



## Chapter 11 Deep Roots: The Post-Fascist Legacies of the Current Western European Far Right

Wiebke Keim

### ► To cite this version:

Wiebke Keim. Chapter 11 Deep Roots: The Post-Fascist Legacies of the Current Western European Far Right. Scripting defiance. Four sociological vignettes, pp.431-478, 2022, 978-81-950559-1-3. halshs-03908709

**HAL Id: halshs-03908709**

**<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-03908709>**

Submitted on 31 Jan 2023

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

## **Chapter 11 [CHAPTER NO.]**

### **Deep Roots: The Post-Fascist Legacies of the Current Western European Far Right [CHAPTER HEADING]**

**Wiebke Keim [AUHOR NAME]**

After the end of the Second World War all over Europe, fascists had to reconfigure. In Italy, the home country of originary fascism, the resistance movement went public and started to engage in the official politics of the country. The remaining fascists of the Italian Social Republic, if not in prisoner-of-war camps or jail, in turn, went underground as the new government banned any attempt to form a fascist organization or party. They also had to fear the revenge of the anti-fascist resistant fighters who appear to have killed around 2,344 fascists or maybe more (Weinberg, 1979: 13). However, following an amnesty in 1946, many fascists became politically active again, claiming continuity with the Social Republic. The main political party they founded was the Italian Social Movement (MSI), represented by the symbol of the tricolour flame over a funeral bier expressing their commitment to pursue Mussolini's legacy. There was a strong 'continuity with the past', i.e., with interwar fascism, confirming 'the authenticity of the MSI's Fascist credentials':

One of the most striking features of the Social Movement's history is the extent to which it recapitulates the history of the original Fascist movement. Despite the existence of enormous differences between the two postwar eras and in the distribution of strength of the various social and political forces at work in them, the similarities in Fascist behavior seem impressive. (Weinberg, 1979: 71–72)

In other countries, the reorganization after 1945 was more discreet. Oswald Mosley, as soon as released from imprisonment, started to reorganize British fascism. He was aware, however, that its appearance needed to change since the interwar style would not have been acceptable any more. He therefore circulated a letter signed by Alf Lockhart, former British Union of Fascists member, amongst supporters. The letter encouraged the creation of local groups but explicitly asked to avoid the term 'fascist' in their names and publications. As a result, '[m]any artful names were invented [. . .]' (Beckman, 1992, 1995: 16).

This chapter outlines the post-war context in Germany and France, and how former fascists reorganized themselves in it. For the German case, it is necessary to demonstrate how organizational continuity was partly encouraged through external support, due to geopolitical considerations, to a fragmented political scene. For France, the key turning points of the Algerian War and of 1968 led to changes in ideological outlook and political restructuring. I shall conclude by arguing that apart from the current situation of political malaise and ideological crisis, the deep roots of the post-war far right are a second explanatory factor for their current strength. The chapter also includes a digression on its current geopolitical significance.

## Post-1945 in Germany: An Overview [A-LEVEL SUBHEAD]

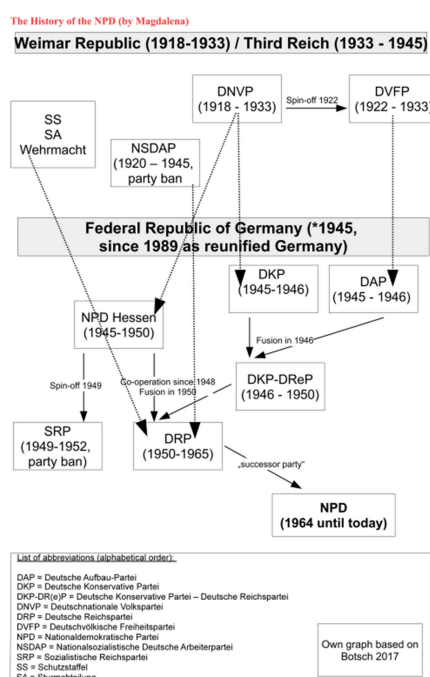
In the federal republic of Germany, in the year 1950/51, there were around 8 million displaced persons or expellees (*Vertriebene*<sup>1</sup>), between 1.5 and 2.5 million ‘outclassed’ public servants, employees of the National Socialist German Workers’ Party (NSDAP, or the Nazi Party) and professional soldiers, 2.4 million war widows and orphans, 1.5 million severely disabled, 2 million late returnees from prisoner-of-war camps, 4.5 to 6 million bomb victims and over 1.5 million unemployed (Stöss, 1986: 210–11, quoting Schelsky, 1955). In order to avoid shortened memories, these figures should also be kept in mind when debating the relevance of the current refugee reception crisis (see the preceding chapter).

In the face of profound social and economic problems in a divided country and of diverging views on how to reconstruct nation and society, many citizens adopted oppositional attitudes towards the plans of the occupying powers to consolidate a liberal, capitalist and somehow democratic project. This opposition was nourished by practical, social and economic concerns, by deep feelings of insecurity and disorientation, but also by a more fundamental opposition to pluralistic parliamentary democracy, similar to the situation during the Weimar Republic. In this sense, the parallels that Weinberg has noted regarding the situation of Italian interwar and post-war fascism apply to the German case as well. The far-right radical opposition was oriented against the occupying powers and their subordination of the ‘German people’, as well as against the so-called licence parties, i.e., political parties that had obtained a licence from the occupying powers to stand for elections and that therefore appeared, in the eyes of critics, as extensions of the occupiers. To sum up, ‘antidemocrats of all shades regarded the parliamentary-democratic and pluralistic Republic as a form of political order that had failed after 1918 and that had therefore lost its historical legitimation’ (Stöss, 1986). Former soldiers and NS activists started to organize and took over the ideological leadership of these oppositional forces. It was these groups that ensured organizational continuity for projects of authoritarian restoration in post-war Germany. They developed at first in a contradictory context.

In politics, various ‘great men’ of NS history did have a career after 1945. Hans Globke is a key example of personal continuities within the administrative elites. He had ‘collaborated and played an active part in carrying out the “Germanization” and extermination policy of the Nazi regime’ (Juristen, 1963: 7–8). By that time, Globke had been chief of Konrad Adenauer’s Bundeskanzleramt (Federal Chancellery) and was counted as the closest partner of the chancellor. Another prominent example is Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU) Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger (1966–69). An NSDAP member between 1933 and 1945, he had started his career as director of the Rundfunkpolitische Abteilung (Broadcasting Policy Department) in the Reichsaußenministerium (Reich Ministry of Foreign Affairs) under von Ribbentrop, maintaining contacts with Goebbels’ Reichspropagandaministerium (Reich Propaganda Ministry).

A request for information on ‘dealing with the NS past’ by various Members of Parliament to the German Parliament was answered in December 2011. It stated that due to the need for and high value of ‘administrative experience’ in the 1950s, there had indeed been a great deal of continuity

in terms of contents and staff within German public administration. The 85-page document reveals, among others, that by the end of the 1950s, 77 per cent of staff of the Ministry of Defence were former NSDAP members, 50 per cent in the Ministry of Economic Affairs and one-third of the Foreign Office. Three-quarters of the staff in the Federal Criminal Police Office had been NSDAP members, and more than half members of the Schutzstaffel (SS). A total of twenty-seven Chancellors and federal ministers had been members of NSDAP, Sturmabteilung (SA) or SS, including, for example, the former Minister of the Exterior Hans-Dietrich Genscher (Bundestag, 2011). The staffing translated into practice. The Federal Criminal Police Office, for instance, right into the 1950s, focused on homosexuals as a group and maintained its ‘gypsy files’, in the tradition of the former Reichszentrale für die Verfolgung des Zigeunerunwesens (Reich Central for the Persecution of the Gypsy Nuisance), only that they changed the name of the file from ‘gypsy’ to ‘people with frequently changing domicile’ (Wildt, 2014: 54–55).



Graph 1: Evolution of far-right parties from pre- to post-war Germany

Source: Baroni et al., 2018

In the beginning, committed National Socialists formed small groups and parties at local and regional levels, and kept switching, renaming and reorienting in order to comply with structures that were officially possible in the new legal environment of the young Republic under Western occupation. Graph 1 outlines their evolution from the pre- to the post-war period. The post-1945 story could start from the National Democratic Party (Nationaldemokratische Partei) that existed between 1945 and 1950 in the region of Hessen. As a right-wing extremist small party, it never obtained the necessary licence from the US-occupying force for the whole region. Its leader was Heinrich Leuchtgens, formerly member of the Bauernbund (Farmers’ Association), later Hessischer Landbund that collaborated with the Deutschnationalistische Volkspartei (DNV). They

favoured a strong state, law and order, the fight against internationalism, pacifism and social democracy; it was profoundly anti-urban and anti-Semitic. From 1948 onwards, the party grew its social base, integrating more radical Nazis who, because of prior activities for the NSDAP or related organizations, had been banned from political activities and had no chance to obtain a licence for the creation of their own party. Their political ambition went as far as reclaiming the borders of the former German Reich and their request for a strong state included redistributionist economic ideas. To them, Leuchtgens with his traditionalist view of a feudal-type society appeared as a desperately conservative mind. Although the local section of the party in Wiesbaden, where the profascists were strongly represented, had been created only in autumn 1947, they achieved 24.4 per cent in the local elections of April 1948. Ideological tensions led to the fragmentation of the party. The oppositional, Nazi-minded group joined the Sozialistische Reichspartei (SRP), the larger conservative group fused with the Deutsche Konservative Partei - Deutsche Rechtspartei (DKP-DRP) to form the Deutsche Reichspartei (DRP) (Schmollinger, 1986b: 1892–99).

The SRP (1949–52) was composed of former members of the DRP who had left it or who had been expelled because of their radicalism. It connected directly with the NS ideological line of nationalism, in direct opposition to the political order of the republic and with the ultimate aim of restoring the German Reich. The SRP's leadership was interesting, by the way, for social scientists: Fritz Dorls, the SRP leader, held a PhD in history, Gerhard Krüger had studied history, German philology, sociology, geography and journalism, held a PhD and had been professor at Strasbourg University and Bernhard Gericke held a PhD in English Linguistics. The three had met in a British camp where they had been imprisoned because of national-socialist and right-wing-extremist activities and had been collaborating since then. They experienced enhanced and accelerated networking as a result of confinement by the 'liberal West'. The SRP was relatively successful politically. In the communes where it presented itself for elections, it obtained around 10 per cent of votes. However, in 1952, the Federal Constitutional Court, in accordance with demands from anti-fascists and from labour organizations and social democrats, judged the party unconstitutional and banned it and also prohibited it from creating follow-up organizations. Then, again, many former members of the SRP joined the DRP and changed its political profile into more radical directions. Many of the former voters, however, joined the more established centre-conservative parties, especially the Deutsche Partei (Schmollinger, 1986d: 2274–79).

The DRP (1950–64) was founded in 1950 out of the fusion of a regional fraction of the DKP-DRP (Niedersachsen) and the NDP of the region of Hessen and was in direct competition with the SRP in its initial phase. Its aim was to fuse the tradition of the Deutschnationale with that of the National Socialists, i.e., it aimed at becoming a broader-based party that could unite the national far right in the Federal Republic with chances to obtain political influence within the existing party system. Ideologically diffuse, largely focused on re-establishing the German Reich, it strategically sought to open up a niche for diverse extreme-right orientations and to attract various constituencies. Furthermore, it opposed denazification and re-education programmes, the political order of the Republic, and importantly, communism and social democracy. Although marginal within the overall party system – many voters had started to support the conservative centre-right parties from the 1953 elections onwards – it nevertheless

was the most important and most continuous political party that defended old-style nationalism as the dominant trend within the post-war German far right, in continuity with National Socialism. From 1949 onwards, it was continuously represented in communal and regional parliaments.

The members of the DRP came mainly from the Protestant, rural areas and small towns of northern Germany – farmers and craftsmen. The leadership was composed of employees, middle-size entrepreneurs, farmers with large land ownership and former high-positioned military staff, i.e., the higher fragments of the middle class. When the block of the centre-conservative parties began to erode, the DRP was to form the nucleus of a new, more radical extreme-right party, the Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD) that it initiated in 1964 and dominated from then on (Botsch, 2017; Schmollinger, 1986a: 1112–91).

The far right also reassembled in a different type of organizations, those that acted as lobby groups to the expellees from Eastern Europe. They have remained an important constituency of the far right till this day and correspond to Mann's outline of 'threatened border communities' as a core constituency of interwar fascism. A first federal association was founded in 1950 that united most of all anti-communist forces amongst the expellees. Its successor, the current Bund der Vertriebenen (BdV, Union of Expellees), dates back to 1957. The majority of its leading staff had their origins in the political cadres and social elites of the Eastern European territories occupied by NS Germany, among them former NSDAP and SS staff that had participated in occupational and extermination policies between 1939 and 1945 (Schwartz et al., 2013). Within post-war Germany, these associations supported the rapid integration of *Heimatvertriebene* populations – many of whom were not *Heimatvertriebene* in the strict sense of the word; rather on the contrary, many had to flee because of participation in war crimes. About 90,000 former officials and public employees of NS occupied territories were integrated smoothly into the public service after 1945 (Später and Kotte, 2010).

The first big economic crisis of the post-war republic hit the country in 1966/67, giving rise to critical voices against the big coalition in government. The NPD gathered a variety of smaller extreme-right groups in the tradition of old-style nationalism. It had representatives in seven regional parliaments between 1966 and 1968. Together with economic recovery, the conservative CDU/ Christian Social Union (CSU), in the opposition since Social Democrats and Liberals had formed a coalition government in 1969, made a considerable rightward shift. This weakened the NPD; they did not even enter Parliament in 1969.

At the same time, within the party, the more national-revolutionary fractions criticized the party's leadership for its legalistic, system-conforming strategy and favoured militant activism against, as they put it, 'the undemocratic and anti-constitutional' politics of the new government. The tone of debate had thus changed; the far right started to appropriate and distort democratic themes in their own interest, a tendency they've played with to date. Around 1970/71, armed groups emerged in the ambit of the NPD, such as the Volkssozialistische Bewegung Deutschlands (VSBD) which was banned in 1982, the paramilitary Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann that acted as door stewards to protect far-right meetings and was banned in 1980, the Deutsche Aktionsgruppen (DA) that were responsible for bomb attacks and the Aktionsfront Nationaler

Sozialisten (ANS), an umbrella organization for neo-Nazis in Hamburg, banned in 1983. The party leadership officially condemned this militant activism. In March 1978, it decided not to accept the involvement of its members from these groups and of the members of its youth organization, the JN (Junge Nationaldemokraten). This behaviour was paralleled in the Front National's (FN) strategy to make unfavourably radical elements disappear from its public image. Apart from the violent action groups, the more intellectually oriented New Right, inspired by the French Nouvelle Droite, started to make inroads after the cultural shock of 1968 and criticized the party's old-style nationalism. The intellectual developments towards post-fascism started out from this impulse.

