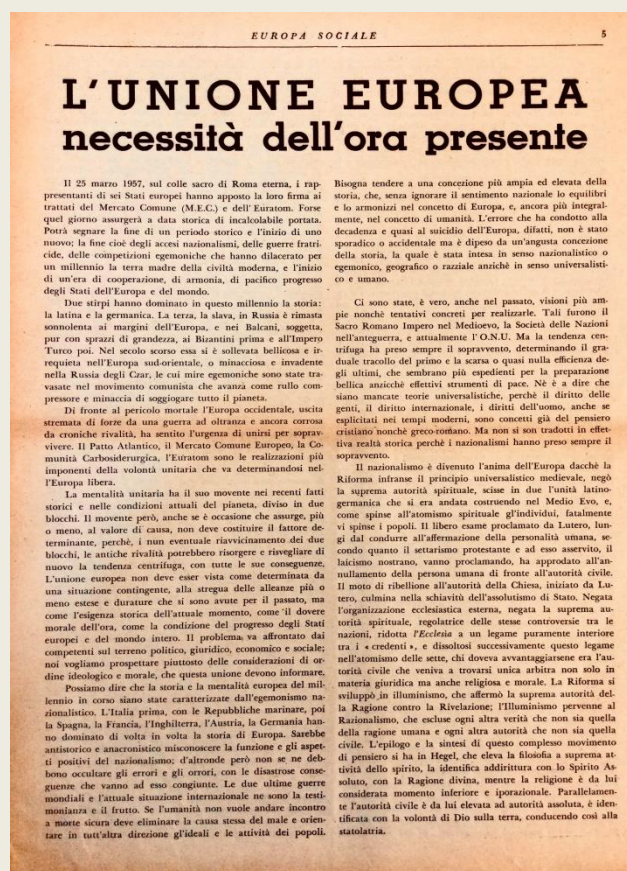




Universiteit
Leiden

“We are the European Nation”

The neo-fascist perspectives on European unification and identity in France and Italy, 1950s-1960s



ResMA History: Politics, Culture and National Identities, Leiden University

Francesca Mascanzoni

Supervisor: prof. dr. H. te Velde

Second reader: dr. H.J. Storm

Word count: 25.150

30 June 2021

Image on the front page: this is a reproduction of the first page of an article by Ambrogio Manno, 'L'Unione Europea: necessità dell'ora presente,' *Europa Sociale* 8, no. 3-4 (April 25-May 25, 1958): 5-12, archived at the *Biblioteca di Scienze Politiche*, University of Florence. The title of this article, literally “The European Union: the need for the present hour”, is here presented as an example of a type of neo-fascist pro-European thought.

Table of contents

Acknowledgements		p. 5
Introduction		p. 6
I	Why this research?	p. 6
II	The importance of definitions	p. 8
III	Sources and method	p. 10
Chapter 1	Central themes within Italian neo-fascism	p. 14
I	The myth of corporatism and the <i>Repubblica Sociale Italiana</i>	p. 15
II	The purges	p. 18
III	A central theme: democracy	p. 21
IV	The refusal of liberal democracy	p. 26
V	Corporatist democracy	p. 30
Conclusion		p. 32
Chapter 2	The idea of Europe within Italian and French magazines	p. 32
I	What is “Europe”?	p. 35
II	Europe as a corporatist project	p. 37
III	Europe as a nation and the role of Maurice Bardèche	p. 41
IV	Jean Thiriart, a noteworthy thinker of European nationalism	p. 46
V	“There is no other option in Europe than to choose the lesser evil	p. 50
Conclusion		p. 52
Chapter 3	Europe and the world	p. 53
I	The United States	p. 53

II	Latin America	p. 59
III	The Eurafrican project	p. 63
IV	The Soviet Union	p. 66
Conclusion		p. 69

Conclusion		p. 71
-------------------	--	-------

Bibliography		p. 76
---------------------	--	-------

Primary sources		p. 76
-----------------	--	-------

Secondary sources		p. 82
-------------------	--	-------

Websites		p. 88
----------	--	-------

Acknowledgements

Finishing this thesis represents for me not only the end of a research project, but also the end of a life experience. My time in Leiden has been incredibly inspiring, both academically and personally. Adapting to a different academic system has been sometimes a challenge, but also highly rewarding and stimulating. First of all, I want to thank my supervisor, prof. Henk te Velde, for his insightful feedback and for his constant academic guidance in these weird and difficult times of pandemic. His advice has been crucial. I want to thank all the professors that I have met, whose teaching has allowed me to acquire the tools to become a historian. I would also like to mention all the staff at Leiden University, which is very helpful when it comes to the doubts and difficulties of international students.

Vital for me was also the friendship of some very special people. In Leiden I have met new friends from literally every corner of the world and I have been able to learn from their cultures, which is something I highly value. Some of those friends have left memories that will not fade. I want to thank David, San, Anastasia, Rick and Gwen, with whom I enjoyed meaningful conversations, dinners, trips around the Netherlands and who always listened to my research ideas and encouraged me. I am not exaggerating by saying that knowing them has enlarged my cultural and personal horizons, and for this I will always be grateful.

Last but not least, my family and friends in Italy have supported me throughout my time abroad and during my work on this thesis in any way possible. I would like to thank my parents, Anna and Leardo, and my dearest friends Sara, Lorenzo and Chiara for simply being there and listening whenever I was in doubt.

Francesca Mascanzoni, June 2021

Introduction

I. Why this research?

There is an interesting story behind this thesis. It all started around two years ago, when coronavirus was nothing but a meaningless word. I had decided to research the influence of Peronist Argentina on Italian neo-fascism in the 1950s and 1960s. I had noticed many similarities between fascism and Peronist populism and, especially after reading a book that assessed the influence of Italian fascism on Peronism¹, I began to wonder if Peronism, in turn, could have had any influence on the development of Italian neo-fascism. The main similarity that I could find between Italian neo-fascism and Peronism was that both political ideologies were characterized by a strong belief in a so-called “third way”. Neither Peron nor Italian neo-fascists liked the Cold War division of the world into two blocks, as they both thought that this would have forbid them to freely express their ideas. In a sense, they feared to be cancelled from history. I started being more interested in this idea of a “third way”: what was it exactly? How was it defined by the neo-fascists? Time passed, I did an internship in Rome, and, in March 2020, coronavirus made its appearance in Europe. At that point, I realized that my research had to be scaled down as it would have been very hard to have access to Argentinian sources. This was not too much of a problem, though, because at that point I was already very interested in focusing on Italian neo-fascist ideas about the “third way”, which, I understood, was mostly identified with Europe. I decided to focus on Italy as well as on France because, as Andrea Mammone has demonstrated², the exchanges between neo-fascist groups in the two countries have always been intense and fruitful in terms of ideological developments, therefore I considered those two countries as potentially very interesting for a study of the neo-fascist conceptions of Europe³. Also, both countries have been characterized by the significant presence of two of the most important neo-fascist parties in the history of post Second World War Europe, namely the *Movimento Sociale Italiano* and the *Front National*. Although the two parties will not be analyzed in this thesis, their presence in the countries considered certainly proves the centrality of France and Italy

¹ Federico Finchelstein, *Transatlantic Fascism. Ideology, Violence, and the Sacred in Argentina and Italy, 1919-1945* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

² See Andrea Mammone, *Transnational Neofascism in France and Italy* (New York-Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), IX-XX.

³ In this thesis Europe will be seen as both a “civic” and a “cultural” project, namely as a political project of unification and as a cultural project of identity formation. The concepts of “civic” and “cultural” are employed and described by Andrew Glencross, “‘Love Europe, hate the EU’: A genealogical inquiry into populists’ spatio-cultural critique of the European Union and its consequences,” *European Journal of International Relations* 26, no. 1 (2020): 119.

for a research on neo-fascism. Therefore, the main question underlying this thesis is the following: how was Europe conceived of by part of the European neo-fascist universe, in Italy and France, in the period between the early 1950s and late 1960s? This research is then focused on Southern Europe, on ideas produced in that specific context and on a specific time frame. The latter has been thus delimited because the 1970s represent a moment of significant change in the history of French and Italian neo-fascism: the *Nouvelle Droite*, a think tank which could be considered as a new level of transformation of the radical right in Europe, was created in France. Although this research is also aimed at reconstructing a piece of the history of the transformation of historical fascism into something different and partly new⁴, this is nevertheless not the main scope of this thesis. Therefore, it will be demonstrated that the neo-fascist projects of European unification and of identity framing played a central role, in the 1950s and 1960s, in the readaptation of fascism to a post Second World War context, but the new waves of the 1970s will not be considered.

Then, this research also has a twofold nature: on the one hand it is inscribed in the historiography on the European radical right, on the other hand it also aims to make a contribution to the problematization of the historiography on European unification. For what concerns the historiography on the European radical right, it has to be noted that the scholarly research on fascism has for long been characterized by a focus on national cases only, perhaps favoured by the fact that fascism has been significantly marked by a strong nationalism. Therefore, many are the works characterized by what Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller have defined as methodological nationalism, or a tendency, as expressed particularly in the social sciences, to take for granted “nationally bounded societies as the natural unit of analysis”⁵. This thesis, though, is mostly inspired by the transnational approach and is aimed at questioning methodological nationalism by highlighting the interconnectedness of Italian and French neo-fascism as well as attempting to indicate a possible line of exchange within these two contexts.

For what concerns the historiography on European unification, this is very often characterized by a teleological narrative which depicts the process of European unification as an unproblematic and positive development towards the creation of the European institutions.

⁴ This thesis also tries to respond to Matthew J. Goodwin's invitation to pay more attention to the historical continuity between interwar fascism and the contemporary radical right. See Matthew J. Goodwin, 'Grandpa's Fascism and the New Kids on the Block: Contemporary Approaches to the Dark Side of Europe,' *Ethnopolitics* 6, no. 1 (March 2007): 146.

⁵ See Nina Glick Schiller and Andreas Wimmer, 'Methodological Nationalism, the Social Sciences, and the Study of Migration: An Essay in Historical Epistemology,' *IMR* 37, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 579.

This historiographical trend is probably caused by a tendency, demonstrated by the European Union's institutions themselves, to present "Europe as a synonym for the EU"⁶, which has been described by Andrew Glencross as the "imperial-like claim" of the EU "to be uniquely capable of speaking on behalf of Europe"⁷. That of Glencross might be a bold assumption, but it is undeniable that there is very little attention to, for example, the radical right opinion on specific topics such as the European unification process⁸, as well as a generalized silence on anti-liberal conceptions of Europe which have been labelled as anti-European⁹. This thesis will then contribute to a nascent field of inquiry by demonstrating that Italian and French neo-fascists had many ideas about Europe and that this topic, contrary to what might be thought, indeed played a central role within their debates.

As the topic of this research is not historical fascism *per se*, a more careful analysis of terminological definitions is due before focusing on the methods applied and the sources used.

II. The importance of definitions

In recent years there has been a significant increase in the number of studies on the radical right, probably also as a consequence of the diffusion of right wing populism all over the world¹⁰. With the increasing attention to these topics, the need to more clearly define the objects under study has led to an almost uncontrolled proliferation of definitions. Hence it is necessary to address the terminological issue before delving into the heart of the topic. This thesis is certainly not aiming at a contribution to the debate on definitions, it pursues a far less ambitious goal, namely to find functional working definitions. Therefore, considering the time period chosen, the term "neo-fascist" will be used to describe the magazines analyzed and the main actors of this thesis. Indeed what we witness in the 1950s and 1960s are actors who are still very much connected to historical fascism, especially in Italy, and, as Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol has written, precisely the term "neo-fascist" is used whenever forms

⁶ Glencross, "Love Europe, hate the EU," 127.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁸ See Marta Lorimer, 'What do they talk about when they talk about Europe? Euro-ambivalence in far right ideology,' *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 43 (2020): 1.

⁹ On this see Dieter Gosewinkel, ed., *Anti-liberal Europe. A Neglected Story of Europeanization* (New York-Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2015): 7. This is one of the few examples of academic works that devote attention to anti-liberal conceptions of Europe. Gosewinkel has underlined how, starting in 1945, as liberal and democratic concepts of Europe were transformed into the tangible reality of the European Community, anything that was not in line with these concepts was considered "anti-European".

¹⁰ Populism has manifested itself, in recent years, also in its left wing variants. Think for example of the Spanish *Podemos* or of the Italian *Movimento 5 Stelle*, whose ideological orientation is neither left nor right. Anyway, it is sure that the openly right wing movements, in Europe and elsewhere, have aroused more attention and, in many cases, concern.

of continuity with the pre-1945 experience can be detected¹¹. Indeed, such continuity can be found in the sources analyzed. This is particularly evident in the case of the magazine *Imperium*, where a column entitled “The Fascist Thought”, aimed at an analysis of the thought of Mussolini and other illustrious names of fascism, can be found in every issue¹². *Nazionalismo Sociale*, which was more focused on the theme of corporatism, devoted space to the opinions of Ugo Spirito, philosopher who had worked considerably on corporatism during the years of the fascist regime¹³. And in the same magazine Rodolfo Graziani, one of the most prominent figures of the fascist regime, as well as commander in chief of the Italian army during the conquest of Ethiopia, wrote an article on why Italy should have gained access to its former colonies¹⁴. Eventually, Maurice Bardèche, founder of *Défense de l’Occident*, was a Holocaust denier, therefore he clearly placed himself in the category of neo-fascism¹⁵. However, although in some cases the term “neo-fascism” works perfectly, in other cases, like that of Jean Thiriart, it will be seen that the same term does not apply equally well¹⁶. For this reason, the expression “radical right” will be used when referring to Thiriart and his ideas. As Cas Mudde has noted, though, expressions such as “extreme right” and “radical right” are quite general, and, although very commonly used, it is difficult to understand exactly what they mean¹⁷. Nevertheless, he also thinks that, as long as a clear definition of the terms “radical” and “right” can be provided, then such expression can be usefully employed. So in this thesis Mudde’s definitions will be used, therefore “radical” will be considered as the “opposition to fundamental values of liberal democracy”¹⁸ and “right” as “the belief in a natural order with inequalities”¹⁹. However, it has to be remembered that the “opposition to fundamental values of liberal democracy” does not necessarily mean that the idea of democracy was always fully rejected, but that only a specific strand of democracy, namely liberal democracy, was usually opposed.

¹¹ Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *L’Europe de l’extrême droite. De 1945 à nos jours* (Paris: Edition Complexe, 1991), 25.

¹² See for example Benito Mussolini, ‘Dottrina del Fascismo,’ *Imperium* 1, no. 1 (May 1950): 22-23 (this is a reproduction of an article published before 1945, but the exact date is not specified).

¹³ See Ugo Spirito, ‘Individuo e Stato nella concezione corporativa,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 1 (15 March 1951): 25-28.

¹⁴ See Rodolfo Graziani, ‘L’Italia deve tornare in Africa,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 2 (15 April 1951): 4-5.

¹⁵ See Robert Faurisson, ‘Le Problème des chambres à gaz,’ *Défense de l’Occident*, no. 158 (June 1978): 32-50, this is an article in which the existence of gas chambers is questioned, published by Bardèche in *Défense de l’Occident* as anyone else in France refused to publish it.

¹⁶ See the paragraph “Jean Thiriart, a noteworthy thinker of European nationalism”, 46-50.

¹⁷ “The problem with both definitions is that they are too relativist.” See Cas Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 25.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

III. Sources and method

Elisabetta Cassina Wolff has underlined the fact that not much research has been done, so far, on Italian neo-fascist magazines, as well as that the intellectual historical approach is hardly ever applied to such sources. Magazines are indeed very interesting in order to understand the ideological developments within a political area²⁰. Therefore, in this thesis Cassina Wolff's reflection is considered as a point of departure and the analysis of the ways in which neo-fascists framed and thought of Europe is achieved through a focus on neo-fascist and radical right magazines written in Italian²¹ and French²². The magazines consulted are: *Nazionalismo Sociale* (1951-1959), *Imperium* (1950-1954), *Europa Nazione* (1951), *Défense de l'Occident* (1952-1982) and *La Nation Européenne* (1966-1969)²³. There is a factor that unites these sources, they belong to the left current of neo-fascism. The reason for focusing on the left wing is because precisely in this area of neo-fascism the most discussion about Europe has been produced. Moreover, this part of neo-fascism was for long time interested in corporatism, which, they thought, could be well adapted to a specific project of European unification. In a sense, they thought that if the United States were represented by liberalism, and Soviet Russia was represented by communism, the truly European ideology then would have had to be corporatism. So the association of corporatism with Europe led them to more reflections on this topic. The only exception here is represented by *Imperium*, which was more than anything else a transmitter of Julius Evola's strand of conservatism as represented by spiritualism, racism and a particular attention to the concept of Europe seen as an empire. However, it was necessary to include this source in the research precisely because pivotal reflections on Europe have been presented in this magazine. And even though these sources present similarities between them, they have also been chosen because they are, each in their own way, representative of different strands of thought on Europe. *Nazionalismo Sociale*, for

²⁰ This is particularly the case with neo-fascism, as the magazines represented the only public space where they could express their ideas more freely. See Elisabetta Cassina Wolff, *L'inchiostro dei vinti. Stampa e ideologia neofascista, 1945-1953* (Milan: Mursia, 2012), 15.

²¹ For what concerns the Italian sources: *Nazionalismo Sociale*, *Imperium* and *Europa Nazione* are archived at the *Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale* in Florence and have been consulted in the archive. In the case of *Europa Nazione*, only the first issue has been preserved.

²² For what concerns the French sources: *Défense de l'Occident* is archived at the *Biblioteca di Scienze Politiche* of the University of Florence and has been consulted in the archive. Not all the issues have been preserved, but it is nevertheless possible to consult issues from 1954 to 1974, which cover the time frame chosen. *La Nation Européenne* is archived at the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* in Paris and in this case reproductions of the most representative articles have been consulted.

²³ In one circumstance only a source other than those listed will be consulted, and that is *Nazione Sociale*. More specifically, an article written by Ernesto Massi will be analyzed. Massi was one of the most prominent figures within left wing neo-fascism, therefore his article 'Per una politica sociale ed economica al servizio dell'unità europea' is very interesting for this research.

example, was founded by Francesco Palamenghi-Crispi²⁴ and Edmondo Cione²⁵, and in the magazine much attention was devoted to social issues and to corporatism. *Nazionalismo Sociale*, as well as the other Italian magazines here analyzed, was close to the *Movimento Sociale Italiano*²⁶ (Italian Social Movement, or MSI), but nevertheless maintained a form of autonomy. Such autonomy is evident for what concerns ideas on both democracy and Europe: if, for example, the MSI accepted the liberal democratic system²⁷, ideas on democracy as expressed in *Nazionalismo Sociale* and, even more so, in *Imperium*, were much more nuanced and critical. Again, if the MSI was very much in favour of a nationalistic approach, the articles published in *Nazionalismo Sociale* (which was published with a new title, *Europa Sociale*, starting from April 1958) and in *Imperium* showed a progressive movement towards forms of europeanism. *Imperium*, unlike *Nazionalismo Sociale*, was much influenced by the Evolian thought. Its founder, Enzo Erra²⁸, had been close to Julius Evola and was therefore influenced by the Evolian spiritualism. Precisely that form of spiritualism also served as a form of “de-territorialization”, which has been presented by Andrea Mammone as a way of cleansing fascism of its ultra-nationalistic connotations²⁹. *Europa Nazione* was a very short-lived magazine and only its first issue has been preserved, therefore this source will play only a marginal role within this thesis. Anyway, this magazine is interesting because Filippo Anfuso analyzed in it the concept of “Europe a nation”, being the first in Italy to address this topic. For what concerns the French sources, *Défense de l’Occident* was a magazine with a

²⁴ There is not much information on Palamenghi-Crispi. What is possible to know from both books and the internet is that Palamenghi-Crispi certainly was a relative of Francesco Crispi, Italian prime minister from 1887 to 1891, and that he was director of the bank of Somalia sometime during the 1960s. Palamenghi-Crispi belonged to the left current of neo-fascism and had very similar views to those of Cione. He too was a member of the MSI for a limited amount of time. See Cassina Wolff, *L’inchostro dei vinti*, 43-46 and ‘Palamenghi – Crispi, famiglia’, Senato della Repubblica, <https://www.senato.it/3107?contenuto=3661>, accessed March 7, 2021.

²⁵ Edmondo Cione (1908-1965), jurist and journalist, was an exponent of the left current of neo-fascism. He did not have an active political life until he became a member of the MSI, in 1951. He left the party only two years later, in 1953, because he did not like the nationalist sentiments typical of the MSI and because of the party’s lack of interest in social issues. He continued to publish on themes such as the European identity until his death. See Cassina Wolff, *L’inchostro dei vinti*, 43-46 and Gennaro Incarnato ‘Cione, Domenico Edmondo’, Treccani, [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/domenico-edmondo-cione_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/domenico-edmondo-cione_(Dizionario-Biografico)/), accessed March 7, 2021.

²⁶ See for example Edmondo Cione, ‘M.S.I. e P.N.M.’, *Nazionalismo Sociale* 3, no. 1 (20 January 1953): 1, in which Cione discusses the relation between the MSI and the PNM, or *Partito Nazionale Monarchico*; Author unknown, ‘Programma del Movimento Sociale Italiano,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 3, no. 5 (May 1953): 15-16; Vanni Teodorani, ‘L’avvenire del M.S.I.’, *Imperium* 1, no. 3 (July 1950): 69-70.

²⁷ Although probably out of political convenience, and maybe not unanimously.

²⁸ Enzo Erra (1926-2011), journalist, became a member of the MSI in 1947 and in 1948 he met Julius Evola, who inspired Erra’s thinking as well as the ideological positioning of *Imperium*. Erra was arrested in 1951, as he was a member of the FAR (*Fasci di Azione Rivoluzionaria* – Fasces of the Revolutionary Action), a group that practiced guerrilla warfare and sabotage. He left the MSI in 1958. See Piero Ignazi, *Il polo escluso. Profilo storico del Movimento Sociale Italiano* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1998), 46.

²⁹ See Andrea Mammone, ‘Revitalizing and de-territorializing fascism in the 1950s: the extreme right in France and Italy, and the pan-national (‘European’) imaginary,’ *Patterns of Prejudice* 45, no. 4 (2011): 295-318.

much broader scope, which welcomed French as well as European authors, and, compared to the Italian magazines, the topics covered were certainly more diverse, ranging from the Algerian decolonization to the Israeli-Palestine conflict. Both *Défense de l'Occident* and *La Nation Européenne* were characterized by an international readership³⁰ and they can be considered as truly European neo-fascist magazines, not only for the ideas expressed but also for their international nature. *Défense de l'Occident*, which was founded by Maurice Bardèche in 1952 and continued to be published until 1982, is seen as the most important French neo-fascist magazine as well as a “crossroads”³¹ for European radical right activists. Anyway, although this magazine had a larger scope than the Italian ones, it nevertheless remained a clearly neo-fascist magazine, as certain issues can testify³².

Different is the case of *La Nation Européenne*, which is the only magazine here analyzed that can hardly be described as neo-fascist. The magazine was in fact very close to *Jeune Europe*, the movement founded by Jean Thiriart, and served as a platform for the diffusion of Thiriart's ideas. Because he had a very complex political experience and was certainly the one that mostly moved away from historical fascism, the magazine will be ascribed to the more general current of the European radical right. *La Nation Européenne* is nevertheless considered in this research precisely because Jean Thiriart, probably the radical right activist that devoted the most attention to Europe, expressed central aspects of his thought in it.

It will be noted that a significant degree of attention is devoted to the ideas of Jean Thiriart and Maurice Bardèche. This is because both Thiriart and Bardèche were spearheads of the radical right thinking of the time, especially concerning ideas about Europe. Although this might have led to their over-representation in the thesis, an attempt has been made to place their thinking in a broader context.

When it comes to the impact of these magazines it can be safely assumed that, even though it is hard to reconstruct their exact level of political influence, this should have been not very

³⁰ It can be supposed that not only French people read these magazines. *La Nation Européenne*, as the magazine of the international movement *Jeune Europe*, probably attracted readers from at least all the European countries in which *Jeune Europe* was active (namely Austria, Germany, Spain, France, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Switzerland. See Jean Thiriart, *The Great Nation. Unitarian Europe – from Brest to Bucharest*, trans. Alexander Jacob (Melbourne: Manticore Press, 2018), 7. Originally published in French: *La grand nation: 65 thèses sur l'Europe*. Brussels, 1965.) *Défense de l'Occident* has been defined by Mammone as a “crossroads” for European activists, therefore this strengthens the hypothesis that *Défense de l'Occident* could also have an international readership. See Mammone, ‘Revitalizing and de-territorializing fascism,’ 309. Moreover, the fact that French was, back in the mid of the twentieth century, a more popular language in Europe than it is today, should not be underestimated.

³¹ See note 30.

³² See for example the articles entitled: ‘Progres et chances du fascisme’, ‘Gauchisme et neo-fascisme’ and ‘Comment passer au fascisme’ in *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 91-92 (October – November 1970).

significant. Anyway, *La Nation Européenne* had a large enough readership to quickly transform from an 8 pages first issue to a 48 pages twenty-first issue³³. Moreover, it could count on 2,000 subscribers, a circulation of approximately 10,000 copies and inside there were advertising spaces³⁴. Similarly *Défense de l'Occident*, already defined as a crossroads for activists, was certainly not aimed at commercial success, but was published without interruptions for thirty years³⁵. And, if *La Nation Européenne* had 2,000 subscribers, it is not difficult to imagine similar numbers for *Défense de l'Occident*, which was directed by Maurice Bardèche, one of the most prominent figures of European neo-fascism³⁶. The Italian magazines certainly had a lot more limited circulation. This is also to be attributed to the fact that the number of neo-fascist magazines published in Italy during the period being considered was very high, therefore practically every nuance of the neo-fascist thought was represented³⁷. That being said, though, it is hard to overestimate the impact of *Nazionalismo Sociale*, *Imperium* and, even more so, of *Europa Nazione*. If the French magazines had a very limited importance in the more general cultural and political context, but had significant value within radical right circles, the same does not necessarily apply to the Italian ones. Nonetheless, these Italian sources have to be considered when researching the neo-fascist ideological framing of Europe because of the centrality of Italy as a point of reference for the whole European radical right. Moreover, Cassina Wolff has noted that, although the role of neo-fascism in Italian politics should not be overestimated, it was nevertheless a political current with some influence that always strived to gain more visibility and normality³⁸.

This research is certainly limited to the magazines analyzed and can not represent the whole of Italian and French neo-fascist ideas on Europe. As Roger Griffin has noted, neo-fascism in the post Second World War context was characterized by a process of “groupuscularization”³⁹, therefore the neo-fascist movements were usually very small, apart from a few exceptions. This means that, nowadays, the sources available are scattered all over Europe and that it is often difficult to write a coherent and complete story precisely

³³ Edouard Rix, ‘La Nation européenne, un journal vraiment révolutionnaire,’ *Réfléchir & Agir* 45 (2015): 12.

³⁴ Ibid. These numbers, though, could have been overestimated, as the source is not academic but belongs to the radical right subculture.

³⁵ See note 189, page 44.

³⁶ See pages 41-45.

³⁷ As Cassina Wolff has written, in September 1950 the French journalist Paul Gentizon wrote an article in *Meridiano d'Italia* in which he described an interesting phenomenon, namely the fact that a huge number of neo-fascist magazines was published in Italy, and only a minority of those was officially connected to the MSI, testifying in this way a significant level of intellectual creativity within that political area, as well as a high degree of freedom of expression that was granted to those groups. See Cassina Wolff, *L'inchostro dei vinti*, 8.

³⁸ Ibid., 14-15.

