

**Dr. Tamir Bar-On: „Alain de Benoist: Neo-fascism with a human face?“,
Konferenzpapier zum Vertiefungsangebot „Grenzübergreifende Konzepte der radikalen
Rechten“ im Rahmen der Fachtagung „Entgrenzter Rechtsextremismus? Internationale
Perspektiven und Gegenstrategien“ der Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung in
München, 09.-10.02.2015.**

Abstract:

The title of this paper is “Alain de Benoist: Neo-fascism with a human face?”. This title is purposefully provocative because it is my claim that the leader and “transnational messenger” of the French *nouvelle droite* (ND – New Right) seeks to create a neo-fascism that is suitable for anti-fascist and anti-imperialist times. That is, in contrast to neo-fascist political parties and extra-parliamentary violence, de Benoist and the ND chose the third path towards neo-fascism, which I call cultural or intellectual neo-fascism. I begin by explaining the meaning of the title of this paper. I then trace de Benoist’s intellectual evolution and impact since the 1960s. Using various definitions of fascism, I underscore why de Benoist is a neo-fascist. I conclude by exploring why it is difficult to fight a metapolitical movement such as the ND.

Key words: Alain de Benoist; *nouvelle droite*; neo-fascism; fascist revisionism; reactionary movements.

Introduction

Where Have All The Fascists Gone?,¹ argues that post-war neo-fascists had three options after the defeat of Fascism and Nazism in 1945: 1) neo-fascist political parties; 2) extra-parliamentary terrorism; and 3) cultural or intellectual neo-fascism. While extra-parliamentary terrorism became discredited after the war due to the experiences of the Nazi brownshirts and Fascist blackshirts and sectors of the French revolutionary right had a disdain for political parties, the French *nouvelle droite* (ND – New Right) led by Alain de Benoist chose the strategy of cultural neo-fascism. Yet, the ND would eventually influence the discourse changes (e.g., the “right to cultural difference”, or cultural ethnopluralism)² and policies (e.g., on immigration, multiculturalism, regionalism, or support for direct

¹ Tamir Bar-On, *Where Have All The Fascists Gone?* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2007), pp. 1-19.

² On the ND’s cultural ethnopluralism, see Martin Lee, *The Beast Reawakens* (Toronto: Little, Brown, 1997). Also, Guiberneau notes that the term ethnopluralism “has been coined by the new right to advocate respect for cultural and ethnic differences while maintaining that the best strategy to protect them is to avoid their mixing with each other.” See Montserrat Guiberneau, *The Identity of Nations* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2007), p. 156.

democracy) of extreme right-wing and neo-fascist political parties such as the French *Front National*, as well as the Italian *Legha Nord* (Northern League) and *Movimento Sociale Italiano* (MSI – Italian Social Movement) and its successor *Alleanza Nazionale* (National Alliance – AN).³ Mammone argues that this metapolitical or cultural approach, which in effect seeks to win hearts and minds and influence political parties of all ideological stripes, helped the revolutionary right to leave the “ideological ghetto it has inhabited since 1945”; promoted a regeneration of postwar neo-fascism; influenced the discourses and policies of part of the mainstream; and impacted the entire revolutionary right after World War Two.⁴

The title of this paper is “Alain de Benoist: Neo-fascism with a human face?”. This title is purposefully provocative because it is my claim that the leader and “transnational messenger”⁵ of the ND seeks to create a neo-fascism that is suitable for anti-fascist and anti-imperialist times.⁶ That is, in contrast to neo-fascist political parties and extra-parliamentary violence, de Benoist and the ND chose the third path towards neo-fascism, which I called cultural or intellectual neo-fascism. I begin by explaining the meaning of the title of this paper. I then trace de Benoist’s intellectual evolution and impact since the 1960s. Using various definitions of fascism, I underscore why de Benoist is a neo-fascist. I conclude by exploring why it is difficult to fight a metapolitical movement such as the ND.

Why should we care about the ND? Lindholm and Zúquete point out that right-wing, left-wing, and “no-wing” anti-globalization movements around the world all seek to defend their distinctive identities against the weight of modernity’s homogenizing processes.⁷ Although they come from different political camps, these movements nonetheless share many key characteristics, goals, and attitudes, including a common tendency toward charismatic leadership, good versus evil worldviews, the quest for authentic identity, concern with ritual, and demands for total commitment. One such movement included by the authors as a “liberation movement” is the French ND, a position I challenge in this paper.

³ Tom McCulloch, “The Nouvelle Droite in the 1980s and 1990s: Ideology and Entryism, the Relationship with the Front National,” *French Politics* 4 (2006), pp. 158–178; Andrej Zaslove, *The Re-invention of the European Radical Right: Populism, Regionalism, and the Italian Lega Nord* (Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2011), p. 117.

⁴ Andrea Mammone, “Pan-European Fascists: Maurice Bardèche, Europe Action, and Alain de Benoist,” Paper presented at Fascist Ideologies Past and Present Conference, Teesside University, Darlington, England, 4 July 2013. Also see Andrea Mammone, *Transnational Neofascism in France and Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming), p. 224.

⁵ Tamir Bar-On, “Transnationalism and the French Nouvelle Droite,” *Patterns of Prejudice*, 45 (3) (2011), pp. 208-212.

⁶ The notion of “anti-imperialist epoch” is borrowed from Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Second Chance: Three Presidents and the Crisis of American Superpower* (New York: Basic Books, 2007).

⁷ Charles Lindholm and José Pedro Zúquete, *The Struggle for the World. Liberation Movements for the 21st Century* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2010).

Gill argues that both force and consensus engendered by intellectuals such as de Benoist help constitute or challenge the global, neo-liberal capitalist order. For Gill, the contemporary hegemonic international order is challenged by “counter-hegemonic forces” associated with “rival groupings of states, some that seek regional autonomy from neoliberalism under state-driven, left-wing models based on social needs” (e.g., former Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez’s regional plans for Latin America or the China-based Shanghai Cooperation Organization), as well as “progressive forces” (e.g., the World Social Forum, Occupy Wall Street, or the *Indignados*) and “reactionary forces” (e.g., the ND, extreme right-wing and neo-fascist political parties, or radical Islamist movements).⁸ Both “progressive forces” and “reactionary forces” struggle to overturn the existing capitalist order, but they imagine worlds with very differing political mythologies and institutions.

Thus, the future of Europe is up for grabs and what intellectuals such as de Benoist utter or write is part of the power struggle of the 21st century. It is important to remember that de Benoist pioneered a “right-wing Gramscianism,” which seeks to win the hearts and minds of Europeans, the mass media, government officials, and political parties of all ideological stripes.⁹ While his heyday was in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the full weight of his ideas are being felt today in the growing skepticism towards mainstream parties and elites; a more right-wing political climate; and increasing attacks on the EU, multiculturalism, open immigration, immigrants, and civic (as opposed to ethnic) variants of nationalism.¹⁰ Ethnic nationalism stresses the predominance of tribal solidarity, an emotional and mystical connection to an idealized past, and national development. In contrast, civic nationalism focuses on liberal universalism, rationality, individual rights and self-transcendence, and a community of numerous sovereign states living in harmony. This type of nationalism is, in theory, more cosmopolitan and colourless than ethnic nationalism and based on shared republican values.

De Benoist historically supported ethnic nationalism, but now calls for a pan-European empire of the regions, which promotes a homogeneous conception of politics and privileges “native” Europeans above non-Europeans.¹¹ In short, de Benoist argues that

⁸ Stephen Gill, *Power and Resistance in the New World Order*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 256–258.

⁹ Alain de Benoist, *Vu de droite* (Paris: Copernic), pp. 456–460; *Les idées à l’endroit* (Paris: Libres-Hallier), pp. 250–259.

¹⁰ Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in Its Origins and Backgrounds* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2008), p. 574.

¹¹ Tamir Bar-On, *Rethinking the French New Right: Alternatives to modernity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), especially Chapter 6 entitled “Europe for Europeans,” pp. 138–160.