In 1970, on the occasion of a meeting between Chancellor Willy Brandt with GDR Prime Minister Wilhelm Stoph, the far right experienced a moment of strong extra-parliamentary activity, including within the NPD, intellectual circles (editors of the far-right journals *MUT*, Bernhard C. Wintzek, and of *Deutsche Wochenzeitung*, Alfred Mank) and student groups in the 'National Resistance' movement. After the movement lost momentum, editor Gerhard Frey of the *Deutsche National-Zeitung*, which had a weekly print run of 1,10,000, founded the Deutsche Volksunion (DVU) that collaborated from time to time with the NPD. The Aktion Neue Rechte was also founded in the beginning of 1972. The NPD's assembly of November 1971 led to the withdrawal of former leader Adolf von Thadden. Many members also left party politics or switched to other parties, groups or the Aktion Neue Rechte, whereas voters increasingly shifted towards the centre-right parties that were now in the opposition.

In comparison with its electoral base,<sup>2</sup> the party's leadership still had a peculiar profile:

The selection of leadership specific to this party is related to the importance of the factor of right-wing extremist organizational experience. If we choose as an indicator membership in the higher leadership ranks of the NSDAP, the SRP and other banned organisations as well as the DRP and other extreme right groups, then for the year 1967, according to information from the Federal office for the Protection of the Constitution, 35% of party members, 42% of party officials at district level, 60% of elected members in regional parliaments, 67% of party officials at regional level, 73% of members of the party executive, 91% of federal chairmen [Bundesredner], and 100% of shareholders in the party publication 'Deutsche Nachrichten' [German News] were part of this group. (Schmollinger, 1986c: 1983)

These parties thus accommodated actors with preceding organizational experience on the far right and helped to socialize new recruits into their ranks. Another important constituency was displaced Germans from parts of Eastern Europe, then under Soviet influence. Linus Kather, one of the activists of associations of displaced persons, was an NPD candidate in 1969; he participated in the Aktion Widerstand and founded in 1980 the nationalist working group Aktion Deutschland, two organisations close to the NPD that mobilised against Germany's new Eastern policy. The displaced persons, German nationals and ethnic Germans from regions then not forming part of Germany any more, were already an important constituency for National Socialism (Mann, 2004). They felt particularly attracted by the idea of a strong nation and a strong state. The far-right parties in question were particularly attractive for them as they aimed

at restoring the former borders of the Reich. The preceding chapter showed that Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) representative von Storch represents parts of those interests within the party today. These kinds of constituencies are clearly not explicable out of any crisis context but only out of long-term continuity of the far right's organizational and ideological nucleus.

In the federal elections of 1972, the NPD experienced a serious electoral failure and from then on was a rather marginal party within the German landscape until the beginning of the 1990s (Schmollinger, 1986c: 1922–94). Throughout the 1980s, however, the far-right scene was sustained not only by political parties (SRP, NPD, DVU and later Republikaner) – those were even relatively marginal. More importantly, the extra-parliamentary armed groups, although considered terrorist, led an existence without much interference from public authorities. Finally, a much broader neo-Nazi underground with loose organizational structures subsisted, fed among others by an influential media and cultural landscape. In the 1980s, it had millions of sympathizers in the population, where 13 per cent held extreme-right attitudes (Jaenecke, 1993: 8). In this phase of weakness at the extreme-right spectrum of the German party landscape, Franz Schönhuber, a CSU dissenter, founded the Republikaner in 1983. He tried to give it a more populist outlook. Schönhuber published his memoirs in which he remembered his activities as a member of the Waffen-SS during WWII. In the course of its existence, however, the Republikaner got marginalized. It could not take political advantage of the 1989 turn, with the collapse of the Berlin Wall (Betz, 1993: 670).

In the German Democratic Republic (GDR), against the official version of its being an anti-fascist state, the far right had started organizing:

It was thus true what could officially not be: In the GDR as well, while according to article 6 of its constitution it had 'in accordance with the interests of the people and its international responsibilities eradicated German militarism and Nazism on its territory', right-wing radicals were active long before the fall of the wall and, as became obvious at latest in 1987, in close contact with 'comrades' in the West. (Borchers, 1993: 121)<sup>3</sup>

Right after the fall of the Berlin Wall, western right-wing radicals engaged in recruiting new members in the eastern parts of the country. Michael Kühnen from the Freiheitliche Deutsche Arbeiterpartei developed a 'work plan East' with the aim of founding a new political party. This succeeded in 1990 with the foundation of the Nationale Alternative that took part in local elections (Borchers, 1993: 122–123). The NPD started organizing in the eastern parts of the country and founded the branch Mitteldeutsche Nationaldemokraten (MND). This did not succeed immediately, however. In none of the regional and federal elections throughout the year did it attain even 1 per cent of votes. Helmut Kohl's CDU, with its national pathos and welfare promises, seemed to have caught the electorate that could otherwise have been attracted by the NPD. In addition, the party was highly in debt at the end of 1990 (Staud, 2016). In 1991, a new federal board was elected under the leadership of Günter Deckert. His radicalizing strategy with revisionist speeches did not help in reconstructing the party. Deckert himself ended up in prison for Holocaust denial. The NPD could neither capitalize, in the beginning of the 1990s, on the fact that right-wing radicalism had started to flourish nor on the context of the asylum debate. Republikaner and DVU were the two parties that dominated the far right at the time. The NPD



even kept a distance from militant activist groups such as Neue Front (GdNF) under Michael Kühnen, the Liberal Workers' Party (Freiheitliche Arbeiterpartei, FAP) and the Nationalistische Front (NF). Under the continuous threat of getting banned, the NPD prohibited its members from joining such groups. However, after a series of extreme right violent attacks throughout eastern Germany in particular, many of these neo-Nazi groups were disbanded. At this point, the NPD changed strategy and opened up to the organizationally homeless activists from the militant groups. In 1996, Udo Voigt, later member of the European Parliament for the NPD, followed the former party leader Deckert (then in jail) and welcomed hundreds of militant neo-Nazis into the party. Some of them, like Thorsten Heise (formerly FAP), Jens Pühse (formerly NF) and Thomas Wulff (formerly GdNF) climbed up the internal hierarchy into leading positions. This also led to a considerable rejuvenation of the party; the youth league had pioneered this process of opening up to radical members (Staud, 2016). This enabled the party to lead several big street demonstrations towards the end of the 1990s and to become a visible political force in the country. It also became influential culturally, with the promotion of right-wing rock groups. In terms of content, Voigt shifted from a rather conservative towards a more radical ideological outlook, redefining the NPD as a 'revolutionary party'. In addition, capitalizing on growing dissatisfaction with the outcome of the so-called reunification in the eastern parts of Germany, the NPD introduced a new focus on social themes that were attractive for an electorate that was frustrated with its post-1989 existence (Staud, 2016).

As a result of the opening up of the NPD towards militant neo-Nazi groups, the federal government, Bundestag and Bundesrat initiated a procedure to prohibit the party in 2000. Extreme-right violence in the country had grown considerably and spread fear among parts of the population. This first prohibition procedure was suspended by the Federal Constitutional Court, however, because too many members of the party's executive were actually police informers. As a result, much of the verbatim material used in the court files had to be attributed to police informers. They seemed to have dominated the party's leadership in some places, such as at the regional level in Nordrhein-Westfalen (Pilath, 2017), shedding light, well before the NSU process, on doubtful connections between state structures and the far right. It turned out that 30 out of 200 party executives at regional and national levels were police spies, i.e., one out of seven had received funding from the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution.

The failed prohibition procedure gave the party much public attention. It concentrated its resources in Saxony by moving its publishing business and related jobs for functionaries. In the next regional elections in 2004, the NPD made an agreement with the DVU that only the NPD would present itself in Saxony and the DVU in Brandenburg, which allowed for concentrating far-right votes (the Republikaner did not present themselves). During the campaign, the NPD voiced a strong protest against the labour market reforms (Hartz IV) promoted by the governing coalition between Social Democrats and Greens, political decisions that can count to this day as a disaster for social democracy in Germany.<sup>4</sup> The NPD gained slightly over 9 per cent (Staud, 2016). After several decades, the party again sent members into a regional parliament. In the regional elections in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in 2006, it achieved 7.3 per cent. In 2007, the party had 7,200 members and was considered the strongest far-right political party of the country. It has been losing vote shares since then, more so since the AfD presented itself at

elections (Pfahl-Traugher, 2016). Because the NPD hardly managed to overcome the 5 per cent hurdle, little documentation exists on its voters' profiles.

The short phase of electoral success at the beginning of the 2000s had increased internal tensions between the younger militant members and the older, more conservative ones. In addition, a series of government programmes against right-wing radicalism were issued. Voigt could contain both fragments for a while and, during the 2010 congress, achieved a considerable strategic success by fusing the NPD with the DVU into the Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands – Die Volksunion (NPD – Die Volksunion) after DVU's founder Gerhard Frey retreated from the party. Financial scandals and debt forced the party to dismiss several functionaries (Staud, 2016). In autumn 2011, Holger Apfel, representative of the more moderate fraction, succeeded Voigt in the party leadership. Many militant activists left the party.

This was also the time when the terrorist group National-Socialist Underground (Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund, NSU) was arrested and accused of a series of racist murders. The investigations discovered direct connections between members of the NSU and several NPD functionaries. At the end of 2013, the Federal Constitutional Court initiated a second attempt to disband the NPD. Apfel had to leave the leadership after only two years because of accusations of sexual harassment against young militants. In the regional elections of 2014, the NPD could not surmount the threshold of 5 per cent necessary to enter regional parliaments. The concurrence of the newly rising AfD contributed to this failure. However, in the European Parliamentary elections of 2014, for the first time, Germany could not impose a threshold any more, enabling Udo Voigt to enter the European Parliament for the NPD. In 2015, together with Golden Dawn and Jobbik, the NPD formed the Alliance for Peace and Freedom at the European level, gaining access to funding and staff (Staud, 2016).<sup>5</sup> J.M. Le Pen, upon his expulsion from the Front National (see the preceding chapter), joined this alliance.

Even today, the NPD is closely associated with the NS legacy. It is not only closely linked to neo-Nazi movements, but because of its nationalist orientation, the emphasis on the German *Volk* and its welfare chauvinism and its demands for state control over the economy, it can be considered an 'originary national-socialist party' (*originär nationalsozialistische Partei*) (Kailitz, 2007). Its ultimate, utopic aim is the restoration of the German Reich. In 2017, the new procedure to ban the party as anti-constitutional was refuted by the Federal Constitutional Court. The Court recognized the party's ideological closeness to National Socialism and its anti-constitutional orientation, aiming at 'replacing the existing constitutional order with an authoritarian nation-state oriented towards the ethnically defined "Volksgemeinschaft"' (Pilath, 2017). It admitted that the party was irreconcilable with democracy and disrespected human dignity. However, the Court found that with 5,200 members, in the majority in the eastern regions of the country, especially Saxony, the party was too small and insignificant to represent a real threat for liberal democracy in the country. The party's official website summarizes its outlook today as '*Die soziale Heimatpartei*' [The social Heimat-party].<sup>6</sup> Following Kemper's analysis on Björn Höcke, we may assume that parts of the radical energies of the NPD, in the face of an unsuccessful party threatened by prohibition, fused into the rising AfD (Kemper, 2016a).

The NPD has remained a small party throughout. Its continued existence throughout up-and-down phases of success and in changing political environments is largely explicable through the biographies of its political leadership, its personal and organizational networks and the ideology they have upheld. The succession of political parties has also maintained throughout the entire period connections with militant groups, at times with the complicity of parts of public authorities. Finally, a cultural sector, including not only party publications but the more intellectual New-Right scene, music and youth subcultures, have sustained the continued visibility and appeal of the German far right. The NPD clearly upholds the legacy of National Socialism. It can be considered an organizational form of post-war fascism. In the preceding chapter, we have detected the NPD and its surrounding networks as one of the radicalizing agencies within the AfD's short history. A direct continuity is therefore present from the interwar period, throughout the post-war period, in the organizational structures and intellectual heritage of the latest far-right party in Germany. This long-term continuity is key to understanding how the AfD, within a brief time span, could significantly shift towards a far-right stance. Indeed, a small circle of political and ideological cadres, who inscribe themselves clearly in the outlined continuity, have steered these developments. This reality needed a separate treatment, independent of societal crisis contexts. Irrespective of existing new electoral constituencies, therefore, their agenda has strongly determined the AfD's rapid evolution and electoral success. This analysis is complementary to the one presented in the preceding chapter.

However, as opposed to the NPD, the AfD has streamlined its discourse and adapted it to the new context. This is why many analysts consider it as a right-wing 'populist' party. The party corresponds to the intellectual strategy of the New Right. Its members show a different degree of reflexivity about the country's NS past. I therefore conclude that the current situation of the German far right is adequately characterized as post-fascist.

### **Organizational Consistency and External Support [A-LEVEL SUBHEAD]**

During the early post-war decades, the European far right was at odds with the official post-1945 dynamic towards peace, liberal democracy, welfare capitalism and the new international institutional framework. However, these were also the decades of the Cold War confrontation. In Volume I of *Defiance*, I argued that in parallel to the official landscape, in hidden ways, the direct continuity of National Socialism was upheld within parts of the intelligence services in Germany under the auspices of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and later in coordination with NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) which considered pre-1945 fascists to be qualified and reliable partners against communism (Keim, 2014). Apparently, finding refuge and support in intelligence structures was a feature shared by the far rights of several Western European countries. If this hidden support does not alone explain why these movements were attractive to their sympathizers, supporters and members, it is an important element in understanding their survival and trajectories.