³⁹ Goodwin, ‘Grandpa’s Fascism,’ 147, in which Goodwin refers to Roger Griffin, Werner Loh and Andreas Umland, eds., *Fascism Past and Present, West and East* (Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2006): 56.

because of this aspect⁴⁰. Therefore, the sources used here have been chosen not only because of their relevance, but also because, contrary to the trend, they can be more easily accessed and allow for a more complete analysis.

For what concerns the thesis structure, it is articulated in three chapters: the first chapter is dedicated to the development of neo-fascism in Italy and pays particular attention to the steps that led to the formation of a left wing strand of neo-fascism. Articles from *Nazionalismo Sociale* and *Imperium* are analyzed, particularly for what concerns the theme of democracy and how it was presented in these magazines. The reflections on democracy were important as they served as a first occasion, for a part of neo-fascists, to start thinking of how Europe should have been defined and organized after the end of the Second World War. After the more introductory approach of the first chapter, the second chapter delves with more detail into the ideas about Europe as expressed within both the Italian and French magazines, and dedicates particular attention to the idea of “Europe as a nation” as expressed by Maurice Bardèche and Jean Thiriart. Maurice Bardèche is also seen as a transmitter of neo-fascist conceptions of Europe, therefore his activity is presented as central for the diffusion of ideas about Europe. The third and final chapter takes a slightly different approach, as it focuses on the influence that the non-European “others” had on the intellectual developments of French and Italian neo-fascism. Therefore the role played by the United States, Latin America, the former European colonies in Africa and Soviet Russia will be considered, with the ambition to demonstrate that the reflections on Europe, and produced in Europe, were actually much more dependent on the extra-European world than might be thought.

Chapter 1. Central Themes within Italian Neo-Fascism

1945 marked the end of the Second World War as well as the end of nazi-fascism in Europe. A more careful analysis, though, will show that fascism was in fact alive in Europe well beyond 1945, although usually not under the more traditional and recognizable vestige. This was the case for most European countries although in some, neo-fascist groupings and parties were more active and in more plain sight than in others. Italy was one of those countries.

⁴⁰ Speaking more specifically of this thesis, coronavirus certainly had a negative impact as it would have been much more preferable to consult a source like *La Nation Européenne* in person. Probably, under different circumstances, this research would have been more complete.

With the first neo-fascist party created in 1946⁴¹, Italy soon became a point of political and cultural reference for the European radical right. In particular, the country represented a sort of laboratory for all the different tendencies within the radical right area. In order to fully understand what neo-fascism was in Italy in the 1950s, it is necessary to first analyze the passages that led the fascist regime to a puppet state and then to the purges in the immediate postwar period, as both experiences have shaped the way neo-fascism, particularly the left wing of neo-fascism, was thought and enacted in Italy.

I. The myth of corporatism and the *Repubblica Sociale Italiana*

Corporatism was a very important project for Italian fascism in general, and for the fascist left in particular, and it was so since the early years of the regime⁴². It is important to note that the Italian fascist left put much emphasis on the protection of workers' rights as well as on the creation of independent guilds, or *corporazioni*, that would have had a representative role at the political level⁴³. Antonio Costa Pinto, one of the most prominent scholars of corporatism, has distinguished between social and political corporatism: social corporatism can be described as a form of interest representation in which organized categories are recognized as independent and monopolistic in their respective fields. Political corporatism instead is seen as a system of political representation in which the guilds replace the single individuals⁴⁴. Therefore, considering Costa Pinto's descriptions, it can be stated that the fascist left advocated a mixture of social and political corporatism. That system, then, would have also represented a viable economic "third way" between capitalism and communism, therefore it was perceived as the key distinguishing element of fascism that, it was thought, would have appealed to many more people beyond Italy. In a way, corporatism was also considered as a potential Trojan horse in the economic systems of other countries and, as such, it was believed to have the potential to leak into their political systems as well,

⁴¹ The MSI (*Movimento Sociale Italiano* – Italian Social Movement) was the main neo-fascist party in Italy, and it was formed in December 1946, only a year and a few months after the official end of WWII. Nevertheless, it was not the first attempt at grouping like-minded fascists in Italy. The publication of numerous fascist magazines and newspapers already in 1945 prepared the ground for the birth of MSI. See Sandro Setta, *La Destra nell'Italia del dopoguerra* (Rome: Laterza, 2001), 108.

⁴² The fascist left looked at a tradition that dated back to Mazzinian ideas. See Giuseppe Parlato, *La sinistra fascista. Storia di un progetto mancato* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2008), 33-34.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 299.

⁴⁴ Antonio Costa Pinto, 'Fascism, corporatism, and authoritarian institutions in interwar European dictatorships,' in *The Nature of Fascism Revisited*, ed. Antonio Costa Pinto (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 122.

changing them in a fascist sense⁴⁵. This aspect of political and territorial conquest linked to corporatism was well in the minds of fascist leaders, especially of those who organized the fascist international congress in Montreux on 16-17 December 1934. Eugenio Coselschi, founder of the *Comitati autonomi per l'Universalità di Roma* (Autonomous Committees for the Universality of Rome, or CAUR), gave a speech in Montreux in which he stated that if the youth of Europe wanted to find a way to conquer the world, it had to develop a conscience far from Bolshevik materialism as well as from individualistic selfishness. Therefore, it had to embrace corporatism⁴⁶. As it could be easily predicted considering the ultra-nationalism at the core of fascist ideology, conquest was clearly in the minds of Italian fascists and corporatism was considered a driving force of this project of international expansionism. And it is also important to note that, because of corporatism's "third way" nature, and because of Coselschi's appeal to the youth of Europe, it is reasonable to think that in the minds of at least a part of fascist leaders and activists, corporatism was identified as the ideology that could have represented Europe, as communism represented Russia and capitalism the United States.

Indeed, corporatism did not lose its "revolutionary élan"⁴⁷ after decades since its first appearance in the fascist political agenda. The creation of the *Repubblica Sociale Italiana* (Italian Social Republic, or RSI) in 1943 was in fact a moment of rediscovery of corporatism. On the 25 of July 1943, the Italian fascist regime collapsed following an assembly of the *Gran Consiglio del Fascismo*, in which the majority of the members voted in favour of Mussolini's resignation. As a consequence, Italy was divided into two parts: the center and south of the country were controlled by the Anglo-American forces and a postfascist military government led by Marshal Badoglio, whereas the north was under the control of a puppet state called *Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, led by Alessandro Pavolini, previously minister of Popular Culture during the fascist regime, with the help of Nazi Germany. Undoubtedly the Republic could not have existed without the support and geographical nearness of Germany,

⁴⁵ As Costa Pinto has demonstrated, though, the fact that, in the interwar period, countries like for example Ireland adopted forms of economic corporatism, did not mean that they were transformed into fascist dictatorships. See Costa Pinto, 'Fascism, corporatism,' 123.

⁴⁶ 'Comités d'action pour l'universalité de Rome, Réunion de Montreux 16-17 Décembre 1934-XIII, Bureau de presse des Comités d'action pour l'universalité de Rome, s.l., 1935', quoted in Matteo Pasetti, *L'Europa corporativa. Una storia transnazionale tra le due guerre mondiali* (Bologna: Bononia University Press, 2016), 221.

⁴⁷ As Philip Morgan has written: "Corporatism became the 'revolutionary' myth of the regime, and functioned as such in raising both the international and internal profile of fascism, convincing many foreign observers and commentators of the seriousness of its universal mission to change the world, and persuading many university-educated young Italians that the regime, after a decade in power, had not lost its 'revolutionary' élan." See Philip Morgan, 'Corporatism and the economic order,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism*, ed. Richard James Boon Bosworth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 156.

and as such, it did not have a strong autonomy or political driving force⁴⁸. That being said, and however politically marginal the RSI was, this experience was important for the future ideological developments of Italian neo-fascism. The RSI represented a moment in which the left wing of fascism, silenced throughout the entire regime, returned to believe in the possibility of a debate that could have also taken their requests and aspirations into consideration, as the RSI mostly represented a rediscovery of the social values that had been at the core of the fascism of the origins. Certainly the RSI also allowed for more questioning and reflection after twenty years of predominance of the right wing current within the fascist party⁴⁹. Giuseppe Parlato has indeed stated that the creation of the RSI did not only represent the end of the regime but also a moment of internal disintegration of fascism that had long been developing, caused mostly by its inability to respond to the population's needs and by an indecisive and contradictory social policy⁵⁰. Although the RSI was born under the auspices of an increased attention towards corporatism and social issues, it seems that there was again a huge divide between the expectations and what actually took place. While Renzo De Felice has underlined the fact that the RSI was meant to represent a moment of change, specifically characterized by the idea of overcoming the past regime and listening to the real necessities of the people, with a clear focus on social issues⁵¹, Mimmo Franzinelli has written, in his very recent work, that the elements of continuity between the regime and the RSI outnumbered the elements of discontinuity⁵². Although the RSI disappointed all those who had believed in a more effective realization of corporatism, it is nevertheless necessary to reflect on an unrealized project and its consequences. And the reason for doing so lies in the fact that the neo-fascist left's instances that were never taken into serious consideration were not tested by the proof of reality, so they could continue to develop, in the form of myths, as

⁴⁸ The political weakness of the RSI is testified not only by the support given by Nazi Germany, but also by other factors. It was a puppet state born out of the extreme will to survive of a leader and his party, but it was clear to everyone, starting from Mussolini himself, that it would have been a deathly battle. Renzo De Felice has well underlined this aspect of decadence, typical of the RSI: "Mussolini was convinced that the game was now lost and that there were no 'repair exams' for him." ("Mussolini era convinto che la partita era ormai perduta e che non ci fossero 'esami di riparazione' per lui."). Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini l'alleato. II. La guerra civile, 1943-1945* (Turin: Einaudi, 1997), 343. De Felice has also stressed the importance of the idea of "dying as fascists and not as cowards" ("morire da fascisti e non da codardi"), that was inherent in many's choice to join the new Republic's army, *ibid.*, 353.

⁴⁹ "As if a cloak of conformism and rhetoric had finally dissolved" ("Come se una cappa di conformismo e di retorica si fosse finalmente dissolta") as Parlato has written. See Parlato, *La sinistra fascista*, 320-321. It is nevertheless necessary to note that most of the people who adhered to the Republic did so out of personal convenience, and not because they believed in a significant political change. See for example Mario Avagliano and Marco Palmieri, *L'Italia di Salò, 1943-1945* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2017), 100-118 and 261-270.

⁵⁰ Parlato, *La sinistra fascista*, 29.

⁵¹ De Felice, *Mussolini l'alleato*, 391-393.

⁵² Franzinelli has noted that the only significant difference was represented by the republican option, made inevitable by the turnaround of the monarchy. See Mimmo Franzinelli, *Storia della Repubblica Sociale Italiana 1943-1945* (Rome: Laterza, 2020), 99.

Philip Morgan has written⁵³, in the minds of those who hoped for their realization. In this sense, mythology has a great political power. It does not matter how much of an ideology is realized, what matters, in this perspective, is how powerful a myth is⁵⁴, and whether it can lead to action. As history shows, all ideologies need to rely on myths in order to be fully accepted and supported, and clearly fascism did rely on many different ones. Some of those were not born as myths in the first place, they were economic and social projects. And, as we have already seen, they were perceived as distinguishing elements of fascism, which could clearly set the boundaries between fascism and communism on the one hand and fascism and capitalism on the other. These ideas, especially that of corporatism, had a political power in that people advocated them beyond Italy, so they represented instruments of international expansionism⁵⁵. And, if this was not enough in order to create the myth, the project was never fully put into practice, thus feeding disappointments, but also new hopes. As Vito Panunzio, theorist of corporatism, wrote in his memoir:

“The actual corporate order was thus increasingly projected into the future. Endlessly. *Mutatis mutandis*, a sort of ‘rising sun’ of fascism.”⁵⁶

This sort of utopia constituted fuel for the development of neo-fascism, not only with Italy in sight but also Europe⁵⁷. And corporatism as a European idea will indeed be discussed in the next chapters as one of the key elements defining the neo-fascist project of European unification in the post Second World War era. But it is necessary to first dedicate space to the purges that occurred in Italy after the RSI and the Second World War were over.

II. The purges

Don Luigi Sturzo, a priest and founder of Italian Christian Democracy, reflected on fascism in 1945, at the dawn of what many in Europe hoped would have been a new world. He concluded that historical fascism, namely the government led by Mussolini, was clearly dead. However he also wrote that the fascism that ante-dated Mussolini, or that of “all times and all

⁵³ See note 47, page 16.

⁵⁴ See Franco Ferraresi, *Threats to Democracy: The Radical Right in Italy After the War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 35.

⁵⁵ On the diffusion of corporatism in Europe between the 1920s and the 1940s see Pasetti, *L'Europa corporativa*.

⁵⁶ “L’effettivo sistema corporativo veniva, così, sempre più proiettato nel futuro. All’infinito. *Mutatis mutandis*, una sorta di ‘sole dell’avvenire’ del fascismo.” See Vito Panunzio, *Il “secondo fascismo”, 1936-1943. La reazione della nuova generazione alla crisi del movimento e del regime* (Milan: Mursia, 1988), 140.

⁵⁷ As Panunzio has noted: “We still wanted to delude ourselves – that our ideas, our political thought, the model of our institutions could constitute useful and usable material for the future reorganization of a Europe which was then still completely indefinable.” (“Volevamo ancora illuderci – che le nostre idee, il nostro pensiero politico, il modello delle nostre istituzioni potessero costituire materiale utile e utilizzabile per il riordinamento futuro di un’Europa allora ancora del tutto indefinibile.”). *Ibid.*, 194.

countries”, had not died yet, as it was an idea capable of adapting to all contexts. In a word, he wrote that fascism was “deathless”⁵⁸. Don Sturzo proclaimed fascism’s immortality, an act that could have been perceived as both an incitement to political participation in defense of democracy, but also as a feeling of distrust: what could possibly be done if fascism was immortal? If one considers the meagre results of the purges, it seems that the Italian postwar governments opted for the latter option. There are indeed many reasons why the purges were not particularly effective. One is of a practical nature: who would have replaced, in a short amount of time, all the public servants? Were there enough professionals available to run the country? Italy had been governed for more than twenty years by people educated in fascist schools and universities, so the public functionaries were potentially all fascists. And they had competencies that younger generations were not yet ready to employ. Moreover, precisely because the whole country had been ‘fascistised’ during those twenty years, it must have been very difficult to discern among the many public servants those who had wholeheartedly supported the regime and those who did not oppose it simply with the aim of not losing their job. How to make the distinction once the regime was over? The two domains of public service that were most infiltrated by former fascists were the bureaucracy and the judiciary systems. The judiciary played a central role in reducing the impact of the purges, because many courts simply decided not to punish fascists⁵⁹. But there were also external factors influencing the outcome of the purges, as the Cold War context was an element influencing Italian politics⁶⁰. Purges too radical would have been perceived as facilitating the diffusion of communism, particularly in a country where communist forces had played a significant role in the Resistance to Nazi-fascism and with the biggest communist party in Europe that was under reorganization. The friendly relationship with the United States probably pushed Italian politicians towards adopting moderate views on the purges, up to the point that two fundamental steps were taken in 1946 and in 1948: in 1946 the communist Minister of Justice, Palmiro Togliatti, enacted the amnesty laws, which gave freedom to many political prisoners, and in 1948 a special law readmitted many former bureaucrats to the posts they occupied during the regime. These measures were not only taken with the objective of political reconciliation but also in view of the 1946 *referendum* on the institutional system. The victory of the Republic over the Monarchy was of the utmost

⁵⁸ Luigi Sturzo, ‘Has Fascism Ended with Mussolini?’, *Review of Politics* 7, no. 3 (1945): 306, 310, quoted in Mammone, *Transnational Neofascism in France and Italy*, 39.

⁵⁹ “The judiciary was another of the most significant bodies involved in this process of continuity with the past. Particularly in Italy, some existing state agencies were reactionary and even anti-anti-fascists.”, *ibid.*, 42.

⁶⁰ See Nicola Tranfaglia, *Come nasce la Repubblica. La mafia, il Vaticano e il neofascismo nei documenti americani e italiani 1943-1947* (Milan: Bompiani, 2004), XIX.

importance for the anti-fascist forces, and they felt it necessary to concede the amnesty laws to former fascists in exchange for their vote for the Republic⁶¹.

In general, the whole Italian Right opposed the purges and they all had their different reasons for opposing them⁶². They nevertheless shared a common sentiment of distrust towards the Italian government and believed that the purges were killing the small fishes but not the big ones⁶³. Indeed one of the main flaws of the purges was exactly that of condemning mostly public employees who did not have any significant role during the regime and who could be easily replaced, while leaving the top hierarchy (which was certainly much more involved in the creation and support of the dictatorship) free to occupy prestigious positions. This criticism united the whole right wing area, even though their answer to the lack of efficiency of the purges could be considered rather odd and contradictory, as they advocated a quick termination of all the actions against former fascists, instead of insisting on stronger measures against the ‘big fish’⁶⁴. On the PLI’s (*Partito Liberale Italiano* – Italian Liberal Party) agenda of October 17, 1945, we can in fact read of the party’s hope that at least those who had reached the age of twenty-one (age of majority) in the years of the regime would have been spared from the purges, being considered more as victims than as responsible people⁶⁵. The liberals certainly had a point in affirming that the younger generation of fascists should have been treated differently. Indeed, the consequences of the purges were mostly felt by people who could be easily fired as they were not powerful, and this meant younger employees with low income. These people felt very disappointed and mistreated by the Italian government. They had become adults during the regime, and they had never expected things to change so rapidly and to have such a negative impact on their careers. Many ended up in poverty and had to ask for help from charities⁶⁶. Their anger became the fuel for the creation of many neo-

⁶¹ Mammone, *Transnational Neofascism in France and Italy*, 40.

⁶² For example, the Monarchists saw in the purges a prevaricating gesture on the part of the newly born Republic. The Liberals thought that the actions taken against former fascists were too strong and could have destroyed the bourgeoisie, which for them represented the only class which could rescue Italy from the ruins of fascism. And finally the *qualunquisti* (supporters of the *Fronte dell’Uomo Qualunque* a populist party which was active between 1945 and 1949 and which represented a first “house” for the neo-fascists before the Italian Social Movement was strong enough to represent a viable alternative) simply did not trust the Italian government. See Setta, *La destra nell’Italia del dopoguerra*, 117-188.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 144.

⁶⁴ As Setta has noted, although the failure of the purges consisted precisely in not being able to hit the real leaders of fascism, the right wing opposition continued to denounce the purges’s presumed class action. Setta, *La destra nell’Italia del dopoguerra*, 130.

⁶⁵ ‘Un ordine del giorno del P.L.I. Urgente necessità di un “atto di pacificazione”,’ (17 October 1945), quoted in *ibid.*, 180.

⁶⁶ Charities taking care of those who had been purged were not lacking in Rome in the postwar years. The wealthiest charity was that headed by princess Maria Pignatelli, one of the most prominent figures within the circle of the so-called “black aristocracy”, with important connections with both the Vatican and members of the Italian Royal family. She used to provide with money, food and hospitality those in need, as well as arrange

fascist magazines, groupings and later on a party. Those people were not ready to see their careers reaching an end, nor to abandon the values that had been at the core of their education. Neo-fascism was born not only out of nostalgia but also out of anger.

Therefore the end of the regime and the creation of the Social Republic represented moments of change and reopened the ideological debate, preparing the ground for the core ideas of Italian neo-fascism, particularly of its left wing current. At the same time, the purges represented the partial upturning of a system that had been in power for a long time, hitting mostly the younger generations, and because of this, they enraged many people who decided to take action against the new political system. Even though a neo-fascist party would have been established in 1946, the main form of opposition put in place by the neo-fascists was of an intellectual nature, as the first and most tangible way in which neo-fascism started reorganizing in Italy was through the creation of many different magazines⁶⁷. Even after the creation of the MSI, which eventually became a stable point of reference for all the neo-fascists who had been wondering in search of a political home for some years, the circulation of magazines continued to flourish. And magazines are precisely the point of departure of this analysis. Indeed if we consider the history of the neo-fascist thought, we can easily recognize the importance of such sources, in which thinkers, activists and journalists could outspokenly express their ideas⁶⁸. While these ideas did not have much, if any, political impact in those years, from the point of view of the intellectual history they are of interest in order to attempt an analysis of the passage from fascism to neo-fascism, as well as to interpret some central themes that will be also at the basis of the idea of European unification as expressed by part of the radical right area. In this sense, intellectual history can illuminate understudied aspects. Therefore, the following part of the chapter will be dedicated to an analysis of *Nazionalismo Sociale* and *Imperium*, with a particular focus on the theme of democracy.

III. A central theme: democracy

In June 1950, an article written by Benito Mussolini in 1922 and originally published in *Gerarchia*, was reproduced in *Imperium*. In that article, Mussolini referred to the First World War as a revolutionary war which “liquidated - among rivers of blood - the century of

transfers to Latin America. See Giuseppe Parlato, *Fascisti senza Mussolini. Le origini del neofascismo in Italia, 1943-1948* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2006), 60-71.

⁶⁷ See note 37, page 13.

⁶⁸ “Precisely in the newspapers, which were free from the compromises typical of the parliamentary game, it is possible to trace ideas and projects presented in an open and sincere way.” (“Proprio sui giornali, liberi dai compromessi tipici del gioco parlamentare, è possibile rintracciare idee e progetti presentati in modo aperto e sincero.”). See Cassina Wolff, *L'inchiostro dei vinti*, 15.

democracy, the century of number, of majorities, of quantity.”⁶⁹ The concept of democracy is implicitly, but clearly, associated with the idea of quantity, with undoubted criticism. In this quotation, Mussolini wrote that democracy had been defeated by a war (the First World War) which directly anticipated the advent of fascism⁷⁰. However, history proved not only that democracy had survived and reappeared in 1945, but also that, quite paradoxically perhaps, it was a debated topic within the ranks of Italian neo-fascism. To be more precise, the definition of democracy caused discussions not only among Italian neo-fascists but, more generally, all over Europe and within different political groupings. And this might be no surprise if one thinks of Walter Bryce Gallie’s definition of democracy as an “essentially contested concept”⁷¹ or, as Martin Conway has written: “Democracy as a noun had long required an adjective to acquire any stable meaning”⁷². After the end of the Second World War, the Western European political *élites* had to face the overwhelming challenge of reconstructing Europe, as the ruins were not only of a material nature but, perhaps even more so, of a political and moral nature. In that project, the problem of how to define democracy was of the utmost importance. In the cases of France, Italy and West Germany⁷³, two main political interpretations of democracy can be detected: the interpretation of Socialists and that of Christian Democrats (the Gaullists in France had similar views to those of the West German and Italian Christian Democrats, with some exceptions). In summary, Socialists advocated more participation of the masses in the political decision making⁷⁴, while Christian Democrats favoured a more individualistic approach to politics by stressing the importance of individual freedoms⁷⁵. Even though their opposing ideas were meant to influence the way postwar democracy was to be created, therefore giving rise to conflictuality, they both agreed

⁶⁹ “Che ha liquidato – fra rivoli di sangue – il secolo della democrazia, il secolo del numero, delle maggioranze, della quantità.” See Benito Mussolini, ‘Pensiero fascista. Da che parte va il mondo,’ *Imperium* 1, no. 2 (June 1950): 40. Originally published in *Gerarchia* (25 February 1922).

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ “This is what I mean by saying that there are concepts which are essentially contested, concepts the proper use of which inevitably involves endless disputes about their proper uses on the part of their users.” See David-Hillel Ruben, ‘Re-Reading of W.B. Gallie ‘Essentially Contested Concepts’, *Proceeding of the Aristotelian Society* (1956), 167-198,’ *Philosophical Papers* 39, no. 2 (July 2010): 257.

⁷² Martin Conway, ‘Democracy in Postwar Western Europe: The Triumph of a Political Model,’ *European History Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (2002): 61.

⁷³ These are the countries studied by Pepijn Corduener in his *The problem of Democracy in Postwar Europe. Political Actors and the Formation of the Postwar Model of Democracy in France, West Germany and Italy* (London-New York: Routledge, 2017).

⁷⁴ “The Left aimed to render postwar democracy more inclusive by fostering integration between citizen and state; this required that institutions be representative but also directly responsive to popular sovereignty.”, *ibid.*, 16.

⁷⁵ “By contrast, the Gaullists and the Christian Democrats in West Germany and Italy put top priority on the stability of the executive and a firm guarantee of individual freedom, which would protect democracy against potential radicalizations of the popular will.”, *ibid.*

that it should have been parliamentary⁷⁶. Precisely on such agreement as well as on the more generally shared idea that the popular will had to be mediated by institutions and parties, is based the assumption that Western European politics in the postwar years was somehow greyish and flat, without much contestation or debate. This assumption has been challenged by Pepijn Corduwener⁷⁷, while Conway has adopted a more nuanced approach. To him what stands out mostly in the history of postwar Western Europe is the similarity, if not sameness, of the institutional structures, from Scandinavia to the Mediterranean⁷⁸. He has also written that although different political options were available to the Western European countries at the end of the war, they chose only one of them, or at least they predominantly did so⁷⁹. The fact that Europeans opted for parliamentary democracy, though, does not mean, as Conway rightly states, that other options were not available. And this is exactly where the neo-fascist political discourse lied, in the realm of the options not taken but still existing. Democracy was indeed one of the topics that raised the most interest in the neo-fascist magazines, not only for the sake of the intellectual debate but also because the new democratic regime was perceived by at least part of neo-fascists as repressive and, therefore, undemocratic in principle. It is indeed true that the model of democracy that was established in Italy excluded, for some time, the political participation of former fascists, though such exclusion did not last long, because as soon as 1946 amnesty laws readmitted neo-fascists to the political stage⁸⁰. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that people who had supported a dictatorial rule in the previous years could accuse the postwar political system of being undemocratic. However powerful the feeling of exclusion was⁸¹, also reinforced by the fact that the public opinion was generally not in favour of any concept or political proposal that reminded them of the past regime, the attitude of the neo-fascists towards Italian postwar democracy, and towards democracy more generally, remains problematic and can raise questions pertaining to how neo-fascists conceived of democracy. The sources can certainly help better understanding

⁷⁶ “With the notable exception of the Gaullists, left wing and conservative parties agreed that democracy ought to be parliamentary.”, *ibid.*, 17.

⁷⁷ In the introduction to his book, Corduwener has written that the Cold War era in Western Europe, especially in its first years, was characterized by an intense debate over the nature of democracy, and he has underlined that such debate was inevitably the outcome of a difficult process of democratization after years of dictatorial rule as well as a consequence of the antagonism typical of the period. To quote him: “The process through which political elites forged a broad consensus on the meaning of democracy was long and arduous.”, *ibid.*, 1.

⁷⁸ Martin Conway, ‘Democracy in Postwar Western Europe,’ 59.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁸⁰ See page 19.

⁸¹ Marco Tarchi has presented Italian neo-fascists as “internal foreigners” (“*stranieri interni*”), which very well describes the neo-fascists’ feeling of exclusion. Also, he has interestingly noted that the process of legalization that neo-fascists underwent in the postwar period was necessarily connected, and directly proportional, to a process of delegitimization of their presence on the political stage. See Marco Tarchi, *Esuli in patria. I fascisti nell’Italia repubblicana* (Guanda: Milan, 1995), 27, 38.

their definition of this concept. For example, in *Nazionalismo Sociale* Giorgio Pini stressed the centrality of “the people”, with which neo-fascists certainly identified, and the fact that its voice was not heard in politics nor, more generally, in society⁸².