Europe must strive to overcome its “existential uncertainty” based on both “strategic” and “identity” considerations in order to mould a “Europe for Europeans” in all its manifestations.¹² For de Benoist and the ND, a “Europe for Europeans” connotes the following:

(1) A Europe that is united and sovereign politically and militarily and does not obey the dictates of any external power(s);

(2) A Europe that is united to fight the perceived decadence of liberal universalism and capitalism;

(3) A Europe that has a “long memory” for the hierarchical, pagan, Indo-European past as opposed to the “imposition” of “foreign,” egalitarian influences such as the Judaeo-Christian tradition and its secular derivatives liberalism and socialism (under the influence of French historian Georges Dumézil, de Benoist pointed to his preference for the “tripartite ideology of the Indo-Europeans” in which the first function corresponds to political, juridical, and religious sovereignty; the second to the warrior function; and the third to the economic function. Liberal societies inverted the organic, hierarchical order of the past by privileging the order Dumézil considered the most basic, namely, the economic function and thus denigrating the military and political functions);

(4) A Europe that rejects official multiculturalism and immigration, while seeking to create hundreds of homogeneous ethnic communities privileging ‘natives’ above ‘non-Europeans’ in citizenship, jobs, and government services;

(5) A Europe no longer wedded to the “divisiveness” of the right–left division (conceptual tool one), but instead a Europe united by its civilizational challenge to advance the interests of “Europeans first”;

(6) A united Europe in the foreign policy domain that is able to overcome its current cultural fatigue and ‘decadence’, as well as create heroic rebels (elites), which will recreate a Europe that is true to its peoples and its roots as one of the great geopolitical players of history; and

(7) A Europe that is united yet rejects the liberal, capitalist, and technocratic model of the EU as it is currently constituted. In short, Europe’s “natural vocation” must be the creation of an “original culture and civilization” that challenges Anglo-American

¹² Alain de Benoist, *Mémoire vive: entretiens avec François Bousquet* (Paris: Éditions de Fallois, 2012), p. 249.

mercantilism; a Europe that plays an “independent” geopolitical role on the continent in a “multipolar world”; and a Europe at the forefront of “regulating globalization”.¹³

Moreover, against the civic nationalist posture, de Benoist seeks to create homogeneous regions cleansed of immigrants in which “original” and “titular” groups would receive special privileges in citizenship, welfare benefits, or government jobs. The FN has called this position *préférence nationale* (national preference). This position was first promoted in 1985 as an antidote to unfettered immigration and is attributed to Jean-Yves Le Gallou, a former FN politician and founding member of ND think-tank GRECE.¹⁴ It amounts to creating what scholars call ethnocracies, in which certain ethnic groups are able to exert political, legal, economic, and cultural dominance over their respective societies.¹⁵ For Yiftachel, an ethnocracy is a political regime that facilitates expansion and control by a dominant ethnicity. It is neither democratic nor authoritarian, with rights and capabilities depending primarily on ethnic origin.

The uses of “Fascism with a human face”

The term “Fascism with a human face” is not new. In 1982, the American cultural critic Susan Sontag told a pro-Solidarity (Poland) audience that people like herself on the left have often told lies about Communism because they supported it, but that it was time to see Communism as a type of Fascism:

Communism is Fascism—successful Fascism, if you will. What we have called Fascism is, rather, the form of tyranny that can be overthrown—that has, largely, failed. I repeat: not only is Fascism (and overt military rule) the probable destiny of all Communist societies—especially when their populations are moved to revolt—but Communism is in itself a variant, the most successful variant, of Fascism. ‘Fascism with a human face.’¹⁶

¹³ Tamir Bar-On, *Rethinking the French New Right: Alternatives to modernity*, pp. 138-139; Alain de Benoist, *Mémoire vive: entretiens avec François Bousquet*, pp. 164-165; 248.

¹⁴ Jean-Yves Le Gallou et le Club de l’Horloge, *La Préférence nationale: Réponse à l’immigration* (Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 1985).

¹⁵ For example, see Nils A. Butenschøn, “Politics of Ethnocracies: Strategies and Dilemmas of Ethnic Domination,” Retrieved at: sv.uio.no/isv/; Oren Yiftachel, *Ethnocracy Land and Identity Politics in Israel/Palestine* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

¹⁶ Susan Sontag, quoted in “Susan Sontag Provokes Debate on Communism,” *The New York Times*, 27 February 1982. Retrieved from nytimes.com/books/00/03/12/specials/sontag-communism.html.

Sontag was booed by her audience in New York. While I disagree with Sontag's characterization of Communism as a variant of Fascism because it is a distinctive political ideology, I admire her courage. Moreover, one major scholar of Fascism, A.J. Gregor, has since supported Sontag's claim that Communist regimes were Fascist.¹⁷ Moreover, Sontag is obviously playing on the phrase "Socialism with a human face." The phrase was a part of a political programme announced by Alexander Dubček of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in April 1968. "Socialism with a human face" was a reaction to the worldwide May 1968 events, but also a criticism of dogmatic Soviet Communism associated with the lack of political debate and the extreme violence of the *gulags*. The aim of "Socialism with a human face" was to engender moderate democratization and political liberalization, but still allow the Communist Party to maintain *de facto* power. The Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia on August 20-21, 1968 ended the hopes of "Socialism with a human face" and demonstrated the sheer brutality of the Soviet Union. 500,000 Warsaw Pact troops violated Czechoslovakia's sovereignty, over 100 Czechoslovaks were killed, and another 500 were injured. The 1968 Brezhnev Doctrine disingenuously maintained that the protection of worldwide socialism was more important than the defense of Czechoslovakia's sovereignty.

There are no tanks to stop de Benoist's "Fascism with a human face." He could operate freely through the dissemination of his works. He helped inspire other intellectuals through the ND, especially in Western Europe and later in Central and Eastern Europe and Russia. Interestingly, de Benoist's ND project began in 1968, the year of the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia and the massive student and worker protests in France in May 1968. De Benoist and the ND were influenced by both events, insisting that a revolution is possible in advanced industrialized societies without using violence.¹⁸ If we want to better understand de Benoist's "neo-fascism with a human face," we must see through what Feldman and Jackson see as the "double-talk" of the far right and its disdain for liberal democracy since 1945. Feldman and Jackson argue that the far right includes de Benoist's ND and it attempts at "repackaging" contemporary ultra-nationalism in order to make it more

¹⁷ A.J. Gregor, *The Faces of Janus: Marxism and Fascism in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000); *Marxism, Fascism, and Totalitarianism: Chapters in the Intellectual History of Radicalism*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2008); and *Totalitarianism and Political Religion: An Intellectual History* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2012).

¹⁸ See the collection of essays by ND intellectuals entitled *le Mai 68 de la nouvelle droite* (Paris: Le Labyrinthe, 1998); Alain de Benoist, *Mémoire vive: entretiens avec François Bousquet*, pp. 101; 272.

palatable to mainstream European and American audiences.¹⁹ I now turn to de Benoist, his role in promoting the ND project, and his unusual intellectual evolution.

Alain de Benoist and the expansion of the ND project

Alain de Benoist was born near Tours, France in 1943. He is an intellectual, philosopher, and political commentator who was the most visible face of the French ND at its height of mass media attention in the 1970s. He is the editor of three ND journals founded in three different decades: *Nouvelle École* (1969), *Éléments* (1973), and *Krisis* (1988). Moreover, de Benoist was the director of several publishing collections, including *Éditions Copernic* (1977-81), *Éditions de Labyrinthe* (since 1982), *Éditions Pardès* (1989-1993), and *L'Âge d'Homme* (since 2003).

De Benoist's principal writings have been translated into many European languages. In this century, de Benoist published a work on Carl Schmitt and just war theory in Italian as *Terrorismo e "guerre giusta" Sull'attualità di Carl Schmitt* (Guida, Napoli 2007). A controversial book accused of right-wing revisionism by leftist critics, *Comunismo y nazismo 25 reflexiones sobre el totalitarismo en el siglo XX* (1917-1989) (*Communism and Nazism*), was published in Spanish in 2005 (Ediciones Áltera, Barcelona) and in the same year in Croatian as *Komunizam i nacizam 25 ogleđa o totalitarizmu u XX stoljeću* (Zlatko Hasanbegovic, Zagreb). *Jézus és testvérei Gondolatok a vallásról és a hitről* (Europa Authentica, Budapest) appeared in Hungarian in 2005. *Manifesto per una rinascita europea* (Nuove idee, Roma), or *Manifesto for a European Renaissance*, appeared in Italian in 2005. *On Being A Pagan* appeared in English in 2005 (Ultra, Atlanta). A critique of liberal capitalist globalization, *Kritik der Menschenrechte. Warum Universalismus und Globalisierung die Freiheit bedrohen* (Junge Freiheit, Berlin), appeared in German in 2004. De Benoist's most famous work *Vu de droite* published its newest edition in 2002, sold more than 25,000 copies worldwide, and was translated into Italian, Portuguese, German, and Romanian.²⁰ De Benoist's Web site provides translations of his works in a whopping 25 European languages.²¹ There are also Web sites for GRECE and *Éléments*, as well as an Internet presence for numerous ND journals from *Junge Freiheit* in Germany to *Diorama*

¹⁹ Matthew Feldman and Paul Jackson, eds., *Doublespeak: The Rhetoric of the Far Right Since 1945* (Stuttgart: Ibidem Press, 2014).

²⁰ Alain de Benoist, "Preface A La Nouvelle Edition de Vu de Droite," (2002), Retrieved at: alaindebenoist.com/pdf/preface_nouvelle_edition_vu_de_droite.pdf.

²¹ For the full list of translations see Alain de Benoist's Web site, *Les Amis d'Alain de Benoist*, Retrieved from alaindebenoist.com.

letterario in Italy.²² An ND variant of Wikipedia, Metapedia, was created by ND supporters to disseminate ND ideas worldwide.²³ It is extremely hostile to liberals and leftists.²⁴

In line with the notion of “neo-fascism with a human face,” it must be remembered that de Benoist had ultra-nationalist, pro-French Algeria tendencies in the 1960s. De Benoist supported French colonialism; praised the apartheid regimes in South Africa and Rhodesia; and applauded the “virtues” of the “white race.”²⁵ In 1962, de Benoist was the editor of *Cahiers universitaires*, the journal published by the ultra-nationalist and pro-French Algeria Federation of National Students (FEN). He describes his time with FEN in romantic terms, stating that he enjoyed the movement’s “revolutionary style”; its “sacerdotal character” akin to revolutionaries such as Vladimir Lenin or Georges Sorel; and how he had been a supporter of the violent and ultra-nationalist Organization of the Secret Army (OAS).²⁶

De Benoist’s ND is a “cultural school of thought” (“*Une école de pensée*”), to use the words of Duranton-Crabol.²⁷ The ND emerges out of the French revolutionary Right’s ill-fated attempt to maintain French Algeria and re-think and perpetuate the legacy of fascism. It was founded in France in 1968 by about 40 ultra-nationalists, including de Benoist. The ND’s major think-tank is GRECE - *Groupement de recherche et d’études pour la civilisation européenne* - Research and Study Group for European Civilization. As its French name connotes, GRECE has an affinity for the philosophy and politics of ancient Greece. It is obsessed with the search for Indo-European roots. In 1969, GRECE warned its members to avoid “outdated vocabulary,” a code-word for language linked to Fascism, Nazism, colonialism, anti-Semitism, or racism.²⁸ In short, de Benoist and company followed the

²² For GRECE’s site, including articles from *Éléments*, as well as *Junge Freiheit* and *Diorama letterario*, see the following Web sites: www.grecefr.net/accueil.php; www.jungefreiheit.de; www.diorama.it.

²³ See “Alain de Benoist,” Metapedia, Retrieved from en.metapedia.org/wiki/Alain_de_Benoist.

²⁴ See, for example, Metapedia, “Nouvelle Droite,” Retrieved from en.metapedia.org/wiki/Nouvelle_Droite.

²⁵ See Alain de Benoist (Under the pseudonym Fabrice Laroche) and François d’Orcival, *Le Courage est leur patrie* (Paris: Saint-Just, 1965); Fabrice Laroche and Gilles Fournier, *Vérité pour* (Paris: Saint-Just, 1965); Fabrice Laroche and François d’Orcival, *Rhodésie, pays des lions fidèles* (Paris: Table Ronde, 1966). D’Orcival was a leader in neo-fascist organization *Jeune Nation*; a founding member and editor-in-chief of the *Fédération des étudiants nationalistes* (FEN) in 1960; and supporter of the *Organisation de l’armée secrète* (OAS), which led to his arrest in 1962. He also wrote for *Défense de l’Occident* and *Europe Action*, edited by Dominique Venner and Alain de Benoist. De Benoist also joined FEN. Saint-Just was founded by French neo-fascist and historian Dominique Venner, who committed suicide in 2013. Venner was a member of the OAS and influenced de Benoist’s turn towards the metapolitical and a European nationalism through his *Pour une critique positive (Towards a positive critique)* (1962), which is seen as a foundational text for a revived revolutionary right after the “defeat” (de-colonization) in Algeria and has been compared to Vladimir Lenin’s *What is to be done?* For this last point, see Pierre Milza, *Fascismes français, passé et présent* (Paris: Flammarion, 1988, p. 320). At the time of his death, Venner was the editor of *La Nouvelle Revue d’Histoire*, a bimonthly history magazine.

²⁶ Alain de Benoist, *Mémoire vive: entretiens avec François Bousquet*, pp. 64-72.

²⁷ Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la Nouvelle droite: le GRECE et son histoire* (Paris: Presses de la fondation nationale des sciences politique, 1988).

²⁸ See the May 1969 issue of de Benoist’s journal *Éléments*, p. 16.

lessons of French neo-fascist Maurice Bardèche (1907-1998), who sought to create a fascism “with another name, another face.”²⁹ Or, a fascism that we will not recognize; a fascism without the single party, secret police, or even the presence of a Führer; a “Fascism with a human face.”

In 1977, de Benoist was awarded the prestigious *Académie française* prize for his book *Vu de droite* (*Seen from the Right*), a work that de-legitimizes all the major tenets of liberal democracy and provides a scathing attack of egalitarianism which is equated with totalitarianism. In the mid-1980s and 1990s, de Benoist supposedly veered “left” and his articles were published in *Telos*, a US critical theory journal with roots in the New Left (NL).³⁰ The editor of *Telos* Paul Piccone essentially endorsed de Benoist when he stated the following: “The French New Right, if it is still possible to place them anywhere on the Right – have redefined themselves by incorporating 95% of standard New Left ideas, but on the whole, there is no longer anything that can be identified as ‘Right’.”³¹ Piccone saw the ND as a type of NL in disguise. He insisted that

the ND had swallowed whole most of the ideals of the American and French NL, such as rejection of the socialist and liberal ‘new class’, regionalism, direct democracy, and vehement anti-Americanism. He argued that de Benoist had nothing to do with fascism or the old right (a false claim given the ND’s indebtedness to the German Conservative Revolution thinkers who influenced Nazism), but was seeking to create a new political paradigm.³²

De Benoist also became a supporter of worldwide cultural ethnopluralism. He declared the defense of traditional and indigenous cultures against a homogenizing capitalism an “issue very close to my heart, because I am member of the Board of the Association for the Protection of the Threatened Indigenous Cultures and Peoples, founded in Italy by Alessandro Michelucci.”³³ As a result of de Benoist’s intellectual migrations, the liberal-left

²⁹ Maurice Bardèche, *Qu’est-ce que le fascisme?* (Paris: Les Sept Couleurs), pp. 175-176.

³⁰ See, for example, the special double issue published by *Telos* (98-99) about the ND in 1993-1994. Also, see Alain de Benoist, “Democracy Revisited,” *Telos* (95) (Spring 1995), pp. 63-75; “End of the Left-Right Dichotomy: The French Case,” *Telos* (102) (Winter 1995), pp. 73-89; “Confronting Globalization,” *Telos* (108) (Summer 1996), pp. 117-137; and “What is Racism?,” *Telos* (114) (Winter 1999), pp. 11-48.

³¹ Paul Piccone, “Confronting the French New Right: Old Prejudices or a New Political Paradigm?“, *Telos* 98-99 (Winter–Spring 1993-1994), p. 19.

³² Tamir Bar-On, *Rethinking the French New Right: Alternatives to modernity*, p. 28.

³³ Alain de Benoist, in Arthur Versluis, “A Conversation with Alain de Benoist,” *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 8 (2) (Fall 2014), p. 99.

called him a fascist in disguise, while elements of the far Right called him a Communist.³⁴ This was particularly the case in the ND's mass media heyday in the "hot summer" of 1979 and in *Le Monde* in 1993. Ignoring the criticisms, de Benoist and GRECE spread their ideas beyond France throughout Europe and beyond through a network of think-tanks and journals modeled on the French example.

The ND reasoned that major changes in belief systems across nations would eventually result in revolutionary political change. And, for the ND, revolutionary political change needed revolutionary intellectuals on a mission to destroy liberalism. De Benoist cemented ties with revolutionary right-wing intellectuals throughout Europe in order to spread ND ideas beyond France. De Benoist has been able to single-handedly spread ND ideas throughout Europe, but also to the USA, the Americas in general, and Australia and New Zealand. Other key ND intellectuals include Guillaume Faye, Marco Tarchi, Aleksandr Dugin, Tomislav Sunic, and Troy Southgate. Most of them have roots in the revolutionary right-wing or neo-fascist milieu. Marco Tarchi is today a political science professor at the University of Florence, but was a youth leader with the Italian neo-fascist political party *Movimento Sociale Italiano* (MSI – Italian Social Movement); Faye was a GRECE member and was considered the ND's "intellectual motor" and second-in-command behind de Benoist.³⁵ Sunic is a Croatian sympathetic to the ND and as late as 2003 spoke at the Sacramento chapter of the National Alliance, a white nationalist, anti-Semitic and white supremacist organization. Southgate is a former organizer for the ultra-nationalist British National Front; founded a chapter of the ND in London in 2005; and considers himself a "National-Anarchist."³⁶ In addition, *TeKos* is a Belgian New Right publication, a Spanish *Nueva Derecha* exists, and there are Romanian New Right thinkers. Alberto Buela is a pro-ND Argentinean thinker and a Ph.D. graduate from the Sorbonne. He published a pro-ND work in 1999.³⁷ The intellectuals Paul Piccone (*Telos*), Greg Johnson (*Occidental Quarterly*), and Arthur Versluis (*Journal for the Study of Radicalism*) promoted, or were sympathetic to ND ideas in the USA.

Dugin is a special case. Today he has the ear of Russian President Vladimir Putin and is Russia's most important geopolitical thinker. Umland and Ingram point to his fascist tendencies due to his support for Russian ethnic rebirth, virulent anti-Semitism and ultra-

³⁴ Tamir Bar-On, *Where Have All The Fascists Gone?*, pp. 40-56.

³⁵ Tamir Bar-On, *Rethinking the French New Right: Alternatives to modernity*, pp. 19-20.

³⁶ Graham D. Macklin, "Co-opting the Counter-Culture: Troy Southgate and the National Revolutionary Faction," *Patterns of Prejudice* 39 (3) (2005), pp. 301-326.

³⁷ Alberto Buela, (ed.), *Ensayos de Disenso (Sobre Metapolítica)* (Barcelona: Nueva República, 1999).

nationalism, and embrace of Russian expansionism.³⁸ Shekhovtsov has demonstrated how Dugin is a Russian variant of the ND, as well as the concrete exchanges in conferences, journal names (the Russian journal *Elementy* mimicked de Benoist's *Éléments*), and themes between the ND and Dugin (e.g., the survival of ethnic groups, the dangers of immigration and multiculturalism, the notion of geopolitical greatness through a Russian-European alliance against the USA, liberalism and capitalism as decadent, etc.).³⁹ Shekhovtsov is adamant that both de Benoist and Dugin embody an "alternative modernist" and fascist worldview, with Dugin more overtly fascist, militaristic, and ultra-nationalistic, including open praise for Russian expansionism in South Ossetia and Georgia, as well as Crimea (Ukraine) more recently.⁴⁰ During his 2005 trip to Europe, Dugin met and interviewed ND thinkers Jean Parvulesco and de Benoist, "thus apparently overcoming the 12-year rupture between him and the latter."⁴¹

Moreover, Peunova points out how ND geopolitical ideas, interpreted by Aleksandr Dugin and political philosopher Aleksandr Panarin (1940-2003), have influenced the Russian New Right, and found the ear of key Russian political elites.⁴² In 2014, de Benoist praised Dugin's neo-Eurasian perspective; multipolar vision for geopolitics; "fourth political theory"; and called Dugin "a man of impressive culture and especially a man of original personal thought."⁴³ He pointed to Dugin's power as an *éminence grise* under the Putin regime: "At a time when Russia, under the leadership of Vladimir Putin, is regaining its traditional role of a great superpower, I think we should pay attention to the works of Aleksandr Dugin. His influence is already perceptible in some areas close to the Kremlin."⁴⁴

As the ND was created in France, it was inevitable that it had an impact on the French political landscape. Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy openly questioned multiculturalism and another former President, Jacques Chirac, pandered to anti-immigrant sentiments. It became harder for political parties of any political stripe to defend open immigration. These were positions that would have pleased de Benoist and the ND. Tom

³⁸ Andreas Umland, "Is Putin's Russia really fascist? A response to Alexander Motyl," n.d., Retrieved from globalpolitician.com/print.asp?id=4341; Alan Ingram, "Alexander Dugin: Geopolitics and Neo-Fascism in Post-Soviet Russia," *Political Geography* 20 (8) (2001), pp. 1029-1051.

³⁹ Anton Shekhovtsov, "Aleksandr Dugin's Neo-Eurasianism: The New Right à la Russe," *Religion Compass* 3 (4) (2009), pp. 697-716 and "The Palingenetic Thrust of Russian Neo-Eurasianism: Ideas of Rebirth in Aleksandr Dugin's Worldview," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 9 (4) (December 2008), pp. 491-506.

⁴⁰ Anton Shekhovtsov, "The Palingenetic Thrust of Russian Neo-Eurasianism," pp. 702-703.

⁴¹ Anton Shekhovtsov, "Aleksandr Dugin's Neo-Eurasianism," p. 701.

⁴² Marina Peunova, "An Eastern Incarnation of the European New Right," *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 16 (3) (December 2008), pp. 407-419.

⁴³ Alain de Benoist, in Arthur Versluis, "A Conversation with Alain de Benoist," pp. 83-84.

⁴⁴ Alain de Benoist in Arthur Versluis, "A Conversation with Alain de Benoist," p. 85.

McCulloch points out that leading ND ideologues joined the FN in the 1980s, constituting a powerful party faction, which passed key ND concepts into FN ideology and policy.⁴⁵ Bruno Mégret, Jean-Yves Le Gallou, Jean-Claude Bardet, Yvan Blot, and other members of the ND joined the FN.⁴⁶ So much for de Benoist's false claim that "the ND has always adopted a position of observer, never of actor."⁴⁷ As I wrote in a response to de Benoist in the *Journal for the Study of Radicalism*, "This claim is false because it is contradicted by the evidence and, as a student of the history of ideas, de Benoist should know that we are all political actors in the movement of historical change, whether in civil society, as intellectuals, or with respect to the interaction between the state and civil society."⁴⁸ Moreover, de Benoist's Web site is full of commentary on the politics of the day from the *Charlie Hebdo* terrorist attacks to the European economic crisis and about why France should leave Afghanistan.

According to Minkenberg, the ND is intellectually close to the German *Neue Rechte*, the New Right in the United Kingdom, *Nieuw Rechts* in the Netherlands and Flanders (Belgium), *Forza Nuova* in Italy, Imperium Europa in Malta, and New Right forces in the USA connected to Paul Weyrich and the Free Congress Foundation.⁴⁹ In Germany, Roger Woods points out that de Benoist has "insisted on the importance of cultural hegemony, and his work has been introduced to the German public by Armin Mohler."⁵⁰ Mohler wrote the introduction to de Benoist's *Kulturrevolution von rechts (Cultural Revolution from the Right)* when it appeared in West Germany in 1985, while he mocked a German Right that was intellectually behind the times.⁵¹ The Thule Seminar was founded by Pierre Krebs in Kassel in 1980, created a journal called *Elemente* modeled on the French New Right, and in the late 1980s could boast of over 200 lectures in Germany and abroad.⁵²

Moreover, the German New Right could also influence mainstream German political parties and politicians.⁵³ Contributors to *Junge-Freiheit*, a German New Right journal, include CDU Bundestag members and a former member of the EU Parliament, Rolf Berend.

⁴⁵ Tom McCulloch, "The Nouvelle Droite in the 1980s and 1990s: Ideology and Entryism, the Relationship with the Front National," *French Politics* 4 (2006), pp. 158–178.

⁴⁶ Tom McCulloch, "The Nouvelle Droite in the 1980s and 1990s: Ideology and Entryism, the Relationship with the Front National," pp. 158-178.

⁴⁷ Alain de Benoist, "Alain de Benoist Answers Tamir Bar-On," *Journal for the Study of Radicalism*, 8 (1) (Spring 2014), pp. 143-144.

⁴⁸ Tamir Bar-On, "A Response to Alain de Benoist," *Journal for the Study of Radicalism*, 8 (2) (Fall 2014), p. 130.

⁴⁹ Michael Minkenberg, "The Renewal of the Radical Right," *Government and Opposition* 35 (2) (2000), pp. 170–188.

⁵⁰ Roger Woods, *Germany's New Right as Culture and Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan), p. 25.

⁵¹ Roger Woods, *Germany's New Right as Culture and Politics*, pp. 25-26.

⁵² Roger Woods, *Germany's New Right as Culture and Politics*, p. 29.

⁵³ Roger Woods, *Germany's New Right as Culture and Politics*, pp. 18-19.

The former Berlin senator Heinrich Lummer attended the meeting of extreme right-wing European leaders in 2002. Albrecht Jebens is sympathetic to the German New Right and a member for the Society of Free Journalism, an extreme right-wing cultural organization. The co-editor of the New Right journal *Criticón* is Wolfram Zabel, a member of the CDU. Armin Mohler was the adviser to Franz Schönhuber when he was leader of the *Republikaner*. Johanna Grund, a one-time *Republikaner* deputy, wrote in *Junge Freiheit* attacking the EU's variant of democracy.

The German New Right could also take controversial and politically incorrect positions. Günter Maschke, a German New Right figure who has collaborated in projects with de Benoist, could eulogize Mussolini as a “politician-artist,” who emerges at times of crisis in order to provide people with necessary myths and “life-preserving illusions.”⁵⁴ De Benoist praised Maschke in a piece on his Web site because of his analyses of Carl Schmitt and the need for a powerful Europe, which appeared in *Junge Freiheit*.⁵⁵ The German New Right has also contributed to highlighting the so-called “internal decadence” of Germany as a result of capitalism, modernity, immigration, and multiculturalism, as well as more seriously “relativising National Socialism.”⁵⁶ Some German New Right thinkers claimed that Germans were unaware of Hitler's intentions; make Germans the real victims of the war; stress the heroism of its soldiers; argued that German crimes should be forgotten in the name of the present; and made a distinction between a healthy Conservative Revolution (an alternative Germany) and the perversions of Nazism.⁵⁷ A leading German ND thinker Pierre Krebs praised reunification as a way to reassert the rebirth of “organic communities” and defeat Western and Eastern domination.⁵⁸ New Right thinkers see Germany's anti-fascism as a forms of sickness, suicide, and nihilism, which will lead to Germany's destruction.⁵⁹ Maschke lamented Germany's lack of participation in the Gulf War and the denigration of pro-military and “normal” nationalist sentiments.⁶⁰ Yet, in line with de Benoist's turn to a “new European home,” a 1995 volume of a younger generation of German New Right thinkers questioned nationalism and older forms of political identity.⁶¹

Neo-fascism with a human face

⁵⁴ Roger Woods, *Germany's New Right as Culture and Politics*, p. 70.

⁵⁵ See Alain de Benoist, “Günter Maschke,” *Les Amis d'Alain de Benoist*, 20 December 2007, Retrieved from files.alaindebenoist.com/alaindebenoist/pdf/gunter_maschke.pdf.

⁵⁶ Roger Woods, *Germany's New Right as Culture and Politics*, p. 72.

⁵⁷ Roger Woods, *Germany's New Right as Culture and Politics*, pp. 72-85.

⁵⁸ Roger Woods, *Germany's New Right as Culture and Politics*, p. 99.

⁵⁹ Roger Woods, *Germany's New Right as Culture and Politics*, p. 100.

⁶⁰ Roger Woods, *Germany's New Right as Culture and Politics*, p. 101.

⁶¹ Roger Woods, *Germany's New Right as Culture and Politics*, pp. 103-104.

Recall that it is my contention that de Benoist embodies a “Fascism with a human face.” My various works aims is to demonstrate continuity and change between fascist ideology of the interwar years and novel forms of fascism suited for an antifascist age.⁶² Various historians of fascism such as Griffin, Mammone, and Copsey have demonstrated links between postwar European neofascists and the ND.⁶³ For Griffin, the prefix “neo” meant “offering something new with respect to inter-war phenomena,” and he highlighted four neofascist subtypes: revolutionary nationalism, cryptofascism, Holocaust revisionism, and “conservative revolution” (e.g., the ND or European New Right).⁶⁴ Mammone demonstrates how from 1968 to the end of the 1970s there were patterns of cross-fertilization and ideological transfer among neofascists. He also points to the transborder impact of the ND, its links with postwar neofascists such as Maurice Bardèche and Julius Evola, and “its attempt to update neo-fascist and racist ideals.”⁶⁵ Copsey writes that neofascism, including the ND as one such permutation, “represents a continual evolution of fascism away from its dominant inter-war manifestations.”⁶⁶ That is, neofascism “does not consist of consistent and unchanging features, but has its own history of development, and cannot be reduced to a static model.”⁶⁷

The Israeli historian Ze’ev Sternhell argues that fascism was created in France before World War One and it began as a cultural rebellion and was later transformed into a political movement.⁶⁸ Fascism and the ND are both “atypical” schools of thought, in the words of de Benoist.⁶⁹ Indeed, fascism was “atypical” because it united ultra-nationalism with Marxist revisionism. De Benoist’s “neither right, nor left” synthesis, or his regionalism (or a reformulated nationalism) combined with an anti-liberal, anti-capitalist orientation, eerily resembles the fascist synthesis highlighted by Sternhell. Two of the ND’s important

⁶² See especially Tamir Bar-On, *Where Have All The Fascists Gone?, Rethinking the French New Right Right: Alternatives to modernity*; “A Response to Alain de Benoist,” *Journal for the Study of Radicalism*, pp. 123-168; “The French New Right: Neither Right, Nor Left?,” *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 8 (1) (Spring 2014), pp. 1-44.

⁶³ Mammone, *Transnational Neofascism in France and Italy*; Roger Griffin, “Fascism’s New Faces (and New Facelessness) in the ‘Post-fascist’ Epoch, and Its Threats to Contemporary Democracy,” *Erwägen, Wissen, Ethik*, 15 (3) (Autumn 2004), pp. 287–300; and Nigel Copsey, “Fascism ... but with an Open Mind: Reflections on the Contemporary Far Right in (Western) Europe. First NIOD Lecture on Fascism—Amsterdam—25 April,” *Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* (2013), pp. 1-17.

⁶⁴ Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Pinter, 1991), pp. 146-147.

⁶⁵ Andrea Mammone, “The Transnational Reaction to 1968: Neo-fascist National Fronts and Political Cultures in France and Italy,” *Contemporary European History* 17 (2) (2008), pp. 213-236.

⁶⁶ Nigel Copsey, “Fascism . . . but with an Open Mind,” p. 16.

⁶⁷ Otto Ernst Schüddekopf, *Fascism*, 193, quoted in Copsey, “Fascism ... but with an Open Mind”, p. 16.

⁶⁸ Ze’ev Sternhell (with Mario Sznajder and Maia Asheri), *The Birth of Fascist Ideology: From Cultural Rebellion to Political Revolution*, trans. David Maisel (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).

⁶⁹ Alain de Benoist, “Alain de Benoist Answers Tamir Bar-On”, p. 145.

influences are the German Conservative Revolution and New Left, seemingly contradictory right-wing and left-wing ideologies.⁷⁰

In addition, fascism is simultaneously an ideology, a movement, a party, and regime in power.⁷¹ Furthermore, I point out that defining fascism is tricky because there is no universal consensus definition of what constitutes fascism.⁷² If we use Griffin's definition of fascism as "a palingenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism,"⁷³ the ND is fascist with the caveat that the regions (a "Europe of a hundred flags")⁷⁴ are the new homogeneous nations.⁷⁵

Yet if we take Payne's checklist definition consisting of fascist negations, ideology and goals, and style and organization, the ND meets some but not all of the prerequisites of fascism. Furthermore, using the insights of the historian Stanley Payne I highlight how the ND shares many of the preoccupations of fascists and revolutionary right-wing movements of the interwar years, including

1. Antiliberalism
2. Anticommunism
3. Anticonservatism
4. An attempt to create a new, modern, self-determined, and secular culture
5. A highly regulated, multiclass, and integrated national economic structure
6. An economic framework that uses the state to restrain capitalism, banks, and multinational corporations
7. A desire for nationalist (or regionalist) states
8. The goal of an empire
9. The desire for European grandeur in the geopolitical realm
10. A positive evaluation of authors that legitimize violence such as Carl Schmitt and Julius Evola
11. A stress on the emotional and mystical aspects of life, including traditions, Indo-European symbols, and primordial ties to the region, nation, or Europe

⁷⁰ Tamir Bar-On, "The Ambiguities of the Nouvelle Droite, 1968-1999", *The European Legacy* 6 (3) (2001), pp. 333-351.

⁷¹ Tamir Bar-On, *Where Have All The Fascists Gone?*, pp. 15-19.

⁷² See, for example, the wide variety of definitions of fascism provided by Anglo-American and German scholars (including Stanley Payne, Ernst Nolte, Andreas Umland, A. J. Gregor, Alexander de Grand, Roger Eatwell, myself, and others) responding to Roger Griffin's claims of a "new consensus" in fascist studies in Roger Griffin, "Fascism's New Faces (and New Facelessness) in the 'Post-fascist' Epoch, and Its Threats to Contemporary Democracy," pp. 287-300.

⁷³ Roger Griffin (ed.), *Fascism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 4.

⁷⁴ Yann Fouéré, *L'Europe aux Cent Drapeaux* (Paris: Presses d'Europe, 1968). Fouéré (1910–2011) was a Breton separatist and European federalist.

⁷⁵ Roger Griffin, quoted in Bar-On, *Where Have All the Fascists Gone?*, p. 15.

12. An organic view of society and extreme stress on the masculine principle.⁷⁶

Other scholars such as Taguieff have confirmed the ND's cultural racism and de Benoist's intellectual evolution from open racism to biological racism and later cultural racism.⁷⁷ Guiberneau writes the following: "The *Nouvelle Droite*'s paradigm assumes that cultural difference involves separation, exclusion and what de Benoist refers to as the 'right to difference'."⁷⁸ This means that all cultures must maintain their "purity", be free of "alien influences", and avoid "hybridization."⁷⁹ Banai explains the differences between the ND and Green conceptions of the "Europe of the regions": The former "strongly object to *internal diversity* among individuals within political communities," while the latter "emphasizes the *internal diversity* of tastes, cultures, lifestyles, etc. within the community."⁸⁰

Still other scholars have gone further to insist that the ND and de Benoist are neo-fascist. So, for example, in a 2013 piece Beauzamy argues that the ND engages in what Stephen Reyna called "dazzling theory," which is "formulated at a high level of abstraction" and incorporates "pompous formulations and a large variety of references, including to some extreme-left theory ('rightist Gramscism') to produce a racial argument dressed in a highly complex fashion—a 'high culture' version of fascist arguments."⁸¹

Or, Spektorowski correctly saw through the ND's embrace of cultural ethnopluralism: "It sets a new basis for organic identification, deeper and more authentic than the nation-state, and is the most propitious framework for the raising of populist anti-liberal elites. It justifies segregation of foreigners, however, with clean hands, and sets the intellectual basis for a new European union, anti-liberal, and culturally homogeneous."⁸² Spektorowski argues against the view that the ND is antiracist by suggesting that "the New Right and the *Lega Nord* are two different but complementary faces of the new sophisticated right-wing ethnoregionalist

⁷⁶ Here I borrow from Stanley Payne's comprehensive definition of fascism in *A History of Fascism: 1914–1945* (London: UCL Press, 1995), p. 7. Also, see Tamir Bar-On, "A Response to Alain de Benoist," p. 134. For a comparison of fascism and the ND, see Alain de Benoist and Charles Champetier, "The French New Right in the Year 2000." Retrieved from: home.alphalink.com.au/~radnat/debenoist/alain9.html.

⁷⁷ See, for example, Pierre-André Taguieff, "The New Cultural Racism in France," *Telos* 83 (Spring 1990), pp. 109-122; and *La Force du préjugé. Essai sur le racisme et ses doubles* (Paris: La Découverte, 1988).

⁷⁸ Montserrat Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations*, p. 156.

⁷⁹ Montserrat Guiberneau, *The Identity of Nations*, p. 156.

⁸⁰ Ayelet Banai, "'Europe of the Regions' and the problem of boundaries in liberal democratic theory," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 17 (1) (2012), p. 54; p. 47.

⁸¹ Brigitte Beauzamy, "Continuities of Fascist Discourses, Discontinuities of Extreme-Right Political Actors? Overt and Covert Antisemitism in the Contemporary French Radical Right," in *Analysing Fascist Discourse: European Fascism in Talk and Text*, eds. Ruth Wodak and John E. Richardson (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2013), p. 171.

⁸² Alberto Spektorowski, "Ethnoregionalism: The Intellectual New Right and the Lega Nord," *Global Review of Ethnopolitics* 2 (3) (2003), pp. 68-69.

ideology, the basis for a new discourse of exclusion.”⁸³ Zaslove explains the ties between the ND and *Lega Nord*. Influenced by cultural notions of exclusion put forward in the 1960s and 1970s by de Benoist, the *Lega Nord* focused on cultural justifications of exclusion, “cleverly framing the immigration issue to avoid biological arguments.”⁸⁴

Other scholars have echoed Spektorowski and Zaslove. As Axtmann argued in relation to GRECE, the key ND think tank, “The flipside of [GRECE’s position] is the claim that ... differences have to be preserved at all cost: they must be cultivated, developed and defended against any attempt to abolish them. As a result, this particular version of the right to difference is organized around a ‘mixophobic’ core: it is ‘haunted’ by the threat of the destruction of identities through interbreeding—physical and cultural crossbreeding.”⁸⁵

Antón-Mellón also links the ND to fascism by analyzing their texts. Using Alain Bihr’s conceptual model of fascism, Mellón argues that both the ND and interwar fascists are united by a defense of ethnonationalist ideas, elevating the collective identity to the category of a fetish, the insistence on inequality as a fundamental ontological and axiological category, and the defense of a bellicose conception of life that glorifies combat as one of the fundamental elements of existence.⁸⁶ He points to six ways in which there is continuity between interwar fascism and the ND: homogeneity at the core of their ideological and philosophical foundations; in terms of the movement of history, “the protagonists are ethnically homogeneous peoples”; society is viewed as “decadent” and in “crisis”; the attempt to transcend “party politics, social divisions and ideologies” in the name of new elites and the nation or Europe; the rejection of liberalism as a political philosophy; and an “organicist, metaphysical, transcendental and spiritualist” perspective that focuses more on political and cultural change compared to economic or social change.⁸⁷

Thus, while de Benoist and the ND deny that they are racist or fascist, numerous intellectuals differ with their claims. Let me provide you with a few samples of de Benoist’s anti-liberal, homogeneous, and neo-fascist conception of politics. De Benoist wrote the following in *Telos* in 1995:

⁸³ Alberto Spektorowski, “Ethnoregionalism,” pp. 68-69.

⁸⁴ Andrej Zaslove, *The Re-invention of the European Radical Right: Populism, Regionalism, and the Italian Lega Nord* (Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2011), p. 117.

⁸⁵ Roland Axtmann, *Liberal Democracy into the 21st Century: Globalization, Integration and the Nation State* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 105.

⁸⁶ Joan Antón-Mellón, “The *idées-force* of the European New Right,” in *Varieties of Right-Wing Extremism in Europe* eds. Andrea Mammone, Emmanuel Godin and Brian Jenkins, eds. (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2013), p. 53.

⁸⁷ Joan Antón-Mellón, “The *idées-force* of the European New Right,” pp. 62-63.

The proper functioning of both Greek and Icelandic democracy was the result of cultural cohesion and a clear sense of shared heritage. The closer the members of a community are to each other the more they are likely to hold common sentiments, values and ways of looking at the world, and it is easier for them to make collective decisions in regard to the common good without the help of mediators.⁸⁸

Or, in the ND manifesto, “The French New Right for the Year 2000,” de Benoist and Champetier wrote: “By reason of its rapid growth and its massive proportions, immigration such as one sees today in Europe constitutes an undeniably negative phenomenon.”⁸⁹ De Benoist and Champetier insinuate that native Europeans are the principal “victims” of immigration rather than immigrants themselves, but never asks immigrants for their perspectives:

Immigration is not desirable for the immigrants, who are forced to abandon their native country for another where they are received as backups for economic needs. Nor is immigration beneficial for the host population receiving the immigrants, who are confronted, against their will with sometimes brutal modifications in their human and urban environments.⁹⁰

One writer has recently remarked in reference to de Benoist that “it seems clear from several of his works ... (such as his “Manifesto of the New Right,” “Immigration: Reserve Army of Capital?” and “What Is Racism?”) that Alain de Benoist does believe that maintaining the *separateness* [my emphasis] of the various cultural, ethnic, and racial groups is very important and he certainly does not accept the permanent resettlement of Europe by racially foreign immigrants (as O’Meara claims); rather, he believes taking a less radical procedure to solve the matter.”⁹¹

In addition, de Benoist (and his colleague Champetier) criticize the liberal and “abstract” notion of citizenship and defend citizenship based on ethnic origins:

As regards the immigrant populations which reside today in France, it would be illusory to expect their departure en masse. The Jacobin national state has always upheld a model of assimilation in which only the individual is absorbed into a

⁸⁸ Alain de Benoist, “Democracy Revisited,” p. 75.

⁸⁹ Alain de Benoist and Charles Champetier, “The French New Right in the Year 2000,” section 3, position 3.

⁹⁰ Alain de Benoist and Champetier, “The French New Right in the Year 2000,” section 3, position 3.

⁹¹ Metapedia, “Alain de Benoist,” Retrieved at: en.metapedia.org/wiki/Alain_de_Benoist.

citizenship which is purely abstract. The state holds no interest in the collective identities nor in the cultural differences of these individuals. This model becomes less and less credible in view of the following factors: the sheer number of immigrants, the cultural differences which sometimes separate them from the populations receiving them, and especially the profound crises which affect all the channels of traditional integration (parties, unions, religions, schools, the army, etc.). The New Right believe that ethnocultural identity should no longer be relegated to the private domain, but should be acknowledged and recognized in the public sphere. The New Right proposes, then, a communitarian model which would spare individuals from being cut off from their cultural roots and which would permit them to keep alive the structures of their collective cultural lives. They should be able to observe necessary general and common laws without abandoning the culture which is their very own. This communitarian politic could, in the long run, lead to a dissociation of citizenship from nationality.⁹²

De Benoist wants the revival of “hundreds of homogeneous ethnic communities.”⁹³ He rails against immigration, fears cultural mixing, and calls for the “peaceful” return of immigrants and non-Europeans to their “home” countries for the supposed “mutual benefit” of Europeans and non-Europeans.⁹⁴ In the 1970s, de Benoist was even more politically incorrect when he pioneered his “differentialist racism.” He stated the following: “We have the right to be for Black Power, but on the condition of simultaneously being in favor of White Power, Yellow Power and Red Power.”⁹⁵ As late as 2012, de Benoist insisted that while pan-European unity is “an absolute necessity,” it must have as its base not liberal multiculturalism but rather “the peoples of Europe”—all born from the same “cultural and historical matrix.”⁹⁶ De Benoist (and Champetier) view the liberal and universalist legacy of 1789 as “ethnocentric,” “neo-imperialist,” and “totalitarian”:

⁹² Alain de Benoist and Champetier, “The French New Right in the Year 2000,” section 3, position 3.

⁹³ Tamir Bar-On, “Intellectual Right-Wing Extremism: Alain de Benoist’s Mazeway Resynthesis Since 2000”, in *The Extreme Right in Europe: Current Trends and Perspectives* Uwe Backes and Patrick Moreau, eds. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), pp. 333-358.

⁹⁴ Alain de Benoist and Charles Champetier, “The French New Right in the Year 2000,” section 3, position 3. For a complete analysis of the manifesto, see Tamir Bar-On, *Rethinking the French New Right: Alternatives to modernity*, pp. 161–83.

⁹⁵ Alain de Benoist, *Les Idées à l’endroit* (Paris: Libres-Hallier, 1979), p. 156.

⁹⁶ Alain de Benoist, *Mémoire vive*, p. 47.

The West's conversion to universalism has been the main cause of its subsequent attempts to convert the rest of the world: in the past, to its religion (the Crusades); yesterday, to its political principles (colonialism); and today, to its economic and social model (development) or its moral principles (human rights). Undertaken under the aegis of missionaries, armies and merchants, the Westernization of the planet has represented an imperialist movement fed by the desire to erase all otherness by imposing on the world a supposedly superior model invariably presented as "progress." Homogenizing universalism is only the projection and the mask of an ethnocentrism extended over the whole planet.⁹⁷

In 2014, De Benoist repeated his opposition to the liberal, universalist legacy and "the ideology of human rights": "The ideology of human rights has now become a kind of new world civil religion, having primarily a legitimizing role in the global expansion of the market system."⁹⁸ It is not by accident that de Benoist sees the UN norm of Responsibility to Protect, or Western intervention in cases of genocides or crimes against humanity, as examples of Western neo-imperialism. Or, "as a weapon by stronger nations to bludgeon those weaker states which do not conform to the Western liberal-democratic form of rights, as we have recently seen in action in the former Yugoslavia, Iraq, and Libya."⁹⁹

De Benoist quotes, defends and legitimizes many fascist or revolutionary right-wing authors. These include the following authors, which are still part of de Benoist's contemporary worldview: Joseph De Maistre, Knut Hamsun, Ernst Jünger, Georges Valois, Carl Schmitt, Julius Evola, and Dominique Venner.¹⁰⁰ In 2014, he continued to defend the pro-Nazi thinker Carl Schmitt with these verbal gymnastics: "I am the first to deplore the fact that Schmitt was a member of the Nazi party for three years (from 1933 to 1936, when he was excluded from all his official functions), the ideology of which he had never espoused (he even called for its ban in 1932!). The causes of this adherence are still being discussed."¹⁰¹ In short, for de Benoist Schmitt was not really a Fascist. This was a tactic de Benoist used to defend Conservative Revolution authors such as Jünger, or outright racist Fascists such as Evola. What de Benoist longed for, like these other intellectuals, was not anti-fascism, but a more elitist and aristocratic variant of fascism.

⁹⁷ Alain de Benoist and Charles Champetier, "The French New Right in the Year 2000," section 2, position 8.

⁹⁸ Alain de Benoist in Arthur Versluis, "A Conversation with Alain de Benoist," p. 97.

⁹⁹ See back cover of Alain de Benoist, *Beyond Human Rights: Defending Freedoms* (London: Arktos, 2011).

¹⁰⁰ Tamir Bar-On, "A Response to Alain de Benoist," p. 138.

¹⁰¹ Alain de Benoist, "A Conversation with Alain de Benoist," p. 99.

In addition, Tom McCulloch argues that despite the diversity of ND thinkers, the ND remains wedded to a metapolitical project based on the defense of collective identities (“any,” he states) and a rejection of egalitarianism.¹⁰² In 2002, de Benoist approvingly quoted Giuliano Ferrara in *Il Foglio*: “The rights of man are not universal if they include the right not to believe in the dogma of the universality of rights.”¹⁰³ In a 2004 interview, de Benoist said that he rejected the “abstract,” individualist nature of the Rights of Man, which he viewed as an exception rather than rule in human societies.¹⁰⁴

Fighting neo-fascism for changing times

This paper sought to highlight the uses of “Fascism with a human face” and its connections to the notion of “socialism with a human face.” I focused on one conceptual tool to interpret the ND and its leader, namely, a “Fascism with a human face.” Others such as Bastow, Piccone, and Versluis challenge this claim. In his entry for “Alain de Benoist” in *World Fascism: A Historical Encyclopedia*, Bastow writes: “He has moved from fascism in more recent years.”¹⁰⁵ In another book, I used three other conceptual tools to interpret the ND and its relationship to modernity, including the desire to supersede right and left, the quest for alternative modernities, and the aim of creating a re-sacralized and revolutionary society and state based on a secular “religion of politics”.¹⁰⁶ In still another piece, I asked whether the ND led by de Benoist is “A New Right, Leftist Right, New Left, or Old Right in New Clothes?”¹⁰⁷ I am inclined to view the ND as a combination of “A New Right” and “Old Right in New Clothes.”

Along with Marco Tarchi in Italy, de Benoist is the most “new right” of ND thinkers. Yet, other ND thinkers from Faye and Sunic to Krebs and Dugin are even more radical, ethnically determinist, and racialist than de Benoist.¹⁰⁸ Krebs wrote the following in a clearly

¹⁰² Tom McCulloch, “The Nouvelle Droite in the 1980s and 1990s: Ideology and Entryism, the Relationship with the Front National,” pp. 158-178.

¹⁰³ Alain de Benoist, “Universalité et non-universalité des droits de l’homme,” n.d., Retrieved from files.alaindebenoist.com/alaindebenoist/pdf/universalite_des_droits_de_l_homme.pdf.

¹⁰⁴ Alain de Benoist, “Entretien publié dans le quotidien *Présent* (2004),” Retrieved from files.alaindebenoist.com/alaindebenoist/pdf/entretien_sur_les_droits_de_l_homme.pdf.

¹⁰⁵ Steve Bastow, “Alain de Benoist,” in *World Fascism: A Historical Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, Cyprian Blamires, ed. (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006), p. 88.

¹⁰⁶ Tamir Bar-On, *Rethinking the French New Right: Alternatives to modernity*, p. 227.

¹⁰⁷ Tamir Bar-On, “Intellectual Right-Wing Extremism: Alain de Benoist’s Mazeway Resynthesis Since 2000,” in *The Extreme Right in Europe: Current Trends and Perspectives* Uwe Backes and Patrick Moreau, eds. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), pp. 338-340.

¹⁰⁸ See, for example, Guillaume Faye, *Le système à tuer les peuples* (Paris: Copernic, 1981). Or, Faye’s *The Colonization of Europe*, which preached “total ethnic war” between “original” Europeans and Muslims and led to a fine for racial incitement by a European court. See the French original, *La Colonisation de l’Europe: discours vrai sur l’immigration et l’Islam* (Paris: L’Encre, 2000). Pierre Krebs is part of the German branch of

racialist and determinist tone, while echoing de Benoist's disdain for Christianity and pagan perspective:

Both White America and White Europe (the West?) are in mortal danger today. The matrix of the West, as Krebs argues, is no longer territorial or political. It lies in the White man's experiment with Christianity, which began as merely an obscure Oriental cult — a cult which has absolutely nothing in common with the spiritual homeland of the White man: ancient Greece.¹⁰⁹

De Benoist is keen to create the optics of a “new right” and thus distances himself from the populism and overt nationalism of the FN, or the overt racialism of Krebs. Tomislav Sunic has written a sympathetic portrayal of the ND as a fellow-traveler. De Benoist indirectly criticized Sunic in a 2009 interview in which he lamented that the title of Sunic's 1990 book on the ND was “inappropriate” and hence gave away the ND project.¹¹⁰ The title is *The European New Right: Against Democracy and Equality*.¹¹¹ In recent years, de Benoist continues to reject administrative equality,¹¹² but supports direct rather than representative variants of democracy. Sunic troubled de Benoist because was not helping create an image of a “new right”. Also, Sunic has written these words, which echoed the blood and soil thesis of Hitler and Maurice Barrès: “Blood and soil will forever determine the life of nations.”¹¹³ Or, these politically incorrect lines:

Peoples are not the same; they never have been and never will be. Ethnic groups can be compared to the inmates of large American prisons, who usually begin to respect each other only when their turf is staked out and when their cells are separated by massive stone walls. Thrown into one cell they are likely to devour each other in a perpetual conflict over ‘territorial imperative.’¹¹⁴

the New Right and the author of *Fighting for the Essence: Western Ethnocide or European Renaissance* (London: Arktos, 2012).

¹⁰⁹ Pierre Krebs, in Tomislav Sunic, “Titans Are in Town: Preface to Pierre Krebs, *Fighting for the Essence*,” Counter-Currents Publishing, Retrieved at counter-currents.com/2012/03/titans-are-in-town-preface-to-pierre-krebs-fighting-for-the-essence/.

¹¹⁰ Alain de Benoist, “The European New Right Forty Years Later: Tomislav Sunic's *Against Democracy and Equality*,” *The Occidental Quarterly* 9 (1) (Spring 2009), p. 64.

¹¹¹ Tomislav Sunic, *The European New Right: Against Democracy and Equality* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990).

¹¹² This was even the assessment of a sympathetic analyst of the ND, Paul Piccone in *Telos*, who argued that de Benoist's failure to recognize administrative equality was the one impediment that kept him from being a new leftist. See Paul Piccone, “Confronting the French New Right: Old Prejudices or a New Political Paradigm?”

¹¹³ Tomislav Sunic, “A Global Village And The Rights Of The Peoples?,” Retrieved from home.alphalink.com.au/~radnat/tomsunic/sunic3.html.

¹¹⁴ Tomislav Sunic, “A Global Village And The Rights Of The Peoples?”

A right-wing tide is sweeping Europe, both in the neo-liberal and cultural or racialist senses. How do we fight it? Scholars such as Mudde see the rising right-wing tide as a form of populism combined with nativism and authoritarianism, which challenges established parties and elites and is distinction from fascism.¹¹⁵ For Mudde, the literature on the extreme-right is alarmist and Europe is not repeating the crises of the 1920s and 1930s:

Many authors would focus almost exclusively on the historical background of the populist radical Right, in other words its connection to pre-war fascism and Nazism. The assumption was that the post-war populist radical Right had to be understood as the remnant of the past and not as a consequence of contemporary developments... In fact, they are best seen as a radicalization of mainstream values. Hence, the populist radical Right should be considered a pathological normalcy, not a normal pathology.¹¹⁶

Others such as Umberto Eco would challenge Mudde. Eco points out that it would all be so easy if neo-fascists today said that they want to re-open the gas chambers.¹¹⁷ Except they do not. De Benoist claims that that he is anti-fascist, anti-racist, anti-totalitarian, and pro-multiculturalism. Yet, the ND's elitist, hierarchical, pagan, and ethnically homogeneous worldview, valorization of a warrior ethic, and use of Conservative Revolution authors that legitimized Fascism and Nazism (Schmitt, Jünger, and Moeller van den Bruck) means that they have retained some of the Old Right and this has led to accusations of fascism. A leading historian of fascism, Roger Griffin, is convinced that the ND is fascist and alternative modernist.¹¹⁸ In a recent response to de Benoist, this author noted that the ND is neo-fascist and advances a reactionary political project in the Gramscian sense because it rejects administrative equality and seeks to "liberate" merely a part of humanity ("original Europeans") rather than all of humanity.¹¹⁹ I also suggested that de Benoist is a neo-fascist

¹¹⁵ Cass Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

¹¹⁶ Cass Mudde, "The populist radical Right: A pathological normalcy," *Eurozine*, 31 August 2010, Retrieved at eurozine.com/articles/2010-08-31-mudde-en.html.

¹¹⁷ Umberto Eco, "Eternal Fascism: Fourteen Ways of Looking at a Blackshirt," *New York Review of Books*, 22 June 1995.

¹¹⁸ Roger Griffin, "Modernity, Modernism, and Fascism: A Mazeway Resynthesis," *Modernism/Modernity* 15 (1), pp. 9–24; "Foreword: Another Face? Another Mazeway? Reflections on the Newness and Rightness of the European New Right," in Tamir Bar-On, *Where Have All The Fascists Gone*, pp. viii–xvi; "Introduction," in C. P. Blamires (ed.), *World Fascism: A Historical Encyclopedia*, pp. 1–26.

¹¹⁹ Tamir Bar-On, "A Response to Alain de Benoist," p. 157.

and this is not merely a polemical accusation, as de Benoist claims. It is based on the comments of neo-fascists such as Bardèche arguing that fascism will change; on the GRECE project of avoiding “outdated vocabulary”; on definitions of fascism proposed by Griffin, Sternhell, and Payne; on Feldman and Jackson’s notion of the “double-talk” of the revolutionary right (including the ND); and on Copsey’s insight that fascism “does not consist of consistent and unchanging features, but has its own history of development, and cannot be reduced to a static model.”

Despite the ND’s praise for the 1968ers and New Left, there is plenty that is “old” about the ND: its scathing critique of egalitarianism, rejection of the Rights of Man, and view that liberal and socialist models of history promote a false and abstract egalitarianism and universalism. The ND views immigration, cultural mixing, and multiculturalism through the lenses of homogeneity and exclusion. De Benoist quotes and even legitimizes many fascist or revolutionary right-wing authors, whether Joseph de Maistre, Ernst Jünger, or Georges Valois. De Benoist’s polemical tone and scathing response to this author is part of the “fascist style,” which consists in mocking and denigrating one’s opponents without directly confronting their arguments. The ND also cultivates ambiguity by synthesizing numerous worldviews from the left and right, conservative and revolutionary perspectives, and ideas based on myth and science. Woods also points out that part of the ND strategy consists in “cultivating vagueness” in order to promote a “devaluation of rational discussion.”¹²⁰ As highlighted by Antón-Mellón earlier, de Benoist’s visions of liberalism consisting of despair, crises, and decadence, as well as the possibility of a new beginning for homogeneous peoples as the primary movers of history, adds to the ND’s neo-fascist ethos.

As this author suggested, “If de Benoist wants to forever leave the orbit of the revolutionary rightwing milieu, he would do well to stop defending Carl Schmitt or Julius Evola or legitimizing other figures in the fascist or revolutionary rightwing milieu on his website, including Dominique Venner, Charles Maurras, Henry de Montherlant, Ernst Jünger, or Knut Hamsun.”¹²¹ The leading French expert on the ND, Pierre-André Taguieff, made this point about de Benoist in 1994:

Let us not be so hasty or naïve. Benoist’s undeniable intellectual evolution, which part of GRECE followed, did not reflect or result in an unambiguous political evolution. His credibility will only be beyond reproach when he publishes an argumentative text

¹²⁰ Roger Woods, *Germany’s New Right As Culture and Politics*, p. 107.

¹²¹ Tamir Bar-On, “A Response to Alain de Benoist,” p. 138.

in which he both clearly breaks with the neo-nationalist or “revolutionary-conservative” milieu and clarifies the reasons for this break.¹²²

It is 2015. We are still waiting for that text from de Benoist. As Spektorowski correctly notes, the ND “makes use of the intellectual contribution of old anti-liberal integralist sources at the fringes of fascism.”¹²³ Fleischer views the ND as a variant of “multi-fascism,” which is based on the following tenets: rhetoric of anti-globalization, protection of identity and civilization, an anti-American and pro-Russian or Eurasianist geopolitical orientation, ethnopluralism, pagan or Orthodox in religious orientation, archaic in its mythology, and counter-intellectual (i.e., challenging the liberal-left intellectual elites).¹²⁴ While the ND has attempted to stress the “direct democracy,” ecological, anti-capitalist, and “progressive” aspects of its manifesto “The French New Right for the Year 2000,” I am adamant that its positions are anti-progressive in contrast to the liberal-left. This is not to suggest that all leftists are progressives. Italian thinker Danilo Zolo agrees. He points out that while de Benoist’s imperial and pan-European, pro-regional federalist project attempts to reconcile the “one and the many” (i.e., organic unity, which respects its component parts), it is unlikely to be accepted by liberals or the left because it implies “an absolutist and anti-egalitarian conception of power.”¹²⁵ Moreover, if this empire will be under the direction of one or two hegemonic states such as France and Germany, this would violate the egalitarianism between various European nations or regions.¹²⁶ Finally, as the ND works from an illiberal position, Zolo argues that the imperial model contradicts protection of European citizens’ basic rights.¹²⁷ Zolo’s criticisms of the ND highlights the chasm between liberal, left-wing, and neo-fascist models of Europe.

As the ND appears increasingly more leftist, anti-capitalist, and in favour of direct democracy (in order to attain culturally homogeneous societies), it is nonetheless not a “progressive” movement and fighting it is a challenge:

¹²² Pierre-André Taguieff, “An Interview with Pierre-André Taguieff,” *Telos* 98-99 (Winter-Spring 1993-1994), p. 160.

¹²³ Alberto Spektorowski, “Ethnoregionalism, Multicultural Nationalism and the Idea of a European Third Way,” *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 7 (3) (December 2007), p. 45.

¹²⁴ Rasmus Fleischer, “Two fascisms in contemporary Europe? Understanding the ideological split of the Radical Right,” in *In the Tracks of Breivik: Far Right Networks in Northern and Eastern Europe* (Uppsala, Sweden: Lit Verlag, 2013), eds. Mats Deland, Michael Minkenberg, Christian Mays, pp. 53-70; p. 57.

¹²⁵ Danilo Zolo, “The re-emerging notion of Empire and the influence of Carl Schmitt’s thought,” in *The International Political Thought of Carl Schmitt: Terror, liberal war and the crisis of global order*, Louiza Odysseos and Fabio Petito, eds. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), p. 157.

¹²⁶ Danilo Zolo, “The re-emerging notion of Empire and the influence of Carl Schmitt’s thought,” p. 157.

¹²⁷ Danilo Zolo, “The re-emerging notion of Empire and the influence of Carl Schmitt’s thought,” p. 157.

The ND's 'politically correct' discourse, which is allegedly 'anti-racist', 'anti-fascist', 'anti-nationalist' (or pro-regionalist and pan-European) and 'anti-antisemitic', is coded to suit the changing times. For those concerned with fighting racism and antisemitism, it must be clear that open racists and fascists are becoming an extinct species. Furthermore, the tasks of fighting racism and a revived 'metapolitical fascism' have become complicated since the ND wages its 'wars' against liberalism, equality, representative democracy and multiculturalism not by using castor oil and fists, but by seeking to win the hearts and minds of the majority of Europeans and key state elites. Moreover, stigmatization of the Other may come in new forms, like the ND's 'multiculturalism of the right', which paradoxically recognizes the right of others to be 'different' (for example, to wear Islamic veils), in order to exclude non-Europeans from the continent.¹²⁸

¹²⁸ Tamir Bar-On, "Transnationalism and the French Nouvelle Droite," p. 222-223. For the notion "multiculturalism of the right," see Alberto Spektorowski, "The French New Right: Multiculturalism of the Right and the Recognition-Exclusionism Syndrome," *Journal of Global Ethics* 8 (1) (2012), pp. 41–61. For de Benoist's defense of the right of Muslim women to wear the *hijab* in France in May 2004, see Alain de Benoist, "Sur le foulard islamique Réponse a une enquete (2004)," Retrieved at alaindebenoist.com/pdf/sur_le_foulard_islamique.pdf.