, which presumably was meant to strengthen their historical narrative, ends up instead possibly weakening it due to uncertainties and disputed questions. Consequently, the historical

premise for Europeanism partly erodes in the difficulty of confirming a continuation in the European civilization from the Indo-Europeans to the present.

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