Pini stressed the fact that “the people” could not enter the fortress of power. Implicitly, he meant that democracy was not real as long as part of society would have been left out of it. So we can understand that, in this implicit definition of democracy, popular participation represented a central element. There are indeed many ways of thinking of the people as a political actor, and different political systems or systems of ideas can derive from diverging concepts⁸³. From what Pini has written, we can suppose that “the people” is here conceived of as a unitary entity⁸⁴ that should participate in power and maintain its unity. So, considering Pini’s reflection, it makes sense to suppose that there was a strand of neo-fascism that was not totally extraneous to the idea of bottom-up political participation⁸⁵. Another, way more explicit, definition of democracy is given by Quinto Tosatti, again in *Nazionalismo Sociale*. In this case the title of the article is unequivocal: *Come si difende la democrazia*⁸⁶ (How democracy is defended). Tosatti’s thought is very similar to that expressed by Pini, and it stresses the importance of a “truly representative” democracy, which citizens can consider as “their own”⁸⁷. It is however important to note that this article was written with reference to the law for the repression of fascist activity⁸⁸, which neo-fascists considered a very severe measure as it significantly limited their political participation. In the light of these definitions of democracy, and considering the specific context in which they have been produced, it comes natural to wonder whether these ideas of democracy were influenced by the peculiar circumstance in which these authors found themselves: Did they really believe in the importance of a “truly representative” democracy? Or was it rather a discursive tool used to

⁸² Giorgio Pini, ‘Educazione politica e azione sociale,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 6 (31 August 1951): 15.

⁸³ As Pietro Scoppola has written in his book on the Italian party system, the “people” can be conceived as a unitary totality, but also as a plurality of single individuals. In democratic systems, the people is usually conceived of as a diverse group of individuals. See Pietro Scoppola, *La repubblica dei partiti. Evoluzione e crisi di un sistema politico 1945-1996* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1997), 16-17.

⁸⁴ Pini does not define the people in any way, thus implying a certain uniformity.

⁸⁵ See also, for example, Ermanno Amicucci, ‘L’Argentina di Peron,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 2 (15 April 1951): 14, in which Amicucci favourably describes the Peronist system as a system characterized by “true democracy”. Certainly Peronist democracy was not a liberal one, but the principle of representation was not questioned.

⁸⁶ Quinto Tosatti, ‘Come si difende la democrazia,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 1 (15 March 1951): 13-15.

⁸⁷ “Così che i cittadini la sentano veramente come una cosa propria, e si sentano in essa rispecchiati, in modo che essa sia davvero rappresentativa.” (“So that citizens truly feel it as their own thing, and feel mirrored in it, so that it is truly representative.”) See *ibid*, 13.

⁸⁸ ‘Legge 3 dicembre 1947, no. 1546 . Norme per la repressione dell’attività fascista e dell’attività diretta alla restaurazione dell’istituto monarchico.’ The full text of the law can be read at: ‘44.1.43 - Legge 3 dicembre 1947, n. 1546’, http://www.edizionieuropee.it/LAW/HTML/21/zn44_01_043.html, accessed March, 6, 2021.

be readmitted to political life? Answering these questions is difficult, maybe even unnecessary. However, it is important to note that although politics is often a mix of genuine beliefs and opportunism, the case of neo-fascism is in this sense particularly complex, as it is hard to say when the beliefs end and opportunism starts and viceversa. To try to understand what democracy meant for them it is also useful to consider an important “element of tension” for neo-fascists in postwar Italy: the *Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale* (National Liberation Committee, or CLN). The CLN, which was formed by all the parties that had been active in the Resistance against nazi-fascism, impersonated, according to the neo-fascists, the prevaricating power of the new system. It has indeed been noted that the CLN parties in the immediate postwar years and then the actual government parties later, often adopted a “pedagogical stance”⁸⁹ towards the population, implying that the Italian electorate was not to be trusted in terms of democratic maturity. Such pedagogical stance could be better described as in a sense the willingness to guide the population towards the best political decisions and avoid a direct participation through the means of institutions like parliament as well as through the mediation of political parties⁹⁰. Such tendency did have a direct impact on the neo-fascist groupings and on their more general perception of Italian politics as tainted by the presence of such parties. More specifically, the conservative area of Italian politics developed the concept of *partitocrazia* (namely “partitocracy”, the government of parties) to describe a system in which, in their opinion, parties apparently maintained democracy but, in reality, did not allow the political fringes to actively take part in government nor to, more simply, openly express their views⁹¹. Therefore, democracy as it was put in place by the postwar parties, namely a liberal, parliamentary democracy that tended to the exclusion of the political fringes, was simply not considered a real democracy by neo-fascists, but rather an oligarchy. *Partitocrazia* was also supported, according to the neo-fascists, by the proportional electoral

⁸⁹ Corduener, *The problem of Democracy in Postwar Europe*, 17.

⁹⁰ This tendency has been described as “the taming of the crowd” by Giovanni Orsina: “Thanks to institutional arrangements, and above all political parties, postwar democracies tried to keep grassroots participation and militancy under control, and to prevent popular will from having too direct an impact on the public decision-making process.” See Giovanni Orsina, ‘Perfectionism Without Politics. Politicisation, Depoliticisation, and Political History,’ *Ricerche di storia politica*, special issue (October 2017): 77.

⁹¹ As Eugenio Capozzi has written: “The word *partitocrazia* was used for the first time in a polemical sense to indicate an apparently democratic political regime, but in reality of an oligarchic-authoritarian character, by an exponent of the monarchical Italian Democratic Party, Roberto Lucifero, in 1944.” (“La parola ‘partitocrazia’ veniva usata per la prima volta in senso polemico per indicare un regime politico apparentemente democratico, ma in realtà di carattere oligarchico-autoritario, da un esponente del Partito Democratico Italiano, Roberto Lucifero, nel 1944.”). See Eugenio Capozzi, ‘La polemica antipartitocratica,’ in *Storia delle destre nell’Italia repubblicana*, ed. Giovanni Orsina (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2014), 184.

system which was believed to favour the candidate's dependency on the party rather than on the people who voted for him or her⁹².

IV. The refusal of liberal democracy

But it was not only a matter of electoral systems or feelings of exclusion that determined the way in which neo-fascists conceived of democracy. They also belonged to a political tradition characterized in particular by contempt for liberal democracy. Indeed, we can see a strong sense of skepticism connected to the idea of democracy, as well as to the idea of the liberal state, as a system that provides for alternation in government. More specifically, Ardengo Soffici wrote an article in *Nazionalismo Sociale* in which he criticized political plurality as the core of a democratic and liberal state. In particular, the implicit critique he outlined was against the elections and the political uncertainty that comes with them, to which a powerful state aiming at carrying out ambitious programs should not be subjected⁹³. What he thought was that the State needs to be associated with one ideology, as this is the only way a State can be considered as a strong and efficient polity. According to this strand of thought, the tensions that normally rise within society and that are harmonized, in the context of a democratic system, through the creation of different parties representing different sections of society, was not acceptable, and only the identification of the whole population with one ideology, representing the whole nation, was considered viable⁹⁴. How he thought to achieve such identification remains an unanswered question though, especially for what concerns the postwar, democratic period during which neo-fascists operated. If fascism adopted a dictatorial rule to put an end to social tensions, it is not clear how neo-fascism would have achieved such a goal. Did they consider violence as a tool to restore political and social homogeneity? In this article Soffici does not mention violence, and violence more generally seems to be a significant conceptual absence, at least in *Nazionalismo Sociale*. That said, a skeptical attitude, if not open opposition towards liberal democracy, remained dominant in

⁹² See Cassina Wolff, *L'inchostro dei vinti*, 101-102.

⁹³ Ardengo Soffici, 'La tradizione italiana e la crisi della civiltà liberale,' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 1 (15 March 1951): 4.

⁹⁴ In his book on populism, *Il populismo*, Zanatta has underlined that populism has often been a tool to restore homogeneity in highly conflicting societies (he makes the example of Latin America, but also of Italy). In the case of this research, neo-fascism can be considered as an element belonging to the broad family of authoritarianism, to which populism also belongs and, as such it shares with populism (and even more so with fascism) the belief in a homogenous community that has to be defended from the disintegration brought about by the political and social tensions. See Loris Zanatta, *Il populismo* (Rome: Carocci, 2013), 115-116, 24.

most of the articles.⁹⁵ The most illustrative of this approach is certainly the article written by Charles Maurras⁹⁶ in *Nazionalismo Sociale*:

“Undoubtedly the Enlightenment represented and represents a milestone in the historical development of humanity, but it must be corrected, in the rationalistic abstractness of its assumptions.”⁹⁷

The criticism towards the Enlightenment has always been a constant element of fascist thought⁹⁸, and here again we see it. What is particularly interesting in this case is the reference to the “abstractness of its assumptions”, which will be used to justify the fact that inequality is a real, historical, characteristic of human interactions and, therefore, of politics, while equality, a typically Enlightenment concept, which lies at the base of the idea of democracy, is just the projection of some people’s fantasies. Maurras then supported the idea that inequality between human beings could prove to be of greater benefit for mankind than equality, as he described equality as a menace that could potentially destroy all positive aspects of human nature⁹⁹. The idea of the destructiveness of equality is implicitly or explicitly present in many articles¹⁰⁰. Interesting in this sense are two articles published in *Imperium*. The first one, written by Giano Accame, presents the differences between people as something that humans unconsciously always look for in life, as they wish to support causes, fight battles and so define themselves through such acts. But the postwar society, with

⁹⁵ See for example Pino Romualdi, ‘Liberare l’Europa,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 9 (December 1951): 7, in which Romualdi affirms that the United States, as winners of the Second World War, have condemned Europeans to democracy; Emilio Benfatti, ‘Verso il tramonto della democrazia,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 6, no. 1 (25 January – 25 February 1956): 14, in which Benfatti writes that democracy has had its days and that it is time for a new system; Julius Evola, ‘Il senso dell’Imperium,’ *Imperium* 1, no. 1 (May 1950): 11, where Evola writes that his idea is to cancel the “demos” and substitute it with the “imperium”.

⁹⁶ Charles Maurras (1868-1952), politician and man of letters. Following his collaboration with the Vichy government, he was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1945, but was pardoned in 1948. This article is posthumous. See Author unknown, ‘Charles Maurras’, Oxford Reference, <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100141367>, accessed March 7, 2021.

⁹⁷ “Indubbiamente l’Illuminismo rappresentò e rappresenta una tappa miliare nello sviluppo storico dell’umanità, ma deve essere corretto, nell’astrattezza razionalistica delle sue ipotesi.” See Charles Maurras, ‘Il mito della democrazia e i suoi errori,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 3, no. 3 (20 March 1953): 15 (the article was originally published in: D. Frescobaldi, *La controrivoluzione (Barrès, Maurras, L. Daudet)* (Florence: L’Arco, 1949).)

⁹⁸ As Federico Finchelstein has written, fascism can be conceived of as a political language characterized by “a changing set of signifiers attached to a less malleable signified”. This “common denominator” is characterized, according to Finchelstein, by two core elements: the refusal of the Enlightenment and violence, this last one not seen as an instrument, but rather as an “object of political desire”. See Finchelstein, *Transatlantic Fascism*, 30, 33.

⁹⁹ “La scienza politica... insegna sempre più che ogni progresso è nato dall’ineguaglianza. In una società di veri uguali si comincerebbe con l’uccidersi a vicenda.” (“Political science ... teaches more and more that all progress is born of inequality. In a society of true equals people would kill each other.”) See Maurras, ‘Il mito della democrazia e i suoi errori,’ 16.

¹⁰⁰ See Giuseppe Rauti, ‘Regime democristiano,’ *Imperium* 1, no. 1 (May 1950): 5, in which Rauti presents equality as a “pseudo-valore”, or a fake moral principle; Enzo Erra, ‘Libertà e liberalismo,’ *Imperium* 1, no. 2 (June 1950): 2, in which Erra states that freedom can be found in discipline and in authority, not in equality.

its *partitocrazia* and with consumerism, which aimed at making everyone the same, has eliminated all of that.

“The variety of ties - for example - of cheeses, drinks, aperitifs, sports cheering, the passion for screen stars nowadays perform a heartfelt social function by improvising some easy occasions to stand out, to declare preferences...”¹⁰¹.

Considering what has been written by Accame, it seems that there might have been no choice for a neo-fascist in the 1950s but to rebel to the system and to take action. In what way though? A possibility was to counter egalitarianism by adopting Julius Evola’s philosophy¹⁰². Enzo Erra wrote in *Imperium*, clearly under the influence of the Evolian thought, that it was necessary to free one’s thinking from the “immense baggage of commonplaces and prejudices”¹⁰³ that are part of modernity and that are considered as indisputable truths. A magazine like *Imperium* significantly stressed the importance of one’s personal and spiritual awakening as tools to fight against the new democratic system. As Mammone has written, the influence of Evola on this magazine’s ideology was clear¹⁰⁴, and it led to two main features: the idea of the neo-fascist’s superiority *vis-à-vis* the modern democratic system and its supporters¹⁰⁵, and a sort of de-territorialization¹⁰⁶ process expressed in the “supremacy of the Ideal”¹⁰⁷. As written in *Imperium*, the “legionnaire” should be able to demonstrate that he

¹⁰¹ “La varietà delle cravatte – ad esempio – dei formaggini, delle bibite, degli aperitivi, il tifo sportivo, la passione per i divi dello schermo assolvono oggi ad una sentita funzione sociale improvvisando alcune facili occasioni per distinguersi, per dichiarare delle preferenze.” See Giano Accame, ‘L’incubo dell’eguaglianza,’ *Imperium* 1 (new series), no. 1 (May 1954): 9.

¹⁰² According to Evola, the passing of time is perceived as something intrinsically negative, as his philosophy presupposes the existence of a golden age from which humanity is progressively moving away. In this sense, the idea of modernity is connected to the idea of decadence. As a solution to such decadence Evola initially (at the time of the publication of *Revolt against the modern world*, in 1934) came up with pessimism, but as time passed and with the second edition of *Revolt against the modern world* (1951) he moved towards a form of eroism, expressed as an existential and individual resistance to modernity, to which conformism is certainly connected. See Francesco Cassata, *A destra del fascismo. Profilo politico di Julius Evola* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2003), 77-113.

¹⁰³ “Il bagaglio immenso di luoghi comuni e pregiudizi.” See Enzo Erra, ‘Liberazione radicale,’ *Imperium* 1, no. 1 (May 1950): 1.

¹⁰⁴ “*Imperium*’s doctrinal elaboration was naturally strongly influenced by Evola. It was, in fact, the encounter with books like *Rivolta contro il mondo moderno* (Revolt against the Modern World), first published in 1934, that changed the lives and doctrinal outlook of this rebellious youth.” See Mammone, *Transnational Neofascism in France and Italy*, 66-67.

¹⁰⁵ “Evola became “decisive in transforming ghettoization into a badge of honor, marginalization into a proud boast (the damnation of the modern world), and victimization into the superiority complex of the ‘differentiated man’.” See Ferraresi, *Threats to Democracy*, 69-70.

¹⁰⁶ The expression “de-territorialization” is used here to refer to the fact that, as long as fascism was not a viable political option anymore, the ideological debate had to move to the abstract realm of pure ideas, so in this sense neo-fascism underwent a process of detachment from the “territory”. This term will be used again, and probably with more relevance, in the next chapter dedicated to the concept of “Europe” and the supranational neo-fascism. For a better understanding of the concept see Mammone, ‘Revitalizing and de-territorializing fascism,’ 297.

¹⁰⁷ Mammone, *Transnational Neofascism in France and Italy*, 71.

knows how to “live for the idea”¹⁰⁸. Such “living for the idea” also implied the ability to sacrifice one’s life in the name of it¹⁰⁹. It is here necessary to return to the concept of violence. As we have already seen, violence is not mentioned in the pages of *Nazionalismo Sociale*, but can the same be said for *Imperium*? Violence is not directly advocated, but it seems to be an implicit presence. Not only expressions like “knowing how to sacrifice life”, but also words like “revolution” or “fight” are frequent in the texts¹¹⁰, and this is no surprise considering the relevance of violence in Evola’s thinking¹¹¹. Nonetheless, it must be noted that anytime the word “revolution” appears in the articles it is connected to the spiritual field, therefore it is presented not as a material but rather as a spiritual revolution. So, as it is the case for democracy, here too one can argue whether violence was actually advocated or not¹¹² and also whether the renunciation of violence could not better be described as a rather necessary mystification of a core concept of fascism or as a discursive tool. What is certain is that the “legionnaire” is a person that lives almost out of this world, intent on sacrificing his/her material life with the goal of attaining something bigger. Indeed the article goes as follows:

“Not only do we not seek happiness in well-being, but we do not seek it at all. We only want to fulfill our duty towards the Idea, towards our fellow men, towards ourselves... While the democratic world wants to create happy animals, we want to create men who are spiritually happy.”¹¹³

The message of *Imperium* is that material happiness has to be considered as an instrument of democracy to keep mankind in a sort of slavery¹¹⁴. The only happiness possible seems to be the spiritual one, which is conceived as being in total contrast with anything pertaining to

¹⁰⁸ “Vivere per l’idea.” See Enzo Erra, ‘Stile,’ *Imperium* 1, no. 4-5 (August-September 1950): 74.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ See for example Giuseppe Stasi, ‘La nostra politica estera,’ *Imperium* 1, no. 1 (May 1950): 7-9 or Carlamedeo Gamba, ‘Borghesia,’ *Imperium* 1, no. 4-5 (August-September 1950): 77. Gamba writes that: “Life is not reduced to the arid pursuit of material happiness, but is accepted as a fight.” (“La vita non si riduca alla arida ricerca della felicità materiale, ma sia accettata come combattimento.”).

¹¹¹ See Thomas Sheehan, ‘Myth and Violence. The Fascism of Julius Evola and Alain de Benoist,’ *Social Research* 48, no. 1 (1981), 45-73.

¹¹² Even if violence was presented as belonging to the spiritual field in *Imperium*, and not even discussed in *Nazionalismo Sociale*, this does not mean that Italian neo-fascists in general never recurred to violence. On the contrary, Anna Cento Bull has underlined the centrality of Evola’s message in the development of an international neo-fascist network of terrorists, which enacted the so-called “Strategy of Tension”, characterized, in Italy, by bomb attacks and attempted coups. According to Cento Bull, the “Strategy” became visible in Europe with the 1967 Colonels’ coup in Greece. See Anna Cento Bull, ‘Neo-fascism,’ in *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism*, ed. Richard James Bosworth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 597-598.

¹¹³ “Non solo non cerchiamo la felicità nel benessere, ma non la cerchiamo affatto. Vogliamo soltanto compiere il nostro dovere verso l’Idea, verso i nostri simili, verso noi stessi...Mentre il mondo democratico vuole creare degli animali felici, noi vogliamo creare degli uomini che siano spiritualmente tali.” See Erra, ‘Stile,’ 74.

¹¹⁴ Happiness (particularly material happiness and comfort) is often presented as a tool for moral corruption, therefore not appreciable. On this see again Gamba, ‘Borghesia,’ 1950 and G.A., ‘Dalla cronaca alla storia,’ *Imperium* 1 (new series), no. 1 (May 1954): 6.

material life, including democratic politics. More specifically, the idea of democracy is also usually connected to the idea of “numbers”¹¹⁵, as democracy requires an electoral majority counted on an individual vote basis. The fact of counting the single votes in order to assign the majority to one party is negatively seen on the basis of two considerations: firstly, counting the votes implies a reduction of the political will to the number, secondly, neo-fascists often felt that the system of the majority would have inevitably led to a government of the mediocre¹¹⁶. A defence against this danger would have been the creation of an *élite* with a strong hierarchical structure, which could have kept the vast numbers of people out of the political sphere, as Rauti wrote in 1950:

“There is only one term that can be the center of an effectively reconstructive revolutionary action: the concept, indeed the symbol of authority, instrumented and made functional by a hierarchical political structure.”¹¹⁷

Again, we can see a clear authoritarian approach that tends to exclude the political participation of people.

V. Corporatist democracy

The first interpretation of democracy presented in this chapter was characterized by skepticism towards the liberal conception of democracy, seen as a form of oligarchy, and the second interpretation was critical up to the point of totally discrediting any form of democracy, but these conceptions are by no means the only ones exposed in the articles analyzed. In fact Edmondo Cione, who had long studied corporatism, dedicated an article published in *Nazionalismo Sociale* to the theme of universal suffrage. In this article he repeated some of the core ideas on democracy expressed also by other authors, such as the fear that democracy could lead to governments of mediocre or incapable people or the fears concerning the unrealistic nature of equality. But he did not conclude his reasoning with the idea that people should not participate in the decision making process at all. On the contrary, he found a way to integrate the will of the people to vote with the necessity to avoid the

¹¹⁵ See note 69, page 22. See also Barna Occhini, ‘Dittatura, democrazia e fascismo,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 5 (July 1951): 22, in which Occhini criticizes the fact that democracies are based on the highest possible number of voters, including women (sic!); Edmondo Cione, ‘Universalità di Roma,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 7 (September – October 1951): 19, in which Cione describes liberal democracy as a “mechanistic democracy”.

¹¹⁶ “Ed allora la politica che è schiava del numero ed ancorata per principio ad esso porta in definitiva al predominio e alla vittoria degli istinti più egoistici e volgari dell’uomo.” (“And then the politics that is a slave to numbers and anchored in principle to it, ultimately leads to the predominance and victory of the most selfish and vulgar instincts of man.”) See Giuseppe Rauti, ‘Della gerarchia,’ *Imperium* 1, no. 3 (July 1950): 68.

¹¹⁷ “C’è solo un termine che possa far da centro ad un’azione rivoluzionaria: il concetto, certo il simbolo dell’autorità, reso funzionale da una struttura politica gerarchica.” See *ibid.*

“system of parties” or *partitocrazia* and the downward leveling process that this entailed. He thought of a corporatist democracy, as he wrote that every man has an economic interest as he is connected to the material basis of his existence. Therefore, he thought, in the economic sphere, democracy is valid, as all men have the right to be represented, but this representation, unlike what happens outside of the economic context, is obtained through the creation of economic categories representing all workers¹¹⁸. Voting by categories implied, according to Cione, the recognition, through electoral means, of a hierarchy that was already existing within the economic system. Therefore, the interest of the economic categories would have been directly represented by politics and, social and political tensions could have been reduced if not totally eliminated. Of course what we see here is the reiteration of the myth of corporatism, a myth that, as it has already been noted, was apparently hard to eradicate in a generation of neo-fascists who continued to believe in its transformative power. And it can be rightfully doubted that the system of corporatist democracy would have eliminated social tensions, also considering that the experiment of corporatism had in part already been tried during the years of the fascist regime, with meagre outcomes. This article is nevertheless interesting as it once again stresses not only the diversity of opinions concerning democracy (because even though the general sentiment is of criticism against democracy, there were different ways and reasons to express it) but also that there was a current within neo-fascism that was openly in favour of democracy, as long as it was presented as a corporatist project. According to the neo-fascist thinking, casting votes by categories and not by individuals would have indeed allowed to overcome the materialism that was much associated with liberal democracy, which was believed to reinforce the sense of individualism and the support for a capitalist economic system. Another interesting aspect of this article is represented by the fact that democracy is here associated to the adjective “corporatist”. As already seen, democracy is considered a contested concept¹¹⁹ that, as such, needs clarification. In this case, democracy can exist only as a corporatist one. So, to sum up, it can be understood that the concept of democracy can be accepted as long as it is associated with corporatism. And this will inevitably influence the more general neo-fascist reflection, in Italy and elsewhere, on the value system that they associated to Europe.

¹¹⁸ Edmondo Cione, ‘Il suffragio universale (risposta a Benedetto Croce),’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 1 (15 March 1951): 6.

¹¹⁹ See note 71, page 22.

Conclusion

The early postwar Italian neo-fascist experience in the political and social realm has been heavily influenced by the militancy in the Italian Social Republic (RSI, 1943-1945) as well as by the purges. The RSI has served for many as a period during which the socially revolutionary ideas of fascism have been revived, and precisely the fact that those ideas remained such, having never been transformed into concrete projects, has represented a fundamental factor in transforming them into myths. Therefore a part of postwar Italian neo-fascism, namely the left wing current, has brought these issues into the debate in the neo-fascist magazines. Such debate has been particularly lively, especially when referring to the concept of democracy, being it influenced by the experience of exclusion from politics as well as by a sense of rejection of anything connected to modernity and egalitarianism, under the clear influence of the Evolian philosophy. Nevertheless, the idea of a corporatist democracy has also been expressed in these publications, leading to think that the conceptualization of democracy in the neo-fascist ideology was more complex than might be thought. More importantly, the debate on democracy has served as a first occasion to discuss possible political systems for the post Second World War context, and precisely such ideas will be used and better explored in Italian and French magazines concerning the concept of Europe and European unification.

Chapter 2. The Idea of Europe within Italian and French magazines

In 1958 the magazine *Nazionalismo Sociale* underwent a formal change which in reality also represented a substantial change, as its title was transformed into *Europa Sociale*¹²⁰. In an article in the very first pages of the magazine's issue, Ambrogio Manno explained to the readership the choice of the new title by claiming that the project for a European unification should not be seen as determined by a contingent situation, but as "the historical need of the present moment"¹²¹. More specifically, Manno underlined the symbolic importance of a day like the March 25, 1957, when the Treaty of Rome was signed by West Germany, France, Belgium, Italy, The Netherlands and Luxembourg and the European Economic Community was created. Even more surprising though, for someone writing on a neo-fascist magazine, is what he wrote about nationalism, as he described the creation of the EEC as:

¹²⁰ See page 11.

¹²¹ "L'esigenza storica dell'attuale momento." See Ambrogio Manno, 'L'Unione Europea: necessità dell'ora presente,' *Europa Sociale* 8, no. 3-4 (April 25- May 25, 1958): 5.

“The end of the heated nationalisms, of the fratricidal wars, of the hegemonic competitions that have torn apart the motherland of modern civilization for a millennium, and the beginning of an era of cooperation, harmony, peaceful progress of the states of Europe.”¹²²

This type of reasoning might seem very much in contrast with the ideology expressed by historical fascism, and indeed there is some truth to that. But it is necessary to remember that even historical fascism, with its advocacy for aggressive nationalism, was full of contradictions up to the point of advocating internationalism, as it was the case with the *Fasci Italiani all'Estero*¹²³ (Italian Fasces Abroad) or nazi's imperial ambitions in Europe¹²⁴. However, both fascist and nazi's internationalisms were very much influenced by the will to rule, as in both cases internationalism was conceived mainly as a form of national expansionism¹²⁵. This was not necessarily the case with postwar neo-fascism. In fact there were groups, magazines and people within the political area of neo-fascism, in Italy and elsewhere in Europe, which were much more in favour of a project for European unification or at least made frequent references to a sense of European belonging and identity. The reason for this significant ideological shift is difficult to explain, as it will always be uncertain whether the choice for this “U-turn” was determined by a genuine support for a new cause or by political convenience. However, as it has already been noted in the case of neo-fascist views on democracy, it is possible that setting the boundaries between these two options in order to understand which one best represents neo-fascism is not that important, as it probably does not add anything illuminating to the debate. It is certainly more interesting to see the extent to which nationalism was still advocated and why it was not the only model anymore. As Mammone has written, neo-fascism underwent a process of de-territorialization in the postwar era, a process that was considered to be necessary if fascism was to “revitalize”¹²⁶ its energy for a new, democratic time. De-territorialization was mostly meant as a form of detachment from the identification with the nation, or the “territory”, which was negatively judged after the European population had experienced the harshness of

¹²² “La fine cioè degli accesi nazionalismi, delle guerre fratricide, delle competizioni egemoniche che hanno dilacerato per un millennio la terra madre della civiltà moderna, e l'inizio di un'era di cooperazione, di armonia, di pacifico progresso degli Stati dell'Europa.” See *ibid.*

¹²³ Starting points for an analysis of the *Fasci Italiani all'Estero* are: Michael Arthur Leeden, *Universal Fascism: The Theory and Practice of the Fascist International, 1928-1936* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1972); Marco Cuzzi, *L' internazionale delle camicie nere : i CAUR, Comitati d'azione per l'universalita di Roma, 1933-1939* (Milan: Mursia, 2005).