It was only in 1986 that the US Ministry of Justice admitted that the CIA had recruited SS and Gestapo officer Klaus Barbie in 1947. Barbie, called the butcher of Lyon, had been Head of the Gestapo in occupied Lyon (1941–44).<sup>7</sup> Under his leadership, 14,311 people had been arrested

and tortured, 9,591 deported and 4,342 murdered, among them resistance leader Jean Moulin. Despite the fact that France was actively searching for him to try him as a war criminal, he was first recruited by the Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) as an informant on communist activities in German territories. When the situation became too risky in the face of France's advancements, the CIA, with the support of the Vatican and the Red Cross, had to hide him elsewhere since he knew too much about the functioning of US intelligence. He was allowed to leave Europe through the 'ratline' to Bolivia, as was the case with thousands of other Nazis, and lived in South America under the name Altmann. He continued collaborating with the CIA against Latin American communism. He was behind the capture and murder of Che Guevara in 1967. From the 1960s onwards, the German foreign intelligence service Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND, the Federal Intelligence Service for foreign intelligence) recruited him as an informant on Latin American communism. In addition, as was the case with many former SS members then, he represented the German weapons industry and negotiated the selling of German arms to Latin American countries. Barbie supported the military coup of Banzer in 1971 and the violent repression of the opposition in the eight years that followed. Beate Klarsfeld, investigative journalist on war criminals, identified Barbie but he was protected by Hugo Banzer from extradition to France. Barbie also supported the 1980 coup by General García Mesa, funded upon Barbie's request by his friend the drug boss Roberto Suárez. For this purpose, he recruited a whole mercenary army composed of former Nazis and fascists, with the complicity of the CIA. After the end of the military dictatorship, Barbie was finally sent back to France – German chancellor Helmut Kohl, in his electoral campaign in 1983, refused to take him back in order to avoid scandals about collaboration between the BND and NS war criminals. However, German neo-Nazis, like Michael Kühnen, planned to liberate him from Lyon prison. Publisher Gerhard Frey was ready to provide funding and former Eichmann-collaborator Brunner, underground in Syria, was ready to welcome him. All those plans failed and he was sentenced to lifelong imprisonment in 1987. Barbie's case illustrates particularly well the recycling of NS competency in a huge diversity of contexts, as well as the efficiency of their networks.

More systematically, in Allendorf camp in Hessen, where many high-positioned Wehrmacht-generals were imprisoned, Franz Halder, General Staff of the NS armies, together with 120 former generals, evaluated their military experience in the East after the end of the war. This evaluation was commissioned by the Historical Division of the US army center of military history. The results of their analyses fed directly into the newly founded Bundeswehr and into NATO (Müller, 1991: 104–110).

The German trajectory was sketched already in my contribution to the first volume (Keim, 2014). In the meantime, systematic and detailed research by the Independent Historical Commission has enquired into personal continuities between the NS power apparatus and the post-war German intelligence services. While the Pentagon had ordered its intelligence services to detect German Nazis and bring them into the Nuremberg processes for trial, it also recruited selected ones for the construction of the German intelligence services.

The BND followed a different path from the Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, Intelligence of the Interior). In the case of the latter, the Allied powers took care to prevent recruitment of NS staff in the immediate post-war years. It

was only from the middle of the 1950s onwards that the Verfassungsschutz got 'national-socialized': collaborators with an NS past were initially paid on honorary basis and did not form part of permanent staff. Once the control of Allied authorities weakened, they were then recruited (Wildt, 2014). This was different from the development of the BND. Probably the most prominent Nazi enrolled in German intelligence was General Reinhard Gehlen. He had been a key figure in the Reichswehramt (Reich Defence Office) for the Nazi information service on Fremde Heere Ost (Foreign Armies East), i.e., he was the chief director of espionage of Eastern Europe from 1941 onwards. He was responsible for torture and murder through starvation of four million Soviet prisoners of war. When Gehlen realized the defeat, he voluntarily surrendered in May 1945 to the US-body CIC in charge of finding those responsible for NS crimes. He convinced them of his particular competency in combatting the Soviets and was flown, together with six of his closest colleagues, to Washington together with his data and material gathered in his former functions as chief of Fremde Heere Ost. Gehlen became the first director of the German foreign intelligence service after the war and constructed this service out of networks of former NS colleagues. The precursor of the BND, the Gehlen organization was initiated in 1945–46 by the American authorities. It was institutionalized in 1947 with the installation of its headquarters at Pullach. In 1956, the structures were transferred to federal authorities and adapted to the federal institutional landscape (Sälter, 2014). The Independent Historical Commission has now published detailed insights into Gehlen's career (Keßelring, 2014, 2017; Müller, 2014). The CIA closely controlled his activities, i.e., the German secret service evolved under US control. The presidents of US and Germany had also signed secret protocols in 1955 accompanying Germany's accession to NATO. According to the protocols, the public authorities of the country had to stop prosecution of well-known right-wing extremists.

The Gehlen organization systematically recruited former NS staff out of prisoner-of-war camps.<sup>8</sup> Structurally, the Gehlen organization and the early BND until the end of the 1960s were staffed by people who had held executive positions within the NS apparatus and many had war experience as well. Whereas several members were still young of age during the period 1930–1945, the leading staff had already had careers during National Socialism, like Gehlen himself. 'In short, [within the BND] the generation Hitlerjugend met the Führergeneration' (Rass, 2014: 32). In 1950, 57 per cent of staff had experience as either members of the NSDAP, the German Labour Front, the Reichsarbeitsdienst or had been staff of the Reich's bureaucracy, police or Waffen-SS. Once experience in the Wehrmacht is added, almost 90 per cent of staff were covered. They were hired through job applications, transferred from other services or recruited directly through BND staff. Allied agencies, the occupation authorities in the first place, additionally channelled about one-third of staff.

The Gehlen organization consisted of the headquarters and a series of relatively autonomous external units charged with information gathering. The directors of external units had autonomy to recruit permanent staff and informants and were encouraged to recruit 'proven personnel from within their circles of acquaintances' (Sälter, 2014: 42). A central staff department did not exist. Having war experience was particularly valued, which led to a practice where, next to former military staff, National-Socialist function owners were drawn into the organization. 'The recruitment policy, voluntarily or involuntarily, was oriented towards the incorporation of the

ruins of the National-Socialist security apparatus' (Sälter, 2014: 51). Recruitment following the snowball system allowed pre-existing coteries to be recruited wholly. This effect of decentralized recruitment was reinforced by the fact that new recruits were not further examined, since the recruiting director guaranteed their ideological and technical adequacy.<sup>9</sup> Clearly, 'The direction of the BND based its staff policy on the comradeship that had been created during National-Socialism' (Sälter, 2014: 41). It was only when the BND became a federal body and its staff could pretend to the status of state official that superior federal authorities imposed a minimum control of staff prior to recruitment, problematizing professional biographies prior to 1945. However, inside Pullach, the leading staff largely resisted such measures and continued to uphold their NS-based ideology with its model of the authoritarian state, of which they felt they were part. From then on, their energies were more oriented towards obscuring existing continuities towards the outside.

Sälter also contextualized his analysis of the BND's staff and recruitment policy within the broader post-war society:

This form of recruitment was realised in a postwar society in which parts of the old high ranking executives, some under wrong identities, reassembled. Their networking was based on professional friendship, political closeness and complicity. It aimed at collective ideological reassurance, reciprocal economic support and politically, at putting an end to denazification. After 1945, such networks were formed out of people who knew each other either from department of some NS-organisation or bureaucracy, or from local cooperation between different institutions in the occupied territories. It also appears that they reorganised themselves and that they expanded their member base in the allied camps of the postwar period, in which, under the pressure of denazification, they experienced a common destiny. In the confusing political situation of the 1940s and 1950s, some of those groups aimed at positions of political influence. (Sälter, 2014: 44)

Recruiting one another into the Gehlen organization and the BND was one such strategy. This practice was backed by Globke in the Federal Chancellery.

The Allied powers considered the Gehlen organization, a sort of 'CIA dependence', as a major tool of information gathering on the Soviet enemy in the Cold War context. Therefore, the recruitment of guaranteed anti-communist staff with knowledge on the East and with competency in information gathering outweighed the sensitivity to their NS past (Wildt, 2014). The Soviet invasion never happened. In turn, however, many of those who had opposed and resisted National Socialism became increasingly suspicious again as potential 'collaborators' of the Soviet Union – prominently communists and Social Democrats, but even pacifists and church representatives. Although the Gehlen organization and later BND were charged with foreign intelligence, they abused their position and were also active in the domain of internal affairs. They declared this to be part of their counter-intelligence mission. The fact that they engaged with internal politics was partly due to their aspiration, while 'still in Wehrmacht uniform' to become one day 'the one, the universal German intelligence service' (Henke, 2014: 93). Essentially, '[t]heir new enemy was the old one: world revolutionary communism with their fifth columns rummaging everywhere, who were now, on top of this, backed by the victorious Stalin.

This obsession did not quit Gehlen until his death' (Henke, 2014: 93). He had decided to continue his fight against communism, in alliance with the US government. The Gehlen organization also collaborated directly on internal affairs with the Federal Chancellery through close relationships between Gehlen and Globke.<sup>10</sup> One of the aims was to place members of the organization in influential positions within the German state apparatus.

Importantly as well, in the case of the BND, we cannot speak of a direct institutional continuity. Rather, within an organization that had no direct predecessors before 1945, we find a personal continuity of major NS staff. There were only few other organizations, apart from the BND, that offered a post-1945 narrative of anti-communist struggle to their members, which allowed them to justify and make sense of their own biographies (Rass, 2016: 40). Only when the Social Democrats under W. Brandt governed the country for the first time in 1968 was Gehlen dismissed. He was succeeded by his former adjutant of Foreign Armies East, General Gerhard Wessel, military attaché in Washington since 1945. While the GDR secret service Stasi was dissolved after 1989, the BND has been extended. This was reunification.

The Historians' Commission does not establish any link between the BND and Stay Behind Germany. Several times throughout the post-war period and in different parts of Europe, this secret armed network surfaced and caused political scandals. Stay Behind was led by military intelligence services, i.e., only leading executive figures, but neither national parliaments nor populations were informed. It was only after 1989 that the entire dimensions of these connections came into full light, when Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti, after juridical investigations in the light of terrorist activities in his country, confirmed the existence of secret armies across Western Europe in 1990. In each country, this secret network, also named Gladio after its Italian realization, recruited members who were strictly anti-communist, including moderate conservatives but also right-wing radicals.<sup>11</sup>

In Germany, Stay Behind made its first public appearance in 1952, when former SS officer Hans Otto decided to testify to the Frankfurt criminal police that he formed part of an armed political grouping, the Bund Deutscher Jugend (League of German Youth, BDJ) and headed its 'Technical Service' (Technischer Dienst, TD). The BDJ was not the only, but was the main, branch of Stay Behind in West Germany (Ganser, 2005; Müller, 1991; Roth, 1992). Otto had joined the NSDAP in 1929, became a member of the SA in 1933, aged 20, and pursued a typical Nazi career. In 1934, he joined the SS-Standarte Germania, in 1938 the SS-Junkerschule in Braunschweig, became SS-Obersturmführer (senior storm leader) in 1940 and SS-Hauptsturmführer in 1942. He had fought on several fronts, was prisoner of war with the French and the Americans and was released in October 1948. After the war, he worked as a sales representative and started to collaborate with the British secret service in order to make some extra money. But it was not only an issue of money. 'They were looking for new social bonds among like-minded men. They needed new orders, they longed for new fraternities. In organisations like the 'Bruderschaft' [fraternity], the old comrades reunited' (Müller, 1991: 74). This secret society formed in 1950 in a meeting of former officers as 'Deutsche Bruderschaft' with the aim to restore the 'honour of the German soldiers' and to extinguish the 'European disgrace of Nuremberg', i.e., the trials against war criminals. The key figure in this secret fraternity was Alfred Franke-Gricksch – similarly, he had been a member of the NSDAP in

1927, had followed an SS career, became SS-Standartenführer and director of the staff department of Himmler's Reichssicherheitshauptamt. There he had been in charge of the 'elaboration of methods of underground work in case of military defeat' (Müller, 1991: 75 quoting Opitz). This fraternity was the recruiting agency for the paramilitary organization TD that hid behind the BDJ (Müller, 1991: 72–77).

The group's targets, according to Otto, were the communist party KPD and the social-democratic party SPD. It also led a battle against the communist youth organization Freie Deutsche Jugend that operated in the western zones of the country at the time, a struggle that resembled in style and method the street fighting of the SA in the 1930s (Müller, 1991: 110). Otto also confirmed that 'in the case X' (where it was unsure whether this referred only to Soviet invasion or could also refer to mass demonstrations or an electoral victory of the left), it was planned to act out violence against internal aims. The TD had established death lists of several dozens of leading KPD and SPD members. After Otto's revelations, the regional government directed the case towards Berlin but Adenauer silenced it and prevented investigations. The Federal Constitutional Court decided to release all arrested members of the TD. The BDJ's strategy to actively seek recognition by political authorities within the new Cold War context had proved successful. The regional parliament of Hessen nevertheless issued an investigation in 1953. From the documentation they gathered, 'one can state with certainty that no other youth organisation in the Federal Republic had such excellent relationships with highest public authorities, trade associations and former military as the BDJ and that it has succeeded to obtain huge amounts of money through those relationships' (Müller, 1991: 110). The US formed about 2,000 members of the Nazi BDJ for partisan battles. The report stated among others that the BDJ was 'loosely associated with a political party in Hessen' (quoting a CIA officer); it remains unclear, however, which one that was (Ganser, 2008: 310).

The next public episode happened in 1981, when forest workers discovered a major secret weapon depot in the Lüneburger Heide. Forest supervisor Lembke, a right-wing extremist, was arrested. The investigations soon revealed connections between Lembke and the neo-Nazi group Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann, and there seemed to be links to the terrorist attack at Oktoberfest in 1980, the biggest in Germany since the war. Investigations intensified throughout the decade. Just before the 1990s elections, the Social Democrats did not want any revelations. Chancellor Kohl had lied on the issue from 1982 onwards and was similarly scared about the repercussions of a scandal for the elections. Only the Green Party, founded in 1980, insisted on transparency. It was only after the elections, in December 1990, that the German government published a brief report on the matter.

Recruitment for the BND or for Stay Behind ensured not only adequate funding in the difficult post-war context, it also ensured organizational continuity and allowed far-right groups with a more official face, here the BDJ, to proselytize far-right ideology and seek political alliance in the new political landscape, while the hidden TD translated this ideology into paramilitary strategy and gave particularly committed individuals a space for militant action, protected by the highest authorities. This combination was only possible because of much broader continuities between the NS bureaucracy and the post-war administration and politics of the country, and importantly, in the Chancellor's office and the security services. It was within this overall



societal context that the continuity of active and militant far-right organizations was made possible and even encouraged.

The leading circles especially had experienced social and ideological uprooting in the post-war years. Many of them, after Hitler's army was dismantled or after they had returned from prisoner-of-war camps, had to follow activities that were much less rewarding than their officers' status during the NS years. In the face of such declassification, the fraternities provided a space to reconnect with the mentality and socialization experience of their former professions. This was even one of its major aims: 'The reunification of former professional militaries from Hitler's army was one of the big aims of the Bund Deutscher Jugend. The freedom of the West was supposed to be secured with the help of those uprooted personalities' (Müller, 1991: 103). Apparently, the importance of their activities regressed throughout the 1970s. Lecorte observes that this was also the phase when the political extreme-right scene in Germany radicalized, as I have observed above. He therefore assumes that the staff enrolled in the German stay-behind structures were then searching for alternative occupations (Lecorte, 2013: 13).

### **Post-1945 in France: An Overview [A-LEVEL SUBHEAD]**

The Front National (FN) is characterized as 'one of the big European extreme right parties where the lineage with historical fascism is most evident' (Jacquemain and Claisse, 2012: 19–20). The French far right traces its roots back to opposition to the 1789 revolution, expressed in anti-republican, royalist and monarchist political ideologies. Anti-revolutionary political movements favoured the Catholic Church as guarantor of social cohesion and declared the principle of fundamental equality unnatural. Its lineage includes the movements of General Boulanger in the 1880s with its essentially nationalist and authoritarian outlook and its virulent anti-Semitism. Following Boulangism, a variety of far-right groups coexisted, claiming 'France for the French'. Their common denominator was their strong Catholic orientation, combined with anti-Semitism, with the Dreyfus Affair in 1894 being culminating point. False accusations for treason against Captain Alfred Dreyfus, of Jewish descent, led to a political and highly mediatised scandal, resolved only in 1906. It caused a division of the country into pro-republican, anticlerical Dreyfusards on the one hand, and pro-Army, mostly Catholic anti-Dreyfusards, on the other hand. The far right was then channelled into the Action Française under the leadership of Charles Maurras. Their anti-parliamentary struggle, essentially nostalgic, aimed at restoring a traditional monarchy embodying an integral nationalism. The Action Française lasted until the installation of the Vichy Regime. We need to address the regime briefly before considering the post-1945 period.

Vichy (1940–42) was the first time, and for a short period, the only time that the far right arrived in power in France, if under peculiar circumstances, under German occupation. Vichy was determined by French military defeat on the one hand<sup>12</sup> and by opposition to the parliamentarianism of the Third Republic on the other hand. Marshal Pétain as head of state did not follow closely the fascist line, although he approved of La Rocques's authoritarian-nationalist Croix de Feu and its successor Parti Social Français (PSF). Vichy's slogan '*Travail, Famille, Patrie*' was derived from there. Pétain's government can rather be considered a form of

ancient regime despotism. The constitutional law of 10 July 1940, marking the end of the Third Republic and the beginning of the *Etat Français*, consigned full political authority to Pétain who pursued a project of ‘National Revolution’.<sup>13</sup> His dictates annulled many of the political and social achievements since 1789, replacing the ‘Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen’ (1789) by the ‘Principles of the Community’ (Shields, 2007: 17). Under Vichy, far-right actors had large space for manoeuvre (ibid.: 3). In this sense, Vichy can be considered to have been a laboratory for the far right and this experience was to impact its subsequent development. In occupied Paris, for instance, collaborationists who were apologetic of fascism exerted a constant public pressure to radicalize, in particular through their presence in the written press and literature. Robert Brasillach was editor-in-chief of *Je suis partout*.<sup>14</sup> Drieu La Rochelle’s calls for a strong European federation against the US and the Soviets saw Nazism as the only means of forging European unification. In this sense, even before the end of the Second World War, ‘nationalism’ had become an ‘unstable concept’ in the French experience, ‘at once buttressed and undermined by the Europeanism which collaboration with Nazi Germany implied’ (ibid: 39).

On the ground, there were three major collaborationist organizations, along a variety of parties and movements: Jacques Doriot had founded in 1936 the PPF (*Parti Populaire Français*), later incorporated into the *Wehrmacht*, and complemented between 1943–44 by a French *Waffen-SS* brigade. Both were integrated in late 1944 into the *Waffen-SS* *Charlemagne Division* (estimated at 7,500 members). Marcel Déat had founded in 1941 the *Rassemblement National Populaire* together with Eugène Deloncle, former leader of *Cagoule*, with a membership of about 20,000. And Joseph Darnand (*Sturmbannführer Waffen-SS*), a former member of *Action Française* and *Cagoule*, became the leader of the paramilitary police force *Milice Française*, set up in 1943 as a kind of palace guard, under the aegis of SS. Its main aim was to combat the resistance in what resembled a civil war. It had around 30,000 volunteers.

The Liberation gave way to the creation of the Fourth Republic on the bases of the Third Republic, to the triumph of the communists who could present serious *Résistance* records and who became the most powerful party in the first post-war elections. Collaborators and their organizations were persecuted in justice, their publications banned, Brasillach executed and Maurras put on trial in 1945. At the same time, however, Vichy officials remained in office under the Fourth and later Fifth Republic. It was J. Isorni who defended in court not only Pétain and Brasillach but also Maurice Bardèche, an intellectually influential defender of Vichy, who worked towards rehabilitating NS war crimes and formulated attempts at Holocaust denial.

In the largely hostile climate of post-war France, the far right reconfigured. The two sons of a *Milice* leader executed at the Liberation launched *Jeune Nation* during the Indo–China war, in 1949. P. Sidos became its chief ideologue and later the founder of *Occident*, and J Sidos its president. Jean-Louis Tixier-Vignancour was another founding member. They stood as candidates for J. Isorni’s *UNIR* party in the 1951 legislative elections. D. Venner, another *Jeune Nation* activist, would later found *Europe-Action*. *Jeune Nation*, the most important fascist movement of the 1950s, aimed at a national insurrection in order to replace parliamentary democracy with an authoritarian, popular, national and social state. The role of women in society was to be reduced to that of wife and mother (ibid.: 93–95). Its members were in the majority

radical-right students and ex-servicemen from Indo-China. Jeune Nation was banned in 1962, some of its members were later integrated into the OAS (Organisation armée secrète).

René Binet, former Waffen-SS Charlemagne Division, launched the Parti Républicain d'Unité Populaire (PRUP) in 1946, which transformed into the Mouvement Socialiste d'Unité Française (MSUF) and was banned in 1949. Charles Gastaut, alias Charles Luca, a relative of Marcel Déat, headed successive militaristic movements between 1947 and 1960, all based on NS ideology (ibid.: 58–59). They all struggled with adapting former ideology to the new context characterized by the post-war world order, the Cold War and decolonization. Under these circumstances, the neo-fascist International had to imply a European perspective. Bardèche, Binet and Luca as the French delegation met like-minded Europeans at an international conference of neo-fascists in Malmö in 1951. Bardèche and Tixier-Vignancour launched the 'Euro-fascist' MSE (ibid.: 124–126). The social climate changed when all former collaborators were again free, the latest in 1964 after a series of amnesties in 1951, 1953, 1956, 1958 and 1964.

The first attempt to unite the French far right nationally occurred within the Poujadist movement, launched in 1953 as a localized protest by small shopkeepers against the tax system and against government inspectors. Poujade himself was close to Doriot's PPF, then section leader in Vichy's youth movement Compagnons de France. The Union de Défense des Commerçants et Artisans (UDCA) was founded in 1953. By 1955, it had developed an organizational network all across France and Algeria with the foundation of 'parallel unions', among them the Union for the Defence of French Youth (UDJF), of which J.M. Le Pen was in charge and into which he integrated the JIP (Jeunes Indépendants de Paris), a loose militant grouping he had created within his Law Faculty surroundings upon his return from Indo-China (ibid.: 68–72). In 1956, the newly constituted Poujadist Party Union et fraternité française (UFF, the UDCA's parliamentary group) participated in elections and gained 11.6 per cent, i.e., 52 of 596 seats, replacing Gaullism as the main right-wing opposition. However, its representatives were ill-prepared for their new institutional role. J.M. Le Pen could all the more excel as their favourite speaker. His attempts to politicize the movement, infusing anti-communism and authoritarian nationalism into its ranks, at first seemed to succeed<sup>15</sup> but ultimately proved doomed to fail. Extreme-right elements could not take full control of a movement that was characterized by contradictory political traditions: revolutionary-republican and conservative-nationalist. Poujadism was limited to being a populist movement in defence of lower middle-class interests. In the end, Le Pen and his friend Jean-Maurice Demarquet, on parliamentary leave in 1956 as reservist volunteers in Algeria, turned against Poujade and were excluded in 1957. The Poujadist movement withered away until 1962, and the far right saw its marginality in the political game confirmed.

### **The Algerian War (1954–62) [A-LEVEL SUBHEAD]**

During the Algerian War, colonialist ideology, based on the civilizing mission and racial thinking, radicalized. France mobilized over 2 million soldiers (Renken, 2006: 259–60), the biggest military mobilization outside metropolitan France since the Crusades (Shields, 2007: 91). It was the bloodiest of French colonial wars, with over 20,000 French and several hundred thousand Algerian deaths. Almost a million  *pieds-noirs*  (French settlers) fled to metropolitan

France after it was over (Renken, 2006: 13). During the war, violent conflict was not restricted to Maghreb territories, as bloodshed occurred in the middle of Paris. When Superintendent of Police Maurice Papon, responsible for the deportation of more than 1,500 Jews during the Second World War and later judged for collaboration with NS Germany, imposed a curfew over North Africans in Paris on 17 October 1961, the National Liberation Front (FLN) called a protest demonstration in which up to 40,000 Algerians marched through the capital. Papon ordered to break the demonstration (Shields, 2007: 105–108). This led to a massacre of Algerian demonstrators, with an estimated number of several hundred dead, an event that has not been officially investigated even today.<sup>16</sup> J.P. Sartre called it a pogrom.

The Algerian War reconfigured the Nationalist scene in the country.<sup>17</sup> It drew new supporters without former extreme-right affiliation into far-right nationalism, including army veterans, soldiers, colonial settlers and committed patriots, since colonialism enjoyed broad support within French society. In defending ‘French Algeria’,<sup>18</sup> the far right seized a historical chance to promote itself into a position of truly defending the wider interest of the French nation and to move beyond its discredited Vichy past. Indeed, during the Algerian War, nationalist fractions of the Résistance joined the colonialists’ camp. During the depressing years of German occupation, Free France had united under the leading figure of Charles de Gaulle and upheld a vision of French ‘grandeur’ based on its colonial possessions. Not only did the colonies provide important parts of the troops against Germany, the French empire guaranteed the country the position of a world power, despite military defeat on the continent. When France was excluded from the conferences of the victorious powers in 1945 in Yalta and Potsdam, the defence of its colonial possessions became a fight against the humiliation of Yalta. Shortly after the war, the country, still in a bad shape economically, entered a devastating war in Indo-China that ended with its defeat in 1954.

The Algerian War started the very same year. It led to major political reconfigurations as a result of two military coups – one successful, leading to the end of the fourth and the birth of the Fifth Republic and the return of de Gaulle onto the official political scene; the second unsuccessful, leading to the creation of the OAS, one of the major organizational innovations that fed into the subsequent development of the French far-right scene. In 1958, the war intensified in the border regions to Tunisia and Morocco and the French army attacked a Tunisian village. The British and US-Americans proposed to intervene in order to negotiate a settlement to the conflict. The French government went into crisis and dissolved. Simultaneously, the communists reported on torture by the French army in Algeria, which provoked a shock throughout the country and alienated left-wing forces – who remembered torture under German occupation and French collaboration – from the country’s colonialist ambitions. The Algerian War, in which France was not the dominated nation but the oppressor, dissolved the strategic alliance between Gaullism and the left. Amongst the defenders of ‘French Algeria’, and even within the ranks of the OAS, were former fighters of the Résistance who, once again, defended French soil.

On 13 May 1958 right-wing radical civilians, the so-called Ultras, assaulted the government buildings in Algiers, formed an oppositional government and demanded the retreat of the central government in Paris. The activists ‘saw Algeria both as an end in itself and as the means of

bringing down a hated parliamentary regime in France – a regime they proposed to replace with a 'nationalist, popular, authoritarian and hierarchical State' (ibid.: 92). The political power in Algeria switched into the hands of army generals Jacques Massu and Raoul Salan, the high ranks of the army supporting a policy of continuing war at any cost and securing French possessions in Algeria. Since Algeria was considered to be part of France, the events equalled a coup. On 15 May, superior commander of the army, General Salan, publicly called upon de Gaulle, who had retreated from the official political scene. On 29 May, under the pressure of running operations to militarily usurp the central government, President René Coty opened the way for a de Gaulle's return to power. This marked the end of the Fourth Republic. De Gaulle obtained full powers for six months. When he travelled to Algeria, he was acclaimed as the saviour of 'French Algeria'. His plans were different though. De Gaulle aimed at restoring French greatness not on the basis of colonial possessions, which he believed would be a burden rather than a viable and profitable endeavour in the future, but on accession into the circle of nuclear powers (Renken, 2006: 327). Against all expectations, on behalf of army superiors, he therefore started moving towards ending the war and accepting self-determination of Algeria. This caused a major rupture between the civil political power and military power that, since 13 May 1958, entered the political scene as an autonomous force. In the course of those years, right-wing ideologists of the army linked up with civilian extreme-right groups. The army and the settler community of *pieds-noirs* need to be considered further.

During the Algerian War, the army had thus entered the field of national politics. Its role was to have a major ideological impact on the development of the French far right. Since the Indo-China war, high-ranked army officials developed the doctrine of 'revolutionary war', based on the key idea that after the end of the Second World War, communism would not increase its global reach through a direct attack on Europe any more. Rather, the new strategy of world communism would be 'subversion from inside', among other things by supporting the national liberation movements against colonialism in the Third World. Thus, the doctrine of the 'revolutionary war' was the army's version of the modern colonial war, rejuvenating colonialist ideology. In particular,

[t]he officers' corps was dominated by a nearby psychotic fear of a further humiliation by a 'communist' guerrilla, after it had to face the fall of the French fortress of Dien Bien Phu under the attack of the Vietnamese Liberation Front on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1954, that led instantaneously to the loss of the colony of Indochina. (Renken, 2006: 328)

This experience was taught in military schools and formed the subject of numerous publications in military journals. In the course of the Algerian War, the doctrine of revolutionary war took centre stage within the higher army ranks and led to specific measures, such as the creation of *cinquièmes bureaux* (fifth offices) in charge of psychological warfare and information gathering, partly in parallel to the official army hierarchy and under the systematic use of torture. Ideologically, in many cases, anti-communism combined with anti-parliamentarianism and with a rage against cosmopolitan capitalists, i.e., the key motives of classical fascism. The ideology of revolutionary war was in direct confrontation with de Gaulle's strategy of self-determination for Algeria. In this perspective, the postulate of military obedience was put into question amongst

high-ranking officials who attributed to themselves the role of saving the national interest and winning the fight against world communism.

At the beginning of 1961, in a national referendum, the large majority of French, exhausted by the succession of tenacious wars, expressed their agreement with de Gaulle's policy of accepting Algerian independence. As a direct response, the OAS was founded in Madrid, uniting colonialist militaries with civilian ultras in a desperate fight to keep 'French Algeria'. In April 1961, four army generals, Maurice Challe, Raoul Salan, Edmond Jouhaud and André Zeller, mounted a coup against de Gaulle. Their plan failed because of the resistance of many lower-rank soldiers and the non-commitment of other high-ranked militaries. Challe and Zeller surrendered and were imprisoned, whereas Salan and Jouhaud went underground and took the lead of the OAS. De Gaulle reconfigured the army through transfers and dismissals of leading figures.

When de Gaulle first mentioned in public the idea of Algerian self-determination, the settler community reacted with radicalizing nationalism. The successful putsch against the Fourth Republic created a unifying atmosphere. The existing splinter organizations, many armed, of the nationalist ultras amongst the *pieds-noirs* community increased their membership and started to integrate into broader social formations. In 1958, J. Ortiz set up the first umbrella organization, the Front National Français (FNF), in which J.J. Susini soon emerged as the leading ideologue. Ortiz also built a uniformed paramilitary formation under the leadership of J.C. Pérez. Alongside the followers of deputy P. Lagaillarde, this paramilitary brigade formed the core of the uprising of January 1960. After the unsuccessful coup of April 1961, those within the army who, out of conviction with the doctrine of revolutionary war, intended to pursue the fight for 'French Algeria' sought alliances with the civil ultras and their far-right organizations. The result was the creation of the armed secret OAS, founded in January 1961 by Lagaillarde and Susini in their Spanish exile. The OAS united the persisting currents of Pétainists and of former French Waffen-SS Division Charlemagne. It also recruited from nationalist fractions of the Résistance. Georges Bidault who had succeeded Jean Moulin as leading figure of the Conseil national de la Résistance became head of the organization that followed up on the OAS in 1962, the 'new' Conseil national de la Résistance (Renken, 2006: 78–80). In 1961, the head of the OAS, Salan, declared that 'You participate in the OAS as you participated in the Résistance' (Renken, 2006: 78–80). The public image it tried to project was to position itself in continuity with the Résistance rather than with collaborationism. Within the last six months of the war, OAS terror killed three times more civilians than the FLN since 1956. The OAS also maintained a metropolitan branch and acted out terrorist activities in mainland France, including several attacks on de Gaulle himself. But whereas the organization could capitalize on the practical, logistic and ideological support from major fractions of the settler community in Algeria, OAS-metropole, under the leadership of P. Sergeant, had to manoeuvre in a largely hostile environment, supported only by the most radical far-right groups, like Jeune Nation, banned in 1958 but still active underground (Renken, 2006: 341).

As in the case of Germany, in France as well the intelligence services partly relied on and partly lent support to far-right structures, an issue that surfaces in the literature in relation to the

Algerian War. Ironically, in Germany and France, Stay Behind had its origins in opposing camps. While in Germany it ensured a direct continuity with NS structures, in France, it was erected on the foundations of the secret service BCRA (Bureau Central de Renseignement et d'Action) that de Gaulle had initiated from his British exile in connection with the Résistance, with the aim of combatting the German occupier. Agents of the BCRA would parachute into occupied territory to lead sabotage against occupation. This was the predecessor of the secret post-war stay-behind army in France which included many former BCRA soldiers, indicating the fragile nature of the alliance between nationalists and the left that the Résistance under de Gaulle had initiated. It was the anti-communism of former nationalist Résistance members that animated them to join the Cold War stay-behind army. Although

[a]lmost no documentary sources are available about either the origin or the development of Stay Behind units in France, [. . .], there are indications that already in 1947 certain veterans of the wartime Free French resistance had been asked by the internal security service to organize ‘a network for watchfulness and internal protection’ – a Stay Behind, as the Anglo-Saxons call it. (Riste, 2014: 45–46)

Since there has not been an official inquiry in France to this day, and archives remain closed, it is difficult to assess the stay-behind activities accurately. The training of secret soldiers seemed to have been organized jointly with French special troops, in particular the parachutists of the 11<sup>e</sup> Demi-Brigade Parachutiste du Choc, for short 11<sup>e</sup> du Choc, that had been leading secret warfare in Indo-China and Africa, and in particular during the Algerian War. When anti-communist violent agitation in the metropole and the war against the FLN in Algeria intensified, the government seemed to have lost control over its secret armies. Charles Cogan, ‘who served as station chief in Paris for the CIA in the 1980s’ (Riste, 2014: 45–46), asks ‘whether the French stay-behind program “strayed off the reservation”, so to speak, as did the Italian one’. He concedes that:

If this was the case, the finger would likely point to Service Action, the paramilitary arm of the SDECE [Service de documentation extérieure et de contre-espionnage, i.e. foreign intelligence] and the military unit that supported it, the 11<sup>th</sup> Choc Regiment. With the Evian peace accords of 1962, the 11<sup>th</sup> Choc was divided over the question of independence for Algeria, and part of the 11<sup>th</sup> Choc went over to the Organisation de l’armée secrète (OAS), which opposed the French government’s policy. Therefore, it is possible that some elements of the 11<sup>th</sup> Choc who may have been associated with the stay-behind program undertook terrorist-type actions on behalf of the OAS in Algeria and/or elsewhere. This possibility is alluded to by former DGSE [Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure, successor of SDECE] Director-General Pierre Lacoste in his interview with Jonathan Kwitny: Lacoste still believes that Soviet contingency plans for invasion justified the [stay-behind] program through his term in office [1982–85]. He acknowledges that some ‘terrorist actions’ against de Gaulle and his Algerian peace plans were carried out by groups that included ‘a limited number of people’ from the French stay-behind network. But he says that’s the only time it got political. [. . .] Lacoste’s statement to Kwitny is categorically denied by the knowledgeable French military source cited above. [. . .] The statements of Admiral Lacoste concerning the role supposedly

played by stay-behind during the events at the end of the Algerian War appear to be unfounded. In any case he [Lacoste] was not at that point connected with Service Action and those who were at the time never heard anything about such a connection. (Cogan, 2007: 952–53).

The story is thus not clear. The same is true for the potential role of French Stay Behind in the face of the 1968 student and workers' revolts.

More than two million soldiers had been mobilized in Algeria and returned to metropolitan France after the war. Upon their demobilization, the lower ranks socially dissolved, returning to their families and professions. Veterans of Algeria represented around 22 per cent of the male working population in 1962, 60 per cent of them from working class or peasant families (Renken, 2006: 259–60).<sup>19</sup> The subsequent role of the higher ranks and professional army staff was different. In particular, the officers' corps largely contributed to the empowerment of colonialist and ultra-nationalist ideas.

In 1962, the *pieds-noirs* community fled into mainland France. As a visible minority, or *rapatriés*, they settled in certain regions of the country, in particular in Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, where they constituted an important support base to those who put forth the 'French Algeria' ideology, forming an organized social and cultural milieu in which a romantic vision of 'French Algeria' and OAS heroes could flourish. Those who remained convinced of colonialist thinking, in particular, integrated in a series of right-leaning 'French Algeria' organizations and associations, whereas more left-wing *rapatriés* would get absorbed into the French Communist Party (PCF). Although in the course of the past decades they have been socially integrated into mainstream society, those regions form an important constituency to the FN even today, as the preceding chapter illustrated.<sup>20</sup> The *rapatriés* embody de Gaulle's sell-out of 'French Algeria'. As opposed to the higher ranks of the army, the *pieds-noirs* are largely a lower middle class/working class constituency.

The OAS, in turn, had about 70 per cent of its former activists, military as well as civilian, flee to Franco's Spain;<sup>21</sup> others went underground or were in prison. As opposed to the ordinary soldiers who reintegrated into their former lives in French society, many former OAS members formed a specific, uprooted group, the precondition for the engagement of many of them, in subsequent armed groups.<sup>22</sup> The ideological heritage of the putschists and the OAS survived long after the war. Leading figures, like Sergent and Salan, published their memoirs. The ideological production of 'French Algeria' was sustained by an editing house, La Table Ronde, led by R. Laudenbach, who also coordinated the metropolitan OAS's propaganda. After the end of the war and the independence of Algeria, the defenders of 'French Algeria' put forth a stab-in-the-back legend. According to them, the French army had been victorious against the FLN. It was the central government and de Gaulle that had abandoned 'French Algeria' and had thus betrayed their military victory.<sup>23</sup> This version of history also echoed the 'revolutionary war' doctrine that had inspired larger circles of the army, beyond the confines of the OAS. De Gaulle's disloyalty formed also the core of the defence that J.L. Tixier-Vignancour put forth in favour of his mandate to General Salan, on trial as leader of the OAS in 1962. This legend, together with other conspiracy ideas, remains a constitutive element of the French far right to date (Renken,



2006: 407). The OAS was a prominent political actor, and cannot be compared to the marginality of the German far-right groups in the post-war decades. And it had a lasting legacy.

Many former activists remained politically active and strengthened the organizational structures of the far right, ensuring the passing down to the next generation of the OAS's legacy. In the end, the foundation of the FN in 1972 was directly based, personally as well as ideologically, on the OAS's experience (Renken, 2006: 389–90).<sup>24</sup> Renken elaborates on the biographies of some leading figures, like R. Holeindre, P. Sergeant, J. Fort, J.B. Biaggi, J. Bompard, P. Descaves and J.J. Susini, who joined the ranks of subsequent far-right organizations. Not least, J.M. Le Pen himself upheld his support of 'French Algeria' with pride, and thanks to him, the colonialist legacy persisted right within the party during his presidency. In 1985, the FN formed the Centre National des Combattants (CNC), its own veterans' association, that paraded during demonstrations and gave the embodied legacy of colonialism public visibility. The annual celebrations of the CNC provided a platform of exchange between former OAS figures and the FN youth (Renken, 2006: 397–98).

Algeria was also a point of connection between far-right nationalism and nationalist Catholicism, represented by people like Georges Sauge and Robert Martel. They interpreted the war as a crusade against communism and its Islamic allies. La Cité Catholique, and its periodical *Verbe*, was a network of militant Catholics and political reactionaries. G. Sauge set up the Centre d'Etudes Supérieures de Psychologie Sociale (CESPS) 'to instruct French army officers in the fight against Marxist subversion'. Officers of the army's *cinquièmes bureaux* welcomed his institution's legitimization of repressive methods of information-gathering (Shields, 2007: 98–99).

As in other countries, in the face of leftist radicalism, an anti-democratic, anti-communist, racist and here decidedly 'pro-French Algeria' association, the Fédération des Etudiants Nationalistes (FEN), was created in 1960 by François d'Orcival (pseudonym of Amaury de Chaunac-Lanzac) and Fabrice Laroche (pseudonym of Alain de Benoist, future ideologue of the Nouvelle Droite GRECE) in order to counter the growing Marxist influence within the UNEF (Union Nationale des Etudiants de France) and against the UNEF's support for negotiations with Algeria. The editorial team and contributors to its *Cahiers universitaires* prefigured some of the future leading Nouvelle Droite intellectuals. The FEN tried to take advantage of the war for their authoritarian project. In its 'Manifesto of the Class of 60', the FEN declared its rejection of a democratic conception of man 'which dragged a Bigeard down to the level of the lowest street-sweeper, a Pasteur to that of an illiterate from the Congo, and a mother to that of a prostitute' (ibid.: 95). At times it served as the student branch and as a legal cover for the then banned Jeune Nation. Both were involved in OAS terrorism and both constituted a training ground for a new generation of post-Vichy activists, like F. Duprat, A. Robert, P. Vial and J.G. Malliarakis, who would lead future organizations like Ordre Nouveau, the FN, the Parti des Forces Nouvelles and Groupement de recherche et d'études pour la civilisation européenne (GRECE). The FEN was banned in May 1958 and recreated in October, the same year as Parti Nationaliste with its periodical *Jeune Nation* (ibid.: 95–97). The years 1954–62 were a transitional phase between the older generation and the up-and-coming activists of the following decades. Just as Jeune Nation,

the FEN served as political apprenticeship to some of the most important leading figures of the future.

The Algerian War caused a series of intellectual and political adaptations and modifications within the far-right register. This also concerned the status of nationalism within far-right ideology. No doubt, the Algerian War as well as the wider context of the Cold War and decolonization hardened ultra-nationalism. After the loss of 'French Algeria', the meaning of French nationalism, until then based on territorial coordinates (Alsace-Lorraine, the empire, 'French Algeria') had to be redefined. Some ideologues, out of the FEN in many cases, put forth first versions of a postcolonial nationalism focused on Europe: French identity – not territorial greatness – was defined in terms of European belonging and supremacism (the latter particularly strengthened through the Algerian War, conceived by Jeune Nation, for instance, as a threat to white Europe) (ibid., 2007: 93–94).

M. Bardèche's *Qu'est-ce que le fascisme?* (1961) was a crucial moment, theorizing a new version of fascism that needed to distance itself from the errors of the interwar past. Against the mistakes of German and Italian fascism (their narrow nationalism devoid of a European or universal perspective, their persecution of Jews, their biological racism), Bardèche sought to rescue a timeless, superior fascist essence against political endeavours that aimed at reproducing the interwar heritage. He laid the grounds for the Nouvelle Droite and, ultimately, for the electoral strategy of the FN. Interestingly, and hinting towards divergences within the far-right camp, Bardèche articulated a different view on the Algerian War:

[The defendants of French Algeria] had never stopped to question [...] whether Algerian nationalism might not itself lead to an Islamic 'fascist' state on the model of Nasser's Egypt, a useful new authoritarian force independent of both Washington and Moscow. 'While the communists immediately posed the Algerian problem in terms of the Communist International, the fascist groups did not for a moment think of posing it in terms of the Fascist International'. (ibid.: 103)

Simultaneously, Binet modified the racist argument about decolonization, highlighting the prime importance of keeping racially different population groups separate. Both were key arguments in subsequent ideological developments:

Bardèche's geopolitical and Binet's racist arguments for decolonization pointed the way towards a new anti-colonialism on the extreme right furnishing the rudiments of a rationale that would be elaborated some years later by the Nouvelle Droite. The issue at stake would no longer be French grandeur as measured by colonial power but French identity as defined through European kinship, Western culture and racial specificity. This current of thought would dispense with the notions around which much of the debate over French Algeria had turned – 'integration' and 'assimilation' – to insist instead on the preservation of difference, and therefore distance, between ethno-cultural communities. (ibid.: 104)

These arguments have subsisted within the far right of both countries, France and Germany, until today. They inform the ideological core of the FN's and AfD's programmes (see the preceding chapter).

### **Changes in Political Strategy: Moving towards Party Politics [A-LEVEL SUBHEAD]**

The loss of 'French Algeria' was also a major turning point in terms of political strategy. It marked the end of paramilitarism as a major organizational form. The Algerian experience had revealed that a direct assault on the regime could not secure political power and that political activism could not succeed without broad popular acceptance and support. These lessons laid the bases for the later Nouvelle Droite strategy of achieving intellectual hegemony.

Europe-Action, launched in 1963 by D. Venner (former Jeune Nation member, founding member FEN, author of *Pour une critique positive*, 1961), contributed to redefining the far right's strategy post-Algeria. A coherent doctrine was needed and popular support had to be built. Europe-Action functioned as a think tank with its own publishing house, Editions Saint-Just, and its bookshop, the Librairie de l'Amitié. Venner's FEN constituted its militant base. During three years, Europe-Action served as a platform of exchange between former Jeune Nation, OAS and FEN militants and other fascist-minded personalities (L Rebatet, M Bardèche, Vichyites like H Coston, J Ploncard d'Assac). Bardèche's *Qu'est-ce que le fascisme?* served as a starting point to promote a doctrine with the potential to unite the far right. Its nationalism had turned Europeanist or occidentalist, defending white heritage with allures of a pseudo-scientific racism, supportive of segregationist regimes in Rhodesia and South Africa.<sup>25</sup> Europe-Action was committedly anti-Christian, and put forth an aristocratic, neo-pagan ethic free of bourgeois egalitarianism (ibid.: 117–23).

P. Sidos left Europe-Action in 1962 with others from the FEN after disagreements with D. Venner and launched Occident, which largely imitated the former Jeune Nation. F. Duprat, G. Longuet, A. Madelin, A. Robert and J.G. Malliarakis were amongst its most prominent members. In the name of the defence of the West, diverging from the more recent developments within far-right strategy, Occident continued to promote street violence against left-wing students, PCF offices, migrant organizations and anti-colonialist actors. Its publication *Occident-Université* highlighted the 'principle of selection' as opposed to that of election, and articulated hierarchical, authoritarian, deeply anti-egalitarian visions of humanity that combined nationalism and social Darwinism. For Occident, it was 'manifestly clear that men are not equal' (quoted in ibid.: 140). Perplexed in the face of the events of May 1968, Occident, motivated by its anti-communism and by the amnesty for many 'French Algeria' diehards, ended up siding with state power against students and workers. In October 1968, after the bombing of a Maoist bookshop in Paris, Occident was the only far-right group that was banned by the government in this period – compared with 14 banned leftist groups. It was replaced by Ordre Nouveau (ibid.: 139–142).

Furthermore, the pursuit of electoralism took off from the 1960s onwards, a major rupture with the tradition of anti-parliamentarianism. Initially conceived as a think tank, from 1966 onwards, Europe-Action developed the features of a political movement. In October 1964, it set up support committees (comprised of students, better educated from Jeune Nation and FEN circles, from Biaggi's PPR and repatriated *pieds-noirs*<sup>26</sup>) to disseminate its journal. In the presidential elections of December 1965, Europe-Action supported the candidate Tixier-Vignancour. The last issue of Europe-Action appeared at the end of 1966. The FEN also disintegrated towards the end

of the 1960s (ibid.: 117–23). In the turn towards party-politics, *Ordre Nouveau* played a mediating role (see below).

After the introduction of universal suffrage to elect the president in a referendum in October 1962, anchoring in the Constitution a new form of presidential politics, the change of strategy within the far right led to pretensions to the country's highest political office. J.M. Le Pen and his companions set up a *Comité d'Initiative pour une Candidature Nationale* [Committee to Initiate a National Candidacy]. Participating in presidential elections, Le Pen would argue, 'provided an opportunity [. . .] to disseminate their message to the taxpayers' expense, to exploit the four hours of television and radio airtime allocated to each candidate, and ultimately to measure popular support for the nationalist cause. Scruples about playing the democratic game were outweighed by such pragmatic considerations' (ibid.: 125).

In November 1963, two years before the elections, J.L. Tixier-Vignancour announced he would be the first far-right presidential candidate. A former Vichy official and an activist in the student section of *Maurras Action Française*, he had travelled to Spain as part of a parliamentary group in 1936 to congratulate Franco. He represented 'French Algeria' since he had defended OAS activists General Salan, Colonel Bastien-Thiry and others as a lawyer. (ibid.: 114–16). He had been involved in various right-wing groups and had led his own short-lived *Rassemblement National (RN)* in 1954 (the same party name, by the way, was adopted by M. Le Pen recently to rename the FN). In addition, Tixier-Vignancour was godfather of J.M. Le Pen's daughter Marie-Caroline. Le Pen acted as secretary general and campaign manager of the Tixier-Vignancour Committee. The campaign was animated by a strong anti-Gaullist stance, accusing Gaullism for the loss of 'French Algeria' and the empire at large, of weakening the army and of maintaining too close links with world communism (ibid.: 124–26). Against immense expectations on behalf of his supporters, in December 1965, Tixier-Vignancour obtained only 5.2 per cent, i.e., 1.26 million of first-round votes. The chapter of 'French Algeria' was indeed over. This far-right vote coincided with the geography of the 'no' vote in the referendum of April 1962 on the Evian Agreements and had a similar sociological profile as the Poujadist vote in 1956 (ibid.: 127–31).

At the beginning of 1966, Le Pen was excluded from the Tixier-Vignancour movement because of divergences over Algeria and because Tixier-Vignancour accused Le Pen of damaging his campaign through the release of audio recordings of NS speeches. Tixier-Vignancour converted his support committees into a new party, the *Alliance Républicaine pour les Libertés et le Progrès (ARLP)*. Many younger supporters joined the OAS *Métro-Jeunes* network under P. Sergent, to become the *Mouvement Jeune Révolution (MJR)*. *Europe-Action* and FEN, in turn, sought autonomy vis-à-vis Tixier-Vignancour and launched the *Mouvement Nationaliste du Progrès (MNP)* led by D. Venner in 1966. Another semi-secret organization existed behind the MNP, the *Centre Nationaliste*, under D. Venner's leadership. The *Centre Nationaliste* articulated diverse nationalist movements, with chosen members from *Europe-Action* and FEN. The MNP, as the political cover of the *Centre Nationaliste*, could count on existing organizational structures and an activist base as *Europe-Action* was integrated into it, as was the FEN in alliance the Algerian repatriate FER. The MNP further pursued the electoral strategy, accepting that in the contemporary context, it was the only political choice. In autumn 1966, the MNP set up the

Rassemblement Européen de la Liberté (REL) as its electoral cover. The REL proposed 22 candidates in the March 1967 elections who received fewer than a total of 30,000 votes (ibid.: 136–38).

The 1970s were the pioneering years of the current configuration of the French far right that directly reaches into the present, through the history of the FN on the one hand and through the Nouvelle Droite's efforts at building cultural and intellectual hegemony – a European-wide strategy – on the other hand. The year 1968 proved to be decisive for the development of far-right political and intellectual strategies faced with the influence of the political left in popular and youth culture. But their common grievance was not only the intellectual success of the left throughout and after May 1968 – the year, by the way, when, fearing a communist take-over, the French government released all OAS prisoners. The dissolution of the Jeune Nation movement in May 1958, the dismantling of the OAS and the poor showing for extreme-right candidate J.L. Tixier-Vignancour in the presidential election of 1965 added to their frustration.

The year 1968 marked a 'watershed in the evolution of the French extreme right' (Shields, 2007: 143). It led to major developments on the intellectual front, at a distance from street violence and electoral politics. The Nouvelle Droite aimed at metapolitics, i.e., at establishing hegemony at the level of ideas in order to prepare a political breakthrough based on broad popular support. Alain de Benoist, who had been active in the FEN, Europe-Action and the MNP, emerged as one of the chief ideologues. His thoughts were influenced by Antonio Gramsci, by the conservative revolution as a predecessor to NS ideology, and by C. Maurras. He became the head of GRECE, launched at the beginning of 1968 (i.e., before May 1968). In accordance with its intellectual ambition, GRECE maintained a publishing house (Copernic) and a series of journals (*Nouvelle Ecole*, edited by A. de Benoist, *Eléments pour la Civilisation Européenne*, *Etudes et Recherches* and *Nation Armée*, the last which was aimed at the armed forces). Its forty-member founding committee united academics and journalists, among them prominent figures from Europe-Action and from the Centre Nationaliste, like A. de Benoist, J. Bruyas, G. Fournier, D. Gajas, R Lemoine, A. Mallard, G. Schmeltz (alias P. Marcenet), J.C. Rivière, M. Rollet, J.C. Valla, D. Venner, P. Vial, J.M. Zagamé, L. Rebatet, M. Bardèche. Its self-representation as an innovative think tank required conscious avoidance of any overt connection with former fascist endeavours. However, according to Shields, contributions by A. de Benoist or D. Venner to GRECE's journals 'made it easy to trace the ideological lineage of the new movement' (Shields, 2007: 146).

GRECE, against the discourse of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, focused on ancient pagan cultures and their integral, hierarchically organized communities, their bonds of blood and soil. Its major intellectual innovation was to abandon the explicit acceptance of natural or racial inequalities in favour of an emphasis on difference of cultures. As a consequence of this intellectual construction, those who 'destroyed ethnic communities' in the name of equality appeared to them as 'racists' or 'raciophobes' (ibid.: 150). GRECE declared its opposition to colonialism and demanded instead 'reciprocal decolonisation', i.e., the Europeans' right to preserve their own cultural heritage. However, the assumption behind the emphasis on difference was indeed that of hierarchy. L. Pauwels, one of the Nouvelle Droite's leading ideologues and for a certain period even editor of the weekly *Le Figaro Magazine*<sup>27</sup> expressed this rather

crudely: 'different means unequal' (quoted in Shields, 2007: 149).<sup>28</sup> Copernic's publication of Hans Eysenck's *L'inégalité de l'homme* or the collective book *Race et intelligence*, the prominence accorded to Galton, Chamberlain or Gobineau by the Nouvelle Droite as well as its closeness to periodicals like *The Mankind Quarterly* in Britain or *Neue Anthropologie* in Germany, betrayed such talk. GRECE was also quite outspoken about its anti-democratic beliefs.<sup>29</sup>

The second important body of the Nouvelle Droite was the Club de l'Horloge, founded in 1974. As opposed to GRECE, it sought alliances with the broader right-wing spectrum, with the Gaullist and Giscardian parties; it favoured free-market economics, Catholic conservatism and supported NATO. Nevertheless, both think tanks agreed upon their anti-egalitarianism, anti-communism and socio-biologist tendencies. The Nouvelle Droite lost in momentum throughout the 1980s, following the victory of the Socialists in the presidential elections in 1981. From 1983 onwards, the successes of the FN took centre stage within the French far right.<sup>30</sup>

After the banning of Occident in late 1968, activist groups had proliferated, including Fédération d'Action Nationale et Européenne (FANE, M. Frédriksen), Action Nationaliste (G. Malliarakis), MJR (P. Sergent), Pour une Jeune Europe or JE (P. Saint-Bertais), Jeunesses Patriotes et Sociales or JPS (R. Holeindre), Parti National Populaire PNP (R. Holeindre), L'Oeuvre Française (P. Sidos), and Groupe Union Droit (GUD), that quickly changed its name to Groupe d'Union et de Défense, or Groupe Union Défense, and that preserved Occident's violent ethos. Ordre Nouveau, active between 1969–73, was an imitation of Pino Rauti's Ordine Nuovo, confirming the particular appeal of Italian fascism as a model (Mammone, 2008: 229). It emerged as a renewed attempt to gather far right forces:

The real impetus to 'democratise' would come from a less likely source, the self-styled 'revolutionary' movement Ordre Nouveau, which brought together a younger generation of right-wing radicals with the old guard of the collaborationist and Algérie Française extreme right. Ordre Nouveau applied to political strategy the renovation that Europe-Action and others had brought to ideology. It is examined as a crucial transition between the violent activism and anti-system ethos of its predecessors, Jeune Nation and Occident, and the electoralist vocation of its eventual successor, FN. (Shields, 2007: 6)

Ordre Nouveau was formed after exchanges between major leading figures, like the former Poujadist and Tixierist militant J.F. Galvaire, GUD-leader A. Robert, former leading members of Occident, P. Asselin and F. Duprat, and the former Milicien and editor of *Minute*, F. Brigneau. H. Charbonneau, another ex-Milicien, G. Jeantet, a former Cagoulard and Pétainist journalist, and P. Clémenti, an LVF veteran, integrated Ordre Nouveau's national council (ibid.: 159). The organization put forth a rather simplistic programme aimed at federating a heterogeneous political landscape and launched a series of journals (*Pour un Ordre nouveau*; *Ordre nouveau*; *GUD-Occident Université*; *Jeune Ordre*; *Travail-Informations*). In June 1970, the majority of its members were university students, i.e., Ordre Nouveau also served as a body that handed down the far-right heritage to the next generation. Its electoral endeavours experienced very limited success. Some of its members took to the streets again in violent activism, setting up a

paramilitary group on the basis of GUD with the aim of protecting citizens and ensuring law and order.

The June 1972 supplement of *Pour un Ordre Nouveau* publicized Ordre Nouveau's ambition to become a properly organized party in order to pursue a strategy of a national front in the 1973 elections. However, it was declared, '[o]nly once it had attained a foothold through the democratic process would "all methods" be used to bring about the "popular nationalist revolution" which remained the openly avowed objective of Ordre Nouveau' (ibid.: 163). Similar to its model, the MSI, Ordre Nouveau also aimed at appealing to a larger centre-right constituency. As a consequence, again, the more radical members, especially within the ranks of GUD but also from *Pour une Jeune Europe*, left and joined Groupe Action Jeunesse (GAJ). Internal friction thus removed, based on the Ordre Nouveau, the Front National was founded in October 1972. This would have a lasting impact on the far-right landscape that remains with us today. Shields concludes on the outlined continuities:

While there was less innovation about the Nouvelle Droite and Ordre Nouveau than their names suggested, they represented separately what the FN would seek to combine: ideological renewal and electoral engagement. If this strategy failed to yield any but the most meagre results in the 1970s, it would be vindicated by the unprecedented success which the party would begin to enjoy in the 1980s. (ibid.: 165)

The first central office of the newly founded FN comprised six members, among them Le Pen, the former OAS member R. Holeindre and the former Waffen-SS and Ordre Nouveau member P. Bousquet, as well as Ordre Nouveau members F. Brigneau and A. Robert.

In the case of France, the long-term continuities from Vichy, through 'French Algeria', into the creation of the FN, are clearly discernible. Until the FN's foundation, a multiplicity of groups – paramilitary, political and ideological – were strongly connected with one another. They overlapped not only in terms of shared values and ideas but also in terms of actors. The recurring names of people who have shaped this history after 1945 has highlighted this throughout the section. During the Algerian War as well, the French far right played an important role within French politics, in comparison with the sustained marginality of the German scene. The link with colonialism allowed them legitimacy and prominence above and beyond their discredited past, which also allowed to draw in new activists and broaden their membership base. Some major FN electoral constituencies trace their own legacy back to those years. In any case, irrespective of the recent attractiveness of the FN's programme to relatively new voters in a climate of political malaise, representational and ideological crisis, the outlined continuities, the handing down of experience from older to younger generations of leading cadres and activists, are a major explanatory factor in order to understand the party's persistence and success. Yet, as in the German case, in the course of their post-war history, the French far right also had to adapt their organizational forms and ideological orientation to a changing context. From post-war fascism, through postcolonial far-right ideology, they developed into what I would characterize here again as post-fascism. Similar to the case of Germany, the representatives struggled with their major grievances (see the preceding chapter). This difficulty in reconstructing a credible narrative after the Holocaust is expressed by Sergent, who 'incidentally mentioned the "Algerian Holocaust"

against French Algeria. This lays bare that the invocation of the OAS-legend also serves to downplay the NS-crimes during the second world war' (Renken, 2006: 407). In both cases, 1968 proved to be a major point of self-conscious reorientation.

### **Digression on Geopolitics: Russian and Other Connections [A-LEVEL SUBHEAD]**

The post-1945 history of the far right also highlighted its relevance within the Cold War geopolitical context. It is surprising, by the way, that geopolitical considerations do not figure more prominently even within theories on interwar fascism – after all, this historical period remains unintelligible, for instance, without the outcome of the civil war in Spain, in which the geopolitical constellation and external actors were determining.

It seems that the Allied Clandestine Committee (ACC) held a last meeting in October 1990 in Brussels. Interestingly, the authors who most vehemently argue against Ganser's 'conspiracy theory' indicate that the official dissolution of stay behind was not really the end of the story.<sup>31</sup> This already leads into the last section of this chapter on external connections and the geopolitical significance of today's far-right scene. While such external support to the far right for geopolitical motives cannot explain its attractiveness to national voters, it is nevertheless another element necessary for understanding their success.

Russia has had a prominent role in strengthening the far right all over Europe.<sup>32</sup> The aim here is to outline the support that the country has lent to Western European far-right actors. This obviously cuts short a much longer story around the Russian position within the international framework, starting out from the constellation after the Second World War, through the Cold War years, including at least Russia as a reference for anti-colonial struggles, the breakdown of the Soviet Bloc and the situation since 1989 and the reconfiguration of global geopolitics between the US, the EU, Russia and China. To illustrate Russian attempts at creating alliances with the European far right does not cover the full background to the story, which would go beyond the scope of this chapter.

Vladimir Putin himself has become a leading figure of identification for activists from diverse political strands. He has been marketized as the strong, masculinist, national leader in a decadent world, who managed to revive Russian pride after the years of US domination following the end of the Soviet Union. But his appeal reaches far beyond the national domain. Putin also appears today as the one who protects European values and who successfully opposes US domination worldwide:

Since at least the middle of the 2000s, 'traditional values' have become the national idea of Russia, deployed internally as a populist ideology to unify Russia, and externally as a kind of exceptionalist-messianic pose to present Russia as the saviour of Europe and the leading defender of true European values (defined through the traditional heteronormative family). [. . .] Thus the anti-gender position is at the heart of Russia's self-identification in opposition to the decadent West as well as at the heart of Russia's geopolitical strategy to unite like-minded traditionalist forces behind Russia (thereby both



gaining international status as a world leader and destabilizing the EU by supporting right-wing dissenting factions in Europe). (Moss, 2017: 195)

As opposed to western Europe, where far-right positions have gained strength but remain non-majoritarian, '[i]n Russia, the government, the ruling party, the oligarchs, the state church, the state educational and scholarly establishment and the media all speak with one voice' (Moss, 2017: 208–09).

Next to Putin, Konstantin Malofejew, a monarchist Russian oligarch close to the Kremlin and a committed Christian, who uses his media conglomerate to publicize Russian interests, has played a key role in funding networks and events that connect the far-right action across Europe, besides funding the war in Ukraine. He has publicly supported the AfD because he wants 'Germany to stay German' instead of resembling an Americanized state 'without traditions and national particularities' (Fromm, 2016). Nikolay Shlyamin leads the youth league of the all-Russian National Front (ONF), presided over by Putin himself, a federation of more than 2,000 Russian organizations, among them the ruling United Russia Party. He counts as the direct representative of the Kremlin's interests and maintains connections with the far right across Europe. Finally, Alexander Dugin, philosopher and from 2008–2013 head of Department of Sociology of International Relations in the Sociological Faculty of Moscow State University, State Duma's adviser in foreign affairs, is the single most important intellectual supporting their moves. He is also editor-in-chief of Malofejew's TV channel and a determined voice in his media empire (Fromm, 2016). He launched the Eurasian Movement<sup>33</sup> in 2001 (Petsinis, 2014: 2).

His Eurasian perspective valorizes the far-right parties all over Europe<sup>34</sup> as the true alternative to the existing state of Europe as being artificially divided from its natural ally, Russia. These political projects appear to him as 'the second Europe, the Europe of European peoples' and of tradition and values. Apart from their rejection of the EU, they share certain fundamental values: the defence of white and Christian Europe and the rejection of liberal, capitalist democracy (Fromm, 2016; Moss, 2017). The defence of traditional gender roles plays a particularly important role. The corresponding 'traditional values' are fully endorsed not only by specific parties or movements on the ground but by the Russian state, actors in the State Duma and Petersburg's Legislative Assembly, the Orthodox Church, the media and public universities including the Russian Academy of Sciences, where the sociology faculty of Moscow State University play a leading role.<sup>35</sup> It also circulates internationally through the Paris-based Institute of Democracy and Cooperation or the World Congress of Families. Their mobilizations are funded by Russian oligarchs (Moss, 2017: 200).

The Russian policy of alliance with far-right actors has taken concrete shape at certain moments. In preparing a referendum for the annexation of Crimea that did not correspond to international or OECD standards, far-right parties – some far-left parties as well, such as the Communist Party of Greece – from various European countries sent international observers that lent credibility to the event. In the Czech Republic, the People's Republic of Donetsk, i.e., the pro-Russian parts of Eastern Ukraine occupied by Russia, opened up a fictitious embassy in September 2016, an event that was largely publicized and lent legitimacy to an exclave that does not enjoy international recognition. Within national parliaments as well as in the European Parliament, far-right MPs

support Putin's politics. In 2016, fifteen out of twenty-four far-right parties across Europe openly defended Russian positions (Fromm, 2016).

Apart from the particularly strong links with the Eastern European far right, the FN is one of the most prominent examples of Russian influence. The bank of a close collaborator of Putin granted a ten million credit for the FN's electoral campaign, something the FN treasurer Wallerand de Saint-Just openly admitted (Fromm, 2016). The AfD is also favoured as a Russian ally in Germany, important among other things to reduce Western economic sanctions against Russia. Höcke clearly acted in the favour of Russian foreign politics when he declared that Russian sanctions were not in German interest. Even the supposedly spontaneous Pegida movement declared it favoured good relationships with Russia and an end to economic sanctions, and called upon Putin to help them against the Islamization of the Occident. Connections at the intellectual level have also been enhanced by the creation of the Centre of Continental Collaboration (Zentrum für Kontinentale Zusammenarbeit) in Munich, a think tank and congress centre in which Russian key actors interact with AfD politicians and German New-Right thinkers (Gensing and Stöber, 2016). Beyond financial, political and intellectual influence, Russia has also built up considerable militia structures, in particular in Eastern European countries, that are connected with far-right structures. These paramilitary groups, aimed first and foremost against immigration, also serve Russian political interests, such as the attack on demonstrators who criticized Putin by the Bulgarian militia close to the Ataka Party. Apparently, it is former military staff who lead the militarization of the far-right scene. According to estimates, several ten thousands have joined such armed militias in Bulgaria, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Hungary (Fromm, 2016).

The ideological political, financial and even military influence of Russian key actors in the European far right scene is thus evident. In the meantime, Russian initiatives to strengthen the far right have entered into competition with US-based think tanks who have taken up the challenge (Rizzi, Polezhaeva and Chuang, 2019). Steve Bannon, former editor of the alt-right platform Breitbart News and former advisor of Trump, has been campaigning across Western Europe after he left the White House, meeting AfD politicians and making his appearance in an FN party convention. The creation of a major US-funded think tank with headquarters in Brussels, initiated in July 2018, is also meant to compete with George Soros's Open Society Foundation (Alexander, 2018; Doward, 2018). The aim, we can assume, is also to make an influence felt against the Russian grip on the scene, denouncing, for instance, Merkel's deal regarding Gazprom. European right-wing structures are increasingly becoming a battlefield of several foreign forces.

Given the sensitive nature of the topic and the fact that it is hard to gather reliable sources and more systematic information, it is difficult to provide a solid assessment of what all this means. A much more consistent research effort would be needed in order to be able to formulate a thorough third line of argument around the current strength of the far right with regard to its geopolitical instrumentalization.

### **Conclusion: The Significance of Deep Roots [A-LEVEL SUBHEAD]**

France and Germany started out from differing situations at the 1945 turning point. Both have developed a continuous far-right scene. Today, this resembles interwar fascism only to a certain extent. In Germany, the far right is characterized by its opaque, networked nature and the late success of its political strategy. The German scene has also been particularly struggling with discrediting the NS past. In France, the colonial moment allowed for an early resurgence as a relevant political factor and for an overcoming of the discredited Vichy past. Ironically, the OAS even inscribed itself in the tradition of the Résistance. The loss of 'French Algeria' has led to postcolonial adaptations of the far-right intellectual baggage. Since the 1970s, the political effort was more condensed in one single party that has obtained much bigger achievements in recent years. Both countries host an active ideological production that has adapted classical fascism to changing contexts. It has also led a continuous reflection about how to handle the heritage of historical fascism, since the Second World War and the Holocaust appear as a shared major grievance in both cases. The result is best characterized as post-fascism. The Neue Rechte and the Nouvelle Droite are engaged in exchange of ideas and have common reference points, like, ironically, Gramsci's concept of hegemony, the German conservative revolution, Italian fascism and more recently Russian and US ideological contributions.

The public image and political strategies of the far right have changed considerably in recent years.<sup>36</sup> Old-style post-war Nazis like the NPD have not been very successful. It is obvious, however, that parts of the NPD have fused into fractions of the currently successful AfD. Similarly, some of Europe's far-right parties today defend Jews and Israel, homosexuals and feminism, laicity and direct democracy. Jacquemain concludes that they therefore reject the legacy of fascism and the 1970s neo-fascism (Jacquemain and Claisse, 2012: 21). We have outlined that this public rejection is often part of a determined communication strategy. We have also seen that most of these concepts are filled with a particular meaning that fits rather smoothly into the classical ideological constructs: Israel and the Jews today are interesting as allies against Muslims and jihadism and a positive reference underlines the distancing from the NS past; homosexuality is not a problem but unmanliness; feminism and laicity are brought into position against Muslims; and direct democracy implies to free the direct link between a leader and its people from institutional hurdles, constitutional guarantees, the EU and the international framework. Today, they even declare they are not racists, meaning they are defending the white race against all sorts of perceived threats. However, in seizing these discourses, the dividing line between the far right and the classical conservative right, and even parts of the left, has become more permeable.

My explanation why the far right has been successful in recent years in both countries is twofold, with an indication of a third explanatory element. First, their programmes, adapted to the current context, have been appealing to specific population groups as a result of representative and ideological crisis. A broader trend is observable that indicates disaffiliation of parts of the traditional centre-left and centre-right votes due to the changing faces of the traditional broad-based parties. The far right has managed to put forth credible representative claim-making. Qualitative analyses in the case of France give an idea of how their programmes based on exclusive solidarity, national priority and law and order resonate with specific population groups

in terms of their professional experience, housing situation or anxieties about education of their children. The reaction to several cases of sexual aggression throughout the last years in Germany also indicate the enormous mobilizing potential of the call to defend white women against dark strangers. The fact that gender is problematic to them is also evident from the numerous ‘anti-gender’ mobilizations where the far right meets with more conservative, often faith-based movements (Kuhar and Paternotte, 2017). If the assumption of a crisis context cannot explain fully its current strength, the far right has excelled in conjuring moral panics and in proposing solutions to crisis that imply attacking the achievements of earlier deviants’ struggles, as we have outlined them in Volume I. Their solutions are oftentimes a reaction to emancipation. In this sense, 1968 plays a crucial role as a major grievance. The far right could thus capitalize on a situation of an unattractive left that has abandoned reference to its former working-class constituencies – the losses of the French PCF throughout the post-war period being still superior to the losses of the German SPD after Schröder and his Agenda 2010. This situation combines with the retreat of the post-war welfare state from specific areas, in particular social housing, including for refugees. The understanding of the attractiveness of the far-right programme to relatively new, broadened constituencies is the first part of the answer. An argument around the far right in Europe as essentially being a response to crisis remains unsatisfactory, however.

Secondly, I have argued here that despite obvious differences in official rhetoric and style, it is only through existing long-term continuities that we can understand the current resurgence, its strength and transformations. I argue instead that continuity is another key to understanding. This does not mean to assume an undistorted transmission of an ideological heritage from the interwar years into a completely different context. But the far right has sustained organizational structures that offered spaces for socialization and expression of authoritarian restorationist visions and allowed for a minority of interwar fascists and French colonialists some form of recognition as well as career opportunities. This continuous presence, with changing faces and slogans at times, has allowed fragments of their core constituencies to draw lineages into the past. The fact that in the course of socio-economic transformations at the societal level, in times of crisis, of (however perceived) political or economic hardship or frustrations, new supporters and members joined those movements, organizations and parties, i.e., that new constituencies found their practical, concrete real-world concerns met by far-right party programmes, has only been possible because of long-term trends. Tracing these long-term continuities does not mean losing oneself in chasing spectres of the past<sup>37</sup> in the face of the current strength of a far right that does not resemble its predecessors any more and that deals with the historical past in self-conscious ways, as a candidate for power. Searching for the deep roots, instead, is necessary to understand how within changing contexts, and with adapted discursive outfits, a profoundly authoritarian restorationist agenda has been carried through time and adapted to changing circumstances by a small number of committed actors. The presence of far-right agendas today at the intellectual, movement and party levels, whose offer appears attractive for a variety of reasons to a variety of different constituencies, voters and members, has only been possible through their activism and commitment.

A third explanatory element has only been sketched out briefly due to lack of more systematic material, and because the broader context could not be developed fully within the scope of this

chapter. Concerning the German case, at least for the immediate post-war decades, the issue appears quite clearly though: in fact, some of those political actors have been supported, at times, by powerful state and international agencies as part of much broader geopolitical considerations. This has ensured funding, job opportunities and recognition of their competency.

All this has happened in a contemporary context where the state and capitalism have taken on more authoritarian shapes. This contribution would therefore need to be embedded into a broader perspective on rising authoritarianism at different levels (Hanafi, 2019). While the state is developing ever new forms of surveillance and repression, it simultaneously pursues discursive shifts towards defining parts of humanity as superfluous and eliminable or at least not worthy of being rescued, and criminalizing those who uphold emancipatory views of inclusive solidarity. The far right, at the same time, plays the liberal party-based game of representative democracy and manages to impose its agenda on ever bigger parts of the political spectrum.

---

<sup>1</sup> According to the Federal Expellee Law, *Heimatvertriebene* referred to around 12–16 million German citizens and ethnic Germans who left former eastern territories of Germany lost during the war, including the former Austria–Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland and that now formed part, in the majority, of Poland and the Soviet Union according to post-war international dispositions (Vereinigung Demokratischer Juristen 1963). However, the status of ‘expellee’, of those who have lost *Heimat*, has also often been instrumentalized to lend legitimacy to former members of the NS-occupying forces in Eastern Europe and to present them as victims of the course of events.

<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, towards the end of the 1960s, already when the party had some electoral success, ‘the social structure of NPD-voters [...] had converged to the society of the Federal Republic: its constituency was socially diversified’ (Schmollinger 1986c: 1981). The NPD was particularly strong in economically weak regions amongst all professional groups, more so amongst professional groups affected by economic crisis. Its membership, however, had a more particular profile, featuring in particular members of the old and new middle class and self-employed. One-third of members were workers, more than half of them working in medium-sized enterprises that were particularly affected by the economic crisis. The more typical profile of party members was therefore men in middle-class occupations and who had grown up under National Socialism.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Es konnte also doch sein, was offiziell nicht sein durfte: Auch in der DDR, die laut Artikel 6 ihrer Verfassung ‘getreu den Interessen des Volks und den internationalen Verpflichtungen auf ihrem Gebiet den deutschen Militarismus und Nazismus ausgerottet’ haben wollte, trieben Rechtsradikale ihr Unwesen, lange vor dem Fall der Mauer, und, wie spätestens 1987 deutlich wurde, bereits in engem Kontakt zu ‘Kameraden’ aus dem Westen’.

<sup>4</sup> More precisely, ‘structural factors [...] have been building up since the 1990s in the context of neoliberal economic restructuring. In particular, the decision of the then SPD and Green party government to severely retrench the welfare state (the so-called “Hartz reforms” after 2002) produced large-scale demoralisation of the centre-left SPD’s electoral base. This triggered in turn a permanent disengagement of disadvantaged milieus from the political system. Notably, the SPD lost half of its electoral support after the Hartz reforms and has never since been able to recover’ (Dostal, 2015: 530).

<sup>5</sup> Current member parties, apart from the NPD, are the Belgian Flanders Identitists Nation Movement, the Czech Workers’ Party of Social Justice, the Greek Golden Dawn, the Italian Forza Nuova, the Romanian New Right, the Slovak Kotleba and the Spanish National Democracy.

<sup>6</sup> <https://npd.de/>, accessed 10 March 2018.

<sup>7</sup> The following is based on Müller & Mueller, 2015.

<sup>8</sup> This was the case with Ebrulf Zuber, former Waffen-SS, head of division in the SS-Hauptamt in 1942, fighting in 1944 in a tank regiment. In 1947 while still in US internment, he was recruited into the Gehlen organization, undertook a brilliant career and received an award for forty years in service as early as 1980 since his activity for Reichsarbeitsdienst and Waffen-SS were counted as well (Rass, 2014: 26 ff.). It was also the case of Josef Heinrich

---

Reiser, member of the NSDAP since 1932, former Gestapo, then chief of the security police in occupied France where he led the unit 'defence against communism-marxism' as SS-Hauptsturmführer and in 1942/43 headed the special command 'Red Orchestra'. Released from French war captivity, he joined the Gehlen organization in 1951 as undercover agent, responsible among others with investigations on the residues of the 'Red Orchestra'.

<sup>9</sup> 'Until 1947, new staff was not examined [in terms of their biography and past], since everybody knew one another anyways' (Sälter, 2014: 41).

<sup>10</sup> See also Hechelhammer, 2014)

<sup>11</sup> It is somehow difficult, at this stage, to write about Gladio. Ganser, the author of a PhD on the complete European stay-behind-network (2005), has been harshly accused of promoting conspiracy theories (Hof 2009; Kaplan 2006; Riste 2014; Cogan 2007). I try, in this section, to review only those points on which nobody in this fierce debate seems to fundamentally disagree. All authors agree that stay-behind structures existed all over Western Europe and that they existed outside of parliamentary control (Hof, 2009). Their origins, developments, outlook, size and staffing differed from country to country (Riste, 2014). None of them deny that the fear of a Soviet aggression or communist takeover was a common motivation; that they were all, at some point of their trajectory, in contact with NATO through a committee with changing names (Coordination and Planning Committee, Allied Clandestine Committee) located within SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe). It is the chronology as well as the exact nature of the link with NATO that is disputed.

<sup>12</sup> The new regime tried to present military defeat as a victory: 'Four months on from total military and political collapse, France had contrived its salvation as self-appointed partner in the Nazi project of constructing a 'new European order'' Shields (2007: 16).

<sup>13</sup> 'The "National Revolution" ushered in by Pétain owed much to a French right-wing tradition of anti-parliamentarism dating back to the Revolution of 1789. It repudiated the liberal, humanistic rationalism of the Enlightenment and preached a reactionary, authoritarian nationalism. It drew inspiration in particular from the ideas of Charles Maurras and his Action Française movement, with their sustained assault on the democratic values and institutions of the Third Republic as inimical to the culture, traditions and interests of the French nation' Shields (2007: 16). Furthermore, 'The National Revolution, in sum, was to restore order and greatness to France, promoting national unity to the detriment of individualism, authority to that of liberalism, hierarchy to that of equality' (ibid.: 22–23).

<sup>14</sup> See also Føessel, 2019.

<sup>15</sup> 'The transformation of Poujadism over this period [1953–57] can be seen as a gradual slippage from anti-fiscalism to anti-parliamentarism, from patriotism with strong Republican resonance to a narrow nationalism with xenophobic tones, from anti-capitalism to anti-Semitism' (Shields, 2007: 83).

<sup>16</sup> For a brief collection and comparison of the number of deaths as estimated by different reports and studies, see Riché (2012).

<sup>17</sup> The section on the war in Algeria is based essentially on Renken (2006).

<sup>18</sup> '[. . .] the much conjured "French Algeria", *l'Algérie française*, was as French, as South Africa under apartheid was white. *L'Algérie française* was no reality. It was a political slogan that the representatives of big *colons* used to ideologically bind the mass of *pieds-noirs* and to demoralise the Muslim majority' (Renken, 2006: 47).

<sup>19</sup> An organizational network representing their interests as veterans had developed already before the end of the war, having them accused of treason by radical defendants of 'French Algeria'. The FNACA was to become their most important representative structure. In its early years, it seemed to be under the influence of the Communist Party, supporting the independence of Algeria and demanding the end of the war. Later on, it became a more depoliticized body of lobbying for the lower rank veterans' interests, such as reparation payments.

<sup>20</sup> Electoral analyses of the 1984 European elections showed that the support of *rapatriés* associations to Le Pen pushed the left out of the position of leading opposition in several southern cities, like Toulon or Aix-en-Provence. Le Pen remained the leading figure of 'French Algeria' (Renken, 2006: 392–97).

<sup>21</sup> Since many *pieds-noirs* were of Spanish immigrant origin, 50,000 *pieds-noirs* also took refuge on the Iberian Peninsula.

<sup>22</sup> For biographic accounts on many OAS members, see Harrison (1989).

<sup>23</sup> On the 'Dolchstoßlegende', i. e. Stab-in-the-back legend of National Socialism, see Keim (2014).

<sup>24</sup> Some of the most committed to 'French Algeria', like P. Arrighi, P. Sergeant, J.P. Reveau, P. Descaves, E. Frédéric-Dupont, R. Holeindre were among the thirty-five FN deputies elected to the National Assembly in the 1986

---

legislative elections (Shields, 2007: 113). In the 1992 elections still, several former members of the OAS headed electoral lists in various places (Stora, 1997: 17–19).

<sup>25</sup> 'The nationalism of Europe-Action was not geopolitical but racial. It proclaimed "race" to be "the new patrie", the "patrie of the flesh" which should be defended with an animal-like ferocity'. Furthermore: 'It advocated racial segregation and denounced miscegenation as "genetic suicide"; it supported colonialism (synonymous with "civilisation") and decried "universalism" and "globalisation" (. . .)' (Shields, 2007: 122).

<sup>26</sup> There were over 200 Algerian repatriate associations in the mid-1960s. The most solid amongst them, the *Fédération des Etudiants Réfugiés* (FER), was captured by Europe-Action and FEN.

<sup>27</sup> Launched in 1978 by the renowned daily newspaper *Le Figaro*, see: Mammone (2008).

<sup>28</sup> 'As Maurice Bardèche approvingly observed, the "substitution of the idea of culture for the idea of heredity" allowed the right finally "to recognise, and even to assert, the diversity of races" while at the same time "being able even to call itself anti-racist". As Bardèche also observed, this was more a change of style than a change of substance' (Shields, 2007: 149).

<sup>29</sup> 'There should be leaders and led. The error in liberal democracies, according to GRECE, was that these leaders should emerge through popular election, with all the arbitrary results and distortions to which this gave rise. The only sure means of appointing the best to lead was to apply scientific criteria free of arbitrariness, opportunism and corruption. Therein lay the role of biology and educational psychology for GRECE (. . .)' (Shields, 2007: 152).

<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, years later, the initial aim of achieving intellectual hegemony seemed to be succeeding: Sarkozy during his presidency (2007–12), although officially upholding the 'cordon sanitaire', nearly doubled the FN on its right with a discourse that was 'a blueprint' of the FN's. During his time as Minister of the Interior already, Sarkozy had introduced a compulsory 'social integration contract' for immigrants, obliging them among others to follow educational measures to learn Republican values such as *laïcité* (Zúquete 2008). His campaign based on immigration and security issues allowed him to capture part of Le Pen's electorate.

<sup>31</sup> More than that, some even consider the concept is again timely in the face of the recent moves of Russia: 'Even after the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, some officials were concerned that cashing in a "peace dividend" might be premature. In 2014 those concerns no longer seem fanciful. Russian incursions into Georgia in 2008, Russia's occupation and annexation of Crimea in March 2014, and Moscow's central role in fomenting violent rebellion in eastern Ukraine after the annexation of Crimea have sparked grave anxiety among some new NATO members, especially Poland and the Baltic countries, which want to strengthen allied defenses against Russian military power and expansionist moves. In effect, those states now feel the need for some of the same elements of reassurance that gave rise to the Stay Behind networks of the Cold War' (Riste, 2014: 58–59). Or elsewhere: 'Given the specter of Russian irredentism in Eastern Europe, threatened countries such as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Georgia, and even Kazakhstan must reevaluate their national defence strategies for their ability to conduct resistance or unconventional warfare on all or parts of their sovereign territory. Historical analysis can inform this process. Unsurprisingly, the Russian military draws upon its historical experience in the Russian Civil War and Soviet Cold War for the components of its hybrid warfare model. Similarly, at-risk states can review the Cold War period and, through the careful study and analysis of appropriate historical resistance and unconventional warfare cases, can assess previously used concepts for possible adaptation, application, and integration into a national resistance strategy' (Stringer, 2017: 112).

<sup>32</sup> The following is largely based on the documentary *Putin's völkische Freunde* (Fromm, 2016).

<sup>33</sup> In his 1997 publication *Principles of Geopolitics*, he developed a foreign policy doctrine shaped by cultural essentialism and historical revisionism as the basis of his Eurasian vision. His is not a strictly statist approach but he aims at embedding Eurasianism within a 'political infrastructure that goes beyond the role of states as the main actors in international politics' (Petsinis, 2014: 3). This builds on a fundamental distinction between continental Europe (Russian, Eurasian), the Atlantic powers (Western, US, NATO) and the 'Arab/Islamic' sphere in what sounds like a repetition of Huntington's 1996 *Clash of Civilizations*. In 2012, he published his *Fourth Political Theory* in which he aims at establishing the foundations of a fourth integrative ideology beyond communism, fascism and liberalism. Dugin is careful not to equate Eurasianism with any imperialist notion of 'Greater Russia' but conceives of it as a transnational, inclusionary mosaic of national identities that coexist with Russia.

<sup>34</sup> Dugin 'has often acknowledged he maintains close connections with the leaders of Jobbik (Gábor Vona), Ataka (Volen Siderov) and Golden Dawn (Nikolaos Michaloliakos). [. . .] he regards such parties as a potential vanguard or "fellow-travellers" in the European revolution against the Atlantic imperium' (Petsinis, 2014: 6). What unites them

---

politically is their hard Euroscepticism: 'Most importantly, the Russian thinker views the EU as a mere instrument through which Atlanticism promotes its geopolitical interests within the European space' (Petsinis, 2014: 7–8).

<sup>35</sup> 'Moscow State University's Faculty of Sociology is home to several prominent pro-"traditional family" scholars, and its psychologists have helped define "propaganda of non-traditional sexuality". [. . .] One of the chief ideologues of the Russian attempt to re-establish a bipolar world is Alexander Dugin, who was described at the time of the invasion of Crimea as "Putin's Brain". [. . .] Dugin was head of the Department of Sociology of International relations at the Sociology Faculty of Moscow State University until he was relieved of his position for saying that the way to deal with Ukraine was to "kill, kill, kill" [. . .]' (Moss, 2017: 200–01).

<sup>36</sup> The turn-around is maybe most evident again in the Italian case. G. Fini, former coalition partner of Berlusconi, declared in 1994 still that Mussolini was the most important man of Italian twentieth century history. Soon afterwards, his MSI has transformed into Alleanza nazionale, and has abandoned its openly fascist lineage. Mussolini's daughter, one of the MSI's key figures, left the party (Jacquemain and Claisse 2012: 19–20).

<sup>37</sup> 'In order to face this evolution, and not to find ourselves helpless in front of an adversary who has moved while we were still chasing their historical spectres, it is urgent to update our analytical framework' (Jacquemain and Claisse, 2012 : 17).