¹²⁴ As Mazower has written: “Hitler was in some ways the most European of the leading statesmen of the Second World War; unlike Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin, after all, he did have a conception of Europe as a single entity, pitted against the USSR on the one hand, and the USA on the other.” See Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: Nazi Rule in Occupied Europe* (London: Penguin Books, 2009), 555.

¹²⁵ For more on the nazi European propaganda see ‘Fascism, Nazism and Europe,’ in *The History of the Idea of Europe*, ed. Kevin Wilson and Jan van der Dussen (London-New York: Routledge, 1993), 106-113.

¹²⁶ Mammone, ‘Revitalizing and de-territorializing fascism,’ 297.

nationalism to its extremes. So the European continent represented the new, pristine “territory” with which neo-fascists could positively identify. They could do so also thanks to the fact that internationalism was not totally new to them, as it was already part of the experience of interwar fascism, both as an ideology and as a practice¹²⁷. But this time around, unlike what happened before, “europeanism” had to be the core value, or at least one of the most important. As Roger Griffin has noted in his foreword to Tamir Bar-On’s *Where Have All the Fascists Gone?*, many historians and political scientists studying postwar forms of radical right often make the mistake of looking for traditional fascist values within these movements¹²⁸. A sort of fixation for definitions (that are notoriously difficult in this field) leads to stringent parameters through which movements and people can be defined “fascist” or not. But Griffin claims that fascism in general, and postwar neo-fascism in particular, are characterized precisely by an aversion to too rigid definitions and are very malleable political concepts that can adapt to different situations. Therefore this interpretation can explain why core values could be changed or be adjusted to a different context quite easily. This has been the case of violence, which almost totally disappeared from the neo-fascist discourse and this is the case again of Europe and the refusal or, in some cases, adaptation of nationalism to a post Second World War context. It is no surprise, then, if Griffin quotes Maurice Bardèche¹²⁹, one of the leading figures of French and European neo-fascism, and describes his thought as highly representative of the ability of neo-fascism to transform. The quotation from Bardèche that Griffin refers to goes as follows:

“With another name, another face, and with nothing which betrays the projection from the past, with the form of a child we do not recognize and the head of a young Medusa, the order of Sparta will be reborn.”¹³⁰

Therefore thanks to fascism’s ability to be an “empirical medicine”¹³¹ that can be used in different temporal and geographical contexts, Europe became one of the core ideas of postwar neo-fascism. But how did they define this concept? What was the reference culture they could look back to when thinking of a neo-fascist project for European unification?

¹²⁷ International circles existed not only at the European level but also in the connection between Europe and the Americas. See Finchelstein, *Transatlantic Fascism*.

¹²⁸ Tamir Bar-On, *Where Have All the Fascists Gone?* (London-New York: Routledge, 2007), position 120 of 6820, Foreword, Kindle.

¹²⁹ See Bar-On, *Where Have All the Fascists Gone?*, position 138-147, Foreword.

¹³⁰ Maurice Bardèche, *Qu’est-ce que le fascisme?* (Paris: Les Sept Couleurs, 1961), 195.

¹³¹ “Le fascisme est, d’abord, une médecine empirique qui naît de la crise elle-même ou de la menace de la crise. C’est ainsi qu’il a surgi dans tous les pays du monde et c’est pourquoi il a des visages si divers.” (“Fascism is, first of all, an empirical medicine that is born out of crisis or out of the menace of crisis. That’s how it has come to all the countries of the world and that’s why it has such diverse faces.”), Bardèche, *Qu’est-ce que le fascisme?*, 175.

I. What is “Europe”?

The recent developments in the historiography on European unification are showing a tendency towards the inclusion of anti-liberal strands of thought into the analysis of this process. This branch of the historiography is still pretty much in its infancy, as the studies that consider European unification as the outcome of an entirely democratic and liberal political process still decidedly outnumber other studies. While it is understandable that such a view is predominant, it is also necessary to avoid normative conceptualizations of the idea of Europe. Dieter Gosewinkel has noted precisely the fact that, since the democratic project for European unification progressively became a reality after 1945, anti-liberal concepts of Europe, as well as anti-liberal projects for unification, were categorized respectively as “anti-Europe” and “anti-European”¹³². But, as Gosewinkel claims, anti-liberal thinking has contributed to the formation of a European identity, sometimes willingly and sometimes as a not sought for consequence of certain actions¹³³. Therefore anti-liberalism can be considered part of a process of European identity formation as well as unification¹³⁴.

Anyway, the idea of Europe as expressed by anti-liberal thinkers and politicians presents peculiar features that distinguish it from the idea of a democratic Europe. Therefore, before entering the neo-fascist debate expressed in Italian and French speaking magazines of the postwar era concerning Europe, it is necessary to first assess some cultural aspects that informed the anti-liberal idea of Europe and that made it different from other interpretations. Before any project for European unification, what was Europe as an idea for neo-fascists? First of all, Europe is generally considered by neo-fascists as belonging to a more general concept of “West”. This West, though, should not be confused with the values and culture expressed by the United States. The West as conceived by the neo-fascists was in fact identified with a Latin-Germanic civilization characterized by Christian values¹³⁵. Within this larger definition of West, two central concepts can be identified: the *Imperium* and the *Abendland*. Although there are many differences between these two terms (and it is not the aim of this research to assess all of those) as *Imperium* refers to Julius Evola’s pagan

¹³² Dieter Gosewinkel, ‘Introduction. Anti-liberal Europe – A Neglected Source of Europeanism,’ in *Anti-liberal Europe. A Neglected Story of Europeanization*, ed. Dieter Gosewinkel (New York-Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2015), 7.

¹³³ As also Mazower has noted, peoples of Europe inevitably became more united by the fact of fighting against the same occupant, the nazi troupes. See Mazower, *Hitler’s Empire*, 569.

¹³⁴ Gosewinkel, ‘Introduction,’ 17.

¹³⁵ See Cassina Wolff, *L’inchostro dei vinti*, 197.

philosophy¹³⁶ and *Abendland* is a sixteenth-century German term that has been adapted to different cultural contexts, referring to the idea of a united Catholic Europe¹³⁷, both these terms are associated with the idea of “organic” societies and share a central aspect: the advocacy for a united, traditional Europe. Both concepts have a long history that predates the postwar years, as is especially the case of *Abendland*, and they certainly do not represent the totality of neo-fascists’ conceptions of Europe, but it is nevertheless important to see a connection between the two and to note that these ideas have had a significant impact in the history of the anti-liberal thinking in Europe¹³⁸. Therefore, it can be safely assumed that this mythical conception of Europe, while certainly remaining a cultural fascination, was in the background of more complex elaborations and projects for unification.

Not less important is also the role played by colonialism in the definition of a concept of Europe. Directly connected to the idea of a superior Western civilization, the colonial experience has certainly informed the way neo-fascists thought of Europe and of themselves as Europeans, and this is proved by the frequent references to former European colonies in the magazines as well as by the role played by decolonization in the development of the movement *Jeune Europe*¹³⁹. However imprecise this general definition of an anti-liberal Europe might be, it is nevertheless quite clear what the fundamental elements that should have characterized Europe according to the neo-fascists were: Christianity, whiteness and the refusal of modernity expressed more specifically as the refusal of materialism, rationalism and liberal democracy.

¹³⁶ “A ‘Reich Europe’, not a ‘Nation Europe’, would be the only acceptable formula from the traditional point of view for the achievement of an authentic and organic unification of Europe.” See Author unknown ‘Intervista di Julius Evola a ‘La Nation Européenne’’, trans. Claudio Mutti (originally published in two parts in *La Nation Européenne*, no. 13 (15 January – 15 February 1967) and *La Nation Européenne*, no. 14 (15 February – 15 March 1967), <https://www.rigenerazionevola.it/intervista-francese-nation-europeenne/>, accessed March 21, 2021.

¹³⁷ On *Abendland* see Vanessa Conze, ‘Facing the Future Backwards. ‘Abendland’ as an Anti-liberal Idea of Europe in Germany between the First World War and the 1960s,’ in *Anti-liberal Europe. A Neglected Story of Europeanization*, ed. Dieter Gosewinkel (New York-Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2015), 72-89.

¹³⁸ Vanessa Conze has underlined the convergence of the concept of *Abendland* with that of *Reich*, and the fact that even though Catholicism was central to *Abendland* “a fair number of visionaries of ‘empire’ in Germany turned to National Socialism.” See *ibid.*, 77.

¹³⁹ Jean Thiriart, founder of *Jeune Europe*, after being released from prison for a conviction of collaboration with the nazis, re-entered politics in 1960, during the process of decolonization of the Congo, with the creation of the *MAC – Mouvement d’Action Civique*, which was described as a committee for the defence of the Belgians in Africa. The movement, though, was soon transformed into an efficient revolutionary organisation associated with the French *OAS – Organisation Armée Secrète*. See Christian Bouchet, *Le prophète de la grande Europe, Jean Thiriart* (Nantes: Ars Magna, 2018), 7-8.

II. Europe as a Corporatist Project

In 1934 the political economist Mihail Manoilescu published in Paris the book *Le siècle du corporatisme*¹⁴⁰. Manoilescu was a political economist at the University of Bucharest and one of the leading figures of the Romanian intelligentsia in the 1930s, and while his book was generally considered a “mediocre work”¹⁴¹, it nevertheless had a noteworthy circulation in Europe at the time. The title was quite ambitious, but it can be safely said that that of the 1930s was indeed the decade of corporatism, as the corporatist model was adopted, or at least considered, in many European countries and beyond¹⁴², not necessarily only in those governed by a fascist regime. As it has already been noted, corporatism was a very important element of the fascist thinking, one that was powerful enough to be transformed into an almost mythical feature of fascism. And corporatism was to become also an important element in defining a specific type of idea of Europe. Even though in the early 1930s corporatism was meant to be a socio-economic system for the nation as Ugo Spirito, one of the major theorists of corporatism, wrote in 1932 that it would have led to economic conciliation as a form of national unification¹⁴³, it did not take long to get to the Montreux meeting in 1934¹⁴⁴, where the fascist consensus on corporatism moved from the context of the nation to that of the continent or even of the entire world. On that occasion, Eugenio Coselschi referred to corporatism as the only way through which Europe would have conquered the world. In the same period the diplomat Giuseppe de Michelis published a book entitled *World Reorganisation on Corporative Lines*¹⁴⁵, which was a work on international relations theory and, more specifically, a theorization of corporatism as a system particularly suited to address the interdependencies in the global market through the means of international cooperation and redistribution of labour and capital across the globe¹⁴⁶. But the international aspirations of the Italian fascist regime had to be limited to the colonial conquests in the Horn of Africa, as the rising power and influence of the Nazi regime hindered any possibility of establishing a unitary corporatist third way at the European

¹⁴⁰ Pasetti, *L'Europa corporativa*, 191.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 193.

¹⁴² For the wider circulation of corporatism beyond Europe see Antonio Costa Pinto, Federico Finchelstein, *Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Europe and Latin America. Crossing Borders* (London-New York: Routledge, 2019).

¹⁴³ Ugo Spirito, ‘Individuo e Stato nella concezione corporativa,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 1 (15 March 1951): 27. The article, published in 1951, was originally a speech that Spirito gave at the *II Congresso di studi sindacali e corporativi* (Second congress of syndical and corporatist studies) in Ferrara in May 1932.

¹⁴⁴ See page 16.

¹⁴⁵ Giuseppe De Michelis, *World Reorganisation on Corporative Lines* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1935).

¹⁴⁶ Jens Steffek, ‘Fascist Internationalism,’ *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 44, no. 1(2015): 9.

level¹⁴⁷. And, in fact, 1936 is considered the year when, after the formation of the Rome-Berlin axis, the international activity of the fascist regime reached a halt¹⁴⁸.

After the end of the Second World War, though, things started to change. De-territorialization was a key factor that distinguished postwar neo-fascism from interwar fascism. In that new context, ideas of European unification started circulating even within the neo-fascist milieu. For many neo-fascists, Europe had to be defined and designed in a way that made clear its difference from both the US and the USSR models. A way to do so was to stress the importance of social justice in their project for European unification. Reflecting on the “destiny of Europe” in *Nazionalismo Sociale*, an anonymous author signing his article as “Frenchman” wrote that:

“A clear conception of the authority of the state, of the responsibility of the powers and above all of social justice is necessary. This requires a profound reform, a genuine revolution. This constructive and peaceful revolution must have as a result the disappearance of the wage-earner under the capitalist form, the end of the class struggle with all its manifestations.”¹⁴⁹

What we see in this case is an early attempt, in the postwar period, to present corporatism and social justice as core values characterizing Europe. But if such a connection was clear in the minds of interwar fascists, it was not that obvious that corporatism would have again had an appeal after the end of the Second World War within the larger European neo-fascist context, and that such appeal would have had a transnational nature so that it could be considered a useful model for the whole European continent. However, this latter article is not as powerful in conveying the European corporatist message as the article published by Ernesto Massi in *Nazione Sociale* in 1953 was. The article, entitled *Per una politica sociale ed economica al servizio dell'unità europea* (For a social and economic policy at the service of European unity) can be considered as a very interesting reflection on a possible new path for postwar corporatism. Ernesto Massi was a university professor and a geopolitics expert¹⁵⁰, one of the very few neo-fascists whose background was not only in politics *stricto sensu*, but also in academia. Even though the leftist current within Italian neo-fascism was never fully

¹⁴⁷ As Aristotle Kallis has written: “Simply put, Europe might have indeed become largely ‘fascist or fascistized’, as Mussolini had confidently predicted back in 1932, but, in the process, it was all but lost to Fascist Italy as a sphere of ideological and political influence.” See Aristotle Kallis, ‘From CAUR to EUR: Italian Fascism, the ‘myth of Rome’ and the pursuit of international primacy,’ *Patterns of Prejudice* 50, no. 4-5 (2016): 373.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ “E’ necessaria una chiara concezione dell’ autorità dello Stato, della responsabilità dei poteri e prima di tutto della giustizia sociale. Il che esige una riforma profonda, una autentica rivoluzione. Questa rivoluzione costruttiva e pacifica deve avere per risultato la sparizione del salariato sotto la forma capitalistica, la fine della lotta di classe con tutte le sue manifestazioni.” See A Frenchman, ‘Destino dell’ Europa ed avvenire del mondo,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 7 (September-October 1951): 24.

¹⁵⁰ Parlato, *La sinistra fascista*, 361.

organized, Massi was generally seen as its leader thanks to his intellectual prominence within the group as well as his ability to set the ideological agenda¹⁵¹. He was also the founder of the magazine *Nazione Sociale* which, despite its name, promoted the overcoming of nationalism in the field of economic and social policies¹⁵². His article started with a few simple questions:

“Are we satisfied with the current structure? What can we offer to the peoples of Europe?”¹⁵³

The answer to the first question is provided some pages later, where Massi expressed his open criticism towards the European Coal and Steel Community, which was created only a year before he wrote his article. The reason for such criticism, he explained, was that the ECSC was based on market economy¹⁵⁴, which was in contrast with everything that Massi advocated. And what his thought exactly was is expressed as an answer to the second question. What he wanted the corporatist model to offer to Europeans was, first of all, an equal system that could allow the social inclusion of workers not only within the economic enterprise but also within society at large. This, he wrote, was “true democracy”¹⁵⁵. As we have seen, Edmondo Cione already provided a definition of corporatist democracy¹⁵⁶, but, in that case, it was quite different from what Massi wrote in his article. In the case of Cione, a corporatist democracy was described mainly as an electoral system where votes had to be cast by guilds of workers and not by individuals. But in the case of Massi, a corporatist democracy was seen as one that could include the workers, therefore the often weakest section of society, into the economic activity as well as into the political and social life. What we can see, then, is that Massi tried to operate a significant shift in the more general definition of corporatism as it had been provided up to that point within the context of the Italian neo-fascist left. Massi adopted a more socially than economically oriented definition, which consequently also influenced his conception of democracy, which, he thought, had to be inclusive to be considered effective. This change, though, can not be considered an entirely unpredictable development, as it was the product of Massi’s encounter with the

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid., 361-362.

¹⁵³ “Siamo soddisfatti dell’attuale struttura? Cosa possiamo offrire ai popoli d’Europa?” See Ernesto Massi, ‘Per una politica sociale ed economica al servizio dell’unità europea,’ in *Nazione Sociale. Scritti politici 1948-1976*, eds. Ernesto Massi and Gianni Rossi (Rome: Istituto di Studi Corporativi, 1990): 268. The text of this article was originally conceived of as a speech that Massi gave in Holzminden, Germany, on October 25, 1953, in occasion of a meeting of pro-European extreme-right forces. The text was then published in *Nazione Sociale* 2, no. 1 (18 November 1953).

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 276-277.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 276.

¹⁵⁶ See pages 30-31.

catholic social thought. As Parlato has written¹⁵⁷, Massi opened up to the catholic left, which indeed had a long history of social thinking, that included corporatism¹⁵⁸. This thought influenced at least a part of neo-fascists¹⁵⁹ after the end of the Second World War as it is demonstrated by an article in which Piero Mazzoni described the liberal, laissez-faire economy as one that:

“insists on a narrow utilitarian policy that considers economic associations to be completely abstracted from the human problem.”¹⁶⁰

And the centrality of the human being can indeed be found in Massi’s article of 1953, as he wrote that man should not be the object of economy but the subject¹⁶¹. It can be argued how a neo-fascist like Massi suddenly understood the importance of human life or, as he said, of the “morality”¹⁶² of social policies attentive to the well-being of people. This approach indeed contradicts the fascist ideology not only in its disregard for human life, as demonstrated by history, but also in its effort to be distanced from catholicism. The explanation to this doubt probably lies in Massi’s own political and cultural experience, as he was a leftist neo-fascist who opened up to the catholic reflection on social issues. Also, Parlato has written that Massi represented a sort of current within the current, in the sense that he was a neo-fascist who had much in common with the Left¹⁶³. What is certain is that his case is another exemplary one of transformation and adaptation that neo-fascists chose to put in act for survival. This change of attitude is here clear in the new social and moral value that is attributed to corporatism. But what is probably even more interesting is the link that Massi created between these social ideas and Europe. He wrote that it was necessary for Europeans to

¹⁵⁷ Parlato, *La sinistra fascista*, 361-362.

¹⁵⁸ Nineteenth century scientism and later the 1929 economic crisis led the catholic church to developing a catholic social doctrine which had to be different from socialism but also from capitalism’s lack of attention for social matters. Pope Pius XI’s encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* of 1931 represented the turning point in the development of a catholic social thought and in those years the communication and reciprocal influencing between the catholic and the fascist milieux was not uncommon. Nevertheless, the differences between the catholic and the fascist models remained significant, as the Church advocated social corporatism, while the regime was in favour of a more integral type of corporatism that also covered the political domain. See Juan Manuel Burgos, *An Introduction to Personalism* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2018), 4; John Pollard, ‘Corporatism and Political Catholicism: The Impact of Catholic Corporatism in Inter-war Europe,’ in *Corporatism and Fascism. The Corporatist Wave in Europe*, ed. Antonio Costa Pinto (London-New York: Routledge, 2017): 11, 42.

¹⁵⁹ See for example the publication of a text of Jacques Maritain in *Nazionalismo Sociale*: Jacques Maritain, ‘La persona umana e la società,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 3, no. 6 (30 August 1953): 20-24.

¹⁶⁰ “Insistere in una gretta politica utilitaristica che considera le associazioni economiche astratte completamente dal problema umano.” Piero Mazzoni, ‘La crisi è del sistema,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 4, no. 11 (15 November – 15 December 1954): 7.

¹⁶¹ Massi and Rossi, *Nazione Sociale*, 270.

¹⁶² Massi referred to the minimum wage as a “moral rather than economic concept” (“Dunque il salario minimo dovuto per giustizia, cioè un concetto morale e non economico”). See *ibid.*, 272.

¹⁶³ Parlato, *La sinistra fascista*, 368. Despite his leftist orientations, the fact that Massi wrote on neo-fascist magazines still justifies the definition as a neo-fascist.

develop autonomous social forms which could be well suited to the Western life and traditions¹⁶⁴. So what he implied was that the socio-economic project and the catholic-social philosophy had to go beyond their limited scopes to allow the creation of a specific type of European identity. This type of identity had to be based on thoughts and projects that put human beings at the centre and that did not consider the economic development as the only aim. The next step in Massi's thinking was then, inevitably, a geopolitical consideration: Europe should be, by virtue of the thought from which it originates, a third force between the two powers, becoming a real alternative to both the USA and the USSR. Europe should be independent, between the East and the West, and Massi wrote that, if Europe was actually to realize such a plan, it had to be unitary thanks to its own ways and its own "soul"¹⁶⁵, without external interferences.

Considering the importance given to unity and the centrality of social policies in his thought it is consequential to think, even though Massi did not explicitly refer to this, that his conception of Europe was not that of a community of nations, but rather that of Europe as a single entity. This aspect of neo-fascist thought will be better analyzed in the next paragraph, whose focus will be precisely on Europe conceived of as a single nation.

III. Europe as a nation and the role of Maurice Bardèche

The idea of Europe as a single nation was developed mostly within the left wing of neo-fascism. In Italy, the first to address this theme was Filippo Anfuso in 1951, in the preface to the first issue of *Europa Nazione*. In that article, Anfuso underlined the strong link between the concept of Europe and that of nation represented by, according to him, the fact that denying the importance of the concept of nation and of the national sentiment would have implied denying any future to a European unification as well as to a sense of European belonging¹⁶⁶. More specifically, Anfuso openly criticized the federalist approach to European integration, which he considered a not efficient enough approach to unite the peoples of Europe¹⁶⁷. But if Anfuso was the first to write about "Europe a nation" in Italy, he was not the first to do so in Europe. This idea is in fact associated with the British fascist Sir. Oswald Mosley, who, in 1948, founded the Union Movement, whose racism was justified by a

¹⁶⁴ "E' tempo che sviluppiamo nostre forme sociali autonome rispondenti alla vita occidentale e adatte alle nostre tradizioni." See Massi and Rossi, *Nazione Sociale*, 276.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 278.

¹⁶⁶ "Il convincimento che una condanna del concetto di Nazione potrebbe essere fatale alla vita dell'Europa." ("The belief that a condemnation of the concept of nation could be fatal to the life of Europe.") See Filippo Anfuso, 'Proemio,' *Europa Nazione* 1, no. 1 (Januray 1951): 9.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

reflection that depicted Europe as the cradle of civilization, therefore a continent in need to be kept united¹⁶⁸. Mosley also founded, in 1949, a movement called European Liberation Front, or ELF, with the American expatriate in Ireland Francis Parker Yockey. Yockey was the author of *Imperium*, a tome in which he proposed a new strategy for European fascism: the creation of a European empire¹⁶⁹. However, the ELF did not have a long existence, because Mosley and Yockey's ideas diverged on the movement's international positioning, as Mosley was in favour of Europe's friendly relations with the US, while Yockey, an American, believed that the United States were far more dangerous to Europe than the Soviet Union¹⁷⁰.

As it can be seen, the concept of "Europe a nation" well demonstrates that ideas within the European neo-fascist context circulated quite freely from country to country, from political group to political group. Even though a significant part of the historiography on fascism has often been characterized by a methodological nationalism, implying that the object of study, as characterized by aggressive nationalism, influenced the methodology up to the point of hardly ever considering the transnational aspects, more recent developments have led historians to acknowledge the complexities of the fascist and neo-fascist international dimension. What is considered here is undoubtedly a perfect example of a case of *histoire croisée*¹⁷¹, as while there is no doubt on when Mosley and Yockey founded the ELF or on when Anfuso published his article, we cannot be entirely sure on the exact movements of people or flows of concepts. It is not clear who is the transmitter and who is the receiver and it is also very difficult to analyze this theme under the light of a pure transnational approach, because there is no clear movement from one national context to another. It is in fact important to note that the adjective "national" usually refers to political entities whose boundaries are clearly defined¹⁷², while in this case the objects of study considered do not have such well defined boundaries as they are not mainstream parties or national parliaments. Such clear definition does not apply well to the neo-fascist movements or magazines. That being said, though, it is still possible to attempt some clarification within the multifaceted European neo-fascism, or at least to analyze a specific line of movement and exchange within

¹⁶⁸ Duranton-Crabol, *L'Europe de l'Extrême Droite*, 120-125.

¹⁶⁹ See Kevin Coogan, 'Lost Imperium: the European Liberation Front (1949-54),' *Patterns of Prejudice* 36, no. 3 (2002): 9.

¹⁷⁰ "Yockey later recalled that, when he discovered that Mosley was 'pro-Churchill and pro-American, and anti-Russian à outrance, even to the extent of mobilizing Europe to fight for American-Jewish victory over Russia, I left him'." See *ibid.*, 17.

¹⁷¹ "In most cases, it refers, in a vague manner, to one or a group of histories associated with the idea of an unspecified crossing or intersection." See Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmerman, 'Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity,' *History and Theory* 45, no. 1 (February 2006): 31.

¹⁷² Henk te Velde, 'Political Transfer: An Introduction,' *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire* 12, no. 2 (July 2005): 211

the broader picture. That is the case of the French Maurice Bardèche, who certainly was a transmitter of neo-fascist trends. Author of *Qu'est-ce que le Fascisme?* and founder of the magazine *Défense de l'Occident*, Bardèche was a reference for many in the European radical right and a prominent representative of the neo-fascist intelligentsia¹⁷³. Bardèche certainly was an interesting figure within French and, more generally, European neo-fascism. He was not an activist in the first place, but rather an intellectual. After attending the prestigious *Ecole Normale Supérieure*¹⁷⁴, graduating in 1932¹⁷⁵, he subsequently completed a doctoral dissertation on Balzac's novels¹⁷⁶. He then obtained three teaching positions, first at the Collège Sainte-Geneviève in Versailles, then a temporary position at the Sorbonne and eventually at the University of Lille. He was known, throughout his life, as a specialist of Balzac¹⁷⁷. In an interview with Alice Yaeger Kaplan¹⁷⁸, Bardèche described his support for fascism as totally coincidental¹⁷⁹ and enforced by the fact of being a friend of Robert Brasillach, another important name of French fascism¹⁸⁰. Precisely this friendship changed Bardèche's life: he was so close to Brasillach, who also attended the *Ecole Normale*, that he fell in love with and married his sister, Suzanne¹⁸¹. Bardèche and Brasillach were then friends and relatives and spent a lot of time together discussing literature and politics. Bardèche also was a contributor to *Je suis partout*, a fascist magazine directed by Brasillach¹⁸². The turning point for Bardèche, though, came in 1946. That year, Brasillach was sentenced to death because of his support of the Vichy government and his passing was a trauma for Bardèche. As Yaeger Kaplan has written, his mourning became political¹⁸³, and he made a commitment to honour his friend's memory by spreading his ideas. Bardèche, a man of letters who had not

¹⁷³ Ian Barnes, 'A fascist Trojan horse: Maurice Bardèche, fascism and authoritarian socialism,' *Patterns of Prejudice* 37, no. 2 (2003): 178.

¹⁷⁴ Ian Barnes, 'I am a Fascist Writer: Maurice Bardèche – Ideologist and Defender of French Fascism,' *The European Legacy* 7, no. 2 (2002): 195.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 196.

¹⁷⁷ See for example Maurice Bardèche, *Balzac, romancier: la formation de l'art du roman chez Balzac jusqu'à la publication du 'Père Goriot', (1820-1835)* (Paris: Plon, 1940) and Maurice Bardèche *Une lecture de Balzac* (Paris: Les Sept Couleurs, 1964). Bardèche was also invited to the French television program 'En toutes lettres' on October 29, 1968, to discuss Balzac with the writer Jean Dutourd. 'Balzac aujourd'hui? – Maurice Bardèche, Jean Dutourd. Emission *En toutes lettres*, 29 octobre 1968,' YouTube, accessed May 7, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQGApu4sJPY&t=299s>. Bardèche also published on other French authors such as Proust and Stendhal.

¹⁷⁸ Alice Yaeger Kaplan and Maurice Bardèche, 'The Late Show: Conversations with Maurice Bardèche,' *SubStance* 15, no. 1, issue 49 (1986): 44-68.

¹⁷⁹ "A naive elective affinity". See *ibid.*, 45-46.

¹⁸⁰ Robert Brasillach was a fascist journalist, director of *Je suis partout*. Friend of Charles Maurras, his trial attracted much attention in France, up to the point that representatives of the Resistance asked Charles de Gaulle that Brasillach be pardoned. Forgiveness was not granted, as Brasillach was considered a symbol of the fight against fascism. He was shot in 1945. See Barnes, 'I am a Fascist Writer,' 197.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 196.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Kaplan, Bardèche, 'The Late Show,' 46.

been at the forefront of political engagement before, transformed into a neo-fascist activist, but culture remained a central element of his political activity, as he engaged in what could be described as a culture war aimed at “sanitising” fascism¹⁸⁴. Because he thought that postwar democracy was oppressive¹⁸⁵, as it excluded everything and everyone that did not conform to democratic idealism¹⁸⁶, he wanted to rehabilitate fascism as a doctrine and to spread the neo-fascist point of view on politics and culture¹⁸⁷. To do so, he created the neo-fascist magazine *Défense de l’Occident*, which represented his main political accomplishment. Certainly the magazine did not have a wide circulation¹⁸⁸, but nevertheless was published for almost thirty years with increasing popularity within the European radical right. *Défense de l’Occident* was also known for proposing “alternative” representations of the Holocaust, whose existence was always denied by Bardèche¹⁸⁹. His political engagement was also aimed at addressing two central issues: European unity and socialism. When referring to socialism, though, he did not think of it in the Marxist sense, but rather in a corporatist sense¹⁹⁰. And, as it was the case also for others in the same political area, he thought that Europe’s political identity had to be represented precisely by corporatism, reinforcing the conception of Europe as a third block in the context of the Cold War. Corporatism was indeed a central aspect of *Défense de l’Occident’s* ideological manifesto, published in 1953¹⁹¹. In the same manifesto, Bardèche also referred to another tenet of his thought: the single nation as an obsolete political concept. The first point of the manifesto indeed describes the “national unities”¹⁹² as unable to face the military and economic challenges of modernity, especially *vis à vis* the United States and the

¹⁸⁴ Barnes, ‘I am a fascist writer,’ 205.

¹⁸⁵ Italian neo-fascists shared the same opinion about postwar democracy, which they considered “undemocratic”. See page 23.

¹⁸⁶ Ian Barnes, ‘Antisemitic Europe and the ‘Third Way’: The Ideas of Maurice Bardèche,’ *Patterns of Prejudice* 34, no. 2 (2000): 61.

¹⁸⁷ He engaged in what is called a ‘Gramscian struggle’ for the control of culture. See Barnes, ‘I am a Fascist Writer,’ 199.

¹⁸⁸ In the special issue of *Défense de l’Occident* entitled *Vingt-cinq ans contre l’imposture*, Jacques Poillot, a regular contributor, wrote a short history of the magazine and stated that it was never aimed at commercial success, therefore at reaching a high readership (“nous ne cherchions pas un succès commercial”). See Jacques Poillot, ‘Petite histoire de “Défense de l’Occident”,’ *Défense de l’Occident*, special issue *Vingt-cinq ans contre l’imposture* (December 1977-January 1978): 4.

¹⁸⁹ See Robert Faurisson, ‘Le Problème des chambres à gaz,’ *Défense de l’Occident*, no. 158 (June 1978): 32-50. As reported by Bardèche in ‘The Late Show’, Faurisson reached him to ask for his article to be published on *Défense de l’Occident*, as anyone else in France was not willing to publish it. In that article, Faurisson argued that the gas chambers were an invention of the Americans to make the concentration camps appear more atrocious than they really were. See Kaplan, Bardèche, ‘The Late Show,’ 63.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 182-183.

¹⁹¹ Maurice Bardèche, ‘Pourquoi l’Europe, comment l’Europe?’ *Défense de l’Occident*, no. 4 (April 1953), quoted in *Défense de l’Occident*, special issue *Vingt-cinq ans contre l’imposture* (December 1977-January 1978): 14-16.

¹⁹² “unités nationales”, *ibid.*, 14.

Soviet Union. Therefore, the European community, conceived of as a larger nation, was for Bardèche a necessity.

But why can he be considered a transmitter of such ideas? The reason for Bardèche's fame and ability to influence others probably lies in the fact that he was a talented and inspirational writer, described by Ian Barnes as a provider of "colourful and dreamlike visions"¹⁹³, which appear to have had a strong influential power. It is then understandable why *Défense de l'Occident* soon represented a crossroads for neo-fascist activists, as Bardèche could easily gather the best minds around him. Ernesto Massi, Julius Evola and Per Engdahl¹⁹⁴, for example, were regular contributors to the magazine. Massi and Engdahl in particular seem to have played a significant role in the development of Bardèche's thought¹⁹⁵. The Swedish Engdahl also went as far as writing that European unity was the logic consequence of corporatism¹⁹⁶. Bardèche then certainly had a fruitful relation with Italian neo-fascism, as demonstrated by references in *Défense de l'Occident* to the Italian Social Republic, or RSI, of the 1943-1945 period¹⁹⁷.

If on the one hand Bardèche was the receiver of neo-fascist myths created elsewhere, on the other hand he was also responsible for spreading such ideas. His capability to act as a Trojan horse and his intellectual relevance, particularly within the French speaking world, made it possible for him to come into contact with another important character, namely the Belgian Jean Thiriart¹⁹⁸. Thiriart certainly had clear ideas and a significant role in the development of his thought was played by the experience of the decolonization of the Congo, but Bardèche's influence is indoubted, especially on Thiriart's conception of Europe as a single, unified nation. However, the pupil also significantly diverged from his teacher on a few issues.

¹⁹³ Barnes, 'A fascist Trojan horse,' 194.

¹⁹⁴ Per Engdahl (1909-1994) was the founder, in 1941, of the New Swedish movement. Engdahl always supported the idea of a European fascism and had connections beyond Sweden. He also was very much in favour of corporatism, which he considered as "true" socialism as it was aimed at overcoming class struggle. See Lena Berggren, 'Intellectual Fascism. Per Engdahl and the Formation of 'New-Swedish Socialism',' *Fascism* 3 (2014): 69-92.

¹⁹⁵ "Massi was close to (and also influential on) activists such as Bardèche for his 'socialism'" in Mammone, *Transnational Neo-fascism in France and Italy*, 79.

¹⁹⁶ "L'unité européenne est la conséquence logique du corporatisme." See Per Engdahl, 'Le corporatisme politique de l'avenir,' *Défense de l'Occident*, no.55 (October 1958): 84.

¹⁹⁷ Diano Brocchi wrote in 1971, so a long time after the end of the Italian Social Republic, an article titled "L'expérience corporative", where he described the history of corporatism in fascist Italy up until the creation of the Social Republic, which he presented as an experience that could have led to interesting developments, if only the Second World War would not have led to a halt of all of fascist political activity. See Diano Brocchi, 'L'expérience corporative,' *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 97 (June-July 1971):15-28.

¹⁹⁸ Andrea Mammone has written that Maurice Bardèche acted as a sort of mentor for many younger activists, like Francois Duprat, Alain de Benoist and Jean Thiriart. See Mammone, *Transnational Neo-fascism in France and Italy*, 76.

IV. Jean Thiriart, a noteworthy thinker of European nationalism

Born in 1922 in Liege, Jean Thiriart, an optometrist¹⁹⁹, started his political experience as a socialist activist within the *Jeune garde socialiste* and the *Union socialiste anti-fasciste*, but then moved on to support the *Amis du grand Reich allemand* (Friends of the great German Reich), an association that operated in Belgium and that aimed at gathering extreme left activists favourable to the so-called European collaboration, or the annexation to the Reich²⁰⁰. These few elements on Thiriart's youth already demonstrate that his political position was not always clear and cannot be easily ascribed to the category of neo-fascism. For this reason, and for the sake of clarity, Thiriart's thought will be rather described as belonging to the more general category of the radical right. However, this point will be better analyzed later. Because of his collaboration with the Nazi regime, after the end of the Second World War Thiriart spent three years in prison, and returned to active politics only in 1960, on the occasion of the decolonization of the Congo. This time he founded the *Mouvement d'action civique*, or MAC, which aimed at the defense of Belgians in the Congo as well as at the defense of the colony more generally²⁰¹. The occasion of the birth of *Jeune Europe*, the movement to which Thiriart will dedicate much of his efforts, came two years later, in 1962, when a meeting of radical right European parties was organized in Venice with the goal of creating a single, European party. The participants included, among others, the MSI for Italy, the *Sozialistische Reichspartei* for Germany and the Union Movement for Great Britain. Thiriart's MAC participated as a representative of Belgium but, as a consequence of the failure of the meeting, as the participants could not reach any significant agreement, Thiriart decided to transform the MAC into *Jeune Europe*, because he was resolved to achieve, by himself, what had not been achieved with the cooperation of the other movements²⁰².

Like Maurice Bardèche, Thiriart strongly opposed what he called "little nationalism"²⁰³, or particularism, namely the nationalism expressed by states like France or Germany. As he wrote on the magazine *La Nation Européenne*²⁰⁴, countries like Italy, Belgium or the Netherlands did not exist in political terms, but only in cultural terms as there was a

¹⁹⁹ Jean Thiriart, *L'Europa. Un impero di 400 milioni di uomini*, trans. Daphne Varenia Eleusinia (Dublin: Avatar Editions, 2018), 16, (originally published in French: *Un empire de 400 millions d'hommes: l'Europe*. Brussels: Imprimerie Sineco, 1964).

²⁰⁰ Bouchet, *Le prophète de la grande Europe*, 7.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ "Petit-nationalisme". See Jean Thiriart, 'Le concept d'Europe Unitaire,' *La Nation Européenne*, no. 15 (15 March 1967): 28.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

“minimum dimension” to be called a nation. The minimum dimension is described by Thiriart in his *The Great Nation*²⁰⁵ as a “minimum critical mass relative to an age”²⁰⁶. He then made examples to clarify his theory: if in the twelfth century the Duchy of Brittany was considered “powerful, respected and independent”²⁰⁷, in the nineteenth century a polity like colonial France was. Therefore, in the middle of the twentieth century, the European dimension was necessary for independence, which was, according to Thiriart, a basic requirement for a nation. So, for Thiriart the single, “little” nations simply did not have what he described as the “right to nationalism”²⁰⁸, namely the nationalism of the French or the Germans was, he thought, the nationalism that only deluded and foolish people could express, as their countries were not nations anymore. A nation could be considered real in the twentieth century, he believed, only in the presence of certain characteristics: it could count on at least 200 million inhabitants, the possession of atomic weapons and the technical equipment necessary to be able to land on the moon by 1975²⁰⁹. Therefore, Thiriart counted only two nations in the mid 1960s: The Soviet Union and the United States. He also considered China as a nation on the rise, but not fully developed yet to be described as such²¹⁰. Clearly, the Europe of the time still had to undergo many changes and advancements in its unification in order to enter the rank of nations according to Thiriart. In his opinion, though, the path along which Europe was headed, namely the federalist path, was not the right one to achieve that goal. Federalism, he wrote, maintained internal divisions within Europe that certainly did not help²¹¹. The solution he proposed was that of the “nation unitaire”²¹², or unitary nation, so a single and bigger nation constituted through the unification of all the European states, of the West as well as of the East. What is very interesting to note here is the way in which he thought this Europe could be made. In his writings, Thiriart dedicated a significant amount of space to the reflection on how to bring together the peoples of Europe so that they could support this plan. He came to the conclusion that the idea of nationalism itself had to be changed. Nationalism, he wrote, had always been based on the actions, or presumed actions, performed in the past by a group of people, usually identified as the core of what would have later been considered as “the nation”. So a common and shared past is what has informed, at least since the nineteenth

²⁰⁵ Thiriart, *The Great Nation*, 49-50.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 49.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 50.

²⁰⁸ Thiriart, ‘Le concept d’Europe unitaire,’ 28.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 29.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 26.

century, the idea of nation as well as a sense of belonging to it. But for Thiriart this type of nationalism was not going to work well in the case of Europe. To him what really mattered was not “what we had done together” but “what we will do together”²¹³. Thiriart insisted on the so-called “community of destiny”²¹⁴, or the community that comes together because it is driven by the shared will to create something new for the future. Therefore, the people belonging to this community do not necessarily share a past, but certainly share the future. In order to build this shared future, the *élites* had to play a role of guidance, so for Thiriart the upper strata of society were the real agents of change and the masses could simply follow their lead.

Precisely the aspect of the *élite*'s agency as well as the importance given to the creation of a different type of nationalism based on a shared future, can demonstrate that Thiriart went further than other radical right intellectuals and activists in his thought. For example, Bardèche or Massi understood that the violent nationalism of the interwar period had to be changed and adapted to a new context, and this was a view generally shared by many neo-fascists after 1945. But they never questioned the nature of nationalism itself. Thiriart instead seems to have been aware of the mechanism underlying nationalism, namely what Eric Hobsbawm called the “invention of tradition”²¹⁵. To quote Hobsbawm, the nation is very much associated with such phenomenon, which rests on an “exercise in social engineering”²¹⁶, namely an exercise of invention of a shared past, or, in case a shared past actually existed, the stressing of a continuity that is “largely factitious”²¹⁷. Thiriart was aware of the fact that nations are social and cultural constructs made possible, first of all, by the political will of a usually selected group of people. The popular will comes after, once such political will has been translated into a simplified mass phenomenon. In *The Great Nation* Thiriart wrote that “nationalism should be a reasoned passion, a mission of intelligence”²¹⁸, therefore he demonstrated how different his approach was compared to that of his peers in the same political area: unlike others in the radical right, he was not a “victim”, but rather an agent of inventing traditions. He did not passively accept the mythology associated with traditional nationalism, nor limited himself to a readaptation of nationalism to a new context, but he deliberately broke nationalism down into its components and reassembled it in a way

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Thiriart, *The Great Nation*, 22.

²¹⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, ‘Introduction: Inventing Traditions,’ in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1-15.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 13.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 2.

²¹⁸ Thiriart, *The Great Nation*, 50.

that, he thought, would have made it possible to create a European form of nationalism. In a way it could be said that Thiriart understood the “chameleon-like”²¹⁹ nature of nationalism which, being as Michael Freeden wrote a “thin-centred ideology”²²⁰, could be transformed and showed a high degree of adaptability. His approach, though, did have some contradictions, for example in the fact that while he gave a significant importance to the *élite*’s agency and to the rationality that is involved in the creation of a form of nationalism, he nevertheless stressed the fact that the real Europe was that of the people, and he opposed this Europe, his Europe, to what he called the “Europe of Strasbourg” or the “legal Europe”, that, he thought, had nothing to do with the real nation²²¹. Nevertheless, he was not totally against the institutional Europe: in fact, unlike many others, including Bardèche himself, he welcomed the Treaty of Rome and the consequent creation of the European Economic Community as the creation of an economic power that would have inevitably led to the formation of a political power²²².

For what concerns the aspect of Thiriart’s political positioning, as it has been noted, his political views have been, throughout his life, complex and sometimes contradictory. Can he be considered a neo-fascist? According to *Corriere della Sera*²²³, one of the most important Italian newspapers, Jean Thiriart was a “sectarian” cooperating with neo-fascists and neo-nazis all over Europe, with the ambition of saving the dying German Nazism. But, according to Thiriart himself, the movement *Jeune Europe* was open to former fascists as well as to former communists, as long as they supported his project for European unification²²⁴. What is more, Thiriart was also very critical of the European extreme right and, in particular, of those movements’ inability to reach agreements for a shared project of European unification²²⁵. In a sense, Thiriart anticipated more contemporary political trends as he seemed to be quite skeptical of too strong associations with one party or another²²⁶. Nevertheless, his past as a friend of the German Reich as well as his involvement against decolonization are all elements

²¹⁹ Michael Freeden, ‘Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology?’ *Political Studies* XLVI (1998): 751.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 750.

²²¹ “A questa Europa ‘legale’, che rifiutiamo, opponiamo l’Europa legittima, l’Europa dei popoli, l’Europa dei combattenti, la nostra Europa. Noi siamo la Nazione Europa.” (“To this ‘legal’ Europe, which we reject, we oppose the legitimate Europe, the Europe of the peoples, the Europe of the fighters, our Europe. We are the European nation.”) See Jean Thiriart, *L’Europa*, 72.

²²² *Ibid.*, 146.

²²³ E.P., ‘Il neonazismo tedesco declina sempre di più,’ *Corriere della Sera* (5 March 1965): 4.

²²⁴ Thiriart, *The Great Nation*, 52.

²²⁵ Thiriart wrote that, having long been close the nationalists, he knew of their inability to build Europe. He probably implicitly referred to the Venice meeting of 1962, which marked the end of the attempts to build a unified far-right movement at the European level. See Thiriart, *L’Europa*, 136-137.

²²⁶ In *The Great Nation* he quoted Ortega y Gasset who used to say that “to be of the Left or of the Right is to choose one of the innumerable modes that are offered to man to be an idiot”. See Thiriart, *The Great Nation*, 53.

that should not be underestimated and that concur in considering him a radical right activist, although with a certain degree of intellectual autonomy. It is anyway more appropriate to avoid defining him as a neo-fascist, because such definition is normally used when an activist or a movement can show more consistent forms of connection with historical fascism.

V. “There is no other option in Europe than to choose the lesser evil”

This quotation is taken from an article published in the Italian magazine *Nazionalismo Sociale* and written by Filippo Anfuso²²⁷. In the article Anfuso, who supported the concept of “Europe a nation”²²⁸, wrote that only the respect for the national sovereignty of the European countries could have allowed the peoples of Europe to live happily and in peace²²⁹. Therefore, the European Community represented to him a necessary, even though unwelcomed, option. In other words, a lesser evil. This inevitably sounds like a contradiction, an ambiguity at least, of Anfuso’s thinking. It is necessary to note, though, that the criticism is in this case directed towards the so-called “Europe of Strasbourg”, and not towards the more general possibility of some form of European unification. But even considering the importance of forms of Europeanism, or even of more practical projects for European unification within the Italian and French neo-fascist contexts, the article written by Filippo Anfuso demonstrates that it is necessary not to underestimate the fact that nationalism was not completely dismissed by neo-fascists, even by those who had expressed forms of criticism towards it.

While the relevance of the European projects cannot be denied, it is nevertheless clear that nationalism was still very much part of the neo-fascist way of thinking²³⁰. The case of Jean Thiriart's thought is a perfect example of this ambiguity. Thiriart, for example, promoted the overcoming of “little nationalism”, which he considered as a form of delusion, but he did not totally refuse the concept of nationalism *per se*. In fact he questioned the more traditional

²²⁷ Filippo Anfuso, ‘Il Movimento Sociale e l’Unione Europea Occidentale,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 5, no. 1 (15 January – 15 February 1955): 16.

²²⁸ See pages 30-31.

²²⁹ Anfuso, ‘Il Movimento Sociale e l’Unione Europea Occidentale,’ 16.

²³⁰ See Edmondo Cione, ‘Nazionalismo Sociale Europeo,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 4 (15 June 1951): 7, in which Cione, while hoping for the development of a European nationalism, does not deny the very concept of nationalism; Ulick Varange, ‘L’impero europeo,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 7 (September – October 1951): 22 in which Varange, like Cione, expresses his hopes for a European form of nationalism; Maurice Bardèche, ‘L’Europe réelle,’ *Défense de l’Occident*, no. 116 (January 1974): 11, in which Bardèche insists on the necessity of the European nationalism, which, he thought, had not yet developed in 1974; in conclusion, see Maurice Bardèche, ‘La conspiration contre l’Europe,’ *Défense de l’Occident*, no. 41 (March 1957): 8, “In the world which arose out of the 1945 war there is no longer any opposition between nationalism and the European idea.” (“Dans le monde qui est né de la guerre de 1945 il n’y a plus d’opposition entre le nationalisme et l’idée européenne.”)

forms of nationalism and even understood the process of “inventing traditions” that lies at the basis of it, but to him nationalism remained the foundation of any further form of European unification, which would have been difficult without some form of collective identification in the first place. To him, Europe had to be envisaged as a nation, certainly a new type of nation, different from what had been tried before, but still a nation. There are many examples, scattered almost everywhere in articles and books, in which he refers to Europe as a nation, from “European fatherland” in *The Great Nation*²³¹, to the necessity to “give life to Europe by bringing nationalism to it”²³², ending with the idea of Europe as a “nation unitaire”²³³. Something similar could be said about Filippo Anfuso who, in the preface to the first issue of *Europa Nazione*, stated that the link between the concept of Europe and that of nation is an indissoluble one²³⁴. Others²³⁵, both inside and outside the neo-fascist circle, like for example the conservative thinker Jose Ortega y Gasset²³⁶, insisted on the necessary link between the concept of Europe and that of nation. So there is a clear ambiguity in the fact that, on the one hand, nationalism was criticized as something belonging to the past and that should be overcome, while on the other hand this concept seemed indispensable for the construction of a united Europe. Not always, though, it is possible to find clear connections between nationalism and Europe in the magazines analyzed. For example, the magazine *Imperium* clearly refers, in its title, to a different type of united Europe, one that resembles more of an empire than a nation. In fact, the concept of *Imperium* can be considered similar to that of *Abendland*.

The centrality of the reflection on nationalism in the neo-fascist debate, though, should not be seen as a demonstration of the fact that part of the European neo-fascists were not genuinely convinced by the idea of a united Europe. It should instead be considered as a demonstration of how complex and multifaceted the relation with nationalism was, in the postwar era, for the European radical right. It probably was not easy to transition from a form of violent nationalism, as it had been during the interwar and war period, to a new context where certain ideas were considered absolutely intolerable and out of time. And even in the cases of

²³¹ Thiriart, *The Great Nation*, 47.

²³² *Ibid.*, 77.

²³³ See note 212, page 47.

²³⁴ See pages 41. Anfuso’s idea of Europe as a nation did not differ much from that of Thiriart. Anyway, there is no clear evidence of contacts between the two.

²³⁵ See Emilio Canevari writing about a “united Europe” in ‘La tensione russo-americana,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 2 (15 April 1951): 9. Barna Occhini is more explicit with a reference to “nation Europe”. See Barna Occhini, ‘Politica estera, nazionalismo ed unità europea,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 9 (December 1951): 18.

²³⁶ Ortega y Gasset stated that he saw in the creation of a “national European state” the only remedy against communism. See José Ortega y Gasset, ‘Europa Nuova,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 4 (15 June 1951): 4.

intellectuals and thinkers who adopted a strong pro-European stance, nationalism was still part of their personal and political experience. Maurice Bardèche translated this ambiguity in a clear sentence:

“The European idea today is by no means a renunciation of the national idea, it is its extension and development.”²³⁷

Conclusion

If in the interwar period fascist projects of European unification were mostly driven by propaganda, with the ambition of national expansionism, in the postwar period neo-fascist and radical right activists more generally, started to consider Europe as a geographical and cultural entity with which they could positively identify, in a process that Andrea Mammone has defined as “de-territorialization”. This process was nevertheless made possible also by a long history of anti-liberal thinking about Europe, well represented by concepts such as *Abendland* and *Imperium*, as well as by the existence of transnational fascist networks. Precisely such networks have made it possible to the European radical right activists of the post Second World War to exchange and appropriate ideas on how Europe should be defined. The two most important definitions that can be detected in the magazines consulted can be summarized as “Europe as a corporatist project” and “Europe as a nation”. In the first case, we can see a strong emphasis on socially oriented policies and on a critique of materialism as defining elements of a European, corporatist identity, while in the second case the focus is mostly on overcoming what Jean Thiriart called “little nationalism” in the name of what could be seen as a form of continental nationalism. In both cases, liberal democracy is simply not considered in the definition of a European identity. While Jean Thiriart’s role was vital in questioning nationalism within the context of the European radical right, it is also important to remember the centrality of nationalism in the radical right thought and how complex the relation between nationalism and Europeanism was, especially within this political area.

²³⁷ “L’idée européenne n’est nullement aujourd’hui un renoncement à l’idée nationale, elle en est le prolongement et l’épanouissement.” See Maurice Bardèche, ‘La crise du pacte atlantique,’ *Défense de l’Occident*, no. 32 (April 1956): 10.

Chapter 3. Europe and the World

So far this research has dealt with parts of Italian and French and neo-fascism, with a focus on ideas about Europe as expressed in specific magazines. Such ideas have been presented as interconnected, moving from one context to another, therefore as “European”, not only in the sense of reflections on Europe, but also as products of transnational circles of exchange. What will be provided in this chapter, though, is an attempt at overcoming a Eurocentric approach by highlighting the influence of the external “others”²³⁸ on the way European neo-fascists thought of Europe. If on the one hand the historiography on post 1945 radical right’s ideas of Europe is still in its infancy, on the other hand the works that consider neo-fascism in its European dimension are a lot more numerous, but they mostly focus on national cases and are often based on a comparative approach, which implies a sort of watertight compartment way of conceiving of nations²³⁹. Also, these studies hardly ever consider the extra-European dimension, contrary to what is happening with the historiographical trend on pre-1945 fascism, where increasing attention is devoted to the non-European influence on fascism²⁴⁰. In this chapter the latter type of approach will be attempted, namely the focus will be moved on to the neo-fascist relation with the extra-European world as expressed in the magazines analyzed. More precisely, the United States, Latin America, the former European colonies and the Soviet Union will be considered.

It is indeed important to problematize this history by acknowledging that neo-fascism has not been a uniquely European phenomenon²⁴¹, that ideas did not only circulate within Europe but that the external “other”, sometimes seen as a threat, other times as a positive model, has been fundamental in the development of a neo-fascist conception of Europe.

I. The United States

In the magazines analyzed the United States is always considered in a very negative light, in many cases even Soviet Russia and its ideology, communism, are seen as less dangerous for

²³⁸ As it has been noted in *The History of the Idea of Europe*, Europe as an idea can be constructed as both on the basis of its presumed, inherent values and as defined by contrast with respect to an external “other”. The two approaches often go hand in hand. See Wilson and van der Dussen, *The History of the Idea of Europe*, 209.

²³⁹ As an example of this tendency see Piero Ignazi, *Extreme Right Parties in Western Europe* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2006).

²⁴⁰ See for example Finchelstein, *Transatlantic Fascism*.

²⁴¹ The concepts of “uniqueness”, “coherence” and “continuity” related to the history of Europe are seen by Brolsma, de Bruin and Lok as elements of historiographical Eurocentrism, therefore in need of problematization. See Marjet Brolsma, Robin de Bruin and Matthijs Lok, ‘Introduction,’ in *Eurocentrism in European History and Memory*, ed. Marjet Brolsma, Robin de Bruin and Matthijs Lok (Amsterdam University Press: Amsterdam, 2019): 12.

the development of a united Europe. While fascism has always seen the United States and its political and economic systems as a menace to the socially traditional and economically interventionist fascist State, it has to be noted that post Second World War neo-fascism attributed, if possible, even more significance to the opposition to the United States. This time, in fact, they thought that it was a matter of Europe's dignity and right to independence that was at stake. This is evidenced in particular by the reaction to two episodes that marked the history of the Cold War: the Yalta Conference and the Nuremberg trials. In his *The Great Nation*, Thiriart used very strong words against Yalta and the division of the world that resulted from that conference:

“We shall never recognize the division of our European fatherland at Yalta in 1945 between Yankee plutocracy and Russian Communism.”²⁴²

More precisely, while the rest of the world saw in Yalta the end of the Second World War, Thiriart, and many others within the ranks of European neo-fascism²⁴³, considered the conference as the beginning of a new phase of that war. In this new phase, Thiriart thought, war was directed against the European continent with the aim of destroying Europe's soul which, it is implied, was something completely different from both “Yankee plutocracy” and Russian Communism²⁴⁴. Moreover, Thiriart did not limit himself to thinking that the presumed war had an ideological nature, he thought that it had a colonial nature as well. Europe was in fact going to be divided into two spheres of influence, something that was considered by Thiriart as a strong interference into European affairs by the two superpowers, up to the point of tearing apart the continent. If this was not violent enough, the US and the USSR succeeded also in ousting Europe from the world, as Thiriart referred to all of the European former colonies that had undergone decolonization in the course of the 1940s and 1950s²⁴⁵. He thought that the importance that the United States attached to the liberation of the colonized people was not actually aimed at helping them reach freedom, but rather at the destruction of Europe's overseas influence. If the outcomes of the Yalta Conference were considered as very detrimental for the future of an independent Europe, the Nuremberg trials received even more concerned attention. The general sentiment expressed in the magazines is characterized by the impression that the winners of the Second World War had arbitrarily

²⁴² Thiriart, *The Great Nation*, 34.

²⁴³ Many are the articles focused on the division of Germany into different areas of influence, which is regarded as a fatal blow to the heart of Europe and as a consequence of Yalta. See for example Amedeo Giannini, ‘L’unificazione della Germania,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 6, no. 7-8 (25 July – 25 September 1956): 11-12; Guido Vestuti, ‘L’avvenire d’Europa,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 3, no. 5 (May 1953): 16-19;

²⁴⁴ Thiriart, *The Great Nation*, 34.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 35.

imposed on Europe their way of thinking of and of doing politics²⁴⁶. In 1951 Pino Romualdi wrote that the trials represented an unacceptable violation of justice as they condemned Western Europe to parliamentary democracy²⁴⁷. But Maurice Bardèche was certainly the one that most criticized the trials, as he went as far as stating that the testimonies given during the trials were fictitious and much influenced by hatred²⁴⁸. To be more precise, Bardèche questioned the truthfulness of the Holocaust, becoming the first to ever publicly deny its existence and the initiator of one of the most problematic traditions within the radical right²⁴⁹. He claimed that the concentration camps had been created in Hollywood studios in order to discredit the Nazi regime in such a terrible way that “punishment” imposed by the Americans would have not been avoidable²⁵⁰. Not surprisingly, then, in his interview with Alice Yaeger Kaplan he glossed over the six million dead Jews. The general feeling connected to Yalta and Nuremberg was that those two moments represented the upheaval of the Western world as it had been conceived of by fascism and nazism. Americans and Russians were, in the neo-fascists eyes, solely responsible for what they saw as the destruction of Europe, best represented by the division of Germany²⁵¹. And while neo-fascists certainly did not see Soviet Russia in a positive light, they turned more anger towards the Americans, which they identified as the occupiers of Western Europe. The United States inevitably had an influence also on the way the nascent European Community was designed, and the neo-fascists certainly did not fail to acknowledge this:

“That is why we voted against the Atlantic Pact, because we saw among those who had put together the strenuous Strasbourg building, the Nuremberg judges.”²⁵²

²⁴⁶ See for example Filippo Anfuso, ‘I rapporti italo-germanici,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 2, no. 4 (15 April 1952): 11, in which Anfuso states that the Nuremberg trials represented the apex of American propaganda aimed at the destruction of Hitler’s Germany;

²⁴⁷ “L’aver condannato gli europei a quella forma di reggimento politico a base esclusivamente parlamentare, che è tutt’ora d’uso chiamare democrazia.” (“The condemnation of Europeans to that form of political regiment based exclusively on parliamentary basis, which is still customary to call democracy.”) See Pino Romualdi, ‘Liberare l’Europa,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 9 (December 1951): 6.

²⁴⁸ Kaplan, Bardèche, ‘The Late Show,’ 48.

²⁴⁹ Considering Bardèche’s influential role within French and European neo-fascism, it is clear that his views on Holocaust have had a significant impact. As Ian Barnes has written: “Additionally, he has passed on a methodology for Holocaust denial which is rarely, if at all, acknowledged by his immoderate successors in this genre.” See Barnes, ‘Antisemitic Europe,’ 73.

²⁵⁰ Kaplan, Bardèche, ‘The Late Show,’ 47-48.

²⁵¹ As Karl Hammer wrote on *Défense de l’Occident*: “In the long run it is impossible to want to achieve Europe to the detriment of German unity.” (“Il est à la longue impossible de vouloir réaliser l’Europe au détriment de l’unité allemande.”). See Karl Hammer, ‘Le malaise allemand,’ *Défense de l’Occident*, no. 30 (November 1956): 22.

²⁵² “E’ per questo che noi votammo contro il patto atlantico, perché vedemmo fra coloro che avevano messo insieme il faticoso edificio di Strasburgo, i giudici di Norimberga.” See Filippo Anfuso, ‘Il Movimento Sociale e l’Unione Europea Occidentale,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 5, no. 1 (15 January – 15 February 1955): 15.

Particularly the economic nature of the Community raised a lot of criticism²⁵³. As Bardèche wrote, the construction of Europe started from the economy, politics was not much part of the initial plan for the European Community, and this, he thought, made it “a private preserve of the big banks and the cartels”²⁵⁴. The economic system adopted by the EEC and the American interference in both the economy and the politics of Europe certainly represented huge concerns, but they were not the only ones. American “soft power” also was perceived as very dangerous²⁵⁵, like some kind of drug that could make Europeans do whatever Americans wanted²⁵⁶. The quintessentially American materialism and consumerism, as promoted by movies, magazines and mass culture more generally, represented to the European radical right an insinuating and pervasive form of imperialism²⁵⁷. It has to be noted that, on this occasion only, neo-fascists seemed to be attuned to the feelings shared by many, at least in the cases of Italian and French societies. Anti-Americanism has in fact been a widely shared sentiment in both countries, France in particular has a long tradition of opposition to the American model that dates back to the eighteenth century²⁵⁸. But also in Italy anti-Americanism was significantly spread and even reached mainstream media and popular culture²⁵⁹. The MSI portrayed the American cultural influence as “a moral devastation”²⁶⁰ that risked destroying the “qualitative, latin civilization” in favour of the “quantitative, anglosaxon civilization”²⁶¹. The response to the American threat envisaged by neo-fascists was first of all of an economic and political nature. Some limited themselves to hoping that

²⁵³ See for example Maurice Bardèche, ‘La vraie relance européenne,’ *Défense de l’Occident*, no. 31 (March 1956): 5, in which Bardèche criticized the modern democracy “à l’américaine”, as it was characterized by a strong influence of private economic powers; Jacques Poillot, ‘Un grand pas vers l’Union européenne,’ *Défense de l’Occident*, no. 45 (August-September 1957): 41, where Poillot expresses criticism of the European Economic Community characterized, as he states, by too much economic “laissez faire, laissez passer”, which he thought would have been detrimental to the wellbeing of the people of Europe.

²⁵⁴ “Une chasse gardée des grandes banques et des cartels”. See Maurice Bardèche, ‘La règne de la buse,’ *Défense de l’Occident*, no. 58 (January 1959): 9-10.

²⁵⁵ See for example Giuseppe Rauti, ‘Conformismo dei giovani,’ *Imperium* 1, no. 4-5 (August-September 1950): 96, in which Rauti criticizes the presumed lack of personality of younger people who were only interested in American music and movies; Ugo Redanò, ‘Responsabilità della cultura,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 6, no. 1 (25 January – 25 February 1956): 16, where Redanò affirms that culture should be intended as a form of spiritual elevation aimed at the development of political action, and not as the consumerism of American products.

²⁵⁶ Thiriart, *L’Europa*, 64-65.

²⁵⁷ As Thiriart wrote “The subtle forms of US imperialism” (“Les formes subtiles de l’impérialisme américain”). See Jean Thiriart, ‘USA: Un empire de mercantils,’ *La Nation Européenne*, no. 21 (October 1967): 5.

²⁵⁸ Alexander Stephan, ed., *The Americanization of Europe. Culture, Diplomacy and Anti-Americanism after 1945* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), position 1048 of 11377, part I, Kindle.

²⁵⁹ Interesting is the case of Alberto Sordi, a very popular Italian comedian, active between the 1950s and the early 1990s, who, with the movie *Un americano a Roma* (1954), portrayed a naïf young man whose biggest dream was to become American. He ended up trying to commit suicide as his ambition did not stand the test of reality. Sordi said that with that character he was trying to save Italian youth from americanization. *Ibid.*, position 6565, part IV.

²⁶⁰ Luca Tedesco, *L’America a Destra. L’antiamericanismo nella stampa neofascista dal Patto Atlantico alla Seconda Guerra del Golfo* (Florence: Le Lettere, 2014), 33.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 34.

the European Common Market would not have been “a drainage channel for the American economy”²⁶², others referred more openly to corporatism. That was the case of Per Engdahl, frequent collaborator of *Défense de l'Occident* as well as one of the most passionate supporters of the idea of a united, anti-liberal Europe²⁶³. In an article entitled *Le corporatisme politique de l'avenir*²⁶⁴, Engdahl wrote that in order to make Europe a strong, united nation, it was necessary, first of all, to take into account the fact that most of the members of the Common Market were economically and militarily dependent on the US. That had to be changed. What he proposed was a corporatist economic and, even more importantly, political system which could be adopted by all European nations. If all of them would have turned to corporatism, he thought, then a common coordination system would have been put in place and made economic cooperation possible. All nations would have been equal, which would have greatly facilitated international exchanges, and this would have led to an independent and efficient European Community²⁶⁵. Engdahl also reiterated the project for a corporatist democracy, characterized by category representation, but, as was often the case within neo-fascism, he failed to address the fact that political corporatism had already been unsuccessfully tried throughout history and to explain why this time it should have worked. His article is nevertheless interesting in that it proposed a significant ideological view. Political corporatism, he stated, was not just a “third way” in between communism and liberalism, but what could be today defined as a post-ideology. To use Engdahl's own words, corporatism was “a dynamic ideology as opposed to old and stilted dogmatic systems”²⁶⁶, it could be adapted to different situations and did not follow a strict set of rules or dogmas. It was a “third way”, then, not only because it combined elements of both ideologies creating a new one, but also because it did not espouse a specific political tradition. In a way, and not without a significant degree of ambiguity, it was a form of neutrality, neither right nor left. It is interesting to note that such a clear overcoming of the left-right dichotomy makes its appearance in the neo-fascist magazines only in the late 1950s. This demonstrates that corporatism, which had long been associated to Europe by neo-fascists, continued to be a fundamental trait defining the neo-fascist's conception of Europe and that, precisely because it was described as a dynamic ideology, it could be adapted and changed once again, according to the circumstances. Jean Thiriart, in the 1960s, also insisted on the idea that the two dominating ideologies had in fact demonstrated to be outdated and motivated mostly by

²⁶² Thiriart, *The Great Nation*, 88.

²⁶³ See note 194, page 45.

²⁶⁴ Per Engdahl, ‘Le corporatisme politique de l'avenir,’ *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 55 (October 1958): 49-96.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 84.

²⁶⁶ “Une idéologie dynamique à l'opposé des systèmes dogmatiques anciens et guindés.” See *ibid.*, 79.

economic interest rather than by actual political conviction. This led him to shift the idea of a “third way” neutrality from a strictly political plan to a more specifically geopolitical one. More precisely, Thiriart supported all those countries, as well as political movements all over the world, that promoted an independent approach within the Cold War system. He devoted significant attention to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict²⁶⁷ in which he saw on one side American imperialism and on the other the legitimate opposition to it. His opposition to Israel seemed to be mostly determined by anti-Americanism, as Thiriart believed that the European nations should not have supported Israel, which he considered as an alien element within the Middle-Eastern context, but rather the Palestinians and the Arabs more generally, with whom, he thought, Europeans shared complementary geopolitical interests²⁶⁸, or, they could cooperate on the issue of oil, in order to prevent American infiltration in the area and exploitation of raw material²⁶⁹. But the support for the Arab world was not only Thiriart’s prerogative, the neo-fascists in general had sympathies for them, and for different reasons. Julius Evola, for example, liked the conservatism of part of the Muslim culture, as he believed it to be impervious to the immoral influences of modernity²⁷⁰. Many showed clear signs of anti-Semitism, which was then the reason for their sympathies towards the Arabs. This is the case particularly of the contributors of *Défense de l’Occident*, headed by the editor Maurice Bardèche, also known as a Holocaust denier. It is not uncommon to find in that magazine references to Israeli methods considered comparable to Nazi ones, in a dynamic that is usually defined as “holocaust inversion”²⁷¹, and particularly after the Six-Day War in 1967²⁷². In any case, it is useful to return to Thiriart’s thinking to understand how the support for the Arab world was part, more generally, of a form of opposition to the United States which, as Thiriart believed, had to be carried out on many fronts²⁷³.

²⁶⁷ While Thiriart certainly focused much attention on this topic, he was not the only one to do so. For example, a special issue of *Défense de l’Occident*, published after the Six-Day War, was entirely dedicated to what was defined as “The Israeli Aggression” (“L’Aggression Israélienne”). See *Défense de l’Occident, L’Aggression Israélienne*, no. 64 (July – August 1967).

²⁶⁸ Jean Thiriart, ‘USA: le déclin d’une hégémonie,’ *La Nation Européenne*, no. 18 (July 1967): 5.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Elisa D’Annibale, Veronica De Sanctis and Beatrice Donati, *Il filoarabismo nero. Note su neofascismo italiano e mondo arabo (1945-1973)* (Rome: Edizioni Nuova Cultura, 2019), 116.

²⁷¹ “Holocaust inversion, or portraying Israelis and Jews as Nazis. This anti-Semitic concept claims that Israel behaves toward the Palestinians as Germany did to the Jews in World War II. ‘The victims have become perpetrators,’ is one major slogan of the inverters.” See Manfred Gerstenfeld ‘Holocaust Inversion: The Portraying of Israel and Jews as Nazis,’ Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, accessed May 22, 2021, <https://jcpa.org/article/holocaust-inversion-the-portraying-of-israel-and-jews-as-nazis/>.

²⁷² See for example Pierre Fontaine, ‘Le Moyen-Orient à l’heure du pétrole,’ *Défense de l’Occident*, no. 64 (July-August 1967): 60, where Fontaine lamented the pervasiveness of Israeli propaganda on European media and the methods used against the Palestinians by describing Israelis as “Nazi oppressors”.

²⁷³ “The United States can only be brought down by a collection of wars and local insurgencies... they must also be dispersed over theatres of operation very far from each other.” (“On ne peut abattre les Etats-Unis que par

II. Latin America

“We all have one huge enemy: US imperialism. And we will never be too many to destroy it.”²⁷⁴

This sentence of Thiriart well summarizes his geopolitical reflection. US imperialism could be defeated only through the cooperation of all the countries oppressed by the overwhelming US power. Unity, then, was central in this plan, which did not only encompass Europeans and Arabs, but also Chinese and Latin Americans. But, as Thiriart noted, those “fronts” did not necessarily communicate, thus rendering their battle ineffective. In particular, he underlined the absence of Europe in a group that gathered the oppressed countries of the so-called third world. He defined such group as a “religious front”, namely a group of countries that would never have achieved what they wanted, independence from US interference, precisely because they did not involve Europe in their fight²⁷⁵. If Europe had participated, or, if the European industrial power had supported the cause, then the “religious front” would have been transformed into a “political front”, one that could actually have had a real impact on world politics and threatened the American domination²⁷⁶. So, for Thiriart Europe could have played a central role as head of a coalition against the United States, though he did not consider the implications that such an organized coalition would have had, namely it would have closely resembled a form of colonialism. He nevertheless continued to focus on his plan, in which Latin America certainly played an important role. In particular, he saw in Cuba a very important strategic player. He thought that Cuba, with “Castro's will and the exemplary psychological value of the ‘Guévarian challenge’²⁷⁷”, had to lead a series of uprisings in Latin America, in order to hit the United States in a context in which, according to Thiriart, they were already fragile enough, and where other revolutionary groups would have easily formed²⁷⁸. It is not known whether Fidel Castro ever read Thiriart’s articles, but it is certain that another Latin American leader, or to be more precise, former leader, did. Juan Peron was in fact a reader of *La Nation Européenne* and a strong supporter of Thiriart’s ideas, up to the

une collection de guerres et d’insurrections locales...il faut aussi les disperser sur des théâtres d’opérations très éloignés les uns des autres.”) See Jean Thiriart, ‘Inventaire de l’anti-américanisme,’ *La Nation Européenne*, no. 23 (December 1967): 18.

²⁷⁴ “Nous avons tous un seul et gigantesque ennemi: l’impérialisme américain. Et nous ne serons jamais de trop pour le détruire.” See Thiriart, ‘USA: le declin d’une hégémonie,’ 5.

²⁷⁵ Thiriart, ‘Inventaire,’ 17.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ “La volonté de Castro et la valeur psychologique exemplative du défi guévarien.” See *ibid.*

²⁷⁸ Jean Thiriart, ‘Pour une alliance tactique de dimension planétaire,’ *La Nation Européenne*, no. 16 (15 April 1967): 16.

point of giving an interview to that very newspaper²⁷⁹. Peron, who in the course of the interview also suggested “Monde Nouveau” as a better and more inclusive title than *La Nation Européenne*²⁸⁰, presented a significant similarity to Castro, namely that both had reached government, therefore had succeeded in bringing anti-Americanism from the margins of society to the top of State governance²⁸¹. But he, unlike Castro, had long been thinking of an independent third block that would have also involved Europe. This explains why he was receptive to Thiriart’s ideas. Peron started developing his plan for what Loris Zanatta has called the “Latin block”²⁸², namely a coalition of American and European Latin countries, as early as 1946, when he was first elected as prime minister. Back in the mid to late 1940s, the Cold War division of the world was not yet as clear as it would have already been in the early 1950s, therefore there was still space for imagining a world order that would have encompassed other blocks beyond the United States and Soviet Russia. Peron, as Argentinian prime minister, had different reasons for devoting a significant amount of attention to foreign policy. There were economic reasons, because Argentina was one of the largest producers of grain and meat, which had to be placed on the global market. There were political reasons, as Peron wanted to favour a process of reintegration of Argentina into the international *fora*, since the country had suffered from isolation during the Second World War²⁸³. But, even more importantly, Peron had ideological reasons, as he was convinced of the effectiveness of *justicialismo*, or the Argentinian way to national socialism and corporatism, and that the Latin countries of the world could have profitably allied in an anti-liberal, catholic league in order to prevent the division of the world in only two blocks²⁸⁴. Initially this project had the support of Pope Pius XII, but as soon as the Cold War dynamics became more clear, indicating that the United States were emerging as the most important defender of Western christianity against the threat of communism, the Vatican did not show much interest in Peron’s ambitions anymore²⁸⁵. Even with Spain and Italy, the two catholic European countries *par excellence*, the plan did not take off, as Spain, in an attempt to be admitted to

²⁷⁹ Thiriart himself interviewed Peron in Madrid, were the former Argentinian prime minister was exiled. See Jean Thiriart, ‘Entretien avec le général Peron,’ *La Nation Européenne*, no. 30 (February 1969): 20-22.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

²⁸¹ As Ivan Krastev has noted, this tendency was indeed typical of the 1950s and 1960s, when anti-Americanism became an element characterizing Latin American mainstream politics and not just marginal groups, as it had been in the first decades of the 20th century. See Ivan Krastev, ‘Introduction,’ in *The Anti-American Century*, ed. Ivan Krastev and Alan McPherson (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2007), 3.

²⁸² Loris Zanatta, ‘Peron e il miraggio del Blocco latino. Di come la guerra fredda allargò l’Atlantico Sud,’ *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* 63, no. 2 (July-December 2006): 217-260.

²⁸³ Loris Zanatta, *Il Peronismo* (Rome: Carocci, 2008), 72.

²⁸⁴ Zanatta, ‘Peron e il miraggio del Blocco latino,’ 233.

²⁸⁵ Zanatta argues that the Vatican sympathized with Peron not out of real conviction, but simply because there was still no certainty about the role that the United States would have played in defense of Christianity. *Ibid.*, 228.

the block of Western countries, could not afford too much closeness with Peronist Argentina and the Italian government was also very determined in removing from Italy even the slightest hint of fascism²⁸⁶. Therefore, Peron had to acknowledge that, as the Cold War unfolded, his plans for a reunification of the two catholic sides of the Atlantic were becoming less and less realistic. And when he spoke to Jean Thiriart in 1968 he had partly changed his mind, in the sense that Europe was not part of his plans anymore. His focus was then exclusively on Latin America, on the necessity to form an alliance of Latin American countries, or, as Thiriart would have said with regard to Europe, a Latin American nation²⁸⁷. Peron's attention had been moved to the continental level and also to the so-called third world countries, with which he believed that Argentina, as well as other Latin American countries, had to ally. He suggested, though, that Europe speed up and strengthen its unification project, or the continent would be dominated by other powers by the year 2000²⁸⁸. In a way it could be said that Peron's ideology on foreign relations represented a joining link between the pre-Second World War plans for a fascist international and the Cold War non-alignment movement.

Although it is important to reflect on Peron's international plans, it is very important to also try to answer a few fundamental questions: what does the fact that Thiriart as well as other authors appreciated Peron's ideas tell us about their conception of Europe? What did they most admire in Peron's projects? Before answering, it has to be noted that although Thiriart was certainly the most vocal supporter of Peron, others expressed their sympathies too. For example, Francois Duprat rejoiced of Peron's return to the Argentinian government in 1973, writing that finally a "former fascist leader" was again head of state after many years of political "ostracism"²⁸⁹. Attention to Peron's activity had been expressed in *Défense de l'Occident* as early as the 1950s²⁹⁰ and also on the Italian *Nazionalismo Sociale*²⁹¹. To understand what those exponents of neo-fascism liked in Peron's ideas, it is necessary to remember what Peronism represented. As Federico Finchelstein has written, if democracy

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 250, 255.

²⁸⁷ Thiriart, 'Entretien,' 21.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 22.

²⁸⁹ Francois Duprat, 'Le retour de Peron,' *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 112 (July-August 1973): 36.

²⁹⁰ Author unknown, 'L'Argentine sans Peron,' *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 42 (April 1957): 29-31; Juan Peron, 'Bilan du justicialisme par Juan Peron,' *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 48 (December 1957): 14-21.

²⁹¹ See for example Ermanno Amicucci, 'L'Argentina di Peron,' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 2 (15 April 1951): 13-16; Ermanno Amicucci, 'Insurrezione Argentina,' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 7 (September – October 1951): 10-12; Amedeo Giannini, 'La situazione in Argentina,' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 5, no. 10 (15 September – 15 November 1955): 13-14.

started in Athens, modern democratic populism began in Buenos Aires²⁹². Juan Peron's main legacy is that he succeeded in transforming fascism for a democratic era. Peronism embraced constant change and adaptation in order to "practice illiberal politics in a democratic key"²⁹³. To quote Maurice Bardèche, it could be said that Peronism represented a perfect example of the "reborn order of Sparta" under a different name and a different face. Francois Duprat did in fact not fail to notice, in *Défense de l'Occident*, precisely the fact that in 1973 fascism was something completely different from what it was in 1923 or 1933²⁹⁴. He also added that European neo-fascists should have drawn inspiration from Peron's strategy, as what he did was certainly more effective than what they had been able to do in Europe²⁹⁵. So what can be understood is that what they admired in Peron was his ability to reinvent fascism in a powerful and effective way. In a sense, Peron was ahead of European neo-fascists on the same path, namely that of adapting a profoundly anti-liberal ideology to a world that instead had made democracy its bulwark. Therefore, connecting the history of post 1945 European neo-fascism to the history of Peronism can help us understand a few central aspects: first of all, European neo-fascism was, in that period, something in between fascism proper and what would have later been called right wing populism, or between an anti-liberal ideology and an anti-liberal practice within a democratic context²⁹⁶. That was for them an era of transformations but also of acknowledgement of their own limited possibilities. Latin American populism represented a positive model of reinvention, as well as an emblem of the opposition to the United States. So we can understand that the conception of Europe, as expressed by a part of neo-fascists, would have had to encompass all of these elements and, in more geopolitical terms, continue along the path of the interwar fascist international.

²⁹² Federico Finchelstein, *From Fascism to Populism in History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017), 81.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 203.

²⁹⁴ Duprat, 'Le retour de Peron,' 37.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 39.

²⁹⁶ The passage from historical fascism to right wing populism in Europe is a topic that would in itself deserve a separate research. It is nevertheless possible to try to define a few elements that can help understand this better. As it has already been noted, neo-fascism was a first attempt at changing fascism, the increased focus on pan-Europeanism instead of nationalism, for example, testifies of the will to adapt that ideology to a new context. Important is also the movement from an openly undemocratic, fascist approach to the progressive acceptance of democracy as well as the overcoming of the Right/Left dichotomy. The years and actors studied in this research are exemplary but, at the same time, a focus on other movements and periods would be useful to complete this picture. For example the French *Nouvelle Droite*, a movement led by Alain de Benoist and active between the 1970s and the 2000s, went even further than, for example, *Jeune Europe*, as it openly incorporated in its ideology elements of the New Left and progressively abandoned any reference to historical fascism. See Tamir Bar-On, 'Fascism to the Nouvelle Droite: The Dream of Pan-European Empire,' *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 16, no. 3 (2008): 327-345. Also, it is important to note that a magazine like *Défense de l'Occident* pre-dated the *Nouvelle Droite* and the ideas expressed within this think tank. This makes clear the linearity of movement from one phase to another. See Nigel Copsey, 'Conference Report. Fascist Ideologues. Past and Present, Centre for Fascist, Anti-Fascist and Post-Fascist Studies, Teesside University, 4-5 July 2013,' *Fascism* 2, no. 2 (2013): 265.

III. The Eurafrican Project

As Peo Hansen and Stefan Jonsson have noted, colonialism has often been related to specific national cases, like the history of the British or the French empires. But only very rarely, if ever, has the colonial experience been related to the history of European integration²⁹⁷. This tendency has to be considered as a consequence of the fact that such history is still studied with an apologetic approach, which has long been questioned and abandoned for what concerns the history of nations. This approach inevitably produces a teleological narrative, which depicts the process of European integration as a linear path towards a desired outcome. Whatever stands as an obstacle in this path, whatever obscures the image of a democratic and liberal Europe, like for example colonialism or fascism, is simply not taken into account²⁹⁸. But, in order to understand the neo-fascist projects for European unification, as well as their sense of European identity, colonialism needs to be considered.

The years of decolonization have coincided with the formation and development of neo-fascist movements in Europe, both being products of the Cold War. And such movements, particularly in the French speaking context, have benefited greatly from the decolonization process. As Andrea Mammone has noted, although the decolonization of Algeria certainly represented the defeat of French imperialism, and therefore also of French fascism, as colonial conquest has always been one of the most important goals for fascists, it is also true that the feelings and dynamics generated by the loss of such an important colony have been of the utmost importance in mobilizing French neo-fascists as well as other neo-fascists in Europe²⁹⁹, for example in Italy. Italy had lost its colonies in a totally different way, as they were taken by Great Britain in 1942. Therefore Italian neo-fascists turned their attention to the French colonies and they were influenced mostly by Algerian decolonization. For the majority of both French and Italian neo-fascists, the loss of French Algeria represented a defeat of white civilization, and, as such, a defeat of the whole of Europe³⁰⁰. The French paratroopers in Algeria were seen as role models fighting with pride “as bastions of a pure

²⁹⁷ Peo Hansen and Stefan Jonsson, ‘Another Colonialism: Africa in the History of European Integration,’ *Journal of Historical Sociology* 27, no. 3 (September 2014): 444-445.

²⁹⁸ See on this Julia Nordblad, ‘The Un-European Idea: Vichy and Eurafrica in the Historiography of Europeanism,’ *The European Legacy* 19, no. 6 (2014): 712. Nordblad has studied the writings of two French Europeanists, Louis Le Fur and René Viard, in the years 1940-1941, and has demonstrated that imperialism was at the core of their conception of Europe. Therefore Nordblad argues that, although imperialist and collaborationist views are considered un-European, they nevertheless played an important role in the history of Europeanism and that a more comprehensive way of defining ‘Europe’ is necessary.

²⁹⁹ Mammone, *Transnational Neo-fascism in France and Italy*, 104.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 95-96.

European identity”³⁰¹. Therefore, a maximum of mobilization was needed to rescue the prestige of the continent. As an example of such political mobilization, Jean Thiriart’s *Mouvement d’action civique*, later transformed into *Jeune Europe*, is a case in point. As it has already been noted, Thiriart re-entered politics in 1960, at the time of the decolonization of the Congo, through the creation of a movement that was aimed at the defence of Belgians in that colony. Though this case does not concern Algeria, it is nevertheless inscribed into the radical right *Zeitgeist* of those years. What is particularly interesting about the MAC is precisely the fact that only two years after its formation it became *Jeune Europe*, therefore this case is a good example of the strong interconnectedness between the colonial theme and Europe in the minds of a part of European neo-fascists. To be more precise, many of them, particularly in France and Italy, saw Europe and Africa as complementary and described such complementarity as “Eurafrica”³⁰². As Guy Martin has written, the ideology of Eurafrica represents a body of thought according to which Europe and Africa are inextricably connected on social, cultural, economic and political levels³⁰³, therefore colonial ties are presented as fruitful for both parts involved and not to be dissolved. In clearer terms, this ideology actually appeared as a cover for concrete European interests aimed at perpetuating policies of colonial exploitation even once the decolonization process had been terminated³⁰⁴. Although the project for Eurafrica was particularly appreciated among a good part of French and Italian neo-fascists, it can not be said that it was only their prerogative. In fact, as Hansen and Jonsson have written, the term “Eurafrica” was so popular in the 1930s, when it first appeared, that it is hard to establish who coined it³⁰⁵. The project was advocated by people as different as Count Coudenhove-Kalergi³⁰⁶ and Giuseppe De Michelis, a fascist diplomat who believed that the creation of a Eurafrican union would have led the way to future economic integration all over the world³⁰⁷. After 1945, Eurafrica appealed also to the likes of Robert

³⁰¹ Ibid., 114.

³⁰² See for example: Biagio Pace, ‘Necessità mediterranea,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 5 (July 1951): 5-7; Edmondo Cione, ‘Nord Africa esplosivo,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 5, no. 7-8 (15 July – 15 September 1955): 11-14; Pierre Fontaine, ‘Vers des autonomismes internes africaines,’ *Défense de l’Occident*, no. 30 (February 1956): 19-25; Pierre Fontaine, ‘L’Eurafrrique,’ *Défense de l’Occident*, no. 31 (March 1956): 10-15; Maurice Bardèche, ‘L’Algérie dans le cadre eurafricain,’ *Défense de l’Occident*, no. 52 (April 1958): 7-8.

³⁰³ Guy Martin, ‘Africa and the Ideology of Eurafrica: Neo-Colonialism or Pan-Africanism?,’ *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 20, no. 2 (1982): 222.

³⁰⁴ Guy Martin describes it as a justification for an unequal relation. Ibid., 226.

³⁰⁵ Peo Hansen and Stefan Jonsson, ‘Bringing Africa as a ‘Dowry to Europe’. European Integration and the Eurafrican Project, 1920–1960,’ *International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 13, no. 3 (2011): 449.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 450.

³⁰⁷ Jens Steffek and Francesca Antonini, ‘Towards Eurafrica! Fascism, Corporativism and Italy’s Colonial Expansion,’ in *Radicals and Reactionaries in Twentieth-Century International Thought*, ed. Ian Hall (London:Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 156-158.

Schuman and Jean Monnet, who apparently suggested that France should give Africa as a “dowry” to Europe³⁰⁸. Post Second World War neo-fascists’ ideas did not differ significantly from those of De Michelis in the 1930s or from those of Monnet in the 1950s. According to the authors of *Défense de l’Occident*, the unification of Europe would have significantly helped retaining and exploiting the European colonies in Africa. As Yves Jeanne wrote in 1959, France had to ask for the cooperation of the European states in order to protect Algeria and to share the resources of the African continent³⁰⁹. Therefore, according to Jeanne, if France wanted to retain Algeria, it could do so only through the help of the rest of Europe. French Algeria was not realistic anymore, only European Algeria, he thought, would have been viable³¹⁰. It is also important to note that, although contemporary readers of these sources would agree on the exploitative nature of the Eurafrikan project, the authors themselves never portrayed their intentions as exploitative. On the contrary, their most generally shared point of view was that they thought, genuinely or not, that they could have helped Africa. Maurice Bardèche, for example, believed that Europeans had a duty to protect Africans, in particular from the influences of communism and capitalism³¹¹. Having been aware or not of European exploitation, it remains a fact that they saw Africa as a “lung” that Europe needed in order to survive³¹². According to Domenico Latanza, only Eurafrikan could give Europe the strength to be economically and politically independent, therefore implying that the European mission was bound to the success of the Eurafrikan project³¹³.

It can be assumed that Eurafrikan would have served another purpose as well, namely that of defining a European identity. In this case, the example of Italian colonialism will serve to clarify this issue. Italian colonialism was indeed characterized by a strong identitarian component, as a process of “othering” of the colonized people served the scope of defining a national identity. The “heteroreferent racialization”, as it has been defined by Gaia Giuliani and Cristina Lombardi-Diop, involved the identification of the other as “black” and therefore

³⁰⁸ Hansen and Jonsson, ‘Bringing Africa,’ 454.

³⁰⁹ “La France doit appeler les Etats d’Europe à collaborer à la mise en valeur de l’Algérie et, par delà celle-ci, de l’Afrique et s’engager à mettre en commun au sein de la future Confédération Européenne les ressources du continent noir et de l’ensemble algéro-saharien. Pour cela, une mutuelle compréhension est nécessaire.” See Yves Jeanne, ‘De l’Algérie française à l’Algérie européenne,’ *Défense de l’Occident*, no. 58 (January 1959): 13.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

³¹¹ Maurice Bardèche, ‘Le racisme, cet inconnu,’ *Défense de l’Occident* (new series), no. 7 (September 1960): 10.

³¹² “Un poumon”, as Bernard Vorge wrote. See Bernard Vorge, ‘Un entretien avec Benoist-Méchin et Michel Massenet sur l’Algérie et l’avenir français et européen,’ *Défense de l’Occident*, no. 43 (June 1957): 18.

³¹³ Domenico Latanza, ‘L’Italia e la terra d’Africa,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 2, no. 8 (15 August – 15 September 1952): 9.

as other than oneself³¹⁴. Such process is certainly part of any form of colonization, but in the case of Italy the process of othering was particularly important. With Italy's significant internal diversity, colonialism was presented, particularly during the fascist regime, as the completion of an unfinished process of unification³¹⁵. Therefore, thinking of the case of Europe and its identity, to this day a highly contested topic, and of the importance that a part of neo-fascists attributed to the concept of European nationalism, it would not be unfounded to think that the Eurafrikan project also had an identity value, in the sense that it might have served as an instrument to define a European identity. It is necessary, though, to be cautious as the analyzed sources do not give us enough evidence on this aspect and, more generally, Eurafrikanism is a topic that has not received much academic attention as of today, but future research could explore new interesting paths, also based on Matthew Stanard's reflection that "it was the rest of the world that defined or shaped Europe rather than the other way around."³¹⁶

IV. The Soviet Union

When it comes to the Soviet Union, the sources analyzed are particularly interesting, as they demonstrate a certain ambiguity on the role Soviet Russia and communism played in defining a form of European identity. Despite the neo-fascist nature of the magazines, they contain many examples of positive, or at least not so negative, evaluations of aspects of Soviet Russia. For instance, in 1951 Emilio Canevari wrote in *Nazionalismo Sociale* that the belief that Stalin's rule was dictatorial had no foundation at all, and that State interference in the USSR was probably not more radical than what occurred under socialist rule in the United Kingdom³¹⁷. Whereas in *Défense de l'Occident* we can find a very positive opinion of the Russian soldier, described as "disciplined and dedicated to the group of which he is a part, with legendary solidity" and "invincible obstination"³¹⁸. Interestingly then, in the issue 2 of *Nazionalismo Sociale* of 1957, we can read the opinions of Edvard Kardelj, one of Tito's

³¹⁴ Gaia Giuliani and Cristina Lombardi-Diop, *Bianco e nero: storia dell'identità razziale degli italiani* (Milan: Mondadori, 2013), 39.

³¹⁵ Alessandro Triulzi, 'La costruzione dell'immagine dell'Africa e degli africani nell'Italia coloniale,' in *Nel nome della razza: il razzismo nella storia d'Italia 1870-1945*, ed. Alberto Burgio (Bologna: il Mulino, 1999), 169.

³¹⁶ Matthew G. Stanard, 'The colonial past is never dead. It's not even past: Histories of Empire, Decolonization, and European Cultures after 1945,' in *Material Culture in Modern Diplomacy from the 15th to the 20th Century*, ed. Harriet Rudolph and Gregor M. Metzger (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 156.

³¹⁷ "Tuttavia, essa non è probabilmente maggiore di quanto si verifica sotto il governo socialista in Inghilterra." See Canevari, 'La tensione russo-americana,' 10.

³¹⁸ "Naturellement discipliné et dévoué au groupe dont il fait partie, d'une solidité légendaire dans la défensive, suppléant, dans l'attaque, ce qui lui manque en élan et initiative par une invincible obstination." See Jean Perre, 'Les conceptions militaires soviétiques (I),' *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 29 (December 1955): 37.

most important collaborators, who, writing about the then recent events in Hungary, stated that the new socialist practices, as represented for example by Titoist Yugoslavia but also by the attempted political change in Hungary, were not to be seen as an aggression against socialism but rather as an attempt to improve it³¹⁹. Also Maurice Bardèche, who would be very hard to consider as a sympathizer of communism, wrote that if Stalinism was to be conceived as a form of ruling by a small, elitist group, then he was in favour of Stalinism³²⁰. These positive evaluations, though, should not be overestimated and considered as proof that part of European neo-fascism had strong links with Soviet Communism. It has to be remembered that neo-fascism was the product of fascism, therefore communism certainly was not approved or advocated. Marta Lorimer, who has done substantial comparative research on the *Movimento Sociale Italiano* and on the *Front National* in the 1970s-1990s period, has written that for both parties communism represented the most feared enemy or, as she eloquently puts it, “the most prominent Other”³²¹. While Lorimer’s research deals with a different time frame than the one of this research, and focuses on mainstream neo-fascist parties that are not equivalent to a restricted group of thinkers and activists, there is no convincing evidence that can lead to think that communism was not seen as an enemy also by the authors of *Défense de l’Occident* or *Nazionalismo Sociale*. That said, such ambiguity towards communism has to be questioned, as, for example, nothing of this kind can be found about US liberalism. Jean Thiriart, who described Stalin as “Staline le Grand”³²², or Stalin the Great, thought that the European nationalism that he advocated had to be directed first of all against the United States, only secondarily against the Soviet Union³²³. The reason for this was, he stated, that the Soviet Union had demonstrated, throughout the years, of being far less intimidating, especially for what concerned the economic and industrial levels, than the United States³²⁴. Also, the ideological appeal of communism had in the previous decades constantly diminishing in Europe³²⁵. So for Thiriart, Soviet Russia could be considered as a weaker enemy, and, precisely because of its presumed inferiority to the United States, maybe even as a possible interlocutor of an independent Europe. This consideration did not diminish Thiriart’s fear of a communist infiltration in Western Europe through the Italian and French

³¹⁹ Edvard Kardelj, ‘La crisi ungherese e la democrazia socialista,’ *Nazionalismo Sociale* 7, no. 2 (25 February – 25 March 1957): 29.

³²⁰ “Si le stalinisme est la conduite d’un peuple par le petit groupe de ceux qui dans une nation possèdent les vertus de l’énergie et du civisme, alors il n’y a pas de doute, nous sommes de stalinien.” See Maurice Bardèche, ‘L’effritement des certitudes,’ *Défense de l’Occident*, no. 72 (May 1968): 5.

³²¹ Lorimer, ‘What do they talk about when they talk about Europe?’ 7.

³²² Thiriart, ‘Inventaire,’ 13.

³²³ Thiriart, ‘Pour une alliance tactique,’ 16.

³²⁴ Thiriart, ‘USA: le declin d’une hégémonie,’ 8.

³²⁵ Ibid.

communist parties³²⁶, even to the point of demanding their dissolution³²⁷. Maurice Bardèche went so far as to state that the communism of the French and Italian parties was nothing more than support for Russian imperialism³²⁸. But it is nevertheless undeniable that this part of European neo-fascism did not have a totally negative view on the USSR. Such an ambiguous attitude, characterized by sympathies towards the Soviet world as well as of outright condemnations, emerged particularly during the events of 1956 in Hungary. Bardèche sided with the Hungarian insurgents, condemning the failure of the United States to respond to the protest. As he wrote, the US first incited Hungarians with pro-rebellion radio broadcasts³²⁹ and later abandoned them, leaving them alone in front of the Soviet military power³³⁰. On the contrary, both Bardèche and Thiriart wanted to express their solidarity with the insurgents. Bardèche underlined the fact that Hungarians, as well as other Eastern Europeans, had been reduced to silence for too long³³¹. Thiriart wrote in *The Great Nation* that the peoples of Western and of Eastern Europe were indissolubly bonded by a “solidarity of destiny”³³² and that Eastern Europeans were, in his eyes, “Europeans before being communists”³³³. More specifically, Thiriart articulated his idea by writing that, as Eastern Europeans were Europeans to all intents and purposes, if they had crossed the Iron Curtain and found refuge in a Western country, they would have had the right to be entitled to the citizenship of that country to officially become Europeans³³⁴. Bardèche, writing during the months of the Prague uprising, stated that the insurrectional movements in Eastern Europe were of the utmost importance in order to create an independent Europe between the two blocs³³⁵. Thiriart went even further. As of the early 1960s, he started elaborating a theory called communitarianism³³⁶. Communitarianism could be described as yet another re-elaboration of corporativism, based on a few basic principles, like the social protection of workers and the protection of European politics from the interference of extra-European economic super

³²⁶ Thiriart, *The Great Nation*, 40-41.

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Maurice Bardèche, ‘Défaites et crimes de l’Occident,’ *Défense de l’Occident*, no. 37 (November 1956): 3-4.

³²⁹ Mark Pittaway has noted that radio broadcasts did indeed play a significant role in the Hungarian uprising of 1956. More specifically, he has analyzed the influence of the American channel “Voice of Free Hungary” and its impact in determining the development of political sub-cultures, as well as its role as a provider of the “education of dissent”. See Mark Pittaway, ‘The education of dissent: The reception of the Voice of Free Hungary, 1951–56,’ *Cold War History* 4, no. 1 (2003): 99, 105.

³³⁰ Bardèche, ‘Défaites,’ 7.

³³¹ Bardèche, ‘L’effritement des certitudes,’ 4.

³³² Thiriart, *The Great Nation*, 36.

³³³ Ibid., 72.

³³⁴ Ibid., 73.

³³⁵ Bardèche, ‘L’effritement des certitudes,’ 7.

³³⁶ Not to be confused with communitarianism as an often slightly anti-liberal philosophy that underlines the moral importance of the community as opposed to the (isolated) individual.

powers³³⁷. Communitarianism, Thiriart believed, could have been the best political system for a united Europe, especially considering the fact that it would have more easily appealed to Eastern Europeans, given their familiarity with communism. More specifically, Thiriart envisaged a process of denationalization of the Eastern industries and economic enterprises and of de-Americanization of the Western ones, so that the two parts of Europe could have been more easily harmonized³³⁸. Also, he thought that the administration executives of the East would have played a great role in a communitarian Europe, thanks to their previous work experience in the Soviet administration³³⁹. But, even more importantly, Thiriart thought that communitarianism would have represented a viable ideological project too, one that would have encompassed aspects of the socialist utopia but with more realism. It would have then been possible to think of a Europe not only based on the economy, but also on a political project aimed at guaranteeing a better quality of life for both the East and the West³⁴⁰.

What can be understood from these sources is that, first of all, a part of the European neo-fascists deemed Eastern Europe an indispensable element for the creation of a united Europe. Second, Jean Thiriart believed that communism had something to teach the neo-fascists, namely that in order to develop a European project that appealed to a significant number of people it was necessary to incorporate a part of the communist set of values, such as the idea of the centrality of workers within society. Those values had to be readapted and reinterpreted under the key of corporatism, but still a successful project had to encompass some form of utopian vision, of hope for a better world. Moreover, ideas such as the centrality of the community or collectivism certainly were aspects that united fascism with communism, and precisely this can help to understand why the criticism towards the Soviet Union was not as strong as that towards the United States. Considering the ambiguous opinion of communism that has been so far noted, probably others, within the same neo-fascist current, shared Thiriart's ideas.

Conclusion

While the other chapters are characterized by a closer focus on neo-fascist reflections on Europe as produced in Italy, France and Belgium, in this chapter the importance of taking into account the "others" of Europe in order to fully understand how a group of neo-fascists

³³⁷ Thiriart, *The Great Nation*, 84.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 128-129.

³³⁹ Jean Thiriart, 'Echiquier mondial et national-communisme,' *La Nation Européenne*, no. 11 (15 November 1966): 13.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 46-47.

conceived of Europe has been demonstrated. A few central aspects have emerged: for a part of European neo-fascists the United States represented the most significant and threatening “other”, as based particularly on economic, political and cultural reasons. As has been noted³⁴¹, not all neo-fascists agreed on who represented the biggest threat for Europe, as both the Italian MSI and the French FN saw the Soviet Union as the most prominent one. It is nevertheless true that, even though people like Jean Thiriart and Maurice Bardèche saw the United States in a very negative light, their criticism was never transformed into an actual plan for an uprising or violence against the US. Therefore, the fight against the United States was mostly conceived of as a fight for cultural dominion, even though aimed at a future political independence of Europe. While the opposition to the United States served also as a way to define what Europe should not have been, the opposition to the Soviet Union was something more complex and ambiguous. Elements of communism and of the sentiment and values that were associated with it were incorporated, especially by Thiriart, into the design of communitarianism, as a political project for a united Europe. Also, the solidarity with Eastern Europeans was presented as a central element of a neo-fascist Europe. Not less important to the protagonists of this research was Latin America, particularly Peronist Argentina, and the model it represented as a case of readaptation of fascism for a democratic period. Their Europe indeed had to be an example of a “third way”, of a political system that could have allowed them to continue supporting anti-liberal ideas and practices in a democratic context. And it is indeed right to assume that the groups of activists and thinkers considered in this research were, among others, in the middle between fascism and right wing populism. The Eurafrikan project also significantly contributed to the definition of Europe as intrinsically different from “black” Africa. While the exploitative nature of such a project was shared also by non-right wing radicals, the role and relevance of Eurafrikan for both neo-fascists and democratic European politicians still has to be assessed as well as to what extent it influenced a specific form of European identity.

³⁴¹ See the reference to Marta Lorimer’s work at page 57.

Conclusion

“Because we love Europe, we accuse the EU of killing Europe”³⁴²

Marine Le Pen, December 2017

Marine Le Pen uttered this sentence on December 16, 2017, at a meeting of the leaders of the European far right in Prague. That meeting was also attended by Geert Wilders, leader of the Dutch Party for Freedom, Marcus Pretzell, a former MEP for the Alternative for Germany party, Janice Atkinson, a former MEP for Ukip and members of the Italian Northern League and Austria’s freedom party among others³⁴³. The attendees were mostly concerned with the arrival of Muslim immigrants in Europe and criticized the European Union for its policies on migration. The fact that they organized a European meeting and that Le Pen pronounced that sentence demonstrates that the far right is not entirely foreign to some sort of European collaboration. They have made it clear on many different occasions that they will never support the European Union, but this does not necessarily mean that they do not have their own conception of Europe. So far, though, not much attention has been devoted to understanding what kind of conception that is, when it originated and how it transformed. Probably Andrew Glencross was right when he wrote of the “Imperial-like claim”³⁴⁴ of the EU to be the only one able to speak on behalf of Europe, and the consequence that this has, for example, in terms of scholarly research on anti-liberal conceptions of Europe. However, what emerges from a research, as in this case, on the conception of Europe as expressed within neo-fascist magazines in the 1950s and 1960s, is that, as Martin Conway has written³⁴⁵, other options were available. This means that, although liberal democracy was the predominant political system in postwar Europe, although the European Community was under organization, other ways of conceiving of democracy (or not conceiving of it at all) or of a unitary Europe did exist. Indeed, other options were available, though not always in plain sight. Therefore, what we see nowadays, as for example the Prague meeting of 2017, should not be considered astonishing, as it is the product of a much longer history of “other options”. This thesis has demonstrated the existence of other options in the field of democracy, as a

³⁴² Author unknown, ‘Europe’s far-right leaders vow to create a united Europe without EU’ *CBS News* (16 December 2017), accessed June 25, 2021, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/europes-far-right-leaders-meet-in-prague/>.

³⁴³ See Robert Tait, ‘Far right to gather in Prague as fears grow of rising Czech populism,’ *The Guardian* (15 December 2017), accessed June 25, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/dec/15/far-right-conference-prague-czech-republic-populism-marine-le-pen>.

³⁴⁴ See page 8.

³⁴⁵ See page 23.

part of Italian neo-fascists in the 1950s were highly critical of liberal democracy up to the point of questioning the principle of equality. Others instead were not necessarily critical of the concept of democracy *per se*, but could accept it only if defined by the adjective “corporatist”. Therefore there were neo-fascist currents that revived the idea of political corporatism, namely electoral representation through categories and not individuals. Corporatism certainly was a dominant theme within many of the magazines consulted, and that is because it represented one of the defining projects of the neo-fascist left. As it has been demonstrated, the *Repubblica Sociale Italiana* played a central role in reviving the myth of corporatism. Such a myth certainly influenced the reflections on democracy, but it also had an impact on the way a part of European neo-fascism thought of Europe and of a possible form of European unification. As Ernesto Massi, one of the leaders of the Italian neo-fascist left said in 1953, during a meeting of pro-European radical right forces, they, as exponents of the radical right, were not satisfied with how the European community was built and believed that they could offer something better to the peoples of Europe. They could offer “true democracy”³⁴⁶. Such true democracy could be defined as a project for European unification characterized by political and economic corporatism which, it was believed, could have protected Europe from external interferences, as Jean Thiriart wrote, their Europe would not have been a “drainage channel for the American economy”³⁴⁷. The idea that Europe could have been united in a sort of corporatist community and that corporatism would have been a defining element of a European identity was not new in the 1950s, as the Montreux congress in 1934 served already as a platform for the diffusion of such an idea. However, the idea of corporatism was transformed and readapted many times. For example Per Engdahl wrote, in 1958, that corporatism could be “a dynamic ideology as opposed to old and stilted dogmatic systems”³⁴⁸ and that it could represent a “third way” not only in its being different from both Soviet Communism and US liberalism, but also as a sort of neutral post-ideology representing Europe. Therefore, Engdahl’s thought implied that corporatism could also have a geopolitical value, namely it could have been the ideology for an independent Europe. If this was only implied by Engdahl, Thiriart went further in his idea of Europe as a nation. Again we see that another option was available also for what concerned nationalism, namely part of the European radical right was able to reinterpret nationalism in a new, politically less problematic way or, as Andrea Mammone has written, they de-territorialized fascism by focusing on Europe as a pristine territory with which they could positively identify. In this

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ See page 57.

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

way, neo-fascism could be cleansed of one of the worst characteristics of fascism, namely violent nationalism. Certainly the neo-fascist relationship with nationalism, as it has been presented in this thesis, was not linear. On the contrary, even when they referred to “Europe a nation” or, as in the case of Thiriart, were able to detect the “social engineering” at the basis of the invention of a national tradition, they could not do completely away with the concept of nationalism. Theirs was not a refusal of nationalism, but more of a reworking. As Bardèche wrote, the European idea was not, as far as they were concerned, a renunciation of the national idea, but rather its extension and development. Therefore, if Europe had to be conceived of as a sort of large, continental nation, then it also had to be considered in its relationship with the rest of the world. The third chapter of this thesis has demonstrated that the neo-fascist reflection on Europe, especially for what concerned the aspect of identity formation, was very much influenced by external “others”. The importance of the non-European context can also be understood by taking even a quick look at a magazine like *Défense de l'Occident*, in which articles dedicated to the Algerian decolonization, Peronist Argentina or the economic stand of the United States were not uncommon. The United States and Soviet Russia certainly received a lot of attention as they were seen as the two most significant “others”, namely as outright enemies. If Soviet Russia did have some elements that were considered, according to the authors here presented, not to be disliked, the US model was contrasted in each of its aspects, from the economy to politics and culture. Even more interesting, though, might be the reflections expressed about the former African colonies and Latin America which, contrary to the United States and Soviet Russia, were not considered as enemies. For what concerns the former African colonies, it is clear that part of French and Italian neo-fascism, throughout at least the 1950s and 1960s, believed that Europe and Africa had to be united in order to form the so-called Eurafrica. Eurafrica, as Guy Martin has written, was to be considered as a body of thought as well as a project based on the idea that Africa and Europe were interconnected on different levels, economic, political, cultural, and that such a special relationship, so to speak, had to be maintained. Although the sources analyzed do not present any indication that neo-fascists thought of Eurafrica in exploitative terms, the intention to keep oppressing Africa with the goal of taking advantage of its resources seems undeniable. But Eurafrica could also have had another meaning, namely that of helping to define a specific European identity. As the history of colonialism has in many instances showed, the exploitative relationship with the non white “other” also served as a means to define whiteness as a form of identity. Considering the fact that Europe was, and is, an indefinite concept and that a sense of European belonging beyond one’s own nation state

has not, to this day, developed, if only in limited circles, it might be that part of the French and Italian neo-fascism implicitly saw in the Eurafrikan project a tool to better define the European identity, or the European “whiteness” as opposed to the African “blackness”. This, though, remains an assumption that still has to be validated, as the sources considered in this research do not reveal more than what has been here hypothesized. Also very interesting is the fact that a significant part of the authors showed, through the articles, sympathy and support towards Peronist Argentina, during the years of Peron’s government as well as during his exile in Madrid. Considering the fact that Peron was the first in the postwar history to succeed in establishing a populist government³⁴⁹, it can be safely assumed that those neo-fascist who supported his politics also saw in it a model to look up to. What has indeed been seen throughout this research is that European neo-fascism in general was characterized by the willingness to survive and to adapt to the new, democratic context. Although the actors presented in this thesis certainly still had connections with historical fascism, they also tried to navigate the postwar world as best as they could. The fact that they looked up to Peronism can be seen as proof of the fact that they were indeed transitioning towards something new, but were still very much in the middle of that journey. What exactly was their positioning on that path, though, would require a separate research.

This thesis has indeed provided some answers, but probably also many questions. Further research topics could in fact be considered: it could be possible to investigate other magazines or movements in other European countries. Roger Griffin has referred to the groupuscularization typical of neo-fascism, and precisely such groupuscularization suggests taking into account many different agents within the neo-fascist universe in order to fully understand what their reflections on European unification were. One research can only take into account a piece of the whole story. Trying to investigate the impact of Peronism on European neo-fascism could also be very interesting. This could help better understand the passage from historical fascism to populism and could also enrich the knowledge of neo-fascism by seeing it in its transnational and non-European dimension. Similarly, Eurafrikan is another topic that deserves more scholarly attention than has so far received and research on this topic could problematize the history of neo-fascism as well as the more general history of European unification. A research on this topic could add an important element to a story that is not investigated enough, namely that of Europe’s darker aspects and their influence on the

³⁴⁹ “Modern populism begins with the early Cold War, postfascist contestation of democracy in Latin America, which points to the centrality of Peronism to any study of the history of populism.” See Finchelstein, *From Fascism to Populism in History*, 102.

way Europe, seen both as a unification project and as a cultural construct, has been developed.

If a meeting of European far right leaders was organized in 2017, if it received significant public attention, lots more than one could expect for what might be called political fringes, then it means that this history, the history of the neo-fascist conception of Europe, indeed has to be studied. This thesis has provided some answers and has been a first step into what could be transformed into a larger body of research.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Books

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

Thiriart, Jean. *L'Europa. Un impero di 400 milioni di uomini*. Translated by Daphne Varenya Eleusinia. Dublin: Avatar Editions, 2018 (originally published in French: *Un empire de 400 millions d'hommes: l'Europe*. Brussels: Imprimerie Sineco, 1964).

Thiriart, Jean. *The Great Nation. Unitarian Europe – from Brest to Bucharest*. Translated by Alexander Jacob. Melbourne: Manticore Press, 2018 (originally published in French: *La grand nation: 65 thèses sur l'Europe*. Brussels, 1965).

Periodicals

Défense de l'Occident

Author unknown. 'L'Argentine sans Peron.' *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 42 (April 1957): 29-31.

Bardèche, Maurice. 'Défaites et crimes de l'Occident.' *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 37 (November 1956): 3-11.

Bardèche, Maurice. 'L'Algérie dans le cadre eurafricain.' *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 52 (April 1958): 7-8.

Bardèche, Maurice. 'L'effritement des certitudes.' *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 72 (May 1968): 3-12.

Bardèche, Maurice. 'L'Europe réelle.' *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 116 (January 1974): 5-14.

Bardèche, Maurice. 'La conspiration contre l'Europe.' *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 41 (March 1957): 3-8.

Bardèche, Maurice. 'La crise du pacte atlantique.' *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 32 (April 1956): 3-11.

Bardèche, Maurice. 'La règne de la buse.' *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 58 (January 1959): 3-10.

Bardèche, Maurice. 'La vraie relance européenne.' *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 31 (March 1956): 3-9.

Bardèche, Maurice. 'Le racisme, cet inconnu.' *Défense de l'Occident* (new series), no. 7 (September 1960): 3-11.

Bardèche, Maurice. 'Pourquoi l'Europe, comment l'Europe?' *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 4 (April 1953), quoted in *Défense de l'Occident*, special issue *Vingt-cinq ans contre l'imposture* (December 1977-January 1978): 14-16.

Brocchi, Diano. 'L'expérience corporative.' *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 97 (June-July 1971):15-28.

Duprat, Francois. 'Le retour de Peron.' *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 112 (July-August 1973): 36-40.

Engdahl, Per. 'Le corporatisme politique de l'avenir.' *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 55 (October 1958): 49-96.

Faurisson, Robert. 'Le Problème des chambres à gaz.' *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 158 (June 1978): 32-50.

Fontaine, Pierre. 'L'Eurafrique.' *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 31 (March 1956): 10-15.

Fontaine, Pierre. 'Le Moyen-Orient à l'heure du pétrole.' *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 64 (July-August 1967): 54-64.

Fontaine, Pierre. 'Vers des autonomismes internes africaines.' *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 30 (February 1956): 19-25.

Hammerl, Karl. 'Le malaise allemand.' *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 30 (November 1956): 19-22.

Jeanne, Yves. 'De l'Algérie française à l'Algérie européenne.' *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 58 (January 1959): 11-15.

Peron, Juan. 'Bilan du justicialisme par Juan Peron.' *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 48 (December 1957): 14-21.

Perre, Jean. 'Les conceptions militaires soviétiques (I).' *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 29 (December 1955): 34-41.

Poillot, Jacques. 'Petite histoire de "Défense de l'Occident".' *Défense de l'Occident*, special issue *Vingt-cinq ans contre l'imposture* (December 1977-January 1978): 3-9.

Poillot, Jacques. 'Un grand pas vers l'Union européenne.' *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 45 (August-September 1957): 40-45.

Vorge, Bernard. 'Un entretien avec Benoist-Méchin et Michel Massenet sur l'Algérie et l'avenir français et européen.' *Défense de l'Occident*, no. 43 (June 1957): 12-22.

Europa Nazione

Anfuso, Filippo. Proemio. *Europa Nazione* 1, no. 1 (January 1951): 6-9.

Imperium

Accame, Giano. 'L'incubo dell'eguaglianza.' *Imperium* 1 (new series), no. 1 (May 1954): 9-10.

Erra, Enzo. 'Liberazione radicale.' *Imperium* 1, no. 1 (May 1950): 1-4.

Erra, Enzo. 'Libertà e liberalismo.' *Imperium* 1, no. 2 (June 1950): 25-27.

Erra, Enzo. 'Stile.' *Imperium* 1, no. 4-5 (August-September 1950): 73-75.

Evola, Julius. 'Il senso dell'Imperium.' *Imperium* 1, no. 1 (May 1950): 11.

G. A. 'Dalla cronaca alla storia.' *Imperium* 1 (new series), no. 1 (May 1954): 6.

Gamba, Carlamedeo. 'Borghesia.' *Imperium* 1, no. 4-5 (August-September 1950): 77.

Mussolini, Benito. 'Dottrina del Fascismo.' *Imperium* 1, no. 1 (May 1950): 22-23 (reproduction of an article published before 1945, the original date is not specified).

Mussolini, Benito. 'Pensiero fascista. Da che parte va il mondo.' *Imperium* 1, no. 2 (June 1950): 38-40 (originally published in *Gerarchia*, 25 February 1922).

Rauti, Giuseppe. 'Conformismo dei giovani.' *Imperium* 1, no. 4-5 (August-September 1950): 96.

Rauti, Giuseppe. 'Della gerarchia.' *Imperium* 1, no. 3 (July 1950): 67-68, 70.

Rauti, Giuseppe. 'Regime democristiano.' *Imperium* 1, no. 1 (May 1950): 5-6.

Stasi, Giuseppe. 'La nostra politica estera.' *Imperium* 1, no. 1 (May 1950): 7-9.

Teodorani, Vanni. 'L'avvenire del M.S.I.' *Imperium* 1, no. 3 (July 1950): 69-70.

La Nation Européenne

Thiriart, Jean. 'Echiquier mondial et national-communisme.' *La Nation Européenne*, no. 11 (15 November 1966): 12-13, 23.

Thiriart, Jean. 'Entretien avec le général Peron.' *La Nation Européenne*, no. 30 (February 1969): 20-22.

Thiriart, Jean. 'Inventaire de l'anti-américanisme.' *La Nation Européenne*, no. 23 (December 1967): 12-18.

Thiriart, Jean. 'Le concept d'Europe Unitaire.' *La Nation Européenne*, no. 15 (15 March 1967): 26-29.

Thiriart, Jean. 'Pour une alliance tactique de dimension planétaire.' *La Nation Européenne*, no. 16 (15 April 1967): 14-16.

Thiriart, Jean. 'USA: le declin d'une hégémonie.' *La Nation Européenne*, no. 18 (July 1967): 4-6, 8.

Thiriart, Jean. 'USA: Un empire de mercantis.' *La Nation Européenne*, no. 21 (October 1967): 4-7.

Nazionalismo Sociale

Anfuso, Filippo. 'Il Movimento Sociale e l'Unione Europea Occidentale.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 5, no. 1 (15 January – 15 February 1955): 14-19.

Anfuso, Filippo. 'I rapporti italo-germanici.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 2, no. 4 (15 April 1952): 10-12, 20.

Author unknown. 'Programma del Movimento Sociale Italiano.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 3, no. 5 (May 1953): 15-16.

Amicucci, Ermanno. 'Insurrezione Argentina.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 7 (September – October 1951): 10-12.

- Amicucci, Ermanno. 'L'Argentina di Peron.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 2 (15 April 1951): 13-16.
- Benfatti, Emilio. 'Verso il tramonto della democrazia.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 6, no. 1 (25 January – 25 February 1956): 14-15.
- Canevari, Emilio. 'La tensione russo-americana.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 2 (15 April 1951): 9-11.
- Cione, Edmondo. 'Il suffragio universale (risposta a Benedetto Croce).' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 1 (15 March 1951): 5-6.
- Cione, Edmondo. 'M.S.I. e P.N.M.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 3, no. 1 (20 January 1953): 1.
- Cione, Edmondo. 'Nazionalismo Sociale Europeo.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 4 (15 June 1951): 5-8.
- Cione, Edmondo. 'Nord Africa esplosivo.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 5, no. 7-8 (15 July – 15 September 1955): 11-14.
- Cione, Edmondo. 'Universalità di Roma.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 7 (September – October 1951): 19-20, 23.
- Frenchman (a). 'Destino dell'Europa ed avvenire del mondo.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 7 (September-October 1951): 24-27, 32.
- Giannini, Amedeo. 'L'unificazione della Germania.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 6, no. 7-8 (25 July – 25 September 1956): 11-12.
- Giannini, Amedeo. 'La situazione in Argentina.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 5, no. 10 (15 September – 15 November 1955): 13-14.
- Graziani, Rodolfo. 'L'Italia deve tornare in Africa.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 2 (15 April 1951): 4-5.
- Kardelj, Edvard. 'La crisi ungherese e la democrazia socialista.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 7, no. 2 (25 February – 25 March 1957): 22-29.
- Latanza, Domenico. 'L'Italia e la terra d'Africa.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 2, no. 8 (15 August – 15 September 1952): 8-10.

Maritain, Jacques. 'La persona umana e la società.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 3, no. 6 (30 August 1953): 20-24.

Maurras, Charles. 'Il mito della democrazia e i suoi errori.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 3, no. 3 (20 March 1953): 15-18 (originally published in: D. Frescobaldi, *La controrivoluzione* (Barrès, Maurras, L. Daudet). Florence: L'Arco, 1949.)

Mazzoni, Piero. 'La crisi è del sistema.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 4, no. 11 (15 November – 15 December 1954): 7-8.

Occhini, Barna. 'Dittatura, democrazia e fascismo.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 5 (July 1951): 22.

Occhini, Barna. 'Politica estera, nazionalismo ed unità europea.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 9 (December 1951): 18.

Ortega y Gasset, José. 'Europa Nuova.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 4 (15 June 1951): 3-4.

Pace, Biagio. 'Necessità mediterranea.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 5 (July 1951): 5-7.

Pini, Giorgio. 'Educazione politica e azione sociale.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 6 (31 August 1951): 15, 20.

Redanò, Ugo. 'Responsabilità della cultura.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 6, no. 1 (25 January – 25 February 1956): 14-16.

Romualdi, Pino. 'Liberare l'Europa.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 9 (December 1951): 6-7, 9.

Soffici, Ardengo. 'La tradizione italiana e la crisi della civiltà liberale.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 1 (15 March 1951): 4.

Spirito, Ugo. 'Individuo e Stato nella concezione corporativa.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 1 (15 March 1951): 25-28.

Tosatti, Quinto. 'Come si difende la democrazia.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 1 (15 March 1951): 13-15.

Varange, Ulick. 'L'impero europeo.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 1, no. 7 (September – October 1951): 21-23.

Vestuti, Guido. 'L'avvenire d'Europa.' *Nazionalismo Sociale* 3, no. 5 (May 1953): 16-19.

Secondary Sources

Literature

Avagliano, Mario and Marco Palmieri. *L'Italia di Salò, 1943-1945*. Bologna: il Mulino, 2017.

Bar-On, Tamir. 'Fascism to the Nouvelle Droite: The Dream of Pan-European Empire.' *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 16, no. 3 (2008): 327-345.

Bar-On, Tamir. *Where Have All the Fascists Gone?* London-New York: Routledge, 2007.

Barnes, Ian. 'A fascist Trojan horse: Maurice Bardèche, Fascism and Authoritarian Socialism.' *Patterns of Prejudice* 37, no. 2 (2003): 177-194.

Barnes, Ian. 'Antisemitic Europe and the 'Third Way': The Ideas of Maurice Bardèche.' *Patterns of Prejudice* 34, no. 2 (2000): 57:73.

Barnes, Ian. 'I am a Fascist Writer: Maurice Bardèche – Ideologist and Defender of French Fascism.' *The European Legacy* 7, no. 2 (2002): 195-209.

Bauerkamper, Arnd. 'Ambiguities of Transnationalism: Fascism in Europe between Pan-Europeanism and Ultra-Nationalism, 1919-1939.' *GHI London Bulletin* 29, no. 2 (2007): 43-67.

Berger, Stefan. 'A Return to the National Paradigm? National History Writing in Germany, Italy, France, and Britain from 1945 to the Present.' *The Journal of Modern History* 77, (September 2005): 629-678.

Bosworth, Richard James Boon, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Bouchet, Christian. *Le prophète de la grande Europe, Jean Thiriart*. Nantes: Ars Magna, 2018.

Brolsma, Marjet, Robin de Bruin and Matthijs Lok. 'Introduction.' In *Eurocentrism in European History and Memory*, edited by Marjet Brolsma, Robin de Bruin and Matthijs Lok, 11-21. Amsterdam University Press: Amsterdam, 2019.

Burgos, Juan Manuel. *An Introduction to Personalism*. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2018.

Capozzi, Eugenio. 'La polemica antipartitocratica.' In *Storia delle destre nell'Italia repubblicana*, edited by Giovanni Orsina, 179-206. Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2014.

Cassata, Francesco. *A destra del fascismo. Profilo politico di Julius Evola*. Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2003.

Cassina Wolff, Elisabetta. *L'inchiostro dei vinti. Stampa e ideologia neofascista, 1945-1953*. Milan: Mursia, 2012.

Cento Bull, Anna. 'Neo-fascism.' in *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism*, edited by Richard James Boon Bosworth, 586-606. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Conway, Martin. 'Democracy in Postwar Western Europe: The Triumph of a Political Model.' *European History Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (2002): 59-84.

Conze, Vanessa. 'Facing the Future Backwards. 'Abendland' as an Anti-liberal Idea of Europe in Germany between the First World War and the 1960s.' In *Anti-liberal Europe. A Neglected Story of Europeanization*, edited by Dieter Gosewinkel, 72-90. New York-Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2015.

Coogan, Kevin. 'Lost Imperium: the European Liberation Front (1949-54).' *Patterns of Prejudice* 36, no. 3 (2002): 9-23.

Copsey, Nigel. 'Conference Report. Fascist Ideologues. Past and Present, Centre for Fascist, Anti-Fascist and Post-Fascist Studies, Teesside University, 4-5 July 2013.' *Fascism* 2, no. 2 (2013): 263-270.

Corduwener, Pepijn. *The problem of Democracy in Postwar Europe. Political Actors and the Formation of the Postwar Model of Democracy in France, West Germany and Italy*. London-New York: Routledge, 2017.

Costa Pinto, Antonio and Federico Finchelstein. *Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Europe and Latin America. Crossing Borders*. London-New York: Routledge, 2019.

Costa Pinto, Antonio. 'Fascism, corporatism, and authoritarian institutions in interwar European dictatorships.' In *The Nature of Fascism Revisited*, edited by Antonio Costa Pinto, 119-151. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012.

Cuzzi, Marco. *L' internazionale delle camicie nere : i CAUR, Comitati d'azione per l'universalita di Roma, 1933-1939*. Milan: Mursia, 2005.

- D'Annibale, Elisa, Veronica De Sanctis and Beatrice Donati. *Il filoarabismo nero. Note su neofascismo italiano e mondo arabo (1945-1973)*. Rome: Edizioni Nuova Cultura, 2019.
- De Felice, Renzo. *Mussolini l'alleato. II. La guerra civile, 1943-1945*. Turin: Einaudi, 1997.
- De Michelis, Giuseppe. *World Reorganisation on Corporative Lines*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1935.
- Duranton-Crabol, Anne-Marie. *L'Europe de l'Extreme Droite. De 1945 à nos jour*. Paris: Edition Complexe, 1991.
- Ferraresi, Franco. *Threats to Democracy: The Radical Right in Italy After the War*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.
- Finchelstein, Federico. *From Fascism to Populism in History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017.
- Finchelstein, Federico. *Transatlantic Fascism: Ideology, Violence, and the Sacred in Argentina and Italy, 1919-1945*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009.
- Franzinelli, Mimmo. *Storia della Repubblica Sociale Italiana 1943-1945*. Rome: Laterza, 2020.
- Giuliani, Gaia and Cristina Lombardi-Diop. *Bianco e nero: storia dell'identità razziale degli italiani*. Milan: Mondadori, 2013.
- Glencross, Andrew. 'Love Europe, hate the EU': A genealogical inquiry into populists' spatio-cultural critique of the European Union and its consequences.' *European Journal of International Relations* 26, no. 1 (2020): 116-136.
- Glick Schiller, Nina and Andreas Wimmer. 'Methodological Nationalism, the Social Sciences, and the Study of Migration: An Essay in Historical Epistemology.' *IMR* 37, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 576-610.
- Goodwin, Matthew J. 'Grandpa's Fascism and the New Kids on the Block: Contemporary Approaches to the Dark Side of Europe,' *Ethnopolitics* 6, no. 1 (March 2007): 145-154.
- Gosewinkel, Dieter, ed. *Anti-liberal Europe. A Neglected Story of Europeanization*. New York-Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2015.

Hansen, Peo and Stefan Jonsson. 'Another Colonialism: Africa in the History of European Integration.' *Journal of Historical Sociology* 27, no. 3 (September 2014): 442-461.

Hansen, Peo and Stefan Jonsson. 'Bringing Africa as a 'Dowry to Europe'. European Integration and the Eurafrican Project, 1920–1960.' *International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 13, no. 3 (2011): 443-463.

Hobsbawm, Eric. 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions.' In *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, 1-15. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Ignazi, Piero. *Extreme Right Parties in Western Europe*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2006.

Ignazi, Piero. *Il polo escluso. Profilo storico del Movimento Sociale Italiano*. Bologna: il Mulino, 1998.

Kallis, Aristotle. 'From CAUR to EUR: Italian Fascism, the 'myth of Rome' and the pursuit of international primacy.' *Patterns of Prejudice* 50, no. 4-5 (2016): 359-377.

Kaplan, Alice Yaeger and Maurice Bardèche. 'The Late Show. Conversations with Maurice Bardèche.' *SubStance* 15, no. 1 (1986): 44-68.

Krastev, Ivan. 'Introduction.' In *The Anti-American Century*, edited by Ivan Krastev and Alan McPherson, 1-6. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2007.

Leeden, Michael Arthur. *Universal Fascism: The Theory and Practice of the Fascist International, 1928-1936*. New York: Howard Fertig, 1972.

Lorimer, Marta. 'What do they talk about when they talk about Europe? Euro-ambivalence in far right ideology.' *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 43 (2020): 1-18.

Mammone, Andrea. 'Revitalizing and de-territorializing fascism in the 1950s: the extreme right in France and Italy, and the pan-national ('European') imaginary.' *Patterns of Prejudice* 45, no. 4 (2011): 295-318.

Mammone, Andrea. *Transnational Neo-fascism in France and Italy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

- Martin, Guy. 'Africa and the Ideology of Eurafrica: Neo-Colonialism or Pan-Africanism?' *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 20, no. 2 (1982): 221-238.
- Massi, Ernesto. 'Per una politica sociale ed economica al servizio dell'unità europea.' in *Nazione Sociale. Scritti politici 1948-1976*, edited by Ernesto Massi and Gianni Rossi, 268-280. Rome: Istituto di Studi Corporativi, 1990.
- Mazower, Mark. *Hitler's Empire: Nazi Rule in Occupied Europe*. London: Penguin Books, 2009.
- Morgan, Philip. 'Corporatism and the economic order.' In *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism*, edited by Richard James Bosworth, 150-166. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Mudde, Cas. *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Nordblad, Julia. 'The Un-European Idea: Vichy and Eurafrica in the Historiography of Europeanism.' *The European Legacy* 19, no. 6 (2014): 711-729.
- Orsina, Giovanni. 'Perfectionism Without Politics. Politicisation, Depoliticisation, and Political History.' *Ricerche di storia politica*, special issue (October 2017): 75-86.
- Panunzio, Vito. *Il "secondo fascismo", 1936-1943. La reazione della nuova generazione alla crisi del movimento e del regime*. Milan: Mursia, 1988.
- Parlato, Giuseppe. *Fascisti senza Mussolini. Le origini del neofascismo in Italia, 1943-1948*. Bologna: il Mulino, 2006.
- Parlato, Giuseppe. *La sinistra fascista. Storia di un progetto mancato*. Bologna: il Mulino, 2008.
- Pasetti, Matteo. *L'Europa corporativa. Una storia transnazionale tra le due guerre mondiali*. Bologna: Bononia University Press, 2016.
- Pittaway, Mark. 'The education of dissent: The reception of the Voice of Free Hungary, 1951-56.' *Cold War History* 4, no. 1 (2003): 97-116.
- Pollard, John. 'Corporatism and Political Catholicism: The Impact of Catholic Corporatism in Inter-war Europe.' In *Corporatism and Fascism. The Corporatist Wave in Europe*, edited by Antonio Costa Pinto, 42-60. London-New York: Routledge, 2017.

Rix, Edouard. 'La Nation européenne, un journal vraiment révolutionnaire' *Réfléchir & Agir* 45 (2015): 12-13.

Ruben, David-Hillel. 'Re-Reading of W.B. Gallie 'Essentially Contested Concepts', Proceeding of the Aristotelian Society (1956), 167-198.' *Philosophical Papers* 39, no. 2 (July 2010): 257-270.

Scoppola, Pietro. *La repubblica dei partiti. Evoluzione e crisi di un sistema politico 1945-1996*. Bologna: il Mulino, 1997.

Setta, Sandro. *La Destra nell'Italia del dopoguerra*. Rome: Laterza, 2001.

Sheehan, Thomas. 'Myth and Violence. The Fascism of Julius Evola and Alain de Benoist.' *Social Research* 48, no. 1 (1981): 45-73.

Stanard, Matthew G. 'The colonial past is never dead. It's not even past: Histories of Empire, Decolonization, and European Cultures after 1945.' In *Material Culture in Modern Diplomacy from the 15th to the 20th Century*, edited by Harriet Rudolph and Gregor M. Metzger, 151-174. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016.

Steffek, Jens. 'Fascist Internationalism.' *Millenium: Journal of International Studies* 44, no.1 (2015): 3-22.

Steffek, Jens. 'Towards Eurafrica! Fascism, Corporativism and Italy's Colonial Expansion.' In *Radicals and Reactionaries in Twentieth-Century International Thought*, edited by Ian Hall, 145-169. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

Stephan, Alexander, ed. *The Americanization of Europe. Culture, Diplomacy and Anti-Americanism after 1945*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2007.

Sturzo, Luigi. 'Has Fascism Ended with Mussolini?' *Review of Politics* 7, no. 3 (1945): 306-315.

Tarchi, Marco. *Esuli in patria. I fascisti nell'Italia repubblicana*. Guanda: Milan, 1995.

Tedesco, Luca. *L'America a Destra. L'antiamericanismo nella stampa neofascista dal Patto Atlantico alla Seconda Guerra del Golfo*. Florence: Le Lettere, 2014.

Tranfaglia, Nicola. *Come nasce la Repubblica. La mafia, il Vaticano e il neofascismo nei documenti americani e italiani 1943-1947*. Milan: Bompiani, 2004.

Triulzi, Alessandro. 'La costruzione dell'immagine dell'Africa e degli africani nell'Italia coloniale.' In *Nel nome della razza: il razzismo nella storia d'Italia 1870-1945*, edited by Alberto Burgio, 165-183. Bologna: il Mulino, 1999.

Velde, Henk te. 'Political Transfer: An Introduction.' *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire* 12, no. 2 (July 2005): 205-221.

Werner, Michael and Bénédicte Zimmerman, 'Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity.' *History and Theory* 45, no. 1 (February 2006): 30-50.

Wilson, Kevin and Jan van der Dussen, eds. *The History of the Idea of Europe*. London-New York: Routledge, 1993.

Zanatta, Loris. *Il Peronismo*. Rome: Carocci, 2008.

Zanatta, Loris. *Il populismo*. Rome: Carocci, 2013.

Zanatta, Loris. 'Peron e il miraggio del Blocco latino. Di come la guerra fredda allargò l'Atlantico Sud,' *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* 63, no. 2 (July-December 2006): 217-260.

Websites

Author unknown. '44.1.43 - Legge 3 dicembre 1947, n. 1546', http://www.edizionieuropee.it/LAW/HTML/21/zn44_01_043.html, accessed March, 6, 2021.

Author unknown. 'Balzac aujourd'hui? – Maurice Bardèche, Jean Dutourd. Emission *En toutes lettres*, 29 octobre 1968.' YouTube, accessed May 7, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQGApu4sJPY&t=299s>.

Author unknown. 'Charles Maurras', Oxford Reference, <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100141367>, accessed March 7, 2021.

Author unknown. 'Europe's far-right leaders vow to create a united Europe without EU' *CBS News* (16 December 2017), accessed June 25, 2021, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/europes-far-right-leaders-meet-in-prague/>.

Author unknown. 'Intervista di Julius Evola a 'La Nation Européenne'.' Translated by Claudio Mutti [originally published in two parts in *La Nation Européenne*, no. 13 (15 January – 15 February 1967) and *La Nation Européenne*, no. 14 (15 February – 15 March 1967)],

<https://www.rigenerazionevola.it/intervista-francese-nation-europeenne/>, accessed March 21, 2021.

Author unknown. 'Palamenghi – Crispi, famiglia', Senato della Repubblica, <https://www.senato.it/3107?contenuto=3661>, accessed March 7, 2021.

Gerstenfeld, Manfred. 'Holocaust Inversion: The Portraying of Israel and Jews as Nazis.' Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, accessed May 22, 2021, <https://jcpa.org/article/holocaust-inversion-the-portraying-of-israel-and-jews-as-nazis/>.

Incarnato, Gennaro. 'Cione, Domenico Edmondo', Treccani, [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/domenico-edmondo-cione_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/domenico-edmondo-cione_(Dizionario-Biografico)/), accessed March 7, 2021.

Tait, Robert. 'Far right to gather in Prague as fears grow of rising Czech populism.' *The Guardian* (15 December 2017), accessed June 25, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/dec/15/far-right-conference-prague-czech-republic-populism-marine-le-pen